

How Did You Get Here?

Summary

We **learn** and have **meaningful** experiences while we move from place to place every day. In this activity, participants trace the paths they took to arrive at today's meeting on a paper map, they mark one meaningful or memorable experience during that trip on the map, and they share why this experience was meaningful. Through guided reflection, participants will consider how these meaningful place-based experiences contribute to their ongoing learning.

Purpose

For participants:

- This activity will support participants in recognizing that they're learning, making memories, and having important experiences wherever they go throughout the day--not just when they're sitting in classrooms or involved in more formal learning experiences.

For facilitators:

- This activity can provide insights into the experiences of program participants (e.g., where participants live, how participants travel to program activities, what is meaningful to program participants).
- This activity can help support community by introducing program participants to the lived experiences and insights of others
- This activity offers opportunities for participants to share their knowledge of place with each other and with facilitators

Objectives

- Participants will reflect on their own learning and meaning making during everyday movement
- Participants will consider the ways that learning takes place across our lives each day
- Participants will consider how places connect with their everyday meaning making, learning, and movement
- Participants will better understand the concept of "**placemaking**"--that places and their meanings to us change and shift over time

Materials

- Paper or laminated maps (one for each small group or pair of students)
- Markers
- Sticky notes

GeoConvos Facilitator Quick Guide [alpha]

- Audio/video recorders (optional) for facilitators who want a recording of participants' conversations and reflections

Time for entire activity

20-40 minutes

Directions/Facilitator Instructions

- Divide participants into groups (2-6 participants in each group) and give each group a map, a set of markers, and sticky notes.
- Ask each participant to use the markers to map their routes to the meeting location for today.
- Participants should each choose one location along their path that is memorable/interesting/engaging and mark this spot with the marker.
- On a sticky note, participants should write a brief reflection: Why is this a memorable/interesting/engaging place?



Reflection

In groups, ask each participant to share their responses to the following questions with their groups:

- 1) Explain why the spot you marked along your path to our meeting location today is meaningful. What happened here or has happened here? What is memorable/interesting/engaging about that spot?
- 2) Did you have any difficulties marking your path to today's meeting location? What was difficult? Why do you think it was difficult for you?
- 3) Were there any surprises as you marked your path to today's meeting location?
- 4) In our small group, others have marked their paths and memorable locations. What's different or interesting about your path as compared to others' paths?

Wrap Up

All together, ask each group to share at least one takeaway from their conversations together with the whole group. As a facilitator, follow up on connections to the purposes and goals for this activity (e.g., if participants connect place to interest/engagement/memory, if participants connect learning/interest/engagement to movement across their lives, if participants connect their path to placemaking or meaning making).

***More information on adapting these activities, documenting participants' responses, and using the activities for evaluation purposes can be found in the GeoConvos Advanced Facilitator Guide.**