

ONLINE TABLES & TABLECLOTHS: FACILITATING SPACE FOR ONLINE LEARNING & COLLABORATION

by
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Abstract

This thesis describes the researcher's journey as an online facilitator and reflective organization development (OD) practitioner as she explores how to nurture and cultivate space for learning and collaboration in an online community of practice. The research setting is a small group of mostly volunteers in a national health charity. The researcher adopts a reflective practitioner research approach engaging in a continuous process of story-telling throughout the thesis. She struggles with questions such as her own dynamic role as an outside facilitator, the role of technology, dilemmas of emergence versus design and discovery of purpose. Rather than arriving at a to-do-list for potential online facilitators, she discovers that hosting café style conversations, setting the online tables and enabling space for learning, collaboration and aliveness is more a matter of the facilitator's capacity to listen, to be authentically present and to relinquish control.