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Rethinking communication

Workshops should not replicate the asymmetrical communication structure of webinars. A key difference is a storytelling workshop requires a convening of a group of people to work on their stories and come to a set of conclusions with each other, and celebrate together. To run a storytelling workshop remotely is even trickier: How do we engage people in the absence of face-to-face communication? How will they work together? In what ways can we be understood and cared for? What happens if we experiment with different ways of communicating with our participants?

Synchronous vs. asynchronous communication

Trying to schedule a remote storytelling workshop is made even more challenging when your participants are spread across time zones and with various needs. Synchronous communication means an exchange of information in real-time. Asynchronous communication, on the other hand, refers to the exchange of information between us without the requirement to respond promptly and at each other’s own pace. Synchronous communication can provide our participants with a sense of togetherness and community, while at the same time, it is also recognised that asynchronous communication would allow our participants to work at their own pace.

Consider

Rethinking our over-reliance on real-time communication

Can we opt for a workshop to be run asynchronously instead? Do we really need everyone to be in the same space at the same time, or can they be assigned homework and report on some agreed timelines?

Asynchronous communication can be a form of inclusive care

It allows our participants to respond to us at their own pace and whenever they feel comfortable, prepared, and safe. What we can learn about asynchronous communication from disability justice activism, which places the utmost care and safety towards the understanding that we have varying needs and capacities— which means making learning aids, transcripts, translation, and other necessities available to our participants (that might be limited if we were to do this in real-time).

The tools we use to connect with each other

How accessible they are for everyone, and the types of communication expected from participants.

What can we learn from the practice of asynchronous communication in ‘seasoned’ remote workers

Who often use a variety of tools to get in touch with each other despite the dividing time zones and physical spaces?

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