Collaborative Writing: Tools and Techniques

Introduction Discussion
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Learning Objectives

Why are collaborative projects assigned?
Learning Objectives

• Increased academic achievement
• Positive social skill development
• Collective knowledge generation
Challenges

What hinders the success of a collaborative writing project?
Challenges

• Students sometimes think it is better to divide and conquer on a collaborative project.
• Faculty may recommend one tool, students prefer another.
• Writing and working styles among a team don’t always gel.
A Collaborative Introduction

Understand the tools that are available

Choose the best tech & Use it in the best way

Understand how teams work
How do students choose the technology they use?
Why do students choose the technology they use?
More than words?

**Formatting**
MS Word. Is anything better?

**Images**
Most wikis (inc. Google) require the **upload** of the image to a content collection before it can be added to a page.

**Video**
Depends on the file type. Ex: Bb wikis “like” Quicktime, MediaWiki “likes” mpeg.
Collaboration To-Do’s

- Task Management
- Division of Labor
- Topic Organization
- Collection and Organization of Information
- Writing and Editing
What do students say?

Mostly paraphrased. Not actual data.

Google Drive is great because it allows for real-time group editing, but it gets confusing and can be a huge mess.

Wikis are quick but formatting them can be a nightmare.

Sometimes, all you need to do is track changes.
What do students say?

Quotes from my email

“Please for the love of (omitted) get rid of the check in/checkout system.”

“It was a great to have a centralized location for all of those documents that we could both easily access from any computer.”

“I just really like not having to email the same document back and forth.”

“After discovering my partner was a bum I ended up having to complete the project by myself.”
Team Dynamics Affected by Technology

Etiquette
- Not Acceptable
  - Assigning Tasks
  - Inline editing of a document
- Acceptable
  - Choosing tools based on team member’s experience
  - Encouraging task completion
  - Synchronous editing while in the same room
  - Track Changes
    - Comment feature - notes on the side

Roles
- Writers
- Editors
- Researcher
- Information Curator
Learn about each other’s working styles.
“Because I thought I was a strong writer, but when it came down to it, I wasn’t the strongest writer in this team.”