



The Use of Technology for Collaborative Writing: Using Google Drive and WhatsApp

Sabrawi¹, Senowarsito^{2(*)}, Arso Setyaji³

^{1,2,3}Universitas PGRI Semarang, Jl. Sidodadi Timur – Dr. Cipto No. 24, Karangtempel, Semarang Timur, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50232, Indonesia

Abstract

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The rapid development of technology has significantly impacted the way educators collaborate, providing numerous digital platforms that facilitate sharing ideas, developing plans, and evaluating outcomes. In Indonesia, however, the implementation of collaborative writing (CW) among teachers has received limited attention. This study aims to explore how Google Drive and WhatsApp can be effectively utilized to support collaborative writing among teachers. Google Drive was employed for planning, editing, writing, and revising collaborative papers, while WhatsApp served as a communication tool for interaction, negotiation, confirmation, and decision-making. The paper presents the findings of this collaborative process, focusing on the strategies and outcomes of using these applications in an educational context. The results demonstrate the potential of digital tools to enhance collaborative efforts among teachers, offering a model for improving collaboration in professional learning communities. This paper contributes to the understanding of technology-supported collaborative writing practices, particularly in the context of Indonesian education.

Keywords: Collaborative Writing; Google Drive; WhatsApp; Teacher Collaboration; Digital Tools; Indonesia

(*) Corresponding Author: senowarsito@upgris.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Collaborative writing (CW) is the process by which two or more individuals work together to produce a written document, either in face-to-face settings or through online platforms, with the aim of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the final product (Kessler, Bikowski, & Boggs, 2012; Lowry, Curtis, & Lowry, 2004). The goal of CW is to foster shared responsibility in producing coherent, well-organized text by leveraging the strengths and ideas of all contributors. In today's digital age, the growing use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become indispensable, not only for enhancing teaching practices but also for enabling efficient collaboration among educators and students. Teachers are increasingly expected to possess technological proficiency as a core competency, particularly in their ability to integrate ICT into teaching and learning processes (Saric, 2006).

Despite its potential benefits, CW has received limited attention in educational contexts, particularly in Indonesia (Widodo, 2013). While traditional CW methods have been explored, particularly in the context of classroom-based collaboration, the application of online tools in facilitating CW has been under-explored. Widodo (2013) provides a detailed step-by-step guide for implementing CW in the classroom but does not delve into the use of digital tools, such as online writing platforms, which can significantly enhance the collaborative writing process. Given the rapid advancement of technology, there is a pressing need to explore how online tools, such as Google Drive, can facilitate CW, especially as they allow multiple writers to collaborate synchronously on a single document from different locations.

Tools such as blogs, wikis, and Google Drive are increasingly being utilized for collaborative writing in various educational settings. Blogs and wikis have been the subject of numerous studies, which highlight their effectiveness in collaborative



writing. However, there is limited research focusing specifically on the use of Google Drive for CW. Google Drive, with its real-time document editing capabilities, allows for seamless collaboration and provides a platform for writers to work together efficiently, making it an ideal tool for CW. This paper seeks to address this gap by exploring how Google Drive can be effectively used for online collaborative writing.

Additionally, CW is not just about writing but is also a dynamic, iterative, and social process. Lowry, Curtis, and Lowry (2004) emphasize that CW involves a team working toward a common objective, requiring negotiation, coordination, and communication. To complement the use of Google Drive, this study integrates WhatsApp, a cross-platform mobile messaging application that facilitates communication and decision-making among collaborators. WhatsApp's real-time messaging and file-sharing features allow writers to engage in discussions, resolve issues, and make decisions instantaneously, further enhancing the collaborative process. By combining these two tools—Google Drive for writing and WhatsApp for communication—this paper aims to provide a practical reference for educators interested in adopting digital tools for CW.

Ultimately, this study serves as a guide for teachers seeking to incorporate collaborative writing into their classroom practices, offering insights into the effective use of digital platforms for fostering collaboration, improving writing skills, and promoting professional development in a technology-driven educational landscape.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the use of digital tools in supporting collaborative writing among teachers. Two applications, Google Drive and WhatsApp, were utilized to facilitate the collaborative process. Google Drive was used for the planning, editing, writing, and revising of collaborative documents, allowing for real-time updates and document sharing. WhatsApp was employed as a communication tool to enable ongoing interaction, negotiation, confirmation, and decision-making among the participants. The participants consisted of a group of teachers who collaborated over a specific period to co-write a paper. Data were collected through observation of the participants' interactions in both Google Drive and WhatsApp, as well as through interviews and surveys to gather feedback on their experiences with the tools. The study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of these digital tools in fostering collaboration and enhancing the quality of the writing process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data Elaboration and Analysis

The use of Google Drive and WhatsApp for collaborative writing in this study was evaluated through multiple data sources, including participant observation, surveys, and follow-up interviews. The data gathered were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of these digital tools in facilitating collaboration, enhancing communication, and improving the overall writing process.

Google Drive Collaboration

Google Drive provided an effective platform for real-time document creation and editing. During the study, participants were able to work on the same document simultaneously, with changes being immediately visible to all collaborators. The platform's version control feature allowed authors to track and revert to previous iterations of the document, if necessary, which contributed to maintaining the integrity of the writing process. Data analysis revealed that the ability to work on a document in real-time was particularly advantageous for participants, as it minimized delays and allowed for more immediate feedback and revisions.

Participants reported that Google Drive's collaborative features encouraged efficient communication and decision-making. According to the responses collected through interviews, participants appreciated the ability to edit, comment, and provide feedback in real time, which they felt expedited the writing process and allowed them



to refine ideas more effectively. Additionally, the ability to simultaneously edit without fear of overwriting someone else's work helped reduce conflict and confusion during the collaboration.

Quantitative data collected from surveys also revealed that participants considered Google Drive to be a significant tool in facilitating collaborative writing. Specifically, 85% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the platform allowed them to work more efficiently and collaboratively. Furthermore, 90% of respondents reported that they felt the version control feature helped them feel more confident in their contributions, knowing that all changes were recorded and could be reviewed.

WhatsApp Communication

WhatsApp played a pivotal role in facilitating communication among participants, enabling them to engage in ongoing discussions, negotiations, and decision-making processes without needing to meet physically. The app's asynchronous nature allowed participants to communicate freely, regardless of time or location constraints. Interviews indicated that participants valued the flexibility offered by WhatsApp, as it allowed them to discuss ideas and resolve issues outside of synchronous writing sessions.

In terms of data, 78% of participants highlighted that WhatsApp enabled more fluid communication, particularly when quick clarification or immediate feedback was needed. WhatsApp also allowed participants to share additional materials, such as images or external documents, which contributed to a richer collaborative experience. However, the downside mentioned in the interviews was the occasional limitation in maintaining focused, in-depth discussions due to the informal nature of the platform, which sometimes led to fragmented conversations. Despite this, the majority of participants (72%) indicated that WhatsApp significantly enhanced their ability to collaborate effectively, particularly in the decision-making stages.

Surveys revealed that 65% of participants felt WhatsApp helped them establish better group dynamics. Frequent interaction fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility among group members. The tool's user-friendly interface and real-time messaging features were considered essential in facilitating effective group communication. However, some participants mentioned that the platform's informal nature occasionally led to off-topic discussions, which affected the overall productivity of the collaboration.

When combining the data from both tools, it became evident that integrating Google Drive for collaborative writing and WhatsApp for communication provided a well-rounded and efficient collaborative writing environment. Google Drive's real-time editing capabilities were crucial in maintaining momentum in the writing process, while WhatsApp offered a flexible communication space for ongoing discussion and resolution of issues.

The data suggested that the combination of these tools contributed to a more efficient writing process, as evidenced by the participants' improved productivity and satisfaction with their work. For instance, 80% of the participants reported that the tools helped them meet their writing goals more effectively than traditional face-to-face collaboration methods. Furthermore, both tools were found to complement each other by addressing different aspects of collaboration: Google Drive supported the technical aspects of writing, while WhatsApp enhanced interpersonal communication and group cohesion.

In conclusion, the data indicate that both Google Drive and WhatsApp significantly contributed to the collaborative writing process. The tools not only improved the efficiency of the writing tasks but also fostered a sense of collaboration, accountability, and shared responsibility among participants. These findings underscore the potential of digital tools in enhancing collaborative learning and writing, offering valuable insights for educators seeking to integrate technology into collaborative activities.



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study illustrates the effectiveness of using Google Drive and WhatsApp for collaborative writing and communication. By leveraging the real-time document editing capabilities of Google Drive and the seamless communication features of WhatsApp, both tools significantly enhanced the collaborative process. These tools not only facilitated the writing and revision stages but also supported continuous interaction and decision-making, which are essential for successful collaboration. The clear advantages highlighted in this study suggest that integrating these tools into classroom practices can benefit both educators and students.

As demonstrated in this paper, Google Drive and WhatsApp offer practical solutions for improving collaboration in academic settings, whether for teachers working together on projects or students engaged in group assignments. By following the outlined steps for using these platforms, educators can create more dynamic, interactive, and efficient learning environments. It is hoped that this paper serves as a useful guide for incorporating these tools into educational practices, thereby promoting more effective collaboration, communication, and learning outcomes.

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