

Chapter 4

Google Docs Motivates Creative Inspiration and Constructive Interaction

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ABSTRACT

The value of constructive annotation during the creative writing process will be examined in this chapter. Specifically, two case studies will be considered. The first study investigates the constructive role Google Docs played in a creative writing class at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU). The second study reveals the power annotative feedback through Google Docs provided during the editing process of a novel earmarked for publication. This chapter will outline the method used in establishing a constructive venue implementing an annotative review procedure. Then the authors will detail the beneficial role annotation provided when implemented by both peers/instructor and by writer/editor while working within Google Docs.

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INTRODUCTION

Within the creative writing process, collaboration is a key to success. One effective way in which collaboration can occur is through an online venue that allows for annotation to take place. Google Docs was the selected online tool in which a Creative Writing class at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) and a publishing author living in Manchester, England chose to conduct the collaborative, editing process with an instructor/editor who was living in Elizabeth City.

The role of Google Docs is first established through the investigation of the site offerings during the set-up of a Google Docs account. The ease of site management and the versatility of the components within Google Docs made it a good option for the review process that would take place during the instructional time at a local college and during the editing process with an international author. The dynamic of the instructor/student role during the Creative Writing class was enhanced once the review process was moved to Google Docs. The ease of editing at a distance improved significantly once the author and editor agreed to move their endeavor to Google Docs.

This chapter validates the role of annotation within Google Docs when compositional work is under review. The research demonstrates that online feedback can reduce the threat to psychological ownership, improve collaboration, and promote a better finished product. This validation is focused in both the local classroom and international workplace. The conclusion reached identifies both writer and reviewer as effectively implementing the annotative process when Google Docs becomes a productive workspace both locally and internationally.

BACKGROUND

Technology has permeated our private world, our educational space, and our workplace. When digital cutting-edge technology is incorporated into an instructional/mentoring relationship, the process by which a successful final writing product is achieved can be navigated more efficiently (Black, 2009). Also, the classroom can be the training ground for the global workplace when the instructor and students see the value of online annotating as part of the composition process, as well as an opportunity for skill development that can be used in the future global workplace (Moore, 2016).

The traditional, face-to-face classroom setting can be intimidating for students who are novice writers. The peer review process can create a vulnerability that

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