

# Comprehensive Assessment Project

## Literature Review: Framing and Reflecting

I have chosen to reflect and improve upon the very first semester-long project I completed in the TPC program, which was a literature view on a topic of our choice for a research methods course. For that project, I chose to investigate the literature on online collaborative writing tools (OCWTs) such as Google Docs and SharePoint.

This may have been my first experience in working on a document in sequential iterations. We built up to the literature review slowly, assembling sources, providing background, drafting an annotated bibliography, peer reviewing, and--finally--submitting our final paper. My journey down the never-ending daisy chain of journal articles eventually narrowed down to properties of OCWTs--what works, what doesn't, and why people value them. I purposefully did not gear my searches toward education; as my day job primarily functions (survives) with the use of Google Drive, I was primarily interested in workplace-relevant findings.

I was curious about, and thought it relevant to include, usage statistics of OCWTs. I used this data to set the stage as to why my literature review would be relevant and impactful. As I mention in the paper, two benefits of OCWTs stood out in the literature I reviewed. I wound up having to use a made-up word "collaborativity"--I did not create it, but it came from a source that I cited, so I thought it appropriate to include in the paper. In the Web 2.0 world of simultaneous editing, collaborativity (broadly, the capacity to collaborate) is clearly desired by users. Similarly, accessibility stood out as an important theme (of course!). Users would tend to lean towards programs that they were already familiar with or could be integrated into their current routine without much trouble; obviously, companies that have made themselves ubiquitous have an advantage when it comes to adoption of their OCWT services. Finally, I wrapped up the paper by assembling some sources that judge whether OCWTs are meeting their users' needs and setting the stage for future investigation.

In rereading this document, I am pleasantly surprised, especially considering this was done in my first semester taking graduate-level courses. I have a few more literature reviews under my belt now; I did earn an A on this assignment, but I thought that I might have more problems with it than I do. Overarchingly, a few things rang true that I wouldn't change upon further review. Firstly, the writing style is the balance that I like to strike--professional but accessible. So much of the TPC coursework has been predicated on this balance. Not only do business reports and proposals need to be accessible for those viewing them, but academic writing should make effort to be more plainspoken too. Second, I am very pleased with the level of organization that I struck. I remember putting topics and papers on index cards and swapping around the orders to test the flow of information in this paper. After I was done drafting it, I actually broke it down to a paragraph-level outline to ensure that the flow was as sensible as possible (a neat trick I learned from an assignment in the same class I completed this paper). Finally, I am very glad with the length that this wound up reaching. The assignment was for 12-15 pages; after drafting, I had 18 pages. Assembling too much content and having to trim it down ultimately made this paper stronger and more succinct.

Looking with a critical eye and unrestricted by assignment constraints, there are a few things I would do/have done differently. Firstly, this needed a good old copyedit. I may have erred on the side of too

casual, which weakened my arguments a bit. Second, I'm not sure that the original document got the best literature out there. I did my best to assemble what I could find, but clearly my searches were not working properly, as I found upon revisiting this topic from a teaching framework in a 2019 summer course. In searches for that project, I found a lot of literature that had either not been published yet or never made it into my search. In the interest of tweaking rather than rewriting, I decided to do a literature search on OCWTs through an education framework, and add a bit more substance to the paper with that perspective. The principles, although in different environments between work and school, remain the same.

This paper is on a simple, ubiquitous tool that finds usage in every corner of the world. However, its primary nature is academic, and I would make many changes to it before I used it in a workplace setting. The presentation I give here is geared towards that regard, and is hopefully a succinct and accessible conversion of what is a fairly meaty literature review. If I could boil this paper down to one takeaway, it is that business and practitioners should figure out what works for them.

### *Wrapping up the MA*

More broadly, revisiting this piece has been a great way to bookend my time working towards the TPC MA. I chose to attend graduate school as I found myself in the field of scholarly publishing without an English or related degree, and felt that that would put me at a disadvantage for higher-level openings in the industry. A significant consideration in my electing to work towards an MA online while still retaining my day job was the ability to assemble a portfolio that would not be hampered by confidentiality issues. Thankfully, there was no shortage of assignments from which to choose, and I found myself so comfortable with the coursework that I rarely procrastinated and (almost) always submitted work that I would also have submitted to my boss or my clients at my day job. My time and work in this program has been absolutely, one-hundred-percent worth it, and I have a new-found passion for effective communication that will be an advantage for me in any position I find myself in throughout my career.