# Lecture Notes for September 29:

## Web 2.0 and Writing/Collaborating:

Article Title:

Godwin-Jones, R. (2008). Emerging technologies web-writing 2.0: enabling, documenting, and assessing writing online. *Language Learning & Technology, 12*(2), 7-13. Retrieved from http://llt.msu.edu/vol12num2/emerging/

### Introductory Points

1. Trends in the use of the Internet in recent years, collectively coined Web 2.0, have precipitated changes in modes and uses of writing online.
   1. Examples: Blogs and social networking sites provide new opportunities and incentives for personal writing.
   2. Therefore: This reading-to-write culture requires use and development of language skills.
2. The challenges for language teachers is to:
   1. extend students' Internet world beyond their first language,
   2. to leverage participation in the read-write Web as a learning opportunity for language self-development, and
   3. to find means to link informal and recreational writing with formal and academic writing.
3. There are increased possibilities for moving in these directions with new tools and services that have arisen to facilitate online composition/editing and to assess writing.
   1. Browser-based text editors make it easier than ever to participate in online sites.
   2. Language tools and services offer automatic assessment of writing, enabling the development of reviewing skills, so essential to improving writing.
   3. Finally, electronic portfolios provide a mechanism for bringing together samples of learners' written work, thereby encouraging more global self-assessment of students' language skills.

### Enabling Writing Online

1. One of the major developments of Web 2.0 is the increase in availability of tools and services that are accessed directly through a Web browser rather than residing on the user desktop.
2. The editors vary in their features, but most offer basic editing and formatting and not the full feature set of a word processor such as Microsoft Office.
   1. Since the editors are browser-based, they are agnostic as to operating system and will typically run in any of the major browsers. T
   2. he online editors normally save documents being edited to a server, sometimes doing so automatically at certain intervals so that work is not lost.
3. Like similar Web services, Google Docs makes it easy to share documents and to collaborate on projects.
   1. In addition to the text editor, Google also has introduced an online spreadsheet and presentation tools.
   2. Google Docs currently supports 48 languages, with 8 Indic languages having been added recently.
   3. Google offers online storage of documents up to a maximum of 5,000 documents or presentations.
   4. This allows both for access from multiple locations, as well as for easier sharing of documents.
   5. Some offer specially formatted access from mobile devices, such as Mobile Google Docs.

### Assessing Writing Online:

1. The use of portfolios in language learning should contribute to learners taking more responsibility for documenting and assessing their language abilities.
   1. What tends to be of most use to learners is indirect feedback, which points to problems in written work but leaves it to the writer to find the solution.
   2. This requires the learner to reflect on the application of language rules to one's own actual writing.
   3. Some assessments are automated, but the most effective use of assessing writing is to provide feedback to students through inserting comments, which is an option in Google Docs as it is in the traditional word processing programs such as MS Word.
2. Ideally, of courses, one would want to make available to students a range of opportunities and options for improving their writing, including annotated samples, peer review, and automated or indirect feedback.
3. Social networking sites have become important in the lives of many young people, and this argues for finding means to help students become more articulated and effective writers in whatever language they choose.

## Google Docs Study:

Article Title:

Blau, I., & Caspi, A. (2009). What type of collaboration helps? psychological ownership, perceived learning and outcome quality of collaboration using Google Docs. *Proceedings of the Chais conference on instructional technologies research 2009: Learning in the technological era.* Y. Eshet-Alkalai, A. Caspi, S. Eden, N. Geri, Y. Yair (Eds.), Raanana: The Open University of Israel. Retrieved from <http://telem-pub.openu.ac.il/users/chais/2009/noon/1_1.pdf>

1. Synopsis:
   1. One hundred and eighteen Open University of Israel undergraduate students participated in an experiment that was designed to test the differences between sharing and collaborating on a written assignment.
   2. Participants were randomly allocated to one of five groups that differ in types of collaboration:
      1. two groups share their draft with either an unknown audience or known peers,
      2. two other groups collaborated by either suggesting improvements to or editing each other's draft, and
      3. an additional group in which the participants kept the draft for themselves served as a control group.
   3. Findings revealed differences between groups in psychological ownership, perceived quality of the document, but not in perceived learning.
      1. In addition, students believe that a document that was written collaboratively might have higher quality than a document written alone.
      2. Nonetheless, they reported that while their contribution improved a draft written by a colleague, the colleague’s contribution deteriorated their own draft.
      3. Perceived quality of the document and the improvement from draft to final version predicted perceived learning.
      4. **Thus, the present study implications are that collaboration is superior to sharing, that students prefer suggestion over editing.**

## Open Source Software

Article Title:

Pfaffman, J. (2007). It’s time to consider open source software. *TechTrends, 51*(3), 38-43. Retrieved from <http://sharepoint.niles-hs.k12.il.us/pdc/Shared%20Documents/FOSS/Its%20Time%20to%20Consider.pdf>

1. Using free only free software has considerable economic, technical, political, pedagogical, and moral advantages – and surprisingly few frustrations. If you are a teacher…you should be aware that there are Free/Open Source Software (F/OSS) applications for common classroom uses.
2. Accessing the source code allows anyone to examine the program to see how it works, fix bugs, or change it to suit personal needs. Like freedom of speech, one does not need to use source code to benefit from it.

### The Power of Source

1. Free software gives everyone the freedom to run, study, change, and redistribute software.
2. It is these freedoms, not the price, that is important about free software.
   1. Free software advocates make the distinction between free, as in speech, as opposed to free, as in free lunch.
   2. Though many people would gladly accept a free lunch, it is not one of the fundamental principles of democracy.

### Property Rights Turned Upside Down

1. Those of us who have long been familiar with open source software need to understand that the concept of free software is foreign to manypeople.
   1. The conventional notion of property rights is that I have the right to exclude you from using something that belongs to me.
   2. **Open source software is based on the opposite belief – that *everyone* has the right to distribute and *no one* has the right to exclude further distribution.**

### On the Annoyances of Proprietary Software

1. Proprietary software is inconvenient.
   1. It is inconvenient to purchase additional licenses when you buy new machines.
   2. It is inconvenient to negotiate a new license agreement each year.
   3. It is inconvenient to support multiple versions of a package for machines purchased at different times.
   4. It is inconvenient to be faced with an ethical dilemma when a friend or colleague asks to illegally copy the proprietary software that you support.
   5. It is inconvenient for students not to have the same software at home and at school.
   6. It is inconvenient to decide what to do when a vendor starts charging for a proprietary program that was previously free.
   7. It is inconvenient to perform an audit to document that all software on every computer has a valid license (Acohido, 2002; Cave, 2001).
2. Thanks to the work of Stallman and thousands of others, these inconveniences are now avoidable.

### Understanding Open Source Software and Mythbusting

1. Myth: You Get What You Pay For
2. Myth: F/OSS Software is Created by Amateurs and Must be Inferior
3. Myth: With F/OSS I Cannot Get Support
4. Myth: Moving to F/OSS Will Require Retraining and Re-learning
5. Myth: Students Need to Learn the Standard Applications

### Why F/OSS is Important for Educators

1. *Educators Pay for Software – Twice*
   1. Unlike diamonds, software applications are more valuable when more people have them.
   2. This is among the reasons that Microsoft Office is so popular.
   3. Everyone uses it because everyone uses it.
   4. When enough of your friends upgrade to a newer version that makes files that you can’t read, you upgrade too.
   5. Training teachers and students to use a piece of software makes that software more valuable.
   6. When technology leaders train teachers and students to use proprietary software, it obligates those teachers and students to buy or steal that software or to have wasted their time on the training.
      1. `When one considers how many students and teachers buy Microsoft Office because their school has standardized on it the costs are considerable.
      2. A medium-sized school district comprises about 20,000 households with children; if 10 percent of them spend $100 to help their students do better in school by buying the software that the school is using, the district has spent $20,000 of its constituents’ money.
      3. Whether schools should be effectively taxing its constituents in this way is an issue that deserves more attention.
2. Examples of F/OSS
3. Perhaps the most important applications are those that allow students and teachers to create papers, pictures, and sounds and manipulate numbers. The Microsoft Office suite is the *de facto* standard. In the past few years, however, OpenOffice.org’s suite is a great alternative to MS Office.
4. Concept mapping is becoming increasingly important to learning for its ability to organize information for visual learners and the need to communicate and collaborate with others. FreeMind is a Java-based F/OSS that can be used effectively for academic or classroom use
5. Moodle is a free alternative to Blackboard or Ecollege learning platforms
6. Firefox and Google Chrome are web-based internet browsers that are a great alternative to Internet Explorer or Safari, with much less crashing.
7. Google Docs and the many other Google Apps that are free can be integrated in the classroom and, when used correctly, can be used to increase student engagement and achievement.