Using Web 2.0 technologies and collaborative work in teaching academic writing

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Outline

- Problems with teaching writing
- Why Google Docs?
- The study
- Results
- Discussion
Problem 1: Course design vs 21st century workforce requirements

- the exam
  - time limit
  - one – two drafts
  - pen & paper
  - offline
  - no dictionaries
  - simple topics

- real life
  - deadlines
  - multiple revisions
  - computers
  - online
  - dictionaries
  - complex topics
Problem 2: The tech-savvy student myth

- students are less tech-savvy than it is assumed
  - unaware of practical web tools
  - use Google search ineffectively
  - obtain information from unreliable sources
  - use poor quality bilingual online dictionaries
Problem 3: Students’ misconceptions about the writing process

FIRST DRAFT?

FINAL DRAFT.
Why Google Docs?

- comes free with a Google account
- accessible from any device
- up to 40 concurrent users
- constantly developing
- safe cloud service
Why Google Docs?

- promotes collaborative writing (Kessler 2012)
  - pairwork and groupwork outside the classroom
  - peer learning and peer correction
  - asynchronous collaboration
  - effective comment system
  - access to previous versions
Why Google Docs?

- Documents
  - easy sharing and commenting
- Spreadsheets
  - keeping track of your students’ progress
- Presentations
  - preparing slides for in-class activities
- Forms
  - getting feedback from your students
Pilot study

- **Group A**
  - 10 1BA students
  - individual work
  - pen & paper
  - 10 paragraphs

- **Group B**
  - 30 1BA students
  - groupwork
  - Google Docs
  - 10 paragraphs
Assessment

- double-blind review
- course requirements
- paragraph marksheet
Results

**Paragraph scores**

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<th>Final score</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Groupwork</th>
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Results

Content & language scores

Partial score

Individual – Content

Individual – Language

Groupwork – Content

Groupwork – Language
Discussion

- students working in groups using web tools:
  - generate more complex ideas
  - create better texts in terms of content and language
  - learn from each other
  - raise their awareness of plagiarism
  - develop a positive attitude to collaborative work
References


