WEAVING WEB 2.0 AND THE WRITING PROCESS WITH FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Ruijie Zhao

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Committee:

Kristine L. Blair, Advisor

Lena Ballone Duran
Graduate Faculty Representative

Lee Nickoson

Richard Gebhardt
This dissertation, as a theoretical study, focused on how Web 2.0 technology potentially helps students gain power, knowledge, and agency in the networked learning environment and how feminist pedagogy conceivably facilitates the implementation of Web 2.0 technology to produce an opportune learning environment. Primarily, this study used feminist pedagogy as the theoretical framework to examine the extent to which Web 2.0 tools decenters authority and enhances collaboration, helping composition instructors to create a collaborative, democratic, and interactive learning space for students to achieve positive learning outcomes in first-year and intermediate college writing classes. Such a study benefits writing programs and teachers that use the writing process and recognize the significance of multimodal composition.

To achieve the above goals, I presented the origins and objectives of feminist pedagogy to lay the theoretical foundation to manifest how it correlates with Web 2.0 technology and the writing process and to illustrate how Web 2.0 technology has potentially provided feminist educators in the composition field new tools to innovate teaching methodology. I used YouTube, Google Docs, and blogs to exemplify the benefits and constraints of Web 2.0 tools and showcase how they can be integrated in the writing class based on feminist pedagogy principles to create networked classrooms at different stages of the writing process. In addition, this study addressed the acceptance, resistance, and complexities of employing Web 2.0 in the teaching of writing from theoretical perspectives and my actual experience as a writing instructor. The dissertation concluded with the importance of professional development so that instructors have sufficient knowledge to use these free, open source tools in their classrooms and understand the advantages
of creating and maintaining a feminist classroom. This discussion helps both writing instructors and writing program administrators understand the value of embracing Web 2.0 technology, and promote the application of new technology and feminist pedagogy in college writing classes.
Dedicated to My Dear Grandparents, Who Rest in Peace.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe my deepest appreciation to my Committee Chair, Dr. Kristine Blair, for her guidance, support, patience, and mentorship during my doctoral study in the Rhetoric and Composition program at BGSU. Without her, this dissertation would not have been possible. She has made wonderful changes to my life that language becomes limited for me to express my gratitude to her.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Lee Nickoson, Dr. Richard Gebhardt, and Dr. Lena Ballone Duran for their close reading of this dissertation and the helpful suggestions they recommended to improve this dissertation.

Next, I thank my parents and my brother for their trust in me, their endeavor to help me, and their unconditional and selfless love for my children. I also take the opportunity to thank Dr. Wallace Pretzer and Dr. Diane Pretzer, my American parents, for the numerous readings of this manuscript. In addition, I thank my colleagues, Angela Garner and Emily Beard for the inspiring dialogue at the Writing Center, as well as Vanessa Cozza and Brittany Cottrill for proofreading the last two chapters of this dissertation. I also want to express my gratitude to my forever friend Wang Yan for her moral support at the good and bad times.

Lastly, my appreciation goes to my husband, Sun Kang, and my children, Zhaohan and Zhaoxin, for their love, patience, understanding, and sacrifice while I was working on this project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Students, New Tools, and New Writing Classrooms</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Web 2.0?</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of the Power of Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Multiliteracy</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Innovations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating the Writing Process, Web 2.0, and Feminist Pedagogy</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Writing Process</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web 2.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Pedagogy</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of the Study</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Chapters</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter II. FEMINIST CLASSROOMS AS A SPACE TO WEAVE WEB 2.0 AND THE WRITING PROCESS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is feminist Pedagogy?</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Themes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Debates</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Pedagogy—a Space of Tension, Safety, and Collaboration</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving Feminist Pedagogy with Web 2.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter III. YOUTUBE: A POWERFUL TOOL TO FACILITATE PREWRITING</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prewriting as a Social Act</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Pedagogy as a Social Process</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating YouTube during the Prewriting Stage</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind Stimulus</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation Starter</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Motivator</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving YouTube with Feminist Pedagogy</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube’s Pedagogical Implications and Limitations in Prewriting</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV. COLLABORATIVE WRITING/REVISING WITH GOOGLE DOCS</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Google Docs?</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing/Revising as a Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Docs as a Tool for Collaboration</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving Writing/Revising and Google Docs with Feminist Pedagogy</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Writing/Revising with Google Docs</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Writing/Revising with Google Docs</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges of Integrating Google Docs in the Writing Classrooms</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V. BLOGS: A SPACE FOR REFLECTION FOR POSTWRITING</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Reflection?</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postwriting as a Social Act</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs as a Reflective and Collaborative Learning Tool</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs, Postwriting, and Reflection</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blogs as a Reflective Space for Students at the Postwriting Stage............. 119

Blogs as a Reflective Space for Instructors at the Postwriting Stage .......... 122

Weaving blogs and the Feminist Pedagogy during Postwriting.................. 125

Blogs’ Pedagogical Challenges during Postwriting...................................... 131

Integrating Blogs to Promote Postwriting..................................................... 132

Group Work .................................................................................................. 133

Peer Review Work ........................................................................................ 134

A Class Blog ................................................................................................. 135

Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 137

CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS........................................................................ 140

Issues Addressed............................................................................................. 141

Implications for Instructors........................................................................... 145

Implication I: Understanding and Implementing Technology in Teaching... 145

Implication II: Experimenting with New Technology ................................. 147

Implication III: Advocating Feminist Pedagogy ........................................... 148

Implications for Writing Programs Administrators....................................... 149

Implication I: The Inclusion of Digital Literacy in Curriculum .................... 149

Implication II: Professional Development of Instructors .......................... 150

Implication III: Logistics of the Pedagogical Innovation ............................ 151

Future Research ............................................................................................. 151

An Empirical Study of Web 2.0..................................................................... 152

An Investigation of Social Networks in Academic Spaces ......................... 153

A Critical Understanding of Online Instructional Media ............................ 153
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Writing Instruction and Assessment</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Process Revisited</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afterwords</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORKS CITED</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A. CONSENT LETTER</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES/TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure/Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 YouTube Screencapture</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Google Docs Screencapture</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Google Docs Screencapture</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Every technology is both a burden and a blessing; not either-or, but this-and-that.

—Neil Postman, Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology

To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can deeply and intimately begin.

—bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress

The organization of a serial space was one of the great technical mutations of elementary education.... It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, and rewarding.

—Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish

New Students, New Tools, and New Writing Classrooms

“Mom, I want to watch Journey to the West in Chinese on YouTube.” My son often requests to watch episodes of his favorite Chinese children’s shows on YouTube. At the age of five, he knows Youtube, a term that might be unfamiliar to some older people. He can even use his little fingers to type “word girl” to google word girl video games online, or launch skype (an online program for video chatting) himself to start a video conversation with his uncle in China. The comfort and confidence he displays when operating a computer undoubtedly mark him as a “digital native,” a term coined by Prensky to refer to the young generation who has grown up in the new information age (1).

The new information age unprecedentedly migrates many people to a digital land where young children like my five-year old son easily fit in and thrive. In 2001, Prensky found that “the average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games” (1). He saw the radical change in the students, claiming that today’s
students are “digital natives” who “spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, video games, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools” and are no longer “the people our educational system was designed to teach” (1). These students communicate and socialize in a different way, which challenges the instructors, the “digital immigrants,” to look for new ways to teach this population who speak native digital language.

From 2001 when Prensky made the above claim to 2009, technological innovations have been taking place every day, and currently college students integrate Web 2.0 technology into their daily lives. According to Arrington, statistics in 2005 show that 85% of college students use Facebook, and the number of college Facebook users has been rising. In addition to using email, playing video games, and listening to ipods, college students utilize various Web 2.0 applications to meet their communication or entertainment needs through creating wikis, writing blog entries, watching and posting YouTube clips, and interacting on Facebook. According to Dave Sifry, the CEO of Technorati, in July 2006, 175,000 new blogs were created every day (qtd. in Warlick 37). Facing a college population mainly composed of digital natives, educators are challenged to embrace their technology, learning styles, and learning skills to promote positive learning.

Soloman and Schrum contend that as educators, we “have to recognize that students' use of technology is stronger” and conceive pedagogies that “help students learn thinking and analytical skills” (22). In other words, with the ubiquitous use of Web 2.0 technologies among college students, educators need to acculturate and assimilate themselves into this digital wave so that they can build pedagogies that maximize students’ opportunities to succeed. The new millennium’s emphasis on both print and digital literacies, community building, as well as networking suggests the worth of studying Web 2.0, especially its value to benefit college students. As a scholar in the field of composition, I investigate how Web 2.0 mediates first-year
and intermediate composition classrooms in US colleges.

Currently, writing classrooms in US colleges are a composite of new technology, new students, and the traditional process approach to composition instruction. Many writing programs in the US build their curricula on the belief that writing is a collaborative, social, and reflective process, and many composition scholars have eagerly embraced computer technology in their pedagogical practices as a means of enhancing collaboration and reflection in the writing classroom (Selfe; Hawisher; Wysocki; Sirc; Rice). This explains why it becomes necessary to study how to apply different technologies to help students accomplish learning goals at different stages of the writing process. Large numbers of first-year and intermediate composition instructors wrestle with the need to stay current with technologies in the classroom while adhering to the traditional writing process approach. The writing process approach, though consistently debated, has influenced the teaching of writing to an extent that it was believed to have changed the paradigm of the teaching of writing (Hairston 76). The linear writing stages, namely prewriting, writing, and rewriting stages, have been widely used in composition textbooks and commonly practiced in teaching. Computer technology has been used since the early 1980s to help students benefit from writing instruction; therefore, the integration of computer technology in a writing process-oriented class is not a new phenomenon. However, with the advent of new Web 2.0 technology, the composition field needs to continue to address the promises and challenges that Web 2.0 introduces to writing classrooms. The socialization and collaboration features of Web 2.0 technology add new dynamics to the traditional writing process approach, which is deemed as collaborative and social. Since the incorporation of technology should not be a careless and imprudent decision to follow the digital tide, composition instructors, many of whom still practice more traditional, print-based approaches to
teaching writing, need to reexamine students’ needs and their learning styles in this digital era to readjust their pedagogical practices to foster students’ learning.

Why Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 refers to a set of web-based programs, usually free, that perform functions such as word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, allowing people using different computers to socialize and collaborate without time or spatial limitations (Soloman & Schrum 23). As Web 2.0 technologies continue to gain popularity, theorists are divided about whether these new communication tools are a cultural blessing or a hegemonic curse. Postman proclaims that “every technology is both a burden and a blessing; not either-or, but this-and-that,” indicating that every technology can be a burden to some social groups at specific times but can also be a blessing to the same or other groups at other times (5). Facing such a blessing or burden, society needs to understand that “it is inescapable that every culture must negotiate with technology” (Postman 5). The purpose of such negotiation is to fully understand the beauty and danger of technology so that it can be used intelligently. Postman recommends wise usages of technology, contending that “once a technology is admitted, it plays out its hand; it does what it is designed to do. Our task is to understand what that design is—that is to say, when we admit a new technology into the culture, we must do so with our eyes wide open” (7). To make informed decisions regarding what technology to use and how to use it, instructors and students, therefore, need to open their eyes to scrutinize technology and understand its structure.

The structure of technology can be quite complicated, and people have to devote time and energy to carefully study it to grasp its complexities. Such a task can look really daunting to people in English who usually do not associate themselves with technology. Then why technology? Many educators have realized that technology has changed students, education, and
society. Therefore, at this information age, technology, whether a blessing or a burden, can play a role to empower some people personally, professionally, and academically. To ignore technology is neither practical nor reasonable. As one dominant form of technology so commonly used in people’s daily lives, Web 2.0 has certainly exercised its power on communication and literacy; ignoring Web 2.0 is not an intelligent choice, and I substantiate why the composition field needs Web 2.0 in the following sections.

Recognition of the Power of Technology

As a field less likely to be associated with technology, composition studies has recognized the importance of embracing technology and investigated how it can impact writing as well as the teaching of writing. There have been many debates on incorporating technologies in composition classes. As Evans and Po summarize, “Early debates about the efficacy of incorporating digital culture into the English classroom often dissolved into the now quite familiar disputes between the 'technophiles' who extolled the endless virtues of new technologies and the 'technophobes' who avoided technology altogether” (57). Initially, many instructors were fearful of using computers in their classrooms; as Sapp documents:

Computers have never qualified in my mind as docile household pets.

They eat data and delight in rearranging the written word. They perversely warn you in an alternate language just before doing something drastic, but they often give no indication at all of what lies deep within their hearts. So it was with fear that I first contemplated using a computer as a teaching tool in a writing class. (137)

The fear of hard data and drastic rearrangement discourages some instructors from using computers in the classrooms, but some rise above such fear and incorporate computer technology
in the class; some instructors have taken the initiative in learning technology to employ in their own classrooms.

The attitudinal change from fear or resistance to acceptance is largely due to the wide use of computer technology and its impact upon both the academic and personal lives of instructors and students. Hawisher, et al. argue that from 1979 to 1994, writing teachers were “excited and energized by the prospect of integrating a new technology into their work” (5). Computers entered the field of composition when there was a loud, public call for the improvement of writing instruction at the beginning of the 1980s (23). From 1979 to 1982, the use of the microcomputer featured the use of technology in the writing classrooms; however, just as Hawisher, et al., claim, much early work in the field of computers and writing focused on the possibility that the computer, given its ability to count and to sort, could be taught to “read” students’ work, check for spelling and grammar errors, and help produce “a more finished, more error-free product” (31). Such an introduction of computer technology was viewed both as facilitating the proofreading stage of the writing process and as threatening the process pedagogy due to its sole emphasis on a better product; thus, in the 1980s, integrating computer technology, though controversial and pedagogically challenging, was an innovative endeavor to improve students’ writing.

With the popularity of personal computers, computer-mediated communication (CMC) emerged during the latter part of the 1980s. Due to its ability to create electronic forums where writers could meet and exchange ideas online, it seemed an ideal technology for the writing classroom conceived now as a site for social interaction (Hawisher, et al 149-150). The period from 1989 to 1991 saw the evolution of the personal computer into the interpersonal computer, connected to other computers through networks and/or modems (180). The collaboration
enhanced in the networked classrooms fostered positive learning outcomes in the writing classes during the late 1980s. These networked computers help students to easily collaborate, which led to the growth and later boom of BlackBoard and other teaching tools to promote collaboration. Though scholars cannot reach a consensus on the effectiveness of computer technology, the promises of using technology attracted many composition instructors. The advantages of incorporating computers in the composition classes are recognized by scholars such as Etchison, who found that “computer classes made greater gains than control classes” and “with the computer students writing longer, better papers at the end of the term” (qtd. in Bernhardt 65).

Recognition of Multiliteracy

With the development of technology, print literacy is no longer the only literacy, and the composition field has treated digital literacy as one of its teaching goals. Hawisher et al. argue that:

In the United States, for example, the ability to read, compose, and communicate in computer environments--called variously technological, digital, or electronic literacy--has acquired increased importance not only as a basic job skill but also, every bit as significant, as an essential component of literate activity. Today, if students cannot write to the screen--if they cannot design, author, analyze, and interpret material on the Web and in other digital environments--they may be incapable of functioning effectively as literate citizens in a growing number of social spheres. The ability to write well--and to write well with computers and within digital environments--we believe will continue to play an increasingly important role in determining if students will be able to participate and succeed in school, work, and community. (643)
Similarly, according to Dornsife, recent scholarship, particularly that of Rice and Ball, Walker, Sorapure, Shipka, as well as others, has moved multimodal composition from an "option" or a "possibility" perhaps to the central concern of what it means to teach and learn composition in the classroom. Literacy is no longer defined as the ability to read and write in print, but also to read and compose digitally, which means to open and read web pages, to write electronically, and to communicate via the Web.

The recognition of digital literacy is present in various position statements created for the use of technology, which are generally treated as the guidelines for the teaching of writing. In the spring of 2003, Shirley Wilson Logan, then Chair of CCCC, appointed a CCCC Committee to “create a position statement governing the teaching, learning, and assessing of writing in digital environments” (“CCCC Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments”). Such a decision has reflected the composition field’s acute awareness of the influence of computer technology and the intention to build guidelines for the use of technology in writing and writing instruction in the new millennium. The “CCCC Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments” clearly states that “the focus of writing instruction is expanding: the curriculum of composition is widening to include not one but two literacies: a literacy of print and a literacy of the screen.” Similarly, the NCTE sees the rise of multi-modal literacies. NCTE Guidelines on Multimodal Literacies say that “young children practice multimodal literacies naturally and spontaneously. They easily combine and move between drama, art, text, music, speech, sound, physical movement, animation/gaming, etc.” and “the use of different modes of expression in student work should be integrated into the overall literacy goals of the curriculum and be appropriate for time and resources invested.” The composition field observes the opportunities and challenges
that this expanding understanding of literacies creates for writing programs, instructors, and students.

Herbst claims, “in the information age, the ability to apply technologies, such as the Internet, constitutes an invaluable skill in the shaping of cultural spaces” (135). What Herbst suggests here is the importance of acquiring technological skills to survive in this digital era. The widespread use of computers and the Internet redefined literacy. Selfe and Hawisher in 2004 announced that the “heavy use of computers in the United States, and increasingly elsewhere, for education, entertainment, employment, and empowerment has also changed the use and meaning of ‘literacy,’ which now needs to be linked with such words as technological, digital, and electronic” (2). Selfe and Hawisher call for people’s attention to the expansion of the definition of literacy. Chandler, like Selfe and Hawisher, recognizes that communication in the new century is increasingly tied to digital technology, arguing that “successful students must be competent in a global digital culture” (346). Selfe also says that, “if we continue to define literacy in ways that ignore or exclude new media texts, we not only abdicate a professional responsibility to describe accurately and robustly how humans communicate, and how they compose and read in contemporary contexts, but we also run the risk of our curriculum holding declining relevance for students” and “if our profession continues to focus solely on teaching alphabetic composition … we run the risk of making composition studies increasingly irrelevant to students engaging in contemporary practices of communicating” (Wysocki et al. 55; 72). Therefore, to make composition studies relevant to students’ interests, skills, and professional development, multiliteracy has to be taught in classrooms. Web 2.0, as the new technology, can contribute to the teaching of multiliteracy.
Edward Maloney sees the importance of incorporating technology in education, stating “the more we make these technologies part of the educational landscape, the greater their potential for changing the way people teach and learn”; however, he shows his dissatisfaction about the current use of technologies. He is acutely aware that many of the technological tools used in the classroom such as BlackBoard and Web CT are just helping with the delivery of content rather than with the teaching of thinking ("What Web 2.0 Can Teach Us about Learning"). To concur with Maloney, Barton and Lowe conclude that although there has been a move to content management systems (CMS) like Web CT and BlackBoard in writing instruction, some compositionists find these systems restrictive, suggesting that a pre-defined look at these systems and the limited options they offer to users are problematic. Moxley clearly states that Web CT and BlackBoard are an old-style pedagogy—“a pedagogy that allows some collaboration and dialogue, yet which roots ultimate power in the instructor or server administrator” (189). He finds that although students can be assigned to groups and discussion forums can be linked to documents, BlackBoard and WebCT, in general, are anti-collaborative and anti-interactive (189). Blair concurs with Moxley, claiming that CMS may limit both “the potential of academic virtual learning spaces to engage students in the ways that teaching and learning specialists would advocate” and the “democratic potential of online learning for many institutions.” She argues that such a limitation is caused by the emphasis on written communication, neglect of design, lack of support for students’ identity construction, and the disconnection from the objectives of the course and students’ literate practices ("Course Management Tools” 41-43). All restrictions and problems stated above explain why some instructors are looking for new technologies to gain flexibility in teaching and to promote
dialogues, collaboration, and interaction among class participants. Apparently, Web 2.0 has become a pedagogical choice for instructors because of its popularity and also its potential to encourage collaboration.

Selke urges that educators “must try to understand—to pay attention to—how technology is now inextricably linked to literacy and literacy education in this country; and second, we must help colleagues, students, administrators, politicians, and other Americans gain some increasingly critical and productive perspective on technological literacy” (24). Here, Selke indicates how technology and literacy are closely associated and calls for the recognition of such association from people from different professions.

As more college students habitually use Web 2.0 tools to communicate, utilizing Web 2.0 becomes a literate activity to assist students acquiring skills in composing in different modes such as traditional text, images, videos, and audios. Apart from enabling composing in different modes of literacies, Web 2.0 has also attracted much attention for its potential to facilitate collaboration and enhance democracy. Solomon and Schrum state that the Web 2.0 tools “allow multiple users to participate: editing, commenting, and polishing a document collaborating” (13). Such collaboration encourages diversified opinions which harness the learning process. Likewise, Siemens believes that “learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions; …nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continued learning” (qtd. in Solomon & Schrum 38). Mary Flores, who agrees with Soloman and Schrum, observes that computer technologies can be used in classrooms to facilitate an "interactive, diverse, and collaborative writing community in which each and every student has a voice and can engage in dialogue with each and every other member of that community" (109). Flores states the importance of knowing technology and using it to benefit students. Selke concurs with the need for instructors to
comprehend the importance of integrating computer technology in their curricula, but she emphasizes that educators should use technology critically to enhance students’ literacy skills.

However, with the sweeping recognition of the merits of technology, many scholars warned us of the possible negative outcomes of the incorporation of technology in classrooms. Emily Jessup noted “the power imbalances brought to the fore by technology in the university classroom, cautioning ‘computers make people vulnerable because they are associated with power and status in our culture’ (352). The constraints of computer technology are also witnessed by scholars who notice that computers, in fact, hinder communication and interaction; therefore, technology can be viewed as promoting and suppressing interaction and collaboration. A problem that the composition field faces is marginalization. Hawisher et al. claim that:

> Among the many problems—evidenced in English composition classrooms at least as frequently as they were in any other learning spaces during this time--were the continued marginalization of individuals due to race, gender, age, sexual preference, or handicap; the silencing, intentional or unintentional, of certain segments of our population, such as the very poor; and the unequal distribution of power within economic and social groups represented in our classrooms.
> 
> (*Computers and American Higher Education* 203)

With the constraints of earlier anti-collaborative technology and the impending task to minimize marginalization, Web 2.0 brings new hope to the field, forcing us to reconceptualize how classroom interactions can best serve the participants. Because technology is defined as both a blessing and a curse, the way one implements Web 2.0 largely determines its effectiveness, which again calls for a pedagogy that promotes the benefits of Web 2.0.

> Though computer technology has gained its dominant position during the students’
writing process, composition instructors have been cautious about its possible negative consequences. While computers have been found to be able to “improve student writing (especially revision processes), encourage better attitudes toward writing, and perhaps stimulate a collaborative learning environment,” many scholars have cautioned us to remain alert about the danger or limitations of technology (Bernhardt 65). MacArthur claims that:

The computer is not a magical writing tool that will transform the way in which exceptional students write, neither is it a writing curriculum or an instructional method. However, it is a powerful and flexible writing tool with certain physical characteristics and information-processing capabilities that may affect the writing process and facilitate certain types of writing instruction. (86)

MacArthur admits the power of computer technology, but he clearly indicates that technology itself is not pedagogy or curricula and cannot automatically transform students into capable writers. In order to design effective curricula and choose working pedagogy, understanding computer technology and using its power and flexibility is the key to success. With the emerging Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, Facebook, and blogs that aim to build social networks, compositionists need to carefully study the structures of Web 2.0 to introduce effective pedagogy. Our students certainly seem adept at using multiple Web 2.0 technologies to express themselves and communicate with each other in and out of the classroom. As teachers in a changing field, we need to prepare ourselves to keep pace with and enhance the composition education of “digital natives.” Adams and Hamm observe that “only when teachers are able to keep up-to-date and are capable of applying a thorough knowledge of effective instruction can we be sure that high-tech tools will actually help children to reach new plateaus of thinking and learning” (126). Solomon and Schrum mention that even though students can be stronger
technology users, it is the educators who “harness the technology and use it to help students learn thinking and analytical skills” (22). Hence, though Web 2.0 technology has various functions that empower students to collaborate and interact, it is the instructors who have the agency to integrate technology into pedagogies and curricula to fit the needs of the students. With this said, in this dissertation, I focus on why and how Web 2.0 fosters feminist pedagogical ideals in the process of teaching and learning writing. Since the importance of incorporating open source technologies in the writing process has been an ongoing discussion in the composition field, this dissertation intends to investigate the possibilities of employing Web 2.0 to achieve democratic collaboration advocated by feminist pedagogy in a writing classroom that endorses the writing process theory.

Integrating the Writing Process, Web 2.0, and Feminist Pedagogy

As I have said before, using technology in the process of teaching and learning writing is not a new phenomenon; however, using Web 2.0 to foster a feminist composition classroom is a relatively new area of study that deserves much scholarly attention. In order to better present the close associations among the writing process, Web 2.0, and feminist pedagogy as well as to contextualize my area of study, I provide an overview of these three important theories in the following sections:

The Writing Process

Cicero (106-43 BCE) was the standard source for the five canons of the rhetorical composing process: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, which is the early prototype of the writing process (Bizzell and Herzberg 283). Following Cicero, Quintilian (ca. 35-96 CE), wrote in his Institutes of Oratory that people wrote best on waxen tablets because they could erase easily. This is perhaps the earliest evidence that the writing process had been
implemented in teaching practices; however, such practices did not gain much popularity in writing instruction until quite recently. Glenn points out in *The St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching of Writing* that "it was not until the twentieth century, when psychology began to come under serious scrutiny, that the writing processes—the mental and physical activities undertaken by experienced writers—were considered vital to the teaching of writing" (170).

In 1965, Gordan Rohman clearly argued that "writing is usefully described as a process, something which shows continuous change in time like growth in organic nature" (106). He concentrated on studying prewriting because to him, “it (prewriting) is crucial to the success of any writing that occurs later, and it is seldom given the attention it consequently deserves" (106). Built on Rohman's prewriting theories, Donald Murray, in 1972, advocated teaching writing as a process, not product. Murray divided writing process into three stages: prewriting, writing, and rewriting (4). He stated that "writing is a demanding, intellectual process" instead of a skill that is developed overnight (3). He urged writing teachers to teach unfinished, not finished, writing. For him, “unfinishedness” in writing should be "gloried" because such unfinishedness helped writers to explore the world and make ethical decisions (4). Britton confirmed such recognition of the importance of thinking, discovering, and unfinishedness. He argued that "since our central concern was with the development of writing in its relation to the development of thinking, we needed to focus upon the processes involved in writing, emphasizing the advantages of teaching writing as a process"(6). He concluded that:

Teachers have many reasons for being interested in writing processes. Their involvement with all the learning processes of their pupils requires that they understand how something came to be written, not just what is written. They can bring to their reading of a pupil's work all their knowledge of his life and his
context, realizing, perhaps intuitively, that what they already know about a child and his thinking when they read his work enables them to understand and appreciate something that may be incomprehensible to another. (21)

Britton implied that a student’s work revealed his or her real life, arguing for a closer association among social origins, writer, and the text that can be tracked during the writing process. Such discussions of the social origins of writing complicated process theory, and for a while, social studies was competing with scientific studies regarding the writing process theory, especially at a time when many theorists showed much enthusiasm in carrying out empirical research to scrutinize human brains and mental activities. Many theorists assumed that writers need to think to write and that such thinking activities need to happen during a long process. In order to prove that such a process does happen in people's brains, some compositionists started to focus their research on the scientific side of the writing process. They began to bring cognitive and psychological studies into composition studies. Lauer declared that "writing processes were researched empirically by Emig, Flower, Perl, and Sommers and rhetorically by Young, D'Angelo, and those building new theories of invention" (Lauer "Rhetoric and Composition Studies” 46). Sommers, in 1980, found that the representative models by Rohman and Britton were linear and that "the process represented in the linear model is based on the irreversibility of speech" (44). Her research indicated that writing is a constant revision process, questioning the linearity of the writing process. Flower and Hayes later claimed that "the problem with stage description of writing is that they model the growth of the written product, not the inner process of the person producing it" (275).

With the continuation of scientific studies of the writing process, new discoveries were made by scholars who noticed that the writing process was not linear but recursive and such
recursiveness further complicated the writing process theory. Even if I acknowledge that there are different composing processes, it is impossible for instructors to teach different composing processes in college composition classes. The diversity of the students brings vigor and insights to the class, but it poses a challenge to the instructors on how the class benefits everyone. Instructors are obligated to conduct class activities that benefit most students or ideally all students in the class rather than one individual student. Facing such a social situation, instructors use the most simplified composing process to teach—the linear process of prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Applying the simplified composing process does not, however, negate considering social variables in teaching. When scholars questioned the linearity and scientificness of the writing process, the social studies of the writing process claimed much authority and attention. Around the mid 1980s, a social construction movement that countered the cognitive movement gained momentum in the field. Its major claim is that discourse and thought are socially and culturally constructed, not merely the product of abstract cognition that lacks context (Glenn 189). Bartholomae, as a social constructionist, pointed out that in “A Process Theory of Writing Cognitive,” Flower and Hayes “locate the act of writing solely within the mind of the writer. The act of writing, here, has a personal, cognitive history but not a history as a text, as a text that is made possible by prior texts” (“Inventing the University” 630). Many theorists, including Bruffee, Bartholomae, Berlin, and Faigley, rejected such an overemphasis on the individual cognition in the composing process, claiming that people were socially constructed.

Faigley, in 1986, stated that “the conceptions of writing as a process vary from theorist to theorist” (527). He built his research on the emerging voice that “processes of writing are social in character instead of originating within individual writers” (528). In 1989, Flower saw the limitations of a cognitive study of the writing process and argued that the division of describing
writing as either a cognitive or a contextual act is unreasonable. She made a case for a more integrated approach to the writing process—seeing it as both cognitive and contextual. She said, "It seems naive to assume that the cognitive process we desire will naturally follow from the social situations we engineer," and she did not want to suggest that we need a single image of the writing process or a single “integrated theory” (286). The gist of her argument follows:

What I would argue for is, first, the need for more balanced, multi-perspective descriptions and more rigorously grounded theoretical explanations of various aspects of the writing process: of the process of meaning making, of constructing knowledge, or working collaboratively, of planning and revising, or reading-to-write, of entering academic discourse, and so on. (286)

The writing process Flower proposed is a far more complex and integrated one that considers many cognitive and social factors in the building of knowledge. She was looking for a composing process that could explain “the cognitive and social sources of both success and failure” (286).

Looking at the cognitive and contextual/social debates of teaching writing, I believe that cognition and context both play their parts when instructors teach. Addressing both the cognitive and social elements of the writing process provide educators a more comprehensive and complex picture of what is involved throughout the process. As Flower explains, “context selectively taps knowledge and triggers specific processes” (287). Such an idea applies not only to students’ learning but also to instructors’ teaching. Students in the digital era experience a different knowledge-building process; ignoring such a phenomenon negatively affects teaching. The acknowledgement of the social aspects of the writing process opens up interesting discussions on the possibilities of employing such social origins to pedagogy. Since people are socially
constructed, what they grow up with affects how they perceive the world. Such an influence not only affects what they produce in the papers, but also how they produce writings.

Currently, the college population is a digital population who has grown up with computers. The computer, as a social force, has exerted huge influences on composition teaching pedagogy. When young students come to college, compositionists need to examine how to modify teaching instruction to match these students’ needs and interests. We no longer only see static printed hardcopies of students’ work; rather, students’ work can be interactive, fluid, colorful, dynamic, and participatory blogs and wikis. The social contexts have impacted students’ composing processes, perceptions of the world, values, and eventually the final products they produce.

Hawisher said that the process movement of the 1970s and early 1980s centered on the individual, autonomous writer, thus obscuring the social aspects of composing and the complex assortment of differences among writers (173). Bruffee states that “to study and teach English is to study and teach the social origin, nature, reference, and function of symbolic structures” (432). His declaration suggests that teaching and learning English is a socially constructed activity, and without probing into the social nature of English teaching and learning, the students and teachers are failing. Apart from addressing the social origin of English studies, scholars see the value of collaboration, too. Trimbur claims that “collaborative learning is a process of re-acculturation, of learning to participate in the ongoing discussions of new communities” (465). In other words, collaboration enables students to gain voices in the social communities. With the emerging dominance of digital literacy and new Web 2.0 technology, the field can use the writing process theory in a way that emphasizes both the social and cognitive aspects of the writing process so that students understand the power of the imbedded social values and rhetorically employ these
values to persuade audiences forcefully. An important way to address these social values in the process of writing would also be to adopt feminist pedagogy in the classroom because this pedagogy respects individual differences and the values that society imposes on individuals. Meanwhile, the new technology, Web 2.0, conceivably flattens the digital world and undermines the power that some groups enjoy so that users, especially the underrepresented, can gain voice and agency.

**Web 2.0**

O’Reilly, as the inventor of Web 2.0, emphasized that Web 2.0 invited collaboration and promoted democracy by comparing Web 2.0 and Web 1.0. Godwin-Jones has termed WebCT and BlackBoard the first-generation web and the Web 2.0 tools the second-generation web (12). Web 2.0 has attracted much scholarly attention in higher education due to the ease and democracy that Web 2.0 intends to promote. There has been an increasing number of discussions of the benefits of using blogs, podcasts, wikis, and YouTube in college classrooms (Young; Rimos & Piper; Bean & Hott). These discussions concentrate on sharing the experiences of integrating these tools in classrooms, summarizing the advantages and disadvantages of such a pedagogical practice. In addition to these specific descriptive discussions of how to use Web 2.0 tools in classrooms, some educators investigate potential areas in terms of using Web 2.0 tools in academia such as how wikis might be used in libraries as a way to collaborate and how wikis impact research (Long; Schovczon).

In composition, as early as 2005, Colby, et al., grounded their research in rhetorical spaces and demonstrated how blogs disrupted the lines between public and private spaces while possibly creating opportunities for interaction and synthesis. Apart from rhetorical and spatial studies of blogs, blogs are also used to assess students’ writing. Blair encourages teachers to
“consider integrating other forms of assessment and self-assessment, including weblogs, to allow students for multiple forms of reflection that can include digital video and audio, in ways that print portfolios do not always allow” (“Course Management” 50). In addition to being treated as an assessment and/or reflection tool, blogs are also utilized to build networks in the classroom. Brooke argues that maintaining a blog means participating in a small-world network; Irvin furthers Brooke’s argument, contending that the networks established by electronic learning environments allow students to observe each other, share texts, and derive benefits.

Since 2007, there have been increasing discussions about Podcasts and Facebook. Dangler, Mc Corkle, and Barrow explore various uses of podcasting that effectively engage different audiences in the classroom, the writing center, and the professional composition conference. They claim that “podcasts give students a new way to receive and present information”; assignments requiring students to produce podcasts not only actively engage them in synthesizing course content and expose them to a new mode of composing but also provide a critical opportunity for them to reflect upon the needs and expectations of their audience and “how to reach that audience via the rhetorical elements specific to the medium.” To me, this is a more in-depth study in the sense that podcasts can teach students how to appeal effectively to different audiences and how to handle multi-modal composition. These composition scholars dedicated their studies to different Web 2.0 tools in regard to their influences on assessment, professional development, networking, and multimodal composition, and they focused on how these tools foster collaboration and democracy. Such a positive tone was questioned by deWinter and Vie, who noted the challenges, such as discrimination or harassment in Second Life that instructors face and the ethical obligations instructors have when they teach in Second Life. In other words, Web 2.0 technology does not automatically generate equality, democracy, or
collaboration, even though it is designed to foster such qualities. Moxley recognized that “Newsvine, Wikipedia, Myspace, Facebook—these popular writing sites provide models of new learning environments that enable writers to reach broad audiences for their texts, providing a world stage for collaboration, dialogue, conflict, and innovation” (184). Moreover, he claimed that these open source and open spaces “are all examples of collaborative, decentralized, online communities where crowds of people interact to construct knowledge” and that “we are in the midst of a major change in how knowledge is constructed, interpreted, shared, and archived” (184). Moxley concluded that:

New communication technologies, particularly common-based peer-to-peer technologies, are empowering teachers, students, and Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) to radically transform composition pedagogies—changing the roles of teachers and students, changing the content of our curriculums, and changing our processes of composing and collaborating. (182)

Moxley’s insights on the most sensitive issues of teaching with electronic tools—privacy, power, ethics, shifting roles, and mediated processes lead to an interesting area of study. Such insights invoke pedagogical challenges as to the proper use of these tools in the composition classrooms. He concludes by adding, “we need to brainstorm on ways to develop datagogies to enact our theories and engage students in the writing process, to make evaluation more objective, and to make our curricula more responsive to the needs of students and instructors” (200). He explicitly mentioned the importance for composition scholars to study how open source technologies such as Web 2.0 tools might help to engage students in the writing process.

In fact, from a pedagogical viewpoint, there are many ways that Web 2.0 technology can directly impact the writing process. For example:
Students can improve writing and thinking skills, increase their knowledge, and broaden perspectives due to the collaborative approach;

Students and instructors can respond to one another back and forth within seconds without geographical limitations;

Students can publish their individual and collaborative work on the Internet to gain authorship and agency from writing.

Once familiar with Web 2.0 tools, instructors will find that Web 2.0 is a valuable resource that they can bring to writing classrooms. Though Web 2.0 does not equate the success of teaching writing, it adds new promises and fresh perspectives to writing classrooms. With the endorsement of feminist pedagogy in the classroom, instructors may use Web 2.0 to create digital prewriting, writing, and rewriting activities to enhance the writing process with nonlinear, participatory, or multimodal technologies.

_Feminist Pedagogy_

Blair and Takayoshi state that “computer technologies might create shared communities of writers, democratize the classroom, create space for students marginalized by traditional classroom forums, and address inequalities of gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, and other traditionally marginalized social forces (2). Community building, democracy, and equality are the key words of feminist theories, and feminism has become an important methodology used in composition studies. As I stated before, Web 2.0 technology may have the potential to empower participants in a class but a fitting pedagogy magnifies such power while giving participants agency. The choice of this fitting pedagogy becomes significant or even crucial to the success of the class. When silence and oppression exist in both physical and virtual classrooms, and when Web 2.0 technology is incorporated, feminist pedagogy can possibly be a
way to minimize oppression and promote democracy. Cynthia Selfe confirms that “in considering the uses of computer technology, feminist theory allows us to look critically at the context of what we know, of how we currently use and see computers” (12). Since looking critically at technology is part of the goal of education, feminist theories shed new light on how technology can be implemented in writing classrooms.

Feminist pedagogy is usually defined as community-based, student-centered, context-sensitive, process-oriented, and values-cherished. Such a definition clearly differentiates feminist pedagogy from patriarchal pedagogy that is characterized by its emphasis on these features: teacher is expert, students are novices, teachers use banking theory, and assignments are acontextual (Jung 126). Susan C. Jarratt, a renowned scholar in the study of feminism, summarizes feminist pedagogy as the decentering or sharing of authority, the recognition of students as sources of knowledge, and a focus on processes of writing and teaching over products (115).

Jarratt noticed that by the 1960s there were equal numbers of female and male students in American universities, and major universities had adopted open admissions policies, allowing students of different colors and ethnicities access to college education (in Tate, Rupiper, and Schick 114). She found that such circumstances “contributed to the emergence of the new field of composition studies,” and the then-new process writing theories established “composition” as a course that met the needs of students from diverse backgrounds (114). From the very beginning, the writing process and feminism were, therefore, very closely related and they worked together to accommodate the needs of students.

In the twenty-first century in the US, when equal admission is no longer a huge concern, when digital media and multi-modal literacies are important in college education, and when the
writing process is commonly practiced in college writing classes, feminist pedagogy becomes central to the teaching of writing. Currently, many US universities are composed of students from different genders, colors, beliefs, nationalities, and cultures. Embracing diversity and difference has been an important goal established by many universities. Composition instructors can use their classrooms as ideal spaces to cultivate and nurture such core values.

Tulley and Blair state that Hugh Burns has outlined five important goals for computer-mediated writing teachers:

- that our curriculum and our teaching are gender neutral,
- that our instructional practices are fair across the board,
- that our networked classrooms are safe havens for individual differences,
- that our writing curriculum stimulates freedom of expression and values all human discourse,
- and that students think critically about and critique thoughtfully how technology intensifies the public discourse on gender, ethnicity, class, and economic status. (55)

This safe haven that computer-mediated classrooms aspire for is an ideal space that fosters students’ learning due to the security and democracy that such classrooms promise. Once again, the security and democracy such classrooms promote are not the sole results of advanced or networked technology that encourages collaboration, but also of the appropriate choice of pedagogies.

In a composition class, students come from varied backgrounds; as a result, they bring their family values, customs, cultures, personal experiences, and understanding of life to the classroom. Almost every composition instructor in the US requires his/her students to keyboard their papers, and some even teach in computer labs, exposing students to online learning environments. Many scholars expect the online environment to be utopian and democratic, which
is observed by Torrens, who claims that “on the surface, the Internet may seem like the perfect forum for feminist teaching and learning. It appears to be gender-neutral, prejudice-free, and devoid of hierarchy and oppression. One would fantasize that communication would be free, positive, and supportive without the trappings of gender, class, and power” (211-212). However, such an online utopia has been shattered by the harsh reality, and critics have “cautioned us to examine Internet-based hierarchies and socioeconomic problems” (Blair, Gajjala, and Tulley 12).

The hierarchies and socio-economics problems explain why “the greater challenge is to extend existing research to develop online environments supportive of all students of varying ethnicities, economic circumstances, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities” (Tulley and Blair 57). To encounter this challenge in composition teaching, feminist pedagogy, if practiced appropriately, may pave a way to the success of teaching. Tulley and Blair look at feminist pedagogy as “a foundation for developing an effective writing environment because it endorses revaluing the experience of female students, who have repeatedly been shown to struggle not with the technology itself but with underlying political factors that continue to disenfranchise them” (57). Tulley and Blair believe that “an endorsement of feminist pedagogy can also address difficulties resulting from race, class, and age issues that always intersect with gender-related issues” (57). Feminist pedagogy, therefore, addresses barriers created by racial, cultural, or class differences. It allows students to reflect on their own experiences and share power or authority in class, regardless of their gender, race, class, and ethnicity. Gore earlier summarized feminist pedagogy as a way "to help students and ourselves listen to and come to terms with our differences and the multiple capacities and social responsibilities within ourselves" (26).

Hausman defines feminist pedagogy as a theory “about the democratic creation of knowledge” and declares that “teachers who use feminist pedagogy believe in establishing a collaborative
learning environment where student ideas count as contributions to knowledge.” When students work as equal contributors of knowledge, sharing their socially constructed ideas, they will have the chance to internalize and externalize information and grow into critical thinkers. Tulley and Blair regard such a transforming growth into critical thinkers as the teachers’ responsibility, stating that “as teachers in electronic writing spaces, we must explore ways to move students beyond knowing how the metal box works to understanding what it can do for all students, regardless of gender and other subjectivities” (56).

In my opinion, using a feminist pedagogy is not only the key to fulfilling the ultimate goal of embracing diversity and difference but also helping students become more competent writers in the digital environment. I am not stating that feminist pedagogy is the only way that writing classes should be taught; however, the power of feminist pedagogy should not be ignored. Freire once asked in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?" (48). To me, the only answer to this question lies in decentering the socially privileged and empowering the socially oppressed so that there is the possibility that participants in the class have equal chances to question, critique, and reflect. Maher contrasts feminist pedagogy with conventional approaches to inquiry teaching, claiming that "what is most important [about feminist pedagogy] is that it draws both male and female students into a process of learning that gives both them and the subjects of their study actual lives, lived as men and women in both the public and private spheres. In this way, students are involved in the classroom as whole people" (qtd. in Gore 22). I do not narrow feminist pedagogy only to those who are oppressed by their gender, but by any social factor that puts the students/instructor in a disadvantageous position. A composition class using feminist pedagogy potentially gives participants the freedom to express themselves and
analyze how they are related to the social forces around them so that they can engage in discourses related to gender, class, and race. Such freedom can be enhanced with the integration of Web 2.0 technology in the writing classrooms.

A significant aspect of the writing process is constant revision and sharing of writings, and Web 2.0 can make such sharing and revision easily happen by providing various channels for students to work collaboratively and recursively during the writing process. I value feminist pedagogy because I believe that it can create a safe haven for students and the instructor and provides an opportune learning environment. I use feminist pedagogy to showcase how Web 2.0 and the writing process can support each other to create networked classrooms that are in Hugh Burns’s words “safe haven for individual differences” to learners in the composition classes (qtd. in Tulley and Blair 55). The writing process has been recognized as a collaborative, reflective, and social process to make inquires. Feminist pedagogy can also be used as a methodology to scrutinize how Web 2.0 tools create a democratic, dialogic, collaborative, and reflective space to maximize students’ chances to improve their writing abilities. During this process, feminist pedagogy, if practiced in a way that makes students feel secure to honestly express views, can promote the democratic and dialogic conversations among participants in the class.

Focus of the Study

Based on my previous review of literature and the popularity of technology among current undergraduate student populations, educators should be alert to the possible effects that new media have on learning and be responsible for developing new curricula and discovering effective pedagogical practices to best serve the students in the new learning environment. Evans and Po summarize such an urgency saying that:
As students of the "millennial generation" enter our classroom the question of whether or not to use technology becomes eclipsed by more substantial issues involved in successfully teaching a generation of young people whose lives are mediated and circumscribed by digital culture. (57)

In this dissertation, I investigate the structure of Web 2.0 technology and recommend ways to integrate Web 2.0 tools appropriately to support the writing process in first-year writing and intermediate writing courses in college. Feminist pedagogy is the framework applied to evaluate whether specific Web 2.0 technology is positively accommodating the specific composing phases: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Apart from theoretical studies, personal examples will also be used to assess the success of Web 2.0 technology in writing classrooms.

Because Web 2.0 is loosely defined and it includes many different applications/tools, it is impossible for me to investigate every tool and make recommendations; therefore, in the future chapters, I will select representative tools that have educational value in college writing classes. Through research and experience, I plan to focus on YouTube, Google Docs, and blogs. The major questions I intend to address in the following chapters include:

- How do Web 2.0 tools help instructors and students in teaching/learning the writing process?
- Why Web 2.0? What is at stake if Web 2.0 is not used?
- In what ways do Web 2.0 tools have the potential to create a democratic, collaborative, student-centered, and interactive classroom that feminist pedagogy advocates?
- How does feminist pedagogy promote the use of Web 2.0 in students’ learning?
- How can instructors prepare themselves to teach in such an environment, and why is teaching with Web 2.0 tools so important to composition instructors?
• What types of curriculum support the integration of Web 2.0 in writing classes? What are the implications of my research for WPAs and instructors?

Overview of the Chapters

My dissertation includes six chapters. This first chapter introduces the study I pursue in this dissertation while providing a literature review to contextualize my study. The second chapter is an in-depth discussion of feminist pedagogy that I intend to apply to assess the effectiveness of Web 2.0 technologies in the writing classrooms. Chapter Three starts with the social aspects of prewriting and identifies the tools that facilitate this stage of the writing process and create a democratic and collaborative classroom that feminist pedagogy promotes. Chapters Four and Five will focus on the writing/rewriting and postwriting stages respectively. After presenting the goals that these stages of the writing process should accomplish, chapters Four and Five will discuss specific Web 2.0 technologies that may help to create the positive learning environment for student writers. Chapters Three to Five will also investigate the challenges that instructors face in the teaching of writing and demonstrate why certain tools accommodate the needs of both instructors and students. The last chapter, Chapter Six, will reiterate the most important arguments of previous chapters and discuss implications of my research. Moreover, it will also touch on the professional development of college writing instructors and provide strategies both to WPAs and also writing instructors so that instructors are prepared to use Web 2.0 technology in their curricula.
CHAPTER TWO: FEMINIST CLASSROOMS AS A SPACE

TO WEAVE WEB 2.0 AND THE WRITING PROCESS

To reflect feminist values in teaching is to teach progressively, democratically and with feeling.

—Nancy Schniedewind, “Feminist Values: Guidelines for a Teaching Methodology in Women's Studies”

Feminist education - the feminist classroom - is and should be a place where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgement of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university.

—bell hooks, Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black

Ann Berthoff, a well-known scholar in the composition field, indicates that composing is “the making of meaning.” According to her, student writers are creative agents while the instructors are opportunity providers to help students explore the composing process (70). Therefore, writing is a meaning-making process during which students and instructors collaborate to magnify students’ creative agency so that what they write carries weight. Agency is defined as “not simply about finding one’s own voice but also about intervening in discourses of the everyday and cultivating rhetorical tactics that make interruption and resistance an important part of any convention” (Reynolds 59). In a writing class that recognizes and practices writing as a process, how can an instructor create a learning environment where students are enabled to exercise their agency to resist, intervene, and gain voices while participating in the meaning-making process? In the 1990s and early twenty-first century, scholars raised similar questions and discussed the possibilities of creating safe spaces where students are willing and able to participate while honestly and freely expressing their ideas (Latting, 1990; Chan &
Achieving a safe place in classrooms has been an important objective for many feminist scholars and educators. Schell notes: “Beginning in the latter half of the 1980s, feminists in composition have created a discourse of pedagogy that perpetuates feminine values and principles (Caywood and Overing; Phelps and Emig; Flynn, Frey; Rubin)” (75). This pedagogy, often referred to as “feminist pedagogy,” aims to promote democratic dialogues among class participants and has been associated with the theory of the writing process. Caywood and Overing have found that the writing process theory and feminist theory converge, contending that “the process model, insofar as it facilitates and legitimizes the fullest expression of individual voice, is compatible with the feminist revisioning of hierarchy, if not essential to it” (xiv). They argue that the process of writing gives students the chance to invent, revise, reflect, and collaborate, motivating students to express themselves and gain their voices in the classrooms. They see how the process model fosters a democratic and friendly learning environment that feminist pedagogy advocates, and the belief in such benefits influences writing instruction in the United States.

When many writing programs and writing instructors at universities build their curricula on the process model, understanding and applying feminist pedagogy potentially fosters students’ learning during the process of writing. Larson confirms feminist scholars’ aim to achieve democracy and equality, describing feminist pedagogy as “an essential tool both to deconstruct and to make meaning of the current manifestations of inequality in U.S. society. It provides educators with the means to help students integrate their emotional responses to social injustices with their cognitive learning about histories, theories, and models that are designed to help them create a more socially just world” (135). Larson points out the importance of using...
female pedagogy as a tool to assist students to understand and react to social inequalities. As an international student, I benefit from the writing process due to the confidence gained through constantly revising my work to improve its quality. Meanwhile, my status of being a female minority heightened my interest and sensitivity to equality, agency, and voice. As a scholar in rhetoric and composition field, I study the writing process mediated by Web 2.0 technology, a form of technology that aims to promote social equality, from the perspective of feminist pedagogy. As stated in Chapter One, this dissertation uses feminist pedagogy as the major theoretical framework to guide and assess the teaching of college-level writing in this digital era. In Chapter Two, after describing the current discussions of feminist pedagogy and highlighting debates on feminist pedagogy, I present my understandings of feminist pedagogy and elaborate on how it intersects with the teaching of writing in the Web 2.0 era.

What is Feminist Pedagogy?

Feminist pedagogy has been defined in many ways:

- Manicom said, “Feminist pedagogy is a pedagogy of liberation” (367).
- Lather thought feminist pedagogy “aimed at interrupting relations of dominance” (122).
- Maher regarded feminist pedagogy as the means "to help students and ourselves listen to and come to terms with our differences and the multiple capacities and social responsibilities within ourselves" (“Inquiry Teaching” 192).
- Luke claimed, "Feminist pedagogy argue[s] for a more gender-sensitive pedagogical model, one characterized by a reflection of power and authority, and a celebration of [women's] differences, feminist knowledges, and
cooperative and egalitarian pedagogical relations among equal, but culturally differently situated, subjects" (284).

These definitions are but a few that leave educators contemplating a clear, concise definition of feminist pedagogy and its implication to their classrooms. Tracing the history of feminist pedagogy provides a clearer picture of the fluid characteristic of feminist pedagogy. Briskin states that the “emphasis on social change recognizes feminist pedagogy as a form of feminist practice having its roots in the women’s movement, and firmly situates feminist pedagogy in the traditions of critical and radical pedagogies that see education as a form of empowerment and a tool for social change” (365). The women’s movement, which started near the end of the nineteenth century, is known for having three waves. The first wave sought suffrage rights; the second wave (1960s—1980s) primarily addressed legal and cultural inequalities, while the third wave (1990s—present) has challenged the universally recognized femininity and stereotypes. The purpose of the women’s movement was, therefore, for women to gain the rights to vote, to speak, and, eventually, for the marginalized and underrepresented to gain equality in their social and political lives. It intends to eliminate the patriarchal hierarchies that have dominated Western culture in different social and cultural spheres.

Briskin’s brief introduction of feminist pedagogy explains Tisdell’s claims that “feminist pedagogy has a strong historical context” (140). Compared with Tisdell, Kirsch offers a more comprehensive understanding of feminist pedagogy, defining it as “a growing, diverse field of inquiry concerned with women's educational opportunities, experiences, and success. Feminist educators question the structure of educational institutions, traditional canons of knowledge, women's roles as teachers and scholars, and students' responses to female and to feminist
teachers” (723). Kirsch sees “at least two distinct traditions of feminist pedagogy, one coming out of education, the other out of women's studies” (723).

Tisdell goes further when he relates feminist pedagogy to critical pedagogy and other literature in education, claiming “In short, some strands of it bear a strong relationship to both critical pedagogy and the multicultural education literature, and others have no relationship” (140). Here, Tisdell not only suggests how feminist pedagogy is historically associated with other pedagogies, but also clearly indicates it has different strands. These different strands explain why some scholars do not think that there is one feminist pedagogy but feminist pedagogies. Like many important theoretical concepts, feminist pedagogy is defined in multiple ways. Though an accurate definition of feminist pedagogy may be unattainable, there are common themes on which theorists concentrate. Among these differing or even conflicting ideas, I would like to introduce hereafter shared understandings and common themes, and subsequently present my own perspectives on feminist pedagogy.

*General Themes*

Feminist pedagogy is a theory about teaching that aims to challenge dominant patriarchal frameworks and to promote the democratic creation of knowledge. Maher contends: “Traditionally, the experience, viewpoint, and goals of white, Western, elite males are taken as representing all human experience. The histories, experiences, and consciousness of other groups, whether women, all people of color, or all working-class people, are either ignored, condemned as inferior, or judged as deviant” ( “Toward a Richer Theory” 91). Under such patriarchal frameworks in the West, some groups, due to their statuses, skin colors, ethnicities, or classes, have been neglected, underrepresented, and discriminated against. Such neglect, under-representation, and discrimination are epitomized by the hierarchies in education where teachers,
regarded as experts who own knowledge, enjoy supreme authority and power in and out of class. They lecture endlessly and have absolute control of the curricula; they command while students listen and obey. Instead of communicating, the teachers issue communiqués and spoon-feed students who “patiently receive, memorize, and repeat” (Freire 72). Freire argues that such a practice has turned students into "containers" or "receptacles" to be "filled" by teachers, meaning students only passively imitate without critically analyzing or reflecting (72). Feminist educators, aware of the negative consequences of such teaching practices, strive to overthrow them and build a pedagogy that disrupts such hierarchies by valuing students and their ideas.

Apart from addressing the teacher-student hierarchy, feminist pedagogy also recognizes other hierarchies existing in schools caused by race, gender, and class among students. Under some circumstances, some students may be silenced by other groups of students. The mission of feminist pedagogy is not just to recognize and respond to student-teacher oppression, but also other forms of oppression. It is far more than solely bringing in students’ knowledge and voices; its ultimate purpose is to create knowledge democratically among participants and to change educational systems to benefit those who have been marginalized by status, race, class, sexual orientation, and abilities. In order to accomplish this goal, feminist pedagogy recognizes women’s and the marginalized voices and achievements, thus creating a platform where students can freely and openly express their views. As stated by bell hooks, “feminist and critical pedagogy are two alternative paradigms for teaching which have really emphasized the issue of coming to voice. That focus emerged as central, precisely because it was so evident that race, sex, and class privilege empower some students more than others, granting ‘authority’ to some voices more than others” (Teaching to Transgress 185). Like bell hooks, Tisdell agrees that feminist pedagogy is intertwined with race, gender, and class. Tisdell notes:
Feminist pedagogy foregrounds issues of gender, focusing more on women's learning, although many writers also account for race, class, and sexual orientation differences among women. Writers in critical pedagogy deal primarily with structural factors and have traditionally foregrounded class (following Freire, 1971), but attend to race and ethnicity to some degree; more recent writers (Luke and Gore) suggest that the critical pedagogy literature is overly focused on rationality and does not take into account the significance of emotion and its effect on learning. (141)

Here, Tisdell comments on how feminist pedagogy relates to critical pedagogy, indicating emotions are impacting teaching and learning. Similarly, because learning is personal and emotional, intense emotions may be revealed through students’ behaviors and performances in class. It does occur that in the same classrooms some participants may feel more confident and even privileged to speak while some may show reluctance to have their voices heard. Such reluctance might be caused by upbringing or personalities, but psychological, racial, and cultural barriers largely contribute to their silence, and such a loss of voice deprives these students of opportunities to communicate, collaborate, and connect.

The presence of this silenced group prompted many scholars to research the role of a caring and nurturing environment and its potential to give voice to the silenced. Caywood and Overing confirm an ethic of care in feminist pedagogy, arguing that

People in feminist pedagogy advocate a pedagogical approach rooted in Noddings's ethic of care: a process of ethical decision making based on interrelationships and connectedness rather than on universalized and individualized rules and rights. <...> feminist pedagogy revalues the
experience of women students and encourages individual voice and personal growth in the writing classroom. (Introduction xi)

Caywood and Overing express the importance of care in pedagogy, encouraging students to connect and relate with one another instead of abiding by individual regulations. They suggest that revaluing experiences of silenced groups demonstrate care. Like Caywood and Overing, Gore also considers a feminist classroom as a classroom of care, believing that “a classroom based on an ethic of care can counteract patriarchal pedagogy's ‘emphasis on hierarchy, competition, and control’” (70). She believes that feminist teachers “possess the nurturing, maternal qualities” to facilitate a noncompetitive learning space (70). Caywood, Overing, and Gore all have commented on the caring feature of a feminist classroom, emphasizing that a feminist classroom, disrupting hierarchies and control, is a place where people connect, express views, and gain voices with confidence and ease. They indicate that feminist pedagogy is to achieve a nonhierarchical and noncompetitive learning environment though some critics argue this idea is not likely to be achieved.

Apart from empowering the marginalized to gain voices, feminist pedagogy also promotes social change and justice. According to bell hooks, “feminism is a struggle against sexist oppression” and “a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels, as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion and material desires” (Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center 26). When feminism is used in pedagogy, it is, therefore, not confined to gaining the agency to speak, but it includes the agency to disrupt current social order, reorganize society, and enhance social changes.

The possibility of promoting social change through feminist pedagogy is also noted by
Briskin, who states that “the intrinsic link between feminist pedagogy and organizing for social change reflects the connection between the classroom and the world outside it, and the feminist understanding that change is necessary and must be systemic” (23). This statement suggests that teachers who practice feminist pedagogy have the obligation to encourage students to reflect upon oppression in the real world and find a way to bridge classroom experience with the outside world. This view also reinforces the purpose of practicing feminist pedagogy—to empower the marginalized and promote equity and social justice. Weiler concurs by making a similar statement that feminist teachers have a “political commitment to building a more just society” (113).

Recognizing oppression, enhancing equality, and promoting justice have been ongoing themes of feminist pedagogy. The concentration on these themes potentially encourages democracy, collaboration, and genuine dialogue. Selfe summarizes that feminist composition classrooms “value personal and group discovery through open discussion, collaboration, and process-based writing and reading activities” (“Technology in the English Classroom”122). For a process-based writing classroom, feminist pedagogy, conceivably, can encourage participants to collaborate during different stages of the writing process and nurture a friendly learning environment where positive learning outcomes are achieved.

**Current Debates**

Facing these ongoing themes, scholars hold different views of the possibility and means of creating such a safe learning space. The major debates among them lie in the power dynamics in the classrooms. A safe space is where oppression can be openly discussed, democratic dialogues are fostered, and where justice is desired, and the creation of such a space is considered as the central aim of a feminist classroom; however, scholars question the probability
of establishing this safe classroom while decentering instructors and treating them as equal participants. Kishimoto and Mwangi raise the question “if it was possible to really create a ‘safe’ classroom. If it is possible, who creates it? Do faculty have the power and authority to create a ‘safe’ environment?” (88) Meanwhile, members of a class can have varying understandings of safety and will perceive what happens in the classrooms in different ways. Instructors design course syllabi, choose teaching materials and methodology, and assign grades, thus naturally establishing them as knowledgeable and powerful. If deprived of such knowledge and power, instructors may find it difficult to teach. Some are also concerned that once the power structure of the class is disrupted, coercion might take over and the classroom might become a ruthless rather than a safe and productive space. Luke claims that avoidance of authority places the teacher in the subject position of nurturer and the student as the object of nurturance (202). In displacing classroom authority, the teacher risks deceiving the students into believing that they have equal representation in the classroom (202). This notion, ultimately, is untrue because the teacher does execute power when assigning grades. Kishimoto and Mwangi are also concerned that “by relinquishing or disavowing authority, teachers limit their capacity to empower their students while simultaneously ‘dis-empowering’ themselves” (274). Feminist pedagogy, therefore, aims to disrupt social order and decenter the instructors, and many question the possibility of making this inversion happen.

Apart from arguing about the probability of disempowering instructors, many debate whether the classroom should be a conflict-free environment. Susan Jarratt criticizes the notion that the classroom should be a friendly and nurturing environment. She claims that students learn only when inspired and compelled to think through their positions critically. She believes a conflict-free environment dulls, rather than motivates, students, contending that optimum
Zhao 41

learning occurs when students are confronted with contrasting views. Jarratt ultimately argues that classroom conflicts help students to recognize that "the inevitability of conflict is not grounds for despair but the starting point for creating a consciousness in students and teachers through which the inequalities generating those conflicts can be acknowledged and transformed" (119). In other words, conflicts and arguments should transform students into critical thinkers and help them acknowledge oppression and seek social justice. Kishimoto and Mwangi make a similar comment, contending “Teaching and learning become processes of frustration and uncertainty that work to disrupt the conventional feminist pedagogical assumption that a ‘safe’ classroom environment is an essential prerogative for effective learning” (95-96). Schell furthers the arguments of Jarratt, Kishimoto and Mwangi, saying that “it is my contention that feminist pedagogy, although compelling, may reinforce rather than critique or transform patriarchal structures by reinscribing what Magda Lewis calls the ‘woman as caretaker ideology,’ the psychological investment women are required to make in the emotional well-being of men [and others]--an investment that goes well beyond the classroom into the private spaces of women's lives" (174). If feminist pedagogy is to call for “liberation, empowerment, change, and agency,” “women as caretakers” result in reinforcing patriarchal hierarchies and contradicting the mission of feminist pedagogy. This result risks leading “the subordinate groups to accept the oppressive systems as actually working to their benefits (Kishimoto and Mwangi 94).

In addition to questioning the possibility of decentering instructors to empower students, some also wonder to what degree instructors should be nurturing and caring or not. Carmen Luke discusses the problems feminist pedagogues have with power and authority. She argues that this "disavowal of authority, power, and desire coupled with feminism's first principle of
difference(s) has several potentially disabling consequences for the transformative politics claimed by feminist pedagogy discourse" (190). She maintains that "good-girl feminists . . . may have unwittingly replicated all the classical school-marm virtues of selfless dedication to nurturing and caring for our students" (193). She, like Jarratt, advocates a "confrontational' pedagogy [that] can dislodge students' monochromatic worldviews" (196). She claims that failure to challenge students' beliefs "is to abandon the political and moral responsibility and authority we have as teachers to work on student's consciousness through critique and analysis" (196). She identifies a nurture-authority dualism and claims that feminist pedagogy has tended to be located on the nurture side of the continuum (196).

Citing the dangers of "reinstat[ing] and legitimat[ing] the . . . disempowering image of the self-effacing, benevolent school-marm, or the midwife," Luke eventually argues against instructors placing themselves on the nurturing side of the dichotomy (197). Unlike Luke, Rubin substantiates the benefits of being caring and nurturing instructors and cites Belenky, who claims that "midwife teachers assist students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge explicit and elaborating it" (61). She explains that midwife teachers care about students’ feelings and eventually concludes that “process-based pedagogy encourages maternal behaviors from both male and female instructors and that 'process, conferencing, and maternal patterns help writing teachers to overcome innate gender biases and merge gender-based differences that may be present when they read their own students' texts’” (85).

To conclude, the early literature indicates that the central debates about feminist pedagogy concern: 1) creation of a safe space; and 2): the caring and nurturing role of feminist teachers. These debates demonstrate the complexities and intricacies of feminist pedagogy, revealing oppositions and compatibilities, all of which influence my perspectives as a feminist
These understandings are delineated in the next section and will be applied as the theoretical framework to examine the integration of different Web 2.0 technology in the writing process.

**Feminist Pedagogy—A Space of Tension, Safety, and Collaboration**

A review of history explains the key concepts as well as the major debates surrounding feminist pedagogy. Engaging many different voices and adding to them as a scholar in the composition field, I elaborate my understanding of feminist pedagogy below, weaving it with Web 2.0 in this dissertation.

Facing the major controversies about feminist pedagogy, I focus my discussion on the possibility of creating a safe space and the role of an instructor in such a space. Holley and Steiner discuss the challenges of creating a safe space and cite Boostrom to define a safe space as “a classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (50). A safe space, then, does not suggest a conflict-free space. In fact, such a safe space respects differences and empowers individuals, especially those individuals who have been marginalized and silenced, to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. I do not view a safe learning space as a calm place where everyone hides their identities and politely agrees for fear of hurting others. To me, this is not the classroom environment that feminist pedagogy aims to foster. Rather, feminist pedagogy advocates a productive learning environment under which oppression can be identified and discussed, and students’ minds can be further liberated. An ideal feminist classroom should invite students’ personal experiences and welcome differences so that classrooms are authentic, benefiting students both inside and outside of non-academic settings. Kishimoto and Mwangi argue that “a learning process that is devoid of lived experience of marginalized groups, fails to
confront the assumptions of dominant groups, and discourages critical analysis of the course content and materials, creates a false sense of safety” (97-98). In other words, a classroom that fails to engage students with genuine conversations prohibits students from real learning because what they are exposed to in the classrooms is fake or man-made. Though such an environment may make students feel safe, such safety is superficial because of students’ insecure feelings buried in their hearts. Such insecurity is caused by the fear of offending others or walking out of their own safe boxes; therefore, agreement becomes the easiest choice. Hawisher and Sullivan argue that “discussion…does not thrive when agreement comes too easily from other quarters” (184). Learning does not take place in such spaces because assumptions are not challenged and questioned, and students are still confined in their own comfort zones, refraining from stepping out of the box.

Real learning occurs when doubt is cleared up and assumptions and stereotypes are challenged. The effective way to challenge assumptions and stereotypes is to communicate truthfully. Such truthful communication may ignite conflicts, but such conflicts, if handled based on feminist values, should yield positive learning results. Here, feminist values refer to the concepts of disrupting the dichotomies and hierarchical orders to promote the possibility that all participants have the chance to express their views and connect their positions with others’ perspectives to understand the world from a more complex point of view. Kishimoto and Mwangi comment on the drawbacks of calm learning:

Learning occurs at a place of “calm” is to miss the ways in which contradictions, ambiguities, anger, pain, and struggles can be sources of energy to facilitate critical consciousness necessary for individual and social change. The need for
critical consciousness and social change forms the bedrock of feminist scholarship, teaching, and activism. (98)

When feminist values are observed, the privileged are decentered, and the marginalized are given more chances to speak, making it possible for the dominant groups to hear voices from subordinate groups and allow real communication to happen. Through debating, students become more aware of the origins and limitedness of their positions, thus accomplishing the goal of feminist pedagogy to “question the epistemology of dualism. Those in the ‘center’ are but one voice in a large and varied discourse” (Kishimoto and Mwangi 42). Only by challenging practices of privilege and domination can we transform classrooms and forge alliances across difference such that collectively women can challenge forms of domination outside the classroom (Manicom 381); therefore, a classroom with debates inspires and encourages students to communicate and collaborate. Holley and Steiner believe that “a classroom in which safe means no conflict and that no one is ever feeling challenged or uncomfortable is likely to be a classroom in which little learning and growth are occurring” (52). To me, such debating, questioning, and arguing concerning controversial issues as well as different opinions generated by these controversial issues should be encouraged in classrooms where feminist pedagogy is practiced. On the surface, arguments and debates disrupt the safety in the classroom, but only through arguments and debates can differences be invited, embraced, and accepted. Once differences are embraced and accepted, safety is achieved in the classroom due to the tolerance and acceptance induced by arguments and debates.

Blair clearly states that although students feel uncomfortable in confronting differences and their varying attitudes, many “do recognize the benefits of such conflict on their growth as individuals” (“Literacy, Dialogue, and Difference” 326). She acknowledges the risks involved in
such a classroom, claiming that “if we advocate the more decentered, democratic environments that interactive classrooms have the potential to foster, then we have to recognize that there are risks about what will or won’t be said in the classroom culture.” (325). The active interaction in the classroom, though sometimes risky, nourishes discussions and dialogue, which cultivates tolerance and acceptance among participants. Such tolerance and acceptance enable and motivate students to form communities, thus interacting and collaborating with each other to foster safety in classrooms. Therefore, a safe classroom, as a desirable learning environment built on understanding and tolerance, should be an objective for feminist pedagogy to attain. Teachers who use feminist pedagogy intend to build a collaborative learning environment where students’ ideas are valued as much as those of teachers and counted as contributions to knowledge. Web 2.0 technology, with its objective to create knowledge collaboratively, has potentially provided feminist educators in the composition field new tools to innovate teaching methodology.

Having presented my understanding of the safe space that feminist pedagogy promotes, I now shift my attention to the role of an instructor in a classroom where feminist pedagogy is practiced. Many doubt the possibility of disempowering the instructor and treating him/her as an equal participant in the classroom. Instructors, usually regarded as the most powerful in classrooms, have the authority to empower or disempower students. I believe that teachers enjoy more power in the classroom, and denying such power does not positively influence students’ learning. According to bell hooks, “we must acknowledge that our role as teacher is a position of power over others. We can use that power in ways that diminish or in ways that enrich and it is this choice that should distinguish feminist pedagogy from ways of teaching that reinforce domination” (Talking Back 52). In other words, hooks does not regard teachers as having equal power with the students; rather she views instructors as more powerful and as those who have the
power to choose how to influence their students. Like hooks, Manicom also favors teachers’ authority in the class, declaring that “teacher authority should be exercised, not abolished (381). Such assertion of instructors’ rights contradicts feminist pedagogy that aims to disrupt social hierarchies in classrooms. Treating instructors as authorities seems to build hierarchies, which dismisses the desire to destruct a patriarchal learning space and decenter those dominant social groups.

It would be ideal if a utopian space where everyone enjoyed equal rights could be achieved; absolute equality, however, does not exist and, in reality, it is practically quite difficult, almost impossible, to measure how much power or authority an individual enjoys in the classroom. First of all, the power to grade does grant the instructors more power, and even if feminist pedagogy is practiced in the classroom, it is the instructor’s choice to choose what teaching methodology he or she is going to use. Meanwhile, the instructor who practices feminist pedagogy also has the obligation to ensure a friendly and productive learning space for students, and such an obligation suggests the power to coordinate and adjust; therefore, denying the instructor’s power is neither practical nor reasonable. Acknowledging the instructors’ power, nevertheless, does not suggest the reconstruction of a patriarchal order. Under the patriarchal order, instructors enjoy absolute power and students’ values and opinions are not appreciated. In the feminist classroom, though instructors may enjoy more power, they encourage students’ voices, understand who are the marginalized and silenced, and attempt to build a fair and productive learning environment. Meanwhile, instructors are also aware of their own limitations, and do not regard themselves as the ones who are always right. Therefore, in a classroom where feminist pedagogy is practiced, a teacher’s right is respected but also contested, which lays the ground for conversations and dialogues. Laska, when interpreting Jarratt, puts it very well,
saying that:

We, as teachers, can demand the respect and authority we need to be taken seriously as professionals. However, we can do this without harming our students. In fact, in forcing them to expand their views, we empower them. They learn how to consider the opposition when developing an argument. In taking on a confrontational teaching style, we are both able to assert our own authority in the classroom and ensure that our students leave our courses with skills that will empower them.

Lastly, instructors can also empower students by inviting them to participate in the grading process, such as building the grading criteria together, peer reviewing each other’s work and assessing peer review.

Peer reviewing, rewriting, generating grading criteria, prewriting, and drafting are the different stages of the writing process, a process that has been regarded as collaborative, reflective, and social. As discussed in Chapter One, the collaborative, reflective, and social characteristics of the writing process correlates with the democratic, collaborative, and social aspects of the feminist pedagogy, building a solid ground for my study. Apart from utilizing feminist pedagogy in a writing-process oriented classroom, I integrate Web 2.0 technology and investigate the extent that Web 2.0 technology facilitates both the writing process and feminist pedagogy.

Weaving Feminist Pedagogy with Web 2.0

As mentioned in Chapter One, digital literacy is a trend that progressive educators must recognize and embrace. Schroeder and Boe observe “Computers can alleviate some anxiety about writing, thus making students more confident writers. Furthermore, computers can make
them more knowledgeable about the writing process, more able to use prewriting and revision strategies (29). They suggest that computers not only acquaint students with the writing process, but also release stress caused by academic writing, which helps to explain the increasing number of computer labs used for the teaching of writing. This trend poses new challenges for composition instructors. Hawisher et al. have clearly expressed such a concern: “for those who had access to computers and who actually had them stationed in their classrooms, there was a deep pedagogical challenge: how best to use the new machines in the service of teachers' and students' goals for teaching and learning?”(49) In the late 1990s, when the Internet first gained its popularity in education, Hawisher and Sullivan claim that “activity on the network” has claimed “the attention of feminist theorists, who have much to contribute to an understanding of the online environment as a new social and political location” (173). Hawisher at al. also find that “many computers and composition specialists are beginning to recognize just how dramatically the values of democratic education will be played out during the next decade--especially within these new and still malleable electronic contexts” (6). As a renowned scholar in the composition field, Hawisher foresees the urgency of a pedagogical change and the need for “democratic education.”

In composition classrooms, there has been “continued marginalization of individuals due to race, gender, age, sexual preference, or handicap; the silencing, intentional or unintentional, of certain segments of our population” (Hawisher 203). Such marginalization or alienation of certain groups makes feminist pedagogy an effective pedagogical practice due to its potential to empower the marginalized so that they can possibly gain voice, equality, and social justice. In fact, Barker and Kemp confirm the existence of marginalization in classrooms, arguing that “many students come from areas outside the traditional student sector--areas that are, in many
cases, politically unenfranchised and economically deprived--our pedagogy should be open, inclusive, nonhierachical, consensus based, and process oriented” (5). This open, inclusive, nonhierarchial, and process-oriented pedagogy corresponds to the major features of feminist pedagogy. Selfe summarizes that:

values of feminist theory can help us construct a positive and liberating vision of computer use in reading-and writing-intensive classrooms: one in which we can use technology to invite increasing numbers of people into active and more egalitarian discussions of making and interpreting meaning—especially those individuals who have until this point played only a marginal role in such discussions. (“Technology in the English Classroom” 134)

Selfe ties feminist theory with technology, asserting the possibility of using technology to empower the marginalized groups to promote egalitarian rather than essentialist discussions. Web 2.0, which aims to democratize communication and invite equal participation, can be a useful tool that instructors can use to achieve democratic education potentially in the composition classrooms.

Solomon and Schrum claim that “educators are agents of change” (22). In this digital age when there is a call for democratic education, educators can use Web 2.0 tools to achieve a classroom where democracy is promoted. David Jakes says, "New tools such as blogs, wikis, and podcasts allow everyone, including students, to contribute to a global conversation. They enable voice” (qtd. in Solomon and Schrum 43). This power to enable voices is a power that educators can utilize to further democracy. Mary Flores suggests that computer technologies might also be used in classrooms to facilitate an "interactive, diverse, and collaborative writing community in which each and every student has a voice and can engage in dialogue with each and every other
member of that community” (109). Since Web 2.0 aims to promote collaboration and equal participation, its application in the composition classroom potentially fosters a democratic environment where differences are encouraged, embraced, and discussed. Meanwhile, Tate, Ripper, and Schick find that “process practitioners claimed that their emphasis on craft, voice, and technique could lead to something we had rarely thought to ask or hope for--lively, engaging, dynamic, strongly voiced student essays” (5). For classrooms which practice the writing process theory, students engage in dialogues during different stages of the writing process; thus it is imperative to apply feminist pedagogy to scrutinize the use of Web 2.0 technology during the process.

Some Web 2.0 technologies enable students to write, peer review, edit, and revise their work and others’ work easily. For example, blogs allow students to write narratives and arguments, voicing their own opinions while linking to and commenting on each other’s work, as such they can be useful tools from prewriting to writing and revising stage; wikis provides a public space for different users to contribute to the same document, aiming to give participants equal rights to write, delete, and revise. Facebook is a popular Web 2.0 technology among college students, connects “friends” in various communities, enable instructors to create groups for students where academic and personal lives are blurred, helping students to experience pleasure while writing. Likely, Google Docs and Google Groups connect users, allowing them to share and edit documents synchronously or asynchronously. Though many question the possibility of absolute equal communication between class participants, these Web 2.0 technologies empower participants to share, peer review, and revise documents with much psychological ease, potentially decentering the privileged or the authorities in the classrooms so
that democracy is not just a distant dream but can be achieved through constant negotiations of tensions.

In the following chapters, I investigate the incorporation of Youtube, Google Docs, and blogs in the process of writing by applying feminist pedagogy to evaluate the success of such integration. Hawisher and Sullivan note “In composition studies, e-spaces brought with them a new enthusiasm for teaching and working with computers. For the first time, writing instructors could use a social technology that provided a forum for previously unheard voices, in effect an egalitarian space” (173). Though believed to be able to magnify some voices, technology has its limitations and the networks it builds are “neither egalitarian utopias nor devoid of power and influence” (173). The recognition of the possibilities and constraints of technology encourages further studies. Torrens and Riley argue, “At essence, our feminist pedagogies coherent around an agenda that reflects common concerns of other feminist academics: a desire to empower, struggle against oppressions, create and engage a community of learners and activists, and to expand our students' awareness, learning capacities, and command of course materials” (211). In order to promote interactive, democratic, and productive learning, this dissertation employs feminist pedagogy to explore the incorporation of Web 2.0 technology in a writing classroom that uses the writing process. The following three chapters focus on how different Web 2.0 technologies can be integrated into the various stages of the writing process in ways that potentially empower students.
CHAPTER THREE: YOUTUBE: A POWERFUL TOOL TO FACILITATE PREWRITING

Inherent in the notion of invention is the concept of a process that engages a rhetor (speaker or writer) in examining alternatives: different ways to begin writing and to explore writing situations; diverse ideas, arguments, appeals, and subject matters for reaching new understandings and/or for developing and supporting judgments, theses and insights; and different ways of framing and verifying these judgments.”

—Janice M. Lauer, *Invention in Rhetoric and Composition*

“I am stuck and do not know how to get started.” When I worked at the Writing Center of Bowling Green State University, I often heard students complaining that they had few ideas about what to write. After talking with these student writers, I found out that many of them struggled with having sufficient ideas to begin writing their papers. Daiute, in *Writing and Computers*, has echoed my finding, stating that “student writers sometimes have trouble getting started because they don’t know what to say” (1). Two possibilities can explain why students do not always know what to write: (1) they do not have ideas; (2) they do not know that they have ideas. No matter what the real circumstance is, instructors need to recognize students’ needs by inventing different strategies to help them generate and discover ideas in the prewriting stage so that they feel prepared to write.

As has been discussed in Chapter One, the writing process has been divided into three stages: prewriting, writing, and postwriting. Though there can be as many writing processes as there are writers and this three-stage writing process might be simplified and linear, investigating each student’s individualized and recursive writing process seems too challenging. Meanwhile, too much focus on the uniqueness of each writing process may not yield pedagogical findings that benefit many; hence, addressing students’ needs at different stages during this linear and
generic/general writing process should alleviate pressure, promote positive learning, and carry significant pedagogical implications.

Instructors’ intervention during the prewriting stage thus carries great importance. Yet, such intervention has to be a situated one: it is situated within students’ own experiences and their potential interests/topics of writing, with the tension between instructors offering adequate help but knowing when to stop to grant students’ authorship; it is, in all of its literal and practical senses, situated in a classroom where usually more than one student is in need of help. With these tensions comes the question: how, in practice, can instructors intervene in the writing process without doing too much, and how can they do it for all while allowing students to have different inspirations at the same time?

This chapter explores the positive roles Web 2.0 technology plays in a composition classroom that practices feminist pedagogy in the prewriting stage. I have chosen YouTube to exemplify the potential of Web 2.0 technology in the prewriting stage because YouTube is not as frequently discussed in the composition field as wikis, blogs, and podcasts; it has, however, great potential to motivate students to generate ideas in the prewriting stage. Through sharing YouTube videos with students, instructors who practice feminist pedagogy potentially empower students to participate in social dialogues that engage diverse voices. Hereafter, I use feminist pedagogy to analyze how YouTube conceivably contributes to interactive, democratic, and collaborative learning in the prewriting stage. Before substantiating my major arguments, I contend that prewriting is a social act.

Prewriting as a Social Act

Donald Murray defines prewriting as “everything that takes place before the first draft…it includes the awareness of [the writer’s] world from which his subject is
born…prewriting may include research and daydreaming, note-taking and outlining, title-writing and lead-writing” (4). Similarly, Daiute considers “prewriting as a stage before the actual writing takes place when writers gather information, define the purpose and scope of the piece, and plan how to present it” (73). Connors and Glenn further condense the definition of prewriting, announcing that prewriting refers to invention by prewriting theorists (124). Prewriting, then, may suggest different activities and moments to different scholars and educators; for this chapter, prewriting refers to the invention stage, a stage where students brainstorm and generate ideas before the actual drafting of the paper takes place.

Though the significance of prewriting has been addressed and reinforced by many in the field, it is common for writers to skip the prewriting activities and start writing right away and then complain about not knowing where to start. I often see students procrastinate until the night before it is due to write an unfinished paper, and show much reluctance to revise papers based on the instructor’s feedback. These students unrealistically intend to produce an ideal essay in one or two hours and not have to fix anything later. For many of them, they care much about the final products they submit, which is not wrong, but their resistance to prewriting work can jeopardize their chance of writing an effective essay. Such neglect of prewriting can result from neglect of the writing process or from students’ anxieties and haste to finish the writing assignment as soon as possible. Omission of the prewriting stage, however, impedes students from articulating their arguments in written words.

Lauer specifically addresses the significance of teaching invention in college writing courses because it helps students generate ideas and select useful materials (Invention in Contemporary Rhetoric 3). Likewise, Connors and Glenn specify that invention, as “a systematic search for arguments,” helps writers identify audiences, gather thoughts, collect
Zhao 56

materials, and clarify arguments (160). They contend that “without invention, there can be no effective communication, and invention is the process that supplies writers and speakers with their content material” (160). This potential to supply writers and speakers, ideally, should resolve students’ concern about not knowing where to start.

Apart from recognizing the pedagogical significance of prewriting, addressing its social nature is equally important. Plato believes that “truth is sought through purely individual efforts,” stressing the recovery and expression of an individual’s inner (and perhaps latent) voice or innate cognitive structures. In other words, the Platonic view of invention “encourages self expression and reassures writers of their inner resources” (LeFevre 1). LeFevre finds that Western thought has emphasized the latter view of rhetoric invention founded on a belief that truth is accessible by purely individual efforts. More particularly, composition theory and pedagogy in nineteenth and twentieth century America has been founded on a Platonic view of invention, one which assumes that the individual possesses innate knowledge or mental structures that are the chief source of invention. Invention, according to this view, occurs largely through introspective self-examination. (11)

Such an understanding restricts invention to a process that occurs within “an introspective, isolated writer” (LeFevre 13-14).

An isolated and introspective dialogue within the writer definitely helps him/her select information, digest information, and raise questions, but such functions should not lead people to believe that prewriting itself is asocial and anti-collaborative. As LeFevre says, invention can be regarded as “an unfolding, a manifestation of an individual’s ideas, feelings, voice, personality, and patterns of thought,” which however, are developed socially over time rather than formed
overnight in isolation (1). In order to communicate feelings and thoughts, we rely on languages, which may be arbitrarily created but have unquestionably been socially constructed and interpreted. When humans comprehend these languages, they relate them to their own understandings shaped by their education, social experiences, and social interactions. Similarly, when they produce meanings through verbal or non-verbal means, they draw on their own cultural values and the given social contexts while addressing the social needs of audiences. Berger and Luckmann argue that all knowledge, including the most basic, taken-for-granted common sense knowledge of everyday reality, is derived from and maintained by social interaction (143). If knowledge itself is negotiated by human interactions, knowledge building and sharing is a social process rather than an individual pursuit.

Prewriting, with its mission to share and build knowledge collaboratively, is a social process. LeFevre argues that

rhetorical invention is better understood as a social act, in which an individual who is at the same time a social being interacts in a distinctive way with society and culture to create something. Viewed in this way, rhetorical invention becomes an act that may involve speaking and writing, and that at times involves more than one person; it is furthermore an act initiated by writers and completed by readers.

(1)

However, students who rush to finish their papers at the last minute fail to see the social characteristics of prewriting. They tend to either omit the prewriting stage or finish this stage individually, and eventually suffer from not having sufficient ideas to write.

Treating prewriting as a social act, thus, informs the teaching of writing. With this dissertation’s focus on Web 2.0 technology, the recognition of prewriting as a social act raises
Zhao 58

significant pedagogical questions to composition teachers: How to guide students to benefit from this social process with the help of Web 2.0 technology? How can Web 2.0 technology be incorporated to foster a positive learning environment advocated by feminist pedagogy to benefit students during this prewriting stage? How can social interactions in the classroom be furthered so that instructors can promote students’ agency to create knowledge?

Feminist Pedagogy as a Social Process

As indicated in earlier chapters, simply incorporating Web 2.0 technology in writing instruction does not promise decentered, democratic learning. The way that the class is planned, activities executed, and atmosphere created plays a vital role in achieving the learning outcomes. In other words, the pedagogical approach deeply influences the learning outcomes that Web 2.0 technology achieves. In Chapter Two, I have introduced the major themes and origins of feminist pedagogy. As the theoretical framework I use to investigate Web 2.0 technology’s potential to promote democratic learning in the networked environment, feminist pedagogy is a social process that I plan to link to prewriting.

Feminist pedagogy stems from feminism which is “a self-consciousness about women’s identity both as inherited cultural fact and as a process of social construction” (Heilbrun 18). The social constructing process of feminism is confirmed by Hickey, a socio-constructivist theorist, who recognizes “social processes as an essential element of learning and advocates that knowledge cannot be simply transmitted but constructed from our own experience” (qtd. in Vega-Gorgojo 835). Therefore, an ideal feminist classroom should invite students’ personal experiences and welcome differences so that classrooms are real to benefit students.

Maher claims that feminist pedagogy “draws both male and female students into a process of learning that gives both them and the subjects of their actual lives, lived as men and
women in both the public and private spheres. In this way, students are involved in the classroom as whole people (“Inquiry, teaching, and feminist pedagogy” 192). Maher also observes that one goal of feminist pedagogy is to “help students and ourselves listen to and come to terms with our differences and the multiple capacities and social responsibilities within ourselves” (192). Feminist pedagogy, therefore, encourages a learning process that invites differences in experiences and voices.

As a pedagogy that aims to decenter the instructor, promote collaborative learning, and encourage voices from different groups, feminist pedagogy, as a social process, if practiced appropriately, conceivably promotes positive learning. The following sections concentrate on the implementation of YouTube in the prewriting stage and investigates the close connection of prewriting, YouTube, and feminist pedagogy.

Incorporating YouTube during the Prewriting Stage

Officially launched in June 2005, YouTube was a service aiming to “remove the technical barriers to the widespread sharing of video online” (Burgess & Green 1). Burgess and Green accentuate the user-friendliness of the site, claiming that the YouTube site “provided a very simple, integrated interface within which users could upload, publish, and view streaming videos without high levels of technical knowledge, and within the technological constraints of standard browser software and relatively modest bandwidth” (1). Ever since its establishment, YouTube has gained increasingly popularity among its users. The Nielsen Company, a global information and media company, listed YouTube among the top ten most visited websites globally (“Nielsen News Release”). Its global popularity is epitomized by its widespread use in the American household. Yen reports that, in 2008, about 30% of the Internet Users in the United
States, seventy-nine million people, watched more than three billion You-Tube videos in January alone.

As a site for entertainment, YouTube has attracted viewers largely due to its easy access as well as its quick uploading and sharing. Yet, it is this easy access and early popularity that make YouTube a site of heterogeneous content, various narrative strategies, and diverse styles. Not intending to limit its service to entertainment only, YouTube casts its eye on a market in academia. Young observes that “YouTube itself wants to be a venue for academe” and “web video opens a new form of public intellectualism to scholars looking to participate in an increasingly visual culture” (“Thanks to YouTube”). Similarly, Burgess and Green regard YouTube as “a site of participatory culture” (7). In recent years, scholars have explored its potential in academia and have examined YouTube’s characteristic to promote participation. In 2008, Jeffery Young stated that “Professors are the latest YouTube stars. The popularity of their appearances on YouTube and other video-sharing sites may end up opening up the classroom and making teaching—which once took place behind closed doors—a more public art” (“Thanks to YouTube”). According to Salaway and Caruso “Most first-year college students now arrive on campus with their own personal computer, digital music player, cell phone, and other digital devices.” Facing a student population that has grown up in this digital environment, instructors need to implement innovative teaching that incorporates technology to cater to what students know and need. This chapter is an endeavor to use YouTube to demonstrate how Web 2.0 potentially encourages collaborative, democratic, and interactive learning in the prewriting stage in composition classes through a feminist lens.
To present a detailed and substantial analysis of how YouTube facilitates the prewriting stage from a feminist viewpoint, this chapter integrates a short segment of a first-year academic writing assignment and a YouTube video to clarify my arguments.

Course Summary:

This is ENG 1110, a first-year writing course that immerses students in academic writing. To enhance students’ reading, analytical, and writing skills, the instructor assigns scholarly articles to help students critically interpret information and write well-argued academic essays that make logical connections among different sources. Believing that writing is a social process, the instructor encourages collaborative learning through arranging group work. Students should have already understood the major elements of academic essays, but are new to research-based academic papers where they need to synthesize ideas from different authors.

Context of Teaching:

The instructor has already distributed the essay assignment sheets to students and briefly introduced the assignment to students in class the last time they met. Regarding prewriting as a valuable means to help students generate ideas, the instructor intends to introduce some prewriting activities in class. As a feminist teacher, the instructor acknowledges students’ learning styles and aims to promote collaborative learning to help students receive and provide useful feedback in the prewriting stage.

When students are given this writing assignment, they realize that their knowledge about the subject is limited. Possibly, even after they finish reading a few articles in the textbook, they remain overwhelmed because of their uncertainty about the topic, the focus, and the thesis of the paper; therefore, students can be stuck again, hoping to get help to solicit ideas for their papers.

Assignment Summary:
This assignment is a 4-5 page essay that requires students to read all the articles on sleep in Chapter 8 in *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* by Behrens and Rosen. After reading these articles, students do additional research to gain much knowledge on the subject of sleep. Subsequently, they will write an argumentative paper based on the reading materials to support their own central idea. The essay should be truly argumentative and fully synthesized, not a bombardment of quotes and paraphrases from their sources.

Summary of the YouTube Clip:

The news announcer reports that many American teenagers are sleep deprived, and such sleep deprivation affects their grades and safety; however, many parents are not aware of this problem and teenagers do not show necessary attention to it either. In order to call attention to the problem, this video presents sleep deprivation from various aspects, combining different voices to project a clear picture of the social factors involved in this problem.

YouTube Clip: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olSxyT1JOJ8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olSxyT1JOJ8)

Figure 1: This is a YouTube video clip that was captured from screen.
Specific Content of the YouTube Clip:

The news announcer reports that many American teens are sleep deprived. These teens go to bed late and their grades and safety are at risk as they are nodding off at school and behind the wheel. The poll shows us that many parents do not realize the problem and it may not be the kids’ fault. The interviewer interviewed a few teenagers at a high school around 7:15am. At 7:15 am, kids at this high school are arriving with books, lunch and cooler and energy drinks and coffee. Some of the kids admit that they doze off in class, and some propose to postpone the school schedule. Research shows that teens function best between 11am and 10pm and a child’s biological clock, specifically a teenager’s, pushes them to sleep a little bit later at night. Actually their biological clocks were telling them to do that, not because they wanted to. Meanwhile, the National Sleep Foundation poll shows why parents are being urged to make sleep a priority for their kids because more than half of all teenagers say they drive when they are drowsy, 30% say they fall asleep once a week during school, and more than 22% fall asleep doing homework. These teenagers are still growing and their brains are still maturing so we really need to see them get a lot of sleep. Dr. Breus has also said their parents should make sure their teens had a relaxing sleep environment with no TV watching.

This YouTube video, shown in class, potentially prepares students for actual drafting by stimulating the minds, fostering conversations, and motivating reading.

*Mind Stimulus*

From ancient cave art to four-dimension cinema, human beings have been living in a visual world. These visuals, rich in colors and shapes, show human’s rich creativity and intelligence. Visuals have been regarded as a major means to record history, express emotions, and formulate arguments. Due to the visuals’ power to illustrate arguments effectively, both
Zhao 64

children’s readers and college composition textbooks have observed the traditional practice of supplementing texts with visuals. The introduction of YouTube videos to freshman composition classes is a continuation of this practice; however, the sound, the motion, and the interactivity that are features of YouTube videos appeal to the audiences even more effectively than still images, potentially stimulating the audiences’ minds more vigorously.

Let us take the previously identified YouTube video for example: When college students see the professional news announcer, familiar life styles, busy streets, moving cars, and a crowded campus in the video, they can easily relate their own busy, exhausting, active lives to what they see. The walking students, the knowledgeable researchers, the National Sleep Foundation teen study, the news announcer in front of a big TV screen, the hospital, American sleep diagnoses, and concrete statistics that carry social meanings, once represented on the video, demystify the assignment in the students’ minds. Students perceive sleep deprivation from complex social, biological, and economic dynamics involved in it, thus feeling compelled to listen, read, and analyze the information presented through the YouTube video.

In many ways, this viewing experience stimulates students to uncover what they have already known, enlighten them about what they do not know, and inspire them to know more about the subject. Brasseur highlights the impact of vision on the process of students’ writing:

The idea that one’s sense of vision is not merely a receptive sensory skill but, rather, an active focus of one’s intelligence is a critical concept for writers who wish to use visual thinking in their writing process. This idea crystallizes within writer’s minds the critical importance of turning to visual stimuli when attempting to work through ideas in the writing process. (130)
While students watch the YouTube video, their minds are actively occupied with the movements, conversations, possible associations with the pictures, and even the essay assignment sheet. One of these pictures may attract their attention and be transformed into a most interesting point on which they intend to concentrate. Visual stimulus, thus, may help students to express ideas and shape arguments. In other words, the visuals in the videos catch students’ attention, arouse their curiosity, and trigger their imagination.

Apart from visually stimulating viewers’ minds, YouTube potentially influences students by its music or sound, which can inspire, dismay, and/or please students and subsequently impact their cognitive learning development. As a mixed product of sights and sounds, YouTube impacts audiences visually, audibly, and psychologically. The pedagogical implication of music to produce an opportune learning environment in the classrooms is noted by Nash:

> Music provides energy to classrooms and seminars. Music can also lighten up and energize faculty and committee meetings. Music can add just the right mood and create an atmosphere in which discussion thrives. The use of just the right song at just the right time brings smiles (and the occasional groan) to the faces of students and adult participants alike. (45)

Many college students, growing up in a visual and audio culture, show sensitivity to images and sound and are able to multitask; therefore, the physical stimulus from sounds and images impact them cognitively.

According to Ron Fortune, students take advantage of the computer’s capability to facilitate a move between intuitive cognition and intellectual cognition (Brasseur 133). The sounds and images vigorously reflect diverse opinions regarding sleep deprivation among the youth and create a “real” living space for these college students. As discussed earlier, the
familiar images, relevant conversations, and engaging music influence the learning process of these students intuitively. The pseudo-real learning environment both triggers fresh memory and engages them in dialogues with the YouTube video. Students can also choose to view other viewers’ comments on the video and even check out related video clips recommended by YouTube. In this way, they are not only interacting with their peers and the instructor but also with the computer, which forms a productive learning cycle.

The sights and sounds integrated in the YouTube video, therefore, impact students intuitively and intellectually. In a way, YouTube creates a computer-mediated space to engage students in the writing process by stimulating students’ minds and encouraging articulation, dialogue, collaboration, production, and interaction.

*Conversation Starter*

When students watch this video in class, they hear voices from different groups of people, including scientists, researchers, school authorities, students, and teachers. These different opinions on the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to sleep deprivation provide students with a brief background and possible discussion threads. Coming from different backgrounds, they share different interests and beliefs; therefore, their minds are activated by a vast variety of topics. The differing opinions and various subareas not only inform them of the important issues regarding sleep deprivation but also revive memories relating to their experiences and knowledge. In addition, conversations taking place in the video can stir their memories, helping them identify what they know. The viewing of the video may awaken students’ minds, and they eventually understand that they are not completely ignorant about the subject. The familiarity, even when vague, connects students to the writing assignments, inspiring them and helping them synthesize knowledge in new ways.
The instructor, as the person who chooses and shows this video to students, can encourage dialogue among them. When they view it, they dialogue with themselves and the video. While they work in groups to brainstorm, they can share the internal dialogues they have with themselves and with the video. By communicating these dialogues to peers, they become more aware of the knowledge that they have regarding the topic of sleep. During the process of conversing with peers, students will be delighted to see how their peers’ knowledge adds to what they know, and the interaction among them helps them generate ideas, brainstorm topics, and build their confidence as writers.

LeFevre argues that “people become partners in the process of creating ideas” (12). The partnership among these students strengthens their ties, encouraging them to see each other as collaborators, rather than competitors. Bruffee states that, “to study and teach English is to study and teach the social origin, nature, reference, and function of symbolic structures” (432). So writing is a social construction activity. Introducing prewriting activities in the writing class is a technique to expose students to collaborative learning, which allows students to explore the social facets through writing. Trimbur claims “collaborative learning is a process of re-acculturation, of learning to participate in the ongoing discussions of new communities” (465). In this collaboration process, students work in groups, participate in the ongoing discussions, and realize that they are not learning in a vacuum, but in the real world.

YouTube promotes the social aspects of prewriting mainly by engaging participants in collaborative dialogues. When student writers exchange thoughts with peers, they will unavoidably address social issues, and these social factors may induce both similar and conflicting understandings. It is easy enough for people to recognize how similar opinions make
agreements easier, thus positively impacting the friendly collaborative classroom environment. Paradoxically, conflicting perspectives contribute to positive learning too.

In Chapter Two, when “confrontational pedagogy” was discussed, the merits of differing perspectives were acknowledged. Nash has recognized that “interaction among students can lead to opportunities for disagreement between partners in a discussion or other collaborative activities” (10). These disagreements, if viewed in a healthy and positive way, improve students’ writing as effectively as agreements. Immersed in different thoughts prompted by the video, students are challenged to step out of their comfort zone to understand and eventually appreciate the existence of differences. Take as an example the possible reactions that students may have towards the proposed solutions to handle sleep deprivation. In the video, a student proposes to push back the start of classes to ensure sufficient sleep among young students; however, this solution can sound ridiculous to people who blame students for being lazy and irresponsible. They may blame schools for encouraging children to stay up late wasting time on video games or endless phone calls. In the YouTube video, research, however, suggests that children are biologically prone to go to sleep late at night and wake up late in the morning. In addition, this solution causes new concerns for working parents, who need to observe their work schedules and prefer to have their children at school earlier.

When the complexities concerning this solution are unfolded to participants in the writing class, they take positions based on their own experiences with school schedules, cultural values, parents’ schedules, and so on. When these different positions are brought together in group discussions, participants have the opportunity to hear the reasons behind those positions, which helps them understand the reasonable and sensible side of each position. If some participants question the plausibility of certain positions, they can raise questions which urge the whole
Zhao 69

group to rethink their positions and employ suitable rhetorical strategies to persuade others. This process of articulating positions, questioning differences, and acknowledging oppositions creates a space for dialogues, strengthens the tie among these students, and sharpens their skills as critical thinkers and rhetors.

LeFevre particularly addresses the close connection between conversation and composition. In *Invention as a Social Act*, she argues that “the development of writing ability is made possible by a transformation from a socially interactive to an autonomous process, a movement ‘from conversation to composition’” (58). The conversations taking place after viewing the YouTube video enable the sharing of knowledge, experience, values, and attitudes among participants. This sharing helps students to collaborate and connect. LeFevre says, “Collaboration can also stimulate creative thinking” (740). Through internal and external dialogues inspired by the YouTube video, student writers gain better understanding of various parties and opinions involved, and they approach the writing assignment with a better-informed mind, which helps them feel better prepared to write.

Daiute notes that a writing classroom which does not encourage interaction among students and sharing of work leads to writings that either do not speak or speak with a dead voice (4). She concludes that the voice of writing “dies when writing has lost its relation to speaking” (4). In a writing classroom that integrates YouTube, students are exposed to different voices, having the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds and to present positions to different audiences, which, in turn, provides them with prompt oral feedback. If such interactions take place in written communication, students may have the opportunity to clarify their thoughts, but they may have to wait for peers’ responses. Such a lapse of time may let the opportune moment pass, which eventually results in the loss of ideas or inspiration; since such a
loss does not happen very frequently among conversation partners, the conversations prompted by the YouTube video are conducive to the students’ learning experience.

Equally important, YouTube itself is not a promise of engaging and productive collaborative dialogue. The way that YouTube is used in classrooms and how the class is organized play a significant role. If the instructor does not invite conversation after the video is shared or if the instructor dominates the conversation in the classroom, then reciprocal learning might not take place. Web 2.0 technology is featured with its potential to create democratic, collaborative learning; the key to maximizing such potential is de-centered learning where every participant’s voice is heard and valued. To fulfill this goal, the instructor should be aware of the importance of creating a non-threatening class atmosphere.

The integration of YouTube in the prewriting stage, by encouraging dialogues among participants in small groups, encourages heterogeneous learning. Though the instructor chooses what to teach and how to teach, the prewriting activity predominately centers on students, treating students as the source of knowledge, which promotes their agency to connect, collaborate, and create.

*Reading Motivator*

When students actively participate in dialogues with their peers, they most likely will share opinions, jot down notes, talk about what interests/surprises them in the video, and ask questions. As mentioned earlier, this reciprocal dialogue motivates students to brainstorm, question, and challenge, which encourages students to apply these techniques to their papers. The initial ideas these students gather from the conversation motivate them to learn more about the subject of sleep. They may be eager to know the structure of the brain, patterns of human
sleeping, reasons for sleep deprivation, consequences of sleep deprivation, and possible ways to solve sleep-related problems.

As a conversation starter, the YouTube clip does not answer many of these questions in detail. It may not even address some of the issues students would like to explore further. It, however, invites students to read extensively on the subject. College students are a busy group. Many of them take a few courses a semester while working part-time. They may feel reluctant to read the chapter assigned unless they see a direct association with what they write. The conversations in class help them identify their areas of interest, giving them a better idea of which articles of the chapter need careful reading.

Many have addressed the close association between reading and writing. Marrow argues that “the act of reading itself will not improve this student’s writing abilities unless connections between reading and writing are made explicit” (455). Once students understand the rationale of writing, they show readiness to read assigned articles and even do additional research to locate useful sources; therefore, watching the video encourages active and purposeful reading. Once they read additional sources, they become better-informed, preparing them to have good references and to write more effectively. “As they try to reconcile what they read with what they already think, students begin to explore their assumptions and frameworks of thoughts” (Bazerman 659). As Marrow claimed, “reading and writing are, quite simply, different, albeit complementary, ways of knowing the world. By reading, we enter into a social conversation that enables us to shape our own thoughts and give voice to our own readings of the world through writing” (460). Through the use of YouTube, a conversational model for the interplay of reading and writing has been formed.
As discussed above, the incorporation of the YouTube video, if used appropriately, can encourage reading. Through assisting students to interact with the screen and other class participants, YouTube potentially accomplishes the following tasks:

- helps students discover what they know and what they do not know;
- helps students brainstorm subjects or topics in which they are interested;
- engages students in productive discussions;
- helps students frame their research questions and thesis; and
- finishes the transition of ideas into words.

Once these tasks are accomplished, students are prepared for the next stage—writing. To enable students to use invention as a truly social act, instructors must become alert to opportunities for students to write to effect social change at any level, helping students to find what Richard Ohmann has called “a middle ground . . . between passing English 101 and saving mankind: the students’ uses of their literacy for social or personal ends in society” (146). As Scholes says, “writers must consume in order to produce and readers must produce in order to consume,” (90) confirming the close correlation between reading and writing. Such correlation can foster positive learning among students, explaining why YouTube is an effective tool to assist prewriting.

Weaving YouTube with Feminist Pedagogy

Earlier discussions about the effective use of YouTube to stimulate students’ minds, create conversations, and motivate reading are a situated discussion, a discussion that assumes the endorsement of feminist pedagogy in this first-year writing class. In other words, the presence of YouTube alone does not guarantee collaborative and democratic learning among
students; rather, it is the democratic environment that feminist pedagogy potentially fosters that cultivates YouTube’s democratic, collaborative potential.

Hooks suggests that “feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression, that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact” (Talking Back 22). In this type of writing class, the instructor encourages students to participate in collaborative learning through sharing and commenting on the video to brainstorm possible topics regarding sleeping. The video, composed of various voices from different groups, does not present a certain voice as the most dominant one. Rather, the YouTube video treats voices from different groups without bias, presenting them to the audience without being judgmental. Therefore, the careful choice of a YouTube enhances the chance of an interactive dialogue in the classroom, which indicates the significance of choosing a pedagogy that identifies oppression and bias, promotes freedom, equality, and respects differences. The essence of feminist pedagogy is about liberation and equality, thus being a viable pedagogy for instructors to apply. If certain voices and groups were oppressed in the video, students would react to the video with assumptions, therefore, leading to a discussion dominated by mainstream voices. However, when feminist pedagogy is practiced, students will be encouraged to identify and discuss oppression, which potentially liberates their minds and transforms them into critical readers, capable writers, and ethical citizens. These positive learning outcomes in turn make writing courses very rewarding experiences for students. Hence, the pedagogical approach that instructors choose impacts the learning outcomes that YouTube videos yield because pedagogies impact the choice
of class materials. The careful choice that the instructor makes in picking the video clip then is an important contributor to the productive classroom.

Apart from picking the right video clip, the instructor also assigns different articles written by scholars in different disciplines to expose students to varied information. Since assigning students to read different articles in the textbook is an effective pedagogical strategy to immerse students in opinions from different parties, the barriers among disciplines can be broken down because students have access to different information and experiences across them. Depriving them of such an access may hinder their learning. The exposure to the YouTube video then, provides them with a new means for accumulating information regarding the topic of the assignment. Bonk has noticed that “the current generation of online technologies affords an opportunity for the human species to see the different ways in which the world is connected” (223). YouTube, as an online technology, enables students to perceive and experience the world in a networked environment. The YouTube site, as a place to emancipate and “a birthplace for something new,” provides YouTubers “unrestricted communication, personal autonomy and participatory democracy” (Kellner & Kim 22, 21). YouTubers can cultivate agency and actively participate in a “space of interaction” for “actual issues in actual places” and “alternative views of the lived environment” (Ridell 162). This free and public space, through providing them the freedom to upload video clips and exchanging opinions, potentially provides them with opportunities for genuine dialogues.

This pedagogical significance of YouTube has been noted by Kellner and Kim who urge educators to apply YouTube with “critical consciousness and active engagement” (30). This critical consciousness and active engagement calls for pedagogical practices that promote YouTube’s potential for participatory, democratic, and collaborative learning to foster a safe
learning space for students to exchange dialogues. In the writing class presented earlier, the instructor who practices feminist pedagogy treats students as the center of the classroom by introducing a tool that makes them feel comfortable and gives them the chance to interact and explore in small groups. Nash says “when teachers do most of the talking and when interactions are between a few students and the teacher, those students not involved in the conversation have tacit permission to disengage” (19). In a big group discussion, if instructors give students the chance to air their views, some students may feel shy or unprepared to talk in front of the whole class. Then, as a group, these students are isolated and lose the chance to articulate their opinions to the whole class. Their opinions, therefore, cannot be heard by the others, and yet they also represent important voices because they come from different families, and their social experiences shape their opinions in significant ways to enhance class dialogues. Take the same YouTube video for example. Different students react to it differently, form different opinions, choose to read different articles, and focus on different areas relating to the topic of sleeping. With the exclusion of these voices, the classroom is less likely to be a productive, interactive space.

The negative consequences of excluding voices have been noticed by educators. Nash contends that “students who are not encouraged to communicate frequently will not, unsurprisingly perhaps, learn to communicate well. Because they are not engaged, they become bored. When students take part in paired or group discussions, they are involved and engaged in their own learning” (19). When student writers are bored, they lose their initiatives to participate. In small group discussion, however, they do not have the pressure of being forced to talk intelligently in front of all the classmates and the instructor. In this less stressful atmosphere, they share views with partners and receive feedback on their comments, which provides them a
venue to represent themselves. The talking and responding in small group discussions boost students’ confidence and prepare them to speak in public so that their voices are heard and responded.

Meanwhile, YouTube directs students to read articles and do research to finish the paper. Without this democratic classroom that the feminist instructor and students create, differences may not be highly valued. Then students may not be responsive to the images included in the video, may not be sensitive to the different opinions represented in the clip, may feel the tension to speak up, and may end up doing research that focuses on the dominant voice only. Should this happen, students will not step out of their boxes to respect differences and transform into critical readers and writers.

Based on the above analysis, YouTube, when used in an educational setting supported by feminist pedagogy, potentially breaks down any border of race, religion, class, and gender because it represents and invites a rich variety of voices, creating a community in which each participant in class feels safe to participate. According to Boostrom, a safe space describes “a classroom climate that allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors” (399). The goal of introducing feminist pedagogy is to create such a safe learning space. As Boostrom continues “safety in this sense does not refer to physical safety. Instead, classroom safe space refers to protection from psychological or emotional harm. It is concerned with the injuries that individuals suffer at the hands of society” (399). If students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and are aimed to be transformed into critical thinkers who challenge their own assumptions and explore their own biases, they are in a space where biases, discriminations, and oppression are all questioned. Such a space is definitely an opportune learning environment
where students feel safe.

If the purpose of prewriting is to exchange thoughts and brainstorm ideas for the actual writing, feminist pedagogy then fulfills such a goal by encouraging interactions in a YouTube-mediated environment. The endorsement of feminist pedagogy has made it possible for instructors to recognize students’ needs and implement innovative pedagogy in composition classes. It also encourages interactive discussions after students have seen the visuals and listened to the music. Feminist pedagogy then promotes the positive effects that YouTube has during the prewriting stage in college composition classes by stimulating students’ minds, preparing them for discussions, and empowering them to claim the knowledge that they own.

YouTube’s Pedagogical Implications and Limitations in Prewriting

YouTube, as a heterogeneous site that assimilates different voices, represents the interests of different groups. It allows people from different ethnic groups, cultural and political backgrounds to share their knowledge, attitudes, and opinions through dialogues. These dialogues, in turn, encourage students to articulate viewpoints, express opinions on opposing arguments, assess bias, evaluate strengths and weaknesses of each argument, and make their own judgments. The interactions facilitate prewriting because they help students understand the social contexts of the topics, identify their audiences, and solicit feedback on their outlooks. The writing classroom that practices feminist pedagogy and incorporates YouTube in prewriting fosters genuine dialogues among class participants by promoting a non-threatening atmosphere, created as a result of YouTube’s non-hierarchical organization to decenter the instructor and mainstream voices. In this safe space, conflicting opinions are discussed, personal experiences are shared, students’ knowledge is recognized, and differences are embraced, leading to positive
growth and learning. Through debating, students perceive the same issues from new angles, which add substance to their future writing.

Chapter Two argues that a feminist classroom invites personal experiences and welcomes differences. Instructors are not treated as the only source of knowledge. Rather, it is through students’ conversations and dialogues that they acquire knowledge and growth as writers. By applying feminist pedagogy, the instructor uses YouTube effectively to accomplish goals set for prewriting and to create a safe space that promotes democratic learning.

Though YouTube can potentially help instructors accomplish the goals discussed earlier, it has its pedagogical limitations. In order to show YouTube videos in class, the instructor needs to teach in a classroom that has at least a computer with an access to the Internet. The denial of such access will make video sharing in class difficult, thus impeding lively conversations from taking place. Without the on-site visual stimulus, YouTube loses its instant visual power on its audiences, resulting in students’ lack of interest in engaging in group discussions, thus diminishing YouTube’s potential to foster collaborative, interactive learning.

As a tool to invite collaboration and interaction, YouTube loses much appeal if collaboration and interaction do not occur among class participants. To counteract this disadvantage, instructors can ask students to watch videos before coming to class. Though students cannot experience the visual and sound stimulus in the classroom together, they can come to class with notes and questions. They can also read relevant articles beforehand so that they can use the extra time saved in class from not sharing the video for brainstorming and generating ideas with peers.

Meanwhile, as early discussions indicate, decentering the instructor is crucial to positive learning outcomes in class. One challenge to promote such positive learning outcomes is the
unpreparedness of the instructors. Some instructors are new to Web 2.0 technology and new media composition teaching; they may feel it difficult to teach prewriting with YouTube. Though the appropriate uses of web 2.0 tools have a place in the development of curriculum innovation, teachers should not be encouraged to experiment with these tools without knowing the pedagogical implications. A strategy can be to hold workshops offered by departments or programs to prepare these instructors to use the network environment. Instructors have the responsibility to ensure a friendly, productive learning space for students. As “agents of change,” educators should understand how to utilize digital tools to accomplish democratic and collaborative learning in class. Though there are institutional and individual concerns to integrate YouTube into prewriting, these constraints are surmountable.

Conclusion

Writing has long been considered a complicated and intensive mental labor. When such mental labor is understood as a process that is broken into different components, the activity of writing becomes a more tangible and accomplishable task. Gills declares that “an important goal of writing programs at any level is to provide composition students with a set of effective prewriting strategies that may be used to complete writing tasks (3). The prewriting strategies are effective when they promote positive, active learning among students.

Since invention is a social act, teaching it from a social point of view is the logical choice. Lefevre says that “teaching invention from a social perspective means teaching students how to go about solving the problems that inevitably arise in collaborative invention. … Learning to invent in communities will do more than enable success in classrooms or careers” (129). The collaborative invention and inventing in communities can both be accomplished through the introduction of YouTube in prewriting. Gender, race, and class have always been the
issues that feminist pedagogy aims to address. Hearing different views regarding gender, race, and class might cause discomfort to some students, yet such discomfort allows students to question their own biases, and eventually recognize those who have been marginalized due to differences in gender, race, and class while liberating those who had biased assumptions.

YouTube video allows dialogues as students question and debate with each other regardless of race, gender, and class; therefore, it potentially breaks down possible borders while potentially creating a safe community for students to share their responses to the video. Meanwhile, conversing about how videos, images, and words work together to create meaning, students understand digital literacy so that they can also use sounds, images, and words in their essays to produce multimodal texts that appeal to targeted audiences.

Again, YouTube itself does not promise successful invention teaching. It needs to be used from the perspective of feminist pedagogy to maximize its potential for collaborative and active learning. As a tool that aims to promote democracy in voices, YouTube has a potential in academia and should be related to composition teaching to reveal its strength. Other Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, and podcasts all invite collaboration, and their potential in the prewriting stage can be examined in similar ways. Of course, other than prewriting, many Web 2.0 tools empower students and foster positive learning during the writing and postwriting stages. The following chapters will elaborate the interactive, democratic, and collaborative learning environment that some Web 2.0 technologies potentially create when feminist pedagogy is implemented.
Revision is the essence of intellectual growth. It liberates us from confinement by narrow forms of thought and feeling, from mental laxity, and from whatever is old, false, tired, and trite.

—Ronald A. Sudol, ed. Revising: New Essays for Teachers of Writing

Collaboration that effectively reduces alienation appears in groups where no one individual constantly dominates, where all members are supported, and where individual contributions are developed upon by other members.

—Anne Ruggles Gere. Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications.

Writing is a complex intellectual activity. While we compose, we make decisions such as content management, sentence structure, and word choice. Marder observes,

We tend to think of revision as a step in the writing process, perhaps even the final one; yet, a draft existed first in the mind and was redone, perhaps many times, before it was committed to paper. Even then it was altered in the very act of writing through deletions, substitutions, and additions. A first draft is already many drafts and what has come to be termed prewriting might well be considered rewriting, just as thinking cannot be distinguished from rethinking. (3)

This constant revision in the writing process is confirmed by Sommers who states that revising is “a sequence of changes in a composition—changes which are initiated by cues and occur continually throughout the writing of a work” (44). In other words, writing and revising occur simultaneously; thus, they will not be addressed as two distinctly different stages in the writing process, rather they both will be discussed in one chapter.

Unlike the prewriting stage that is often overlooked, the writing/revising stage has long gained attention from both instructors and students. In the computers and writing field, there have been many discussions concerning the impact of technology on the writing/revising stage.
In 1992, Bernhardt claimed, “Many college English departments have begun using microcomputers in composition classrooms in the hope that they will improve student writing (especially revision processes), encourage better attitudes toward writing, and perhaps stimulate a collaborative learning environment” (65). With the advancement of technology, various tools such as Microsoft word application, Web CT, BlackBoard, Email, Instant Messengers, blogs, podcasts, wikis, etc. have been integrated into writing instruction to enhance students’ writing skills. As early as 1984, Brownell said, “Word processors do make it possible to write more in less time, and do make us better writers” (3). Later Brownell elaborated the claim: “Where writers fully understand the potential of word processing and enjoy the benefits of working with a trouble-free, well-designed system, the results will include not only increased productivity, but more important, clearer, more readable writing” (5).

However, in 1985, Sommers and Collins reminded us that there was no proof that technology improved student writing. In the same year, Deborah Holdstein and Tim Redman found that “some software used for word-processing can actually hinder the writing/rewriting processes” (43). Until 1996, Crafton still challenged the pedagogical effectiveness of computer technology, maintaining that “in general, promises that computer technology would assist students, particularly basic writers, in the process of composition have yet to be fully realized. At the very least, computer use adds an additional level of complexity to an already complex process, leading students to focus on the technology itself and not on their writing” (317). He alleged, “computers may distract students from the task at hand or even prevent them from developing a fuller appreciation of the complexities of the act of written communication” (Crafton 323). Facing the conflicting views on the impact of computer technology to writing,
educators urge the research community “to supply some proof that computers were, indeed, of pedagogical value” (Hawisher et al. 51).

My research responds to this call by providing a theoretical and pedagogical investigation of Web 2.0 tools. In this chapter, even though I admit that writing and revising can occur simultaneously, I segment the writing/revising stage into three phases: writing, peer review, and revising. I do this because of the focus of each phase during the writing/revising stage to substantially explore the influence of Web 2.0 technology. I have italicized “writing” and “revising” to differentiate them from the writing and revising I use throughout this chapter. The important phases of writing, peer review, and revising are specifically defined as the following:

writing refers to the drafting activities leading to the rough draft; peer review refers to responding to peers’ finished drafts; and revising refers to the revision accomplished after the rough draft is finished and before the final draft is submitted. Though writing and revising are identified as two distinctly different phases, they are discussed in one section because these two phases tend to be more individualized under most circumstances and Google Docs facilitates these two phases in very similar ways. Therefore, this chapter aims to investigate the potential of Web 2.0 technology in the writing/revising stage of the writing process, demonstrating how Google Docs facilitates writing/revising and peer review, and subsequently promotes feminist pedagogy. Specifically, this chapter uses Google Docs to showcase how Web 2.0 technology potentially enhances the writing, peer review, and revising phases of the writing process in college composition classes in the United States and encourages a collaborative and democratic learning environment advocated by feminist pedagogy. The major questions that this chapter intends to answer include:

- In what ways does Google Docs foster collaborative, interactive, and decentered
learning among students as advocated by feminist pedagogy during the writing/revising stage? How is such collaborative learning connected to feminist pedagogy?

- What assignments facilitate the collaborative feminist learning space that Google Docs potentially creates?

Why Google Docs?

Writing/revising constitutes a major stage during the writing process. With more people practicing online writing, digital literacy has gained prominence in the composition field. With the emergence of Web 2.0 tools that aim to promote interaction and participation, scholars have been investigating the learning environments that Web 2.0 tools can foster. Because Web 2.0 tools are not designed solely for academic purposes, they are considered to promote informal learning cultures. James Gee calls such informal learning cultures “affinity spaces.” Gee argues, Such spaces offer powerful opportunities for learning because they are sustained by common endeavors that bridge differences—age, class, race, gender, and educational level—and because people can participate in various ways according to their skills and interests, because they depend on peer-to-peer teaching with each participant constantly motivated to acquire new knowledge or refine their existing skills, and because they allow each participant to feel like an expert while tapping the expertise of others. (qtd. in Jenkins 10)

The participatory culture mentioned by Gee is echoed by Porter who notices that digital environments stimulate and nurture social interactions through writing. Porter shares his opinions: “It is not weird if you accept that people write because they want to interact, to share, to learn, to play, to feel valued, and to help others. The drive to interact socially with people is a key feature of the new digital era, which explains the popularity of blogs and of social
networking spaces like Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube” (219). In other words, social collaboration activities enabled through writing is a common feature of new media. Therefore, learning to write through social interactions becomes an innovative pedagogical choice.

As indicated earlier, various tools, including Web 2.0 tools, have been implemented to benefit student writers during the writing/revising stage. The most commonly used Web 2.0 tools include wikis, podcasts, and blogs; wikis are particularly noted for their features to accommodate writing/revising. Because wikis, blogs, and podcasts have already been explored by people in the composition field and wikis have been investigated for their potential to write /revise while Google Docs still remains new (Piper; Richardson; Godwin-Jones), I have chosen Google Docs, a tool invented in 2005, as the focus of the conversation.

Google Docs comprises three kinds of documents: word-processing, spreadsheets, and PowerPoint productions. Because students rarely use spreadsheets or PowerPoint to draft their papers, for the purpose of this dissertation, I concentrate on the word-processing document, which resembles a word application through which people can easily edit, delete, move, copy, and paste information. However, Google Docs differs from a word application in that users need to connect their computers to the Internet and a Web browser as well as create Google email accounts to use it. Even though the document is accessed online, it is private and denies external search for the information in the documents. Yet, the creator of the document can share his/her writing with other people, inviting others as collaborators or viewers, which enables working on the same document with few space and time restrictions. Therefore, Google Docs word processor is safe, convenient, flexible, powerful, and easy to use. As Holzner and Holzner mention, Google Docs “has changed the landscape of word processing: the ability to share a document with others, collaborating on it simultaneously in real time” (91). Similarly, Kittle and Hicks
acknowledge that Google Docs presents itself as a unique space for asynchronous writing regardless of where writers are located (530). The function of Google Docs to enable both synchronous and asynchronous communication through text attracts attention from some scholars in the academic world. (The following figure is intended to explain the features of Google Docs word application visually.)

![Google Docs document](image)

**Figure 2:** This is a screencapture of a Google Docs document. It illustrates the design and primary functions of Google Docs word application.

For educators, Google Docs aids students’ exposure to different perspectives and provides innovative pedagogical possibilities. The exposure to different perspectives immerses students into a variety of opinions and trains them to synthesize their own perspectives. As students draft and revise their papers, exposure to different perspectives enriches their minds, providing them with different angles and possibilities, which pours ideas into writers’ minds and
helps them construct meaning, preparing them to write and synthesize. Google Docs, hence, serves as a viable choice for the writing/revising stage.

Writing/Revising as Collaborative Learning

Writing has been long been regarded as a social process though it can be an individual endeavor. During this social process, individuals are collecting experiences and viewpoints from diverse groups and parties to present a full picture of the given topic/issue. In writing classrooms, when students have finished prewriting activities and started drafting papers, teachers can encourage collaboration to help students receive feedback from their peers with different opinions. Although “collaborative learning,” as a term, appeared in the early 1970s, it did not gain much attention from researchers until the late 1980s (Bruffee, 1984; Meyers, 1986; Young, 1986, Trimbur 1989). Trimbur clearly states that one goal of collaborative learning is “to replace the traditional hierarchical relations of teaching and learning with the practices of participatory democracy” (472). Bruffee critiqued Trimbur and shared his understanding of the goal of collaborative learning:

My notion, for better or worse, was that empowering students, whether or not we call it access to instrumental control and rational efficiency, is something collaborative learning is designed to do and can do. It is certainly something that traditional teaching is not designed to do, cannot do, and consistently fails to do.

(694)

Here, Trimbur contrasts traditional teaching with collaborative teaching and reinforces the concept of empowering students. These early debates of empowering students through collaborative learning grow into central discussions regarding the teaching of writing in the digital age. The Institute of Writing and Rhetoric summarizes that educators have recognized the
value of collaborative learning for the past three decades. When students are isolated recipients of knowledge, they do not learn to write (“Collaborative learning/learning with Peers”). A productive compositing process should not be an isolated but collaborative and dialogic process. Collaborative learning is viewed as empowering, decentering, and productive.

Bruffee, Wiener, and others consider collaborative learning as “distinguished from other forms of group work on the grounds that it organizes students not just to work together on common projects but more important to engage in a process of intellectual negotiation and collective decision-making” (qtd. in Trimbur 461). During the writing/revising stage, students work together on shared goals, discuss complexities relating to their topics, form learning communities, negotiate roles, and communicate via available means to reach decisions. Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede write about a specific mode of collaboration they call “dialogic”:

This dialogic mode is loosely structured, and the roles enacted within it are fluid; one ‘person’ may occupy multiple and shifting roles as the project progresses. In this mode the processes of articulating and working together to achieve goals is as important as the goals themselves. Those who participate in dialogic collaboration generally value the creative tension inherent in multivoiced and multivalent ventures. . . . In dialogic collaboration this group effort is seen as essential to the production—rather than merely the recovery—of knowledge and as a means of individual satisfaction within the group. (235-36)

The prevalence of computer technology adds new dynamics to collaboration. Daiute believes, “Writing on the computer is more interactive than writing with traditional methods” (66). Wolff furthers, “the Web can furnish teachers and students with innovative tools for supporting already existing educational goals such as involving students in the learning process,
using collaboration as a teaching and learning strategy, and creating a space for active learning, exploration, and innovation” (455). The web and the computer open space for collaborative writing to aid students during the writing process. Since writing is a process to discover and make new meanings, collaboration during the writing/revising stage cultivates an opportune learning environment for writers.

Google Docs as a Tool for Collaboration

Google Docs’ word application works effectively if the writing project is a collaborative one, rather than an individual one. In theory, using Google Docs to work on an individual product is very similar to working with Microsoft word application. Both Google Docs and Microsoft word application enable users to manipulate the content of the text through adding, deleting, moving, highlighting, and coloring information with ease. Therefore, in writing classes, if students employ Google Docs to draft their individual papers, it functions similarly to a Microsoft Word application. For a collaborative project, Google Docs provides students with opportunities to work on the same document as collaborators who can view, edit, export, and store it on their own computers. To promote collaborative writing, instructors can assign group projects or ask students to peer review through Google Docs.

When students use Google Docs to collaborate, they can communicate both synchronously and asynchronously. They can use different font styles to highlight information, and Google Docs tracks all the changes that students make, recording all the revisions and dialogues taking place during the writing/revising process. These changes can be reassessed by students, assisting them to make a group decision. This decision-making process in a networked environment prompts students to believe that their contributions are valuable and that staying connected with other students matters.
Research shows that students’ writing skills can be improved through writing in groups. Daiute reports, “The computer's ability to copy and to incorporate the writer's changes automatically simplifies the logistics of collaborative writing. Since collaborative writing is easier on a computer than it is with pen or typewriter, the computer can be used as a catalyst for shared writing” (28). Apart from supporting shared writing, computers are also noted for their potential to promote network. Lundin says, “Networks can socialize the writing process, readily providing real audiences for student writing and emphasizing the situatedness of each piece of rhetoric among a constellation of others (432). Lundin also notes that a Web 2.0 tool similar to Google Docs, wikis, can “challenge the practice of single authorship and help overcome the spatial and temporal hurdles of productive collaborative writing” (438). Google Docs pages, in many ways, resemble wikis pages due to their editability, interactivity, and collaboration. Like wiki pages, Google Docs empowers its users by giving them the rights to view, edit, and share content. If users are all collaborators, they share equal rights over the content. This equal access to information invites collaboration among students.

In writing classrooms, collaboration is accomplished in different forms. Haring-Smith suggests that collaborative writing can take many forms, from the traditional peer response/editing and brainstorming/planning that a group might do all the way through writing a final document with one another (361-65). This chapter discusses how Google Docs potentially promotes collaborative writing during the writing, revising, and peer review phases. As I have mentioned earlier, writing/revising will be discussed under one section because Google Docs facilitates them in very similar ways.
Reynolds and Bonk clearly state, “Revision is commonly thought of as a critical part of writing” (93). They find that “The importance of revision in the writing process results from its favorable impact on the quality of written compositions (Bridwell; Sommers) and its strategic bearing in helping writers rework their thoughts to gain new knowledge (Bereiter & Scardamalia; Murray; Scardamalia & Bereiter)” (qtd. In Reynolds & Bonk 94). Similarly, Sudol says, “Revision is the essence of intellectual growth. It liberates us from confinement by narrow forms of thought and feeling, from mental laxity, and from whatever is old, false, tired, and trite” (xi). Revision has been considered as an important strategy to reconceptualize, reflect, and reconsider the topics. According to Bean, research “suggests that the computer can be a powerful revision aid for students by relieving them of the burden of frequent manuscript recopying’ and “the computer actually created an incentive to spend more time with revisions” with the help of word processing (148).

Once students proceed from the prewriting stage to the writing/revising stage, Google Docs serves as a platform for this drafting process. Students can record their outlines, type their thoughts, insert images, and add, delete, or remove content. In this respect, Google Docs works like word applications in many ways. However, Google Docs automatically saves all the changes writers make. Once writers check the revision history, by accessing the revision tag located under the file menu, all the changes can be viewed, and the track history feature of Google Docs displays all the changes, explicitly demonstrating that writing is a process. Due to their different pedagogical objectives and learning outcomes, individual and collaborative projects are treated differently in the chapter and have individual sections.
As mentioned earlier, the features of Google Docs word application are similar to those of a word application. When users write with Google Docs, they experience the same freedom/flexibility to integrate images, texts, and audios. Because most students are familiar with word applications, the similarities between Google Docs word application and word applications enhance their comfort level with Google Docs. The text they produce also looks similar, but Google Docs gives users the option to invite others to view or edit the document. In the instance of an individual project, the author can invite peers as either collaborators or viewers to provide feedback on the quality of his/her work.

Viewers can see the document but cannot edit it. To provide feedback, the viewers would use other tools to communicate. The collaborators, however, can edit and view the file, and even go to the revision tab to see all the older versions of the document. For individual projects, Google Docs promotes collaboration through the comment feature. The reviewers can insert written comments in the text, which prompts the author to review and reflect on the document, making decisions and working on revisions.

Collaborative Writing/Revising with Google Docs

If the writing assignment is a group project, the merits of Google Docs will be revealed through collaborative writing/revising activities. The collaborative design of blogs and wikis is similar to that of Google Docs. Through Google Docs, group members are invited as collaborators who have equal rights and access to the document. These members can log into Gmail, open Google Docs, and work on the same project synchronously or asynchronously. In fact they can also use Google Chat to supplement their communication if the other members are
online at the same time. Through Google Chat, members can ask each other questions and receive prompt answers. Thus, Google Chat promotes an immediate dialogue.

When students work on collaborative projects with Google Docs, one student is responsible for creating the document and inviting the others to be collaborators of the project. In this respect, the initiation is hierarchical. Once the invited parties accept the invitation, they all share equal access to the material and rhetorical space created by Google Docs. Nesbitt claims that online support resources that are available 24 hours a day and accessible from one's own home empower the users (53). As an application that avails twenty-four hours a day without location restrictions, Google Docs empowers its users due to its easy access, intuitive design, and possible accommodation of work schedules. Herbst comments, “Open source [like Google Docs] is among the most influential trends in technology and purportedly embraces a system of meritocracy, autonomy, and freedom” (137). As an open source technology, Google Docs potentially encourages freedom and equality. Users do not need technological expertise to use Google Docs, and can work either individually or collaboratively on a document without time and location restrictions when technology is available. Therefore, users with little background in computer technology are not technologically challenged to use Google Docs and they can choose how and when to work on their documents through Google Docs.

When students work on the collaborative project synchronously, they see the change of the document in real time. Google Docs shows when collaborators are present and when collaboration goes on. Working in this online environment created by Google Docs connects students, potentially establishing a learning community. Students can engage in an online dialogue through inserting comments or typing in a different font color/style. This dialogue enables students to give and receive feedback from each other while composing. Witnessing the
constant change of documents reinforces the concept of collaboration, fostering a sense of belonging among participants, which strengthens the ties, though virtual and invisible, among participants. Therefore, working with Google Docs synchronously is not an isolating but dialogic and communal experience.

To elaborate on how Google Docs encourages collaborative writing, consider following example from an intermediate writing class. In an intermediate writing class I taught in Spring 2008, I built my syllabus on the writing as a process concept and assigned students to work on both individual and group projects. Believing that students need to demonstrate skills to compose multimodal texts, I introduced them to different tools to complete different assignments. For one group project, analyzing websites, I asked students to use Google Docs to collaborate. Students work in groups of three or four, choosing one website that is interesting to them and evaluating its effectiveness based on the criteria they established. The course focuses on improving students’ analytical and writing skills. It also calls students’ attention to how computer technology has impacted composition and reshaped their understanding of writing and literacy.

The box below is captured from a student’s Google page, and is intended to exemplify how Google Docs promotes collaborative learning. The image below has the text the group produces and also the comments that student A provides. Please refer to the image for details.

The comments that Student A makes in this instance:

“I would stick this line with the previous paragraph because it is not introducing any new idea.”

“I don’t know whether you can use however and even though at the same time. Check please.”
Figure 3: This is a Screencapture of students’ work that was finished through Google Docs. This figure shows the collaborative feature of Google Docs.

So student A initiates a dialogue about the quality of the text in this Google page. Her comments relate to both structural and syntax concerns. Being aware that she is writing to her group members, she uses a softer and informal tone different from the paper they are working on, which demonstrates a sharp sense of audience awareness in her, but also fosters collaboration within the group. *Institute for Writing and Rhetoric*, the writing program website of Darmouth College, recognizes such an awareness of audience fostered through collaboration:

“Collaboration therefore helps student writers to develop a sense of audience. Too often students write only to please their instructors, whose expectations they rarely understand. Knowing that their peers will read their papers gives students a concrete sense of to whom they are writing, and why” (“collaborative learning/learning with Peers”). Student A, in this context, treats her peers as the primary audiences. Knowing that they will read her posts encourages her to actively participate in the meaning making process.
Zhao 96

Student A’s communication style also deserves attention. She does not sound demanding, rather she politely expresses her opinions, creating a friendly environment for conversation. Meanwhile, she not only explains her concerns, she also writes down her compliments, “I like this one.” Such compliments induce healthy online dialogues, creating an environment where people construct meanings together. Hewett says, “From the theoretical perspective, online dialogue, like its oral counterpart, presumably can foster collaboration, a concept common to social constructivist epistemology, which holds all knowledge to be socially developed and relative to the group to which it applies” (6). What Hewett suggests is the promotion of social development of knowledge. In other words, electronic learning environments foster constructive collaboration where knowledge is considered to be socially constructed by all parties.

Google Docs, then, is not a promise of successful collaborative learning. Rather, it is a platform that makes collaborative learning easily accessible. Viewing Google Docs from the lens of feminist pedagogy positively influences its practices. Gere notes as a form of learning that includes various learner-centered approaches, collaborative learning can take place in difference forms (55). If the essence of collaborative learning is learner centered, feminist pedagogy is a viable approach to promote learner-centered learning. Feminist pedagogy aims to decenter authorities or dominant groups in and out of class, encourage multiple voices, and accordingly, accommodate diverse learning styles. In a collaborative learning environment supported by Google Docs, when feminist pedagogy is practised, the instructor is decentered because he/she does not always directly participate in the composing process. Rather, he/she views the document, offering feedback just as other participants. Of course, the instructor’s power to assign grades is undeniable, but such power is limited in a feminist pedagogy-driven learning environment where students are treated as equal creators of knowledge.
The possible equal ownership of knowledge enhances collaboration. Gere concluded, 

Knowledge conceived as socially constructed or generated validates the “learning” part of collaborative learning because it assumes that the interactions of collaboration can lead to new knowledge or learning. A fixed or hierarchical view of knowledge, in contrast, assumes that learning can occur only when a designated “knower” imparts wisdom to those less well informed. (72-73)

The absence of this “designated ‘knower,’” energizes conversation, enabling diverse voices in the classroom and making the writing/revising process less alienating.

If implemented with feminist pedagogy, Google Docs merges the voices from different participants. The final product does not indicate who has done what. Ramos and Piper notice, “The collaborative design of blogs and wikis allows a process of bottom up editing, where the expertise is not in the hands of the few, but rather emerges from the combined efforts of the many” (570). With bottom-up editing, Google Docs merges voices from different groups. While the final product cannot tell who does what, accessing the revision tag allows us to see every version of the paper. The track change feature clearly shows progress made towards the completion of the document, indicating the contribution of each individual participant, which enables the instructor to evaluate the performance of each party.

While acknowledging that Google Docs empowers collaborative work, educators need to realize that building a collaborative and collegial work relationship is always challenging. Kittle discovers, “As we all know from our own schooling and teaching experiences, actually having a group collaborate to create a document is hard work” (526). Each group is usually comprised of very active learners and not so active learners. The equal access to materials does not guarantee engaged cooperation from all students who have different opinions and varied learning styles,
and accommodating these opinions and styles can be challenging. According to feminist pedagogy, the differences or even oppositional viewpoints regarding given topics should be addressed, rather than ignored or suppressed. Recognizing differences motivates students to identify, mediate, and critique the discrepancies, thus helping students to generate criteria to compare, and contrast their work with peers.

Webb claims, “Collaboration allows students to learn from each other, as confident students will model successful writing practices for struggling students” (607). In Gousseva’s research that aims to investigate group work and learning outcomes, her student describes her group work experience as enjoyable. To her, group work stretches herself and her boundaries, preparing her to make friends, cooperate, and respect others’ perspectives (471). Institute for Writing and Rhetoric concludes:

Collaboration helps students to better understand the conventions of academic discourse. When talking about their papers with their peers, students will learn where their readers stumble. They can also find out why. Often, these conversations lead to a better understanding of the writing conventions that the student writer has neglected or misunderstood. (“collaborative learning/learning with Peers”)

Adding to the effectiveness of collaborative learning, Howard says, “Collaboration focuses on the generation of many possible points of view/solutions to a problem, which ultimately leads to more complex conclusions” (10). If students are treated as equal participants who create knowledge, their different viewpoints expose students to various possibilities, preparing them to make independent and thoughtful decisions. Therefore, similarities and differences in opinions will both lead to productive collaboration.
Gere expounds on the value of differences and its contribution to the creation of knowledge in collaborative learning. She concludes:

Collaboration is a necessary but not sufficient condition for collaborative learning. Participants in collaborative groups learn when they challenge one another with questions, when they develop relationships among issues, when they evaluate their own thinking. In other words, they learn when they assume that knowledge is something they can help create rather than something to be received whole from someone else. (69)

Feminist pedagogy emphasizes the recognition of students’ creation and power in teaching. Rather than regarding students as passive recipients of knowledge, feminist pedagogy advocates the active creation of knowledge by students. Google Docs potentially empowers students because they actively create and compose on Google Docs pages rather than passively listen to the teacher or a few students and submit to the knowledge they pass on. Collaborative learning actively engages students, transforming them into critical thinkers who challenge, question, and examine assumptions as well as thoughtful writers who investigate and communicate the knowledge they create with their readers.

Peer Review

Students engage in peer review once they have finished the rough draft of the essay. Conducting peer review gives students opportunities to read, analyze, and critique their peers’ work while receiving feedback from peers. The value of peer review has been recognized in the field, though its process has been difficult to teach because students do not always see the significance of receiving feedback from their peers. Many students complain about the ineffectiveness of peer review, questioning the helpfulness of a peer’s feedback. For many who
complain, they argue that their peers do not have the skills necessary to critically analyze text. In fact, many times, they even voice that their peers know less than they do about the expectations of the assignments; therefore, they doubt the effectiveness of peer feedback.

To address students’ doubts, instructors continually emphasize the value of peer review, an important phase in the writing and teaching process. In a writing classroom that incorporates Google Docs during the peer review stage, students will invite peers to both view and comment on their documents. In this respect, Google Docs serves as a tool to promote feminist pedagogy because it has the potential to decenter instruction, to equalize opportunities among participants, and to create an ideal peer-to-peer learning community. The following sections demonstrate the connection between Google Docs, feminist pedagogy, and peer review.

Though Google Docs is considered a tool that promotes democracy and equality, the fact that instructors decide which tools to use and how the tools will be used indicates a power structure, or an undeniable hierarchy existing between students and instructors. However, feminist pedagogy does not deny unequal power; rather, it acknowledges such inequalities, and finds out ways to counterbalance these inequalities to promote democratic learning.

To demonstrate how inequalities are addressed by feminist pedagogy, both a collaborative assignment and a peer review assignment supported by Google Docs work as effective ways to connect students, helping them build a community of learners. The vulnerability of the community, to a large extent, depends on the way collaboration is enhanced and maintained. When an instructor introduces peer review assignments, the integration of Google Docs conceivably equalizes power because collaborators have equal access to the online space Google Docs provides when technology is available. Though it is the instructor who introduces Google Docs, it is the students who creates the document. The instructor can be
invited as either a viewer or a collaborator. As a viewer, the instructor sees changes of the document but does not have the access to change the content. As a collaborator, the instructor can make changes, but such access is available to all students, equalizing the power among participants. The decentering of the instructor, of course, does not denote the deprivation of the instructor’s agency to create knowledge. Instead, the instructor needs to actively participate in the peer review process, facilitating the peer review process so that the instructor, like other participants in the class, is actively making knowledge in this collaborative learning environment that Google Docs creates.

In the intermediate English writing class I taught, I did not require students to peer review with Google Docs. Had I used the tool, students from other writing groups would have had the opportunity to comment on the documents their peers wrote through inserting comments. Because the groups focus on different topics and they themselves have diverse backgrounds, different perspectives emerge. These perspectives potentially influence group discussions and the level and focus of the feedback provided.

When using Google Docs for peer review, the authors need to read, analyze, and critique the comments received before they make decisions whether to accept or reject them. This decision-making action is a collaborative process, involving authors and reviewers. The interactions through Google Docs can be productive when comments and decisions are made with care and thoughtfulness. While reviewers read their peers’ drafts, they read and then write down comments. The authors will read these comments and then make decisions. Gere remarks, “Writing groups, in contrast, focus on creating meaning through dialogue among participants, and this creation enables writers to re-vision their work, improving it substantially” (93). Apart from recognizing its potential to improve work, its convenience also empowers participants.
Bush comments, “A computer-mediated classroom facilitates collaborative class peer review especially well because all class members have immediate and ready access to one student’s draft without making so many arrangements beforehand and without student writers being required to make multiple hard copies that waste paper and time” (454). The convenience of completing peer review through Google Docs accommodates different schedules, providing great possibilities to those who have tight schedules, eliminating the schedule conflicts that often happen when people meet face to face.

Some people would argue that face-to-face peer review sessions are more convenient and effective. Face-to-face peer review is effective mainly because of the immediate dialogues occurred when peers interact with one another. Admitting the value of online peer review does not negate the power of face-to-face peer review. Van compares the two types of peer review, claiming:

Compared to face to face peer assessment, implementing peer assessment online can also support its pedagogical aspects. As mentioned by Gehringer (2001) and Trahasch (2004), it allows higher degrees of interactivity between students and offers teachers better possibilities to monitor and guide this interactive process. In addition, peer feedback that is exchanged online may result more often in the revision of students’ products than face to face feedback, as Hewitt (2000) and Tuzi (2004) demonstrated. (van180)

The possible higher level of interactivity and instructor’s intervention taking place during online peer review processes may urge students to revise texts. Meanwhile, when students meet face to face, they show more reluctance to provide critical feedback for fear of hurting peers’ feelings.
The physical closeness present at face-to-face peer reviews largely contributes to such reluctance.

Bledsoe argues that students who use technology work in isolation (54). However, Bledsoe does see it is not technology that isolates students, but the way that technology is used. He concludes, “When students are led in collaborative digital writing projects, they will develop not only their technology skills but also improve their interpersonal communication and organizational skills. They will learn how to pitch their ideas and amend and build on the ideas of others” (Bledsoe 54). With Google Docs, especially the integration of feminist pedagogy, students do not work in isolation. They develop their personal communication skills through connecting with others, improve their work, and collaborate in meaningful ways.

Another significant value of online peer review conducted through Google Docs is its promotion of connecting reading and writing. When student writers are engaged in peer review through Google Docs, the original texts produced are mixed together with the comments peers insert. In order to provide constructive written comments, peers need to critically read the document. When they receive written comments, they need to carefully read them and decide revision strategies. Like Jenkins argues, “Empowerment comes from making meaningful decisions within a civic context” (12). Students, from giving and receiving feedback, become more powerful readers and writers, and the experience of connecting reading and writing closely in the electronic environments prepares them to mature as writers.

From this aspect, peer review conducted through Google Docs connects reading and writing, blurs readership and authorship, and empowers student writers. Reading and writing are different and complementary ways of knowing the world. By reading, we have dialogues with the authors and these dialogues enable us to develop ideas, shape thoughts, and form opinions.
Many times, reading motivates people to explore their assumptions, challenge stereotypes, and expand their visions. Through reading Google Docs pages, students are exposed to different writing styles, which provide frameworks that they can refer to when they write. Meanwhile, reading also develops students’ skills to evaluate and critique, which enhances their critical reading skills.

Despite these potential advantages of online peer assessment, its success is not unconditional. As shown by Van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot, peer assessment must be adequately organized in order to produce feedback of sufficient quality (qtd. in van1805). Van clearly indicates the role of instructors for successful peer review. The earlier analysis of effective peer review suggests the decentering of instructors; however, the instructor does not yield to students. Instead, they share duties, responsibilities, and power with student, but the purpose is to encourage students to take increased responsibility in the knowledge creation process. Like Gocsik says, “Transferring authority requires instructors to shift their focus from setting standards to diagnosing problems, from giving direction to facilitating learning, from focusing exclusively on product to supporting process. In the Active Learning classroom, instructors, like students, remain actively engaged.”

The active participation on the part of instructors definitely supports feminist pedagogy that calls for shared authority in learning. Meanwhile, the collaboration occurring on group projects supported by Google Docs defines writing as a collaborative act that merges diverse social backgrounds and opinions. The accomplishment of such collaboration prompts us to rethink pedagogy to engage and empower diverse student populations.
Challenges of Integrating Google Docs in Writing Classrooms

Though Google Docs, as a program to promote collective creation of knowledge, has positive pedagogical implications, it also has its pedagogical limitations. In order to work in the space supported by Google Docs, users need to have access to Google email, computers, and the Internet. Some students regard email accounts, especially those accounts not affiliated with universities, as a tool for communication for nonacademic purposes. They may show reluctance to create a Google email account or they feel their personal lives have been invaded. Instructors may have the good intention to blur personal and academic lives, thinking the connection of the two may motivate students. However, some students do see learning through Google Docs as an intrusion to their private or personal spaces. When I used Google Docs for an intermediate writing class, one student did ask me why he had to create another email account when he had the university email. To him, the university email is the only email account necessary for academic purposes. As instructors who practice feminist pedagogy, we acknowledge that students have varied learning styles, and the rejection of a new tool does not suggest the rejection of the course content distributed in class. Justifying the implementation of Google Docs might help overcome this negative attitude. Therefore, understanding the intentions and outcomes of using Google Docs for peer review should be a knowledge that instructors own.

Related to this reluctance to create a Google email, I also encountered students who are afraid of working with new tools. Their fear to use the tool might be due to their unfamiliarity with it; therefore, Google Docs depowers rather than empowers them. The alienation resulted from unfamiliarity with the tool keeps students from using and benefiting from it, making Google Docs an ineffective way. Addressing this fear in class before introducing the tool or advising these students to pair up with other students who are familiar with Google Docs may
decrease their fear, giving them an opportunity to explore this new tool, and eventually helping them to peer review with other students.

Apart from the discouragement caused by the learning curve, another limitation of Google Docs is the removal of writers from writing. When students peer review, if they use the comment feature and insert comments, authors still make their own decisions after they receive responses. However, if the reviewers directly type and write in the Google page, it has the danger of becoming a collaborative rather than individual project. The voice of the author can be overshadowed by the reviewer(s), thus marginalizing the person who is trying to be heard. In addition, even when reviewers insert their comments, due to the fact that there will be layers of information from different reviewers, the document can strike the readers as chaotic or disorganized, which can reinforce the concept of the removal of the authors. This concept then beats the purpose of collaboration. This possible limitation makes it important for the instructor to warn students of the danger of the marginalization of the author and guides them to conduct peer review to empower authors.

Conclusion

Writing/revising is a vital stage in the writing process. This is a stage that students and instructors have valued and have experimented with various technological tools to facilitate. The current chapter is an endeavor to introduce a new way to accommodate the needs of students and instructors when they write/revise. I am not suggesting that Google Docs serves as a definite strategy to guide students during the writing/revising stage. Rather, it is how we use it that matters. As Gerben argues, “Our goal should never be what technology can teach us, but how using it and discussing it can help us produce our own community-specific knowledge that can be used with or without a computer.” As teachers of writing, we study how computer-mediated
communication (CMC) affects teaching with feminist pedagogies. However, as Crafton notes, the online writing environment seems to be marked by contradictions, a paradoxical tendency to pull simultaneously in opposite directions, which may explain some of the difficulties we face (319). These contradictions, hence, call for effective pedagogies to assist students to achieve the learning outcomes,

Blair, Gajjala and Tulley proclaim, “just as we attempt to develop both physical and virtual spaces to foster feminist values and practices within classroom contexts, there are limitations, in part because of the inevitable constraints of technology in fostering dialogue and collaboration, even as researchers come together to create more egalitarian spaces for all students (9). With an emphasis on collaboration, this chapter investigates the extent to which that Google Docs enables collaboration, dialogue, and active learning. The process of writing/revising, with the facilitation of Google Docs, can be a communal learning process for class participants, opening new ways for voices to be heard and communities sustained.

Other Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, and Facebook can facilitate the peer review process too, and their potential during this process can be examined in similar ways. This extensive discussion of the interactive, democratic, and collaborative learning environment that Google Docs creates aims to shed light on similar discussions. After connecting Google Docs, the writing/revising stage, and feminist pedagogy in this chapter, the next chapter investigates the implications of blogs in the postwriting process that is guided by feminist pedagogy.
CHAPTER FIVE: BLOGS: A PLACE FOR REFLECTION DURING POSTWRITING

Blogs archive the learning that teachers and students do, facilitating all sorts of reflection and metacognitive analysis that was previously much more cumbersome. From an organizational standpoint, the ability to keep histories of work in an organized, searchable, easily shareable space is an important development.

—Will Richardson, Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms.

Chapters Three and Four have demonstrated ways in which YouTube and Google Docs add interactive and democratic dynamics to the prewriting, writing and rewriting stages of the writing process. To follow this discussion, Chapter five intends to investigate the potential that Web 2.0 technology has to facilitate teaching practices that are guided by feminist pedagogy during the postwriting process. Since this dissertation is a theoretical discussion rather than a technological illustration about the pedagogical implications of Web 2.0 technology in the first-year or intermediate writing classrooms in American colleges, I have selected one tool to exemplify the power and agency that different Web 2.0 tools can bring to the class. To be more specific, I have chosen a frequently used tool, blogs, as the primary focus, discuss the reflective space that blogs conceivably create for the postwriting stage, and I propose a curriculum that supports reflective learning during the postwriting stage, hoping that this epitomizes the potential of other Web 2.0 technology.

Postwriting literally means “after writing,” which can be a very broad definition because writing, as a practice, may not have an end. In classroom teaching, however, it is impractical for instructors to give students unlimited opportunities to revise their work and assign them new grades for the new revised papers to record students’ progress. In this chapter, postwriting refers to the period of time when students have submitted the final revision of their papers but have not
yet received grades from the instructor. I choose this specific stage because once students know their grades, they may repeat the instructors’ marginal and/or end comments on the final drafts or treat this as an opportunity to vent anger, confusion, and dissatisfaction for displeasing grades or express delight or excitement for pleasing grades rather than regard postwriting as a chance to evaluate progress and write constructive reflection. There have been many discussions about the benefits and limitations of using blogs in the composition courses (Habermas; Kress; Blood; Fenheimer & Nelson; Brooks, Nichols, & Priebe; Fernheimer; Richardson), but investigating blogs during the postwriting stage and from the point of view of feminist pedagogy is still new.

To add to the current discussion of the implementation of Web 2.0 technology in college composition classrooms, this chapter uses blogs to formulate pedagogical suggestions through connecting postwriting, blogs, and the feminist pedagogy. The major questions that this chapter intends to answer include:

- In what ways do blogs invite, foster, and support reflections? How does feminist pedagogy encourage reflection? What does reflection do to positive learning?
- In what ways do blogs foster collaborative, interactive, and decentered learning among students as advocated by feminist pedagogy during the postwriting stage?
- What assignments facilitate the reflective learning space that blogs create?

Why Reflection?

Reflection is defined as the “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey 9). Similarly, Ng, Lan, and Thye observe that “basically, reflection may be defined as an active and deliberate process of thinking which addresses practical problems, taking into account underlying belief and knowledge before arriving at
possible solutions in a sequence of inter-connected ideas” (202). Reflection has been indicated as an inseparable part of knowledge-making; however, in reality, many students do not consciously integrate reflection in their learning activities and many instructors do not enthusiastically advocate reflection in their classroom practices. Overlooking or minimizing reflection in learning and teaching ignores the significant contribution reflection makes in education.

Ng, Lan, and Thye conclude, “Teachers must be reflective so that they will always find purpose and direction amid a sea of changes and not implement changes merely for the sake of change or because of top-down policy directives” (201). In agreement with Ng, Lan, and Thye, Zeichner and Liston declare that “more reflective teacher actions will lead to greater benefits for the teacher and for all of his or her pupils” (25). These researchers’ attention to reflection does not alter the reality that reflection is not valued as much as it deserves in education, and the composition field is not an exception. Yancey indicates that “Reflection has played but a small role in this history of composing. A single published article links reflection and composing process: Sharon Pianko’s ‘Reflection: A Critical Component of the Composing Process,’ published in 1979” (4). Yancey continues, “One often undervalued and little understood method of identifying what we know and of understanding how we come to know involves what, in the last ten years or so, has been called “reflection” (Reflection in the Writing Classroom 5-6).

Spalding and Wilson note that “Reflection is a mysterious concept to many students who enter our graduate-level, secondary teacher education program at a large, Southeastern university” (1393). If reflection is mysterious to graduate students training to be educators, to many undergraduate students who are freshly admitted to college, it probably is equally if not more mysterious. The best approach to demystify reflection in college composition classrooms is to introduce it in the teaching of writing so that students understand reflection, and eventually
benefit from it. As indicated earlier, the focus of this chapter is the implementation of blogs during the postwriting stage to foster reflective learning. Because “reflection is a critical component of learning and of writing specifically” (Yancey *Reflection in the Writing Classroom* 7), I propose strategies to integrate reflective teaching and learning with the help of blogs. Spalding and Wilson admit that “we realized that we must demystify reflection if students are to take ownership of their journals and use reflection as a vehicle for personal and professional development” (1394). Yancey concurs the power of reflection to assume “agency and authority,” urging the field to generate ways to integrate reflection in teaching (*Reflection in the Writing Classroom* 20). The writing process is a social and collaborative process during which students converse with different social groups and forces and constantly make decisions regarding the style and content of their work. The action of writing and rewriting is a reflective process, which explains the importance of valuing reflection on the part of the students. Likewise, for instructors, the teaching process involves planning, creating syllabi, executing class plans, and assessing students’ learning outcomes. The successful choice of the teaching materials and methodologies is, to a large extent, decided by students’ reactions. The positive and negative reactions from students shape the teaching of writing, and reflective instructors have the chance to self-evaluate based on students’ responses/reactions and needs. Since reflection engages the student writers and instructors in a decision making process during which they constantly challenge themselves and strive for perfection, it consequently benefits both students and instructors who observe the writing process. Yancey accentuates, “Reflection is both process and product. The processes of reflection can be fostered in several ways. Inviting students to reflect in multiple ways is inviting them to triangulate their own truths, to understand and articulate the pluralism of truth” (*Reflection in the Writing Classroom* 19). Recognizing the importance of
reflection in the writing process, this study concentrates on inviting students to reflect in a networked digital environment and investigates how reflection in this space helps students to gain agency and authority. The following sections elaborate on how students and instructors benefit during the postwriting process in a blog-mediated learning environment.

Postwriting as a Social Act

Being defined as the stage between students’ submission of the final draft and receipt of the grades, postwriting carries much significance in the teaching practices. Very often, in both theoretical and pedagogical discussions of the writing process, the writing process is segmented into prewriting, writing, and rewriting. It is difficult to distinguish between writing and rewriting because responsible writers constantly revise and rewrite; therefore, rewriting becomes part of writing. Personally, I do not think that writing activity should stop when the final draft is submitted. Time runs out during classes, and papers must be turned in, but postwriting needs to be encouraged. If students are taught that writing is a continual process, they need to see such a concept being practiced in teaching; accordingly, this is the reason that I devote one chapter to postwriting.

The purpose of introducing postwriting is to provide students a channel to reflect, evaluate, critique, and articulate the previous writing activities. This process of reflection, evaluation, critique, and articulation fosters students’ skills to read critically and analyze both the products submitted and the process of creating the product. In other words, the mission of the postwriting stage is to promote active, reflective learning. However, where does active learning occur? Learning occurs in social environments. Bruffee states that, “to study and teach English is to study and teach the social origin, nature, reference, and function of symbolic structures” (432). These, therefore, are important factors that teachers of English should consider in the
knowledge creation process in classroom teaching. Ng, Lan, and Thye further such observations, arguing that “knowledge is created through the interaction of learners, never in a social vacuum,” thus emphasizing the importance of social interactions among learners in the knowledge creation process (202). Successful learning then takes place in a social and interactive environment. As college composition instructors, we need to implement appropriate tools and strategies to establish an interactive social space in the first-year and intermediate college writing classrooms to fulfill the goal of postwriting.

The social aspects of postwriting are enhanced through students interacting with their own ideas and written words, their peers’ work, and other participants in the class. During this interacting process, students carry on inner and outer dialogues, encouraging them to identify differences, address conflicts, and make decisions. To accommodate this social process, instructors should facilitate the postwriting stage with a viable teaching pedagogy, which largely influences the course materials and approaches. Due to positive learning outcomes possibly produced by collaborative during the postwriting stage, a pedagogy that fosters such collaboration needs to be implemented; thus an appropriate pedagogy needs to be carefully considered. Blogs, as a medium and a resource, suggest a way of using the postwriting process to promote interactive and social learning.

Blogs as a Reflective and Collaborative Learning Tool

Pipher believes that "blogs surfaced in the 1990s as online journals for people who worked with computer technology, but they quickly morphed into a much bigger phenomenon. Computer users began posting personal blogs that included everything from daily activities to poetry, travel tips, movie reviews, political commentary, and thoughts about the universe" (199). So, initially, blogs were used as diaries or journals to record and share personal feelings, and were used for
various purposes such as writing movie reviews and composing political commentary. The possibility of writing in blogs in different genres is noticed by Penrod who indicates that “as an e-genre, blogs allow for a variety of written expressions in an easy-to-use format in which writers can concentrate on writing rather than technology” (45). Like other Web 2.0 technologies, blogs do not require technological expertise from the users, which makes it an ideal tool for students. Yang says: "Blogs utilize a simple interface to make it easy for any user to construct, without having to understand HTML or web scripting. Thus, anyone who can create a basic Microsoft Word document can create and maintain a blog" (13). Such user-friendliness is confirmed by Penrod, who asserts that “a blog’s appeal is based on how well a writer can communicate with an audience. Blogs allow individuals to move from silence to articulating their voice without the need for extensive technical knowledge” (45). The ease of writing with blogs attracts people including technophobes to treat blogs as a writing venue. Through linking people to other bloggers, blogs encourage people to participate in ongoing dialogues.

Since the emergence of blogs, they have been used in both academic and nonacademic settings. Due to the flexibility to write in different genres about various subjects, blogs are used to express opinions and to socialize with people who share similar interests. Penrod summarizes reasons why blogs have gained much popularity and have been a commonly employed medium for communication:

- Blogs are incredibly easy to publish because of technological advances.
- Blogs mix pleasure with information to create an information reformation.
- Blogs are a malleable writing genre.
- Blogs allow writers to generate new personas and construct new worlds.
- Blogs empower those who are often marginalized in society. (3)
Because blogs create an online community in which users enjoy much freedom in expression, people from diverse backgrounds with a shared interest can exchange their opinions and experiences. The self-explanatory and intuitive design of blogs makes online writing less intimidating, fostering interactive dialogues and quick feedback. If students have a low comfort level with new technologies, the ease of using blogs should alleviate their pressure so that they can concentrate on the quality of what they write and can offer constructive feedback. Therefore, the ease of writing with blogs in an online community promotes voices and networking, making blogs a virtual space that fosters dialogues, which subsequently deems blogs as an interactive online learning environment that helps students achieve their learning outcomes.

Regarded as a utopia that embraces heterogeneous opinions, virtual space was conceived as an environment devoid of oppression, discrimination, and other social biases. It did not take long for people to find out that online space is not free of oppression originating from power, gender, race, and class, etc. Blackmon argues that “ironically, although computers and the World Wide Web are being hailed as the great equalizer for students in the computerized classroom, African-American students are finding themselves further marginalized” (153). He continues to say that “if we assume that because minority students have material access to computers they should be able to perform at the same level of computer competence as their majority counterparts, we once again fail to make good on the promise of a better life” (160). Access to computers, online learning spaces, or other materials does not ensure democratic and equal interactions. Subsequently, the ideal utopian learning space is not a given; the pedagogy that instructors apply and resources/tools that instructors choose impact the learning outcomes achieved in a virtual learning environment.

Such a link among pedagogy, tools, and successful teaching/learning explains the
intricacies of this dissertation, justifying my endeavor to weave together pedagogy, technological tools, and students’ learning outcomes. For the purpose of effective reflective learning outcomes, I analyze ways that blogs, as a technological tool, assist in achieving such goals during the postwriting stage. In Fullwood’s view, “Self-expression, networking, and identity management have all been cited as motivating factors that contribute to blogging. Research suggests that self-expression, as opposed to social interaction, is the main reason individuals choose to blog” (686). I challenge such an assertion that indicates self-expression excludes or contradicts social interaction. As Whithaus notes, “computer-mediated communication provides a contact, a connection, between students from radically different educational backgrounds” (81). The possibility of expressing individual emotions and thoughts is a social process in that the bloggers, as social beings, are constructed and impacted by various facets of the society; thus their emotions and thoughts are social. In addition, blogs build a networked community through which bloggers read and comment on the others’ posts in addition to posting theirs. Therefore, blogs, as a medium, invite social and collaborative dialogues through promoting individual discussions among bloggers.

Blogs, Postwriting, and Reflection

The implementation of blogs in composition classes is not new; writing instructors have used blogs to achieve different pedagogical objectives. Due to the focus of this chapter, I will exemplify the potential that blogs have for postwriting and analyze how blogs are correlated with postwriting and reflection. Blogs differ from formal academic writing largely due to its less formal writing style. As Petterg explains, “some aspects of blogging are certainly very similar to oral cultures: blogs are conversational and social; they are constantly changing and their tone tends to be less formal and closer to everyday speech than is the general tone of print writing”
Bloggers may treat it as a space to carry on dialogues with themselves and others; thus, they tend to write more casually. Such causal writing, as opposed to formal academic writing, appeals to students because they have one additional space to express and exchange thoughts in a new style. Such a new addition creates an opportunity for students to gain the pleasure of writing in a dialogue form that they do not always have the chance to explore in college composition courses. The pleasure found in writing contributes significantly to active learning.

Carrying on dialogues promoted through the use of blogs adds exciting dynamics to teaching writing. The possibility to link to others and have potential readers enables and encourages dialogues. Pettberg said:

> Plato, on the other hand, argues that dissemination is wasteful, and that dialogue with worthy listeners and the careful tending of communication is the best way to spread your ideas. This idealization of dialogue has been particularly strong in modern ideas of pedagogy, where experts in the latter half of the twentieth century have moved away from previous ideas of education as a simple transferral of information (a kind of dissemination) and towards the idea that knowledge is constructed by the learner in dialogue and interaction with people and technologies. (36)

Pettberg is promoting the idea that knowledge is constructed and shared in a community of people, rather than a single individual. In the digital world, knowledge construction involves people and technologies that interact. Loss of interaction diminishes the power of dialogues, which negatively impacts the building of knowledge. Knowledge building itself is situational and materialistic. Therefore, the question is: How do educators promote collaborative and democratic learning among students in the virtual space?
Turnley argues, “When interactions with technologies are assumed to be automatic rather than contingent upon personal, social, and political factors, users (including students and teachers) are positioned as passive receivers rather than active agents” (134). This observation reinforces the importance of approaching technologies in a way that promotes their active qualities so that the advantages of implementing these technologies are cultivated. Moreover, this observation also suggests the importance of understanding technologies to promote positive learning outcomes under specific social settings. For the postwriting stage, with its goal to connect students to reflect on the prewriting and writing/rewriting stages, blogs are an effective tool to accomplish these learning objectives.

Blogs are a democratic and widely utilized form of self-publishing, and can be a great tool to promote reflection at the postwriting stage. Yang states:

> When student teachers came together to discuss or give feedback on each other’s work and teaching, it was not clear that they would engage in critical reflection. However, by using blogs as a platform for reflection, participants obtained more opportunities to make comments and challenge each other’s viewpoints. They could still converse about or express what had been left out in the traditional classrooms. (18)

Richardson echoes a blog’s potential to foster reflective learning, saying, “Blogs archive the learning that teachers and students do, facilitating all sorts of reflection and metacognitive analysis that was previously much more cumbersome” (27). Blogs could, therefore, be used to promote reflective learning. The following sections elaborate on how students and instructors benefit during the postwriting process in a blog-mediated learning environment.
Many students treat submitting the final drafts of their papers to instructors as the final stage of writing. Once final drafts have been submitted, what students wait for is the final grade. In fact, almost every student is eager to end this writing process so that they can move to the next paper. Upon receiving a satisfactory grade, they consider that this learning experience has come to an end. What these students miss is an important learning opportunity—to reflect on their writing experience regarding this paper to enhance their critical reading, critical thinking, and self-evaluation skills. Unfortunately, this opportunity for reflection is not always encouraged by many teachers either. With limited class time, instructors prioritize the most urgent tasks. When papers are finished by students and graded by instructors, instructors tend to view them as “finished” papers and do not typically spend more time in class discussing these finished products.

Reflection, as an invaluable learning strategy, needs to be promoted in teaching. Though reflection takes place any time during the writing process, reflection at the postwriting stage empowers students because it urges them to recall the challenges they faced, the writers’ block they experienced, the obstacles they overcame, and the changes they made during the prewriting, writing, and rewriting stages. Such a reexamination of the tasks that students accomplished during those stages enables them to look back on the activities in which they were involved so that they can analyze the strengths and weaknesses of a paper, and consider the causes of such strengths and weaknesses. The objectives of writing classes usually include training students to communicate effectively with different audiences in different contexts, transforming them into critical thinkers and ethical citizens. If reflection promotes positive learning among students, in what ways do blogs, then, promote reflection in the postwriting stage?
Richardson argues “by their very structure, blogs facilitate what I think is a new form of genre that could be called ‘connective writing,’ a form that forces those who do it to read carefully and critically, that demands clarity and cogency in its construction, that is done for a wide audience, and that links to the sources of the ideas expressed” (28). The connective writing benefits the students because it connects them with a wider audience, motivating them since having a real audience in addition to themselves helps them see the value of this postwriting activity. Meanwhile, when students publish their reflections on the blogs, they can collaborate in smaller groups virtually. Such virtual collaboration occurs when students are connected to each other by adding classmates’ blogs, which creates a positive networked learning environment for each individual.

Penrod contends that “because a blog is a personalized learning environment in a real setting, it simulates a genuine writing activity. Student writers learn about writing by completing a real writing task. In many ways, the blog becomes an interactive teacher” (24). When students comment on their writing stages and the strengths and weaknesses of the paper, they need to understand what they wrote before they evaluate and eventually articulate such evaluation online. When they write, they are mainly writing to themselves, their group members, and their instructors. This group of audiences know the subject very well and, in fact, have gone through the writing process together, and has worked together to brainstorm, draft, and revise. Therefore, students do not need to provide detailed background knowledge about the assignment or the activities they did in class to contextualize their reflection. Such a specific audience challenges the writer to critique his/her writing and the writing process critically so that the reflective essay is meaningful to the audience. Under this learning circumstance, a reflection that lacks depth and good content will not appeal to such a specific group of audiences.
Apart from pressing students to reflect thoughtfully on their own writing and their writing processes, reflection at the postwriting stage also benefits peers who read the posts. Through knowing the specific efforts that their classmates made to improve the papers, students who work in the same blog group have the opportunity to understand what effective strategies the others have employed during the writing process, which gives them insights regarding how to approach assignments. Meanwhile, these peers benefit because blogs provide the opportunities for them to leave comments and receive comments. Reading blog posts exposes students to new ways of approaching assignments, effective strategies of revising, peer reviewing, and drafting self-reflection, which promotes collective learning and gives students the chance to learn from each other. The opportunity to comment on classmates’ blogs, in addition, encourages students to interpret the information on the blogs critically and offer constructive feedback, which also encourages critical reading skills and critical response skills.

One important feature of blogs is the flexibility to facilitate learning with little time or space constraints. Blogs create an online learning space available to students twenty-four hours and seven days a week unless technology breaks down, so students enjoy the freedom to post and comment on reflections at a time and space convenient for them. Furthermore, blogs are networked, which changes blogs into virtual hubs for expressing ideas, reflecting progress, and commenting on ideas/reflections. During this process of articulating, exchanging, and critiquing, students have been exposed to online writing and may be transformed into digital literates if they were not so previously. Penrod notices, “Blogs can show students how to present the right information at the right time for the right audience using the right discourse strategies” (47). Thus, blogs can prepare students to communicate effectively with different audiences in digital environments, promoting digital literacy among students.
The web that is woven through blogs, as a result, connects different life styles, different understandings of the same subject, different angles to approach the assignment, and different responses to the same post. However, blogs do not automatically guarantee effective connected learning. It is the dialectical and interactive learning environment advocated by feminist pedagogy that contributes to the establishment of a dynamic virtual network. The successful learning mentioned by Penrod is realized through promoting collaboration among learners, a key concept in feminist pedagogy. Such collaboration enhances positive learning outcomes fostered by blogs during the postwriting process. More importantly, it encourages reflective learning among students and helps them understand the importance of reflective learning. Blogs then create a learner-centered environment that allows students to learn at their own pace.

*Blogs as a Reflective Space for Instructors at the Postwriting Stage*

Similarly, instructors can keep blogs to write reflections on classroom teaching to assess how assignments or teaching pedagogies are received by students. Such a practice resembles what has been discussed in the previous section on students’ blogs. What I want to focus on is the potential that students’ blogs have to promote effective teaching on the part of the instructors. The blogs that students keep record their progress and reflections, and such a record can be used as an immediate and direct resource by the instructors. After reading what students encountered during the learning process, instructors gain insights into the needs of the students, which lays a good foundation for effective pedagogy. Good teaching is informed teaching. Without knowing what students need and how they respond to the class, instructors may teach without definite objectives. Through reading blog posts and interacting with students, instructors become aware of students’ reactions to course materials and classroom teaching; and such awareness promotes successful teaching.
The following examples illustrate the importance of the dialogues between students and instructors. I taught an intermediate writing class in Spring 2009 and encouraged students to post 250-300 word essays on blogs that they created for this class. I often asked students to post their reflections on articles and assignments to press them to read and write and to have a space to reveal learning experiences. This space worked as a channel for me to understand students through the dialogue this space cultivated between me and the students. During that semester, I saw two contradictory posts which are worth sharing below:

Blog Samples:

Sample I: This is Ridiculous!!! (subject of the blog post)

As I type this, we are being instructed on how to look up books in our library’s database. Am I the only person to find this completely elementary? Many of the students in this class are upper-classmen and already know the library’s database works. If you can figure out google, then you should be able to figure out a simple book search. No offense, but if you cannot figure out how to search and find books online, then you probably should not be in college. I understood how to look up library books in the first grade. I have been in college for two years and know how to find research sources. The concept of a research paper is not a novelty to me. Why are we wasting valuable class time on this instead of being taught something useful for once?

Sample II: Reflections on Spring Semester—Eng 207 (subject of the blog post)

As the end of this class, ENG 207, I have to ask myself, what benefits did I get from it? What are the new things I’ve learned? I believe this class was very useful when it comes to writing and thinking skills. I have learned about discourse communities and how to write for a specific one. This was particularly important since when I write I tried to
define my audience, but that is not easy and specific all the time. This class helped me define my audience better … Other ways this class helped me was in the aspect of researching papers properly. I really liked how we went over how to find good sources and evaluate them to see what makes up a credible source. This skill will help me in other classes and even in Law school when I am trying to research. If it hadn’t been for this class, my process of finding academic sources would be much different, and not as efficient as it is now.

It is not difficult to see the contrasting attitudes among students concerning the teaching of research skills in class. One student regards it as elementary skills that should not be taught in an intermediate level college English course; the other student, however, appreciates sharpening research skills in this class. Before reading these posts, I assumed that many students would not know very much about the advanced research skills that the course required and that I would need to help develop such skills in students. Seeing contrasting viewpoints relating to research skills changed my assumptions, helping to modify my teaching approaches so that students at different levels will both benefit.

Encountering such situations, instructors can survey students and examine how much help students need in researching databases. The comments that other students provide to these two blog posts also help instructors better understand students’ needs. Forming more effective teaching practices is an immediate result of connected blogs; what is more valuable is the genuine dialogue between instructors and students. If instructors encourage students to post honest reflections, differing opinions emerge and such an emergence will urge and motivate the instructors to reflect on their teaching practices. Richardson observes:
When overseeing student blogs, the teacher’s role becomes that of connector, not just evaluator. As you read what students write, try to respond by commenting back when appropriate. And link to the best student posts and ideas in the class blog. This is a very important habit to form. When you celebrate good work, or use students’ unique ideas to drive further discussion, it goes a long way to creating a community of learners. (47)

In short, students’ blogs reflect their joy and pain in taking the class, which creates a space for instructors to reflect on their classroom practices.

Weaving Blogs with the Feminist Pedagogy during Postwriting

My analysis of the potential of blogs to foster reflective learning and teaching is a conditional or situational discussion. I assume the endorsement of feminist pedagogy because without treating students as a source of knowledge and respecting the dynamics they bring to class, instructors may not implement blogs in teaching, let alone use them strategically to produce positive learning and teaching outcomes among students and instructors. Likewise, implementing blogs in teaching does not suggest feminist pedagogy. It is the interactive, democratic learning space that feminist pedagogy potentially fosters that cultivates blogs’ collaborative and interactive potential during the postwriting stage.

Blogs, or other Web 2.0 technological tools, do not promise democratic and collaborative learning. These tools need to be used appropriately to create an interactive, collaborative online learning space. The correlation between technology and feminist pedagogy in this context, has been an engaging area for many. Torrens and Riley say:

Feminism in cyberspace, we have discovered, fosters student knowledge, voice, cooperation, reflection, and autonomy—all central goals of our feminist pedagogy. Furthermore, we would like to think that a feminist pedagogy is
appropriate to foster substantive, legitimate, active learning and community building not only in cyberspace but across the curriculum as well. (232)

Torrens and Reiley reiterate how pedagogy impacts learning goals of classes and how feminist pedagogy promotes active learning. In an online undergraduate women’s studies class, their teaching objectives include “to provide students with knowledge of feminist theory, the history and development of women’s movements, and women’s contributions to culture and society in the United States and internationally” and “to help students recognize the cross-cultural/global context of women’s studies and comprehend issues affecting women in different cultural, economic, religious, ethnic, and class settings” (209). In order to fulfill their teaching goals, they asked students to write response papers and post them on the class discussion board to share their reflections on readings and ideas in the course. They discovered that students “learned to value each other as meaning-makers in the class” through the virtual BlackBoard (230), claiming that “cyberspace facilitates our goal of having students engage in reflective learning” (229).

Torrens and Riley required students to carefully read some texts to reflect on how the readings inspired them, encouraging them to critically consider “the issues and their relevance” to their lives and communicate their thoughts with audiences (232). To demonstrate the achieved learning outcomes, they cite a student’s final reflection on what she learned from the course: “I never knew that I could become so open-minded and well-informed about women’s issues” (231). In this instance, Torrens and Riley showcase “how the virtual space we create in our online women’s studies course fostered student learning and responsibility, while also challenging students to confront significant social issues affecting women’s lives and experiences (206). From students’ reflective writing, they advocate that “students have important, legitimate roles as meaning-makers in the classroom” (230). When students are
treated as knowledge makers rather than mere recipients, they are motivated to create new
knowledge. While actively reflecting on their learning experience, they have opportunities to
explore their earlier assumptions to form new perspectives.

When these reflections take place in a blog-mediated environment, students not only have
the opportunities to enjoy the freedom to share their earlier assumptions and new perspectives
with other members, but also enhance their writing skills in a digital environment. This sharing,
in turn, yields other dialogue, subsequently improving students’ communication skills. If
feminist pedagogy is not applied in a writing class that introduces blogs, the central goals of the
class may not be the fundamental goals of the class. In fact, when students’ knowledge or
learning styles are neglected by the instructors, their digital literacy skills or their needs to
cultivate digital literacy skills will be ignored.

The acknowledgement of students’ learning styles, and the effort to give students causal
blog writing assignments after class as a supplement to formal academic writing reflect,
knowingly or unknowingly, the feminist pedagogical approach that instructors try. Even when
blogs are chosen as a strategy to assist students in the postwriting stage, technology itself does
not automatically guarantee democratic and interactive learning. Only when students are treated
as the center of education, can instructors innovate their teaching practices and implement
powerful tools to assist their students. When feminist pedagogy is utilized, both instructors and
students are prompted to be active learners. The mission of the instructor is to promote active
learning among students, and in order to do so, students’ knowledge, creativity, reflection, and
voice should be the primary concerns of the educators; otherwise the innovative tools might lose
their power, and in the case of this chapter, the potential that blogs have to promote democratic
learning will be undermined.
When students reflect upon their learning experience through blogs during the postwriting stage, they have an opportunity to comment on course materials, class activities, learning curves, and other course-related issues. With limited in-class meeting time, students will not have enough time to exchange thoughts with peers and instructors. The space created by blogs enables them to share their thoughts with peers and instructors outside of class. The blog becomes a place for students to voice joy, doubt, happiness, and discomfort—to build a genuine dialogue among students and also a dialogue between students and the instructor. In addition, due to different learning styles or different personalities, some students do not feel comfortable speaking in class and treat after-class time as a very productive period for them to make progress. Whatever the circumstances, blogs bring different voices and perceptions to class participants’ attention, thus establishing a conceivably democratic and interactive learning space for all.

The participatory culture that blogs nurture among students with different learning styles and different personalities is recognized by Richardson. He argues:

> The Weblog is a democratic tool that supports different learning styles. For those students who might be more reticent in class, a blog gives them the opportunity to share in writing the ideas they may be too shy to speak. Everyone has a voice in the conversation, and all ideas, even the instructor’s, are given equal presentation in the blog. As students participate, they also take ownership of the space, and depending on how teachers frame that participation, this can lead to a greater sense of participation. (27)

Of course, the full participation and equal voice mentioned by Richardson is quite unlikely to be accomplished in practice. It is a utopian world imagined by people who do not realize that virtual
space resembles physical space in many ways. The oppression, bias, and inequality in the physical world also exist in the electronic space. Gruber claims that cyberspace is a “no less hierarchically structured environment,” verifying that it is “a space that can recreate and reinvent existing social and political injustices such as xenophobia, homophobia, racism, classism, and sexism” (201). The social and political injustices prevalent in the online space urge instructors to apply effective pedagogies to create an active and productive learning atmosphere. What Richardson brings up in the end shows the significance of the instructor’s role in framing participation, and this framing style, in essence, relates to teaching pedagogy.

The previous analysis shows ways that blogs, when used by instructors who practice feminist pedagogy, foster collaborative and democratic learning. Wajcman, however, sees the other side of the coin. She reminds people that “New technologies are malleable, but they also reveal continuities of power and exclusion, albeit in new forms” (54). Although blogs open up new spaces that promote active learning, they also exclude groups who do not have access to blogs or groups who feel intimidated about publishing online. Wajcman reminds us that in these sociotechnical networks, “it is necessary to recognize not only possibilities, but also constraints. Sociotechnical systems are not merely performed symbolically; they are also enacted materially” (54). The material constraints pose challenges to instructors when they enforce blogs, but if such constraints are treated with caution, they might positively impact students’ learning.

For instructors who practice feminist pedagogy, these material constraints and the social implications related to them can become excellent topics for students to discuss in and out of class. The deprivation of material or social access to the space created by blogs can also be used to promote discussions and reflections. These discussions eventually assist students to understand the social and economic factors in real life, helping them think beyond the surface
and be engaged in lively, practical discussions both online and face-to-face. Torrens and Riley further such an observation, announcing the positive impact technologies have towards both students and faculty. They believe that “cyberspace provides not just students with a chance to learn and improve their critical thinking and writing skills, but also faculty with a place to engage in reflective practices focused on developing new ways to increase student engagement and learning” (223).

The appropriate approach to utilizing technologies and the spaces they open up, then, impacts the teaching outcomes that faculty can achieve. In other words, technology needs to be utilized situationally to foster an opportune learning environment to maximize its benefits to users. The knowledge that faculty possesses and the teaching approaches applied impact the outcomes that technology brings to teaching. It makes it important for faculty to “discover themselves continually questioning and (re)developing our learning environments through the use of fully online and blended classrooms” (Torrens & Riley 223). Blogs, then, provide both teachers and students with an alternative space to foster their personal and professional knowledge through meaningful negotiation of power and communication of perspectives among participants.

This meaningful negotiation and communication, first of all, require instructors to be reflective learners. Ng, et al. claim that “teachers must be reflective so that they will always find purpose and direction amid a sea of changes and not implement changes merely for the sake of change or because of top-down policy directives” (201). With the emergence of various digital tools and with the trend to integrate technology in education, instructors need to be reflective and critical to use an effective pedagogy and design an effective curriculum to support students’ learning. Blogs, as a participatory and connective tool, actively connect instructors to other
participants in the class, allowing instructors who practice feminist pedagogy to act as guides, evaluators, connectors, and peers during students’ postwriting stage. Torrens and Riley conclude that “learning in cyberspace offers itself as an innovative and effective tool for the university as a whole, which will lead to more active classrooms, more engaged students, and, in the long run, to the ongoing development of responsible, articulate citizens” (232-233).

Blogs’ Pedagogical Challenges during Postwriting

Following the discussions above regarding the pedagogical implications of blogs during the postwriting stage, this section deals with blogs’ pedagogical challenges. Blogs, as a site for participants to share and create knowledge collaboratively, though potentially assist instructors and students to learn and teach actively during the postwriting process, still have their limitations. In order to read and post messages on blog sites, students need to have access to computers and the Internet during the designated time before the blog posts are due. A denial of such an access creates hurdles for students during the learning processes. In addition, viewing instructors as an important audience of the blog sites who are authorized to assign grades, some students may use blogs to say things that they consider pleasing to the instructors’ ears. This false representation of learning outcomes and learning experiences may deceive the instructor, misleading him/her to mistaken judgments and inaccurate reflection. As a consequence, blogs lose the appeal to establish genuine dialogues and constructive reflection.

Another challenge is related to some students’ negative attitudes towards blog assignments. College students are busy, and many of them work while taking courses. The after-class blog assignments can be regarded as extra or unnecessary work. In this case, students do not have much initiative to finish the blog assignments. Even if they do finish the blog assignments, they probably do not spend much time reflecting and producing quality work.
Another attitude among some students is the fear of public presence. These students do not feel safe sharing information and forming dialogues in virtual spaces. Their anxiety also lessens their interest in finishing the blog assignments. Such refusal or perfunctory completion of the blog assignments is unlikely spark engaging conversations, which may defeat the purpose of utilizing blogs in course design.

Facing these challenges, instructors need to design a curriculum that stimulates students’ interest in learning with blogs to fulfill the mission advocated by feminist pedagogy: promoting democratic, reflective, and interactive learning among class participants to maximize students’ chance for success. The following section proposes several strategies to build a viable curriculum to promote reflective learning at the postwriting stage with the help of blogs.

Integrating Blogs to Promote Postwriting

Acknowledging the promises and constraints of blogs makes it necessary to discuss the curriculum that promotes reflective learning at the postwriting stage. “Writing a blog is instant-publication, which is its own special kind of creativity” (Pipher 200). However, how to cultivate such creativity and build appropriate curriculum to promote positive learning experience deserves attention. Whithaus raises an important question:

Given these uses of blogs as writing places where students and teachers reflect on their writing, make connections between college courses and activities outside of their writing class, and employ associative methods of proof and structure rather than the more typical thesis-support-conclusion forms of writing looked for by AES software, what possible connections are there for writing teachers and test developers to consider? (126)

Whithaus urges composition instructors to inspect the connections between technology and
writing proficiency, between in-class learning and after-class activities. The implementation of blogs is a strategy that composition instructors can use for such purposes. As has been discussed earlier, feminist pedagogy gives instructors and students much room in using blogs for effective learning and teaching. The following are some of my recommendations for instructors to use blogs to enhance effective learning:

**Group work**

Assign students to work in groups and ask them to reflect on their writing experiences at the postwriting stage periodically and to comment on group members’ blogs regularly so that they can respond to each other and collaborate. One way that social networks are created is through linking and viewing writing. The reflections and responses can inspire interesting dialogues among students or between students and the instructor. These dialogues can occur in class when students are encouraged to share their thoughts and claim their authority on blogs. Shrewsbury reveals, “by focusing on empowerment, feminist pedagogy embodies a concept of power as energy, capacity, and potential rather than as domination” (168). Feminist pedagogy regards classrooms as spaces of tension, safety and collaboration. It is through acknowledging and addressing tension through group blog discussions that safety and collaboration can be achieved. Only when tension and oppression are openly discussed in and out of class, can students feel safe to uncover their understanding about various subjects, sharing the knowledge they own and their perceptions of truth. As Chapter Two indicates, feminist pedagogy encourages students to confront differences and reflect upon oppression collaboratively to promote social justice and seek truth. Tougaw discovers that “the blogging media shapes the development of their writing in powerfully ways, foregrounding audience and facilitating the development of voice and inquiry in tandem with each other (257). The role the web plays in
promoting student-centered pedagogy has been noted by Miller: “Now I would say that the web has a central role to play both in the smooth running of a writing program and in the delivery of a transparent, student-centered pedagogy” (33). This student centeredness drives students to write multi-modal texts on blogs, take pride in the work they produce online, and carry on engaging dialogues in this virtual space. The healthy and dialogic learning style in the class and after the class becomes a reality due to the effort to emphasize reflective learning, the writing process, and the use of technology.

*Peer Review Work*

When students are assigned to work in groups, the grading assignment is an effective way to motivate students and challenge them to reflect on their own learning experiences and those of others’. At the postwriting stage when students submit their final drafts and await the grades, instructors can ask students to grade peers’ final drafts as a pedagogical approach to facilitate postwriting. The grading of papers requires students to understand the assignments, know the grading criteria, and be able to draft comments and assign grades professionally. When students work together on this grading assignment, they can collaborate and post their grading criteria on blogs.

Graupner, Nickoson-Massey, and Blair argue that class blogs “represent a powerful site for knowledge-making. The shared responsibility of maintaining a digital, public log of classroom activities and conversations provides students the opportunity to experience research from multiple subject positions” (18). The grading assignment gives students the authority to act as instructors, blurring the authority line between students and instructors, subsequently empowering students by asking them to play different roles. A classroom that incorporates feminist pedagogy, contrary to a patriarchal classroom, disrupts hierarchies and control, inviting
Zhao 135

different parties to make decisions. Torrens and Riley recognize that the essence of feminist pedagogy constitutes, “a desire to empower, struggle against oppressions, create and engage a community of learners and activists, and to expand our students’ awareness, learning capacities, and command of course materials” (211). The peer review work executed/realized through blogs potentially empowers participants by encouraging differences in opinions and collaborative efforts to make knowledge.

A Class Blog

Richardson emphasizes that “The true potential of blogs in schools comes when students and teachers use them as publishing tools. And to me at least, the best way to fully understand the potential of Weblogs as a teaching and learning tool is to become a blogger” (43). Being an active blogger is an approach that educators who practice feminist pedagogy will take because it combines teaching and learning, decenters the instructor, and promotes interesting dialogues. If the instructor creates a class blog, he/she can post assignments, ask students questions, share his/her own reflections, and encourage students to cross-comment. The instructor’s effort to create a blog and share it with all the students makes it possible for students to regard him/her as an equal participant in the class, which shortens the distance between students and the instructor, helping to disrupt the hierarchy between students and the instructor.

In addition, the instructor’s personal class blog becomes a site for public dialogue, blurring personal and public space. This mix of public and personal fosters reciprocal learning, transforming a blog as a place for communicating with others, developing a social network, and building rapport. This student-centeredness is an important aspect of feminist pedagogy, aiming to produce an active classroom. According to Nash, “an important component of an active classroom is the existence of strong rapport between the teacher and the students, along with
effectively working relationships among the students in the class” (8). Creating this class blog helps create a positive student-teacher relationship and encourage students to cross comment to hear different voices.

Yancey advises students and instructors to practice reflective learning/teaching. In *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*, she recommends:

> If we want students to be reflective, we will have to invite them to be so, may need to reflect with them. Reflection, like language itself, is social as well as individual. Through reflection, *we tell our stories* of learning: in the writing classroom, our stories of writing and of having written and of will write tomorrow; in other classes, other stories, often told through writing, too. (53)

Yancey suggests that instructors implement reflection in the teaching of writing to encourage students and instructors to share personal and social stories. The group work, peer review work, and class blogs recommended above work as possible ways to motivate discussion, which eventually engages students and instructors in the democratic and productive learning environment that feminist pedagogy aims to achieve. The texts shared on blogs connect various social and individual stories, largely eliminating the possibility that certain individuals or groups act as or be regarded as superior. With the implementation of blogs, the class can be “where both teachers and students move beyond traditional boundaries to work cooperatively to create knowledge in the classroom” (Torrens & Riley 207). Learning to transcend boundaries created due to social, economic, racial, gender, or class differences is a goal that teachers who practice feminist pedagogy wish to attain, and such a goal is attainable in virtual spaces created by blogs during the postwriting stage.
Conclusion

Postwriting, as a stage often neglected by students and instructors, provide both sides an opportunity to reexamine their teaching and learning processes. Yancey specifies that “reflection is a critical component of learning and of writing specifically; articulating what we have learned for ourselves is a key process in that learning—in both school learning and out-of-school learning (although I’m not sure the two can be—or should be-separated)” (Reflection in the Writing Classroom 7). For her, “reflection is dialectical, putting multiple perspectives into play with each other in order to produce insight” (Reflection in the Writing Classroom 6). The exposure to multiple perspectives in composition classes enables and necessitates collaboration, a skill to which Bonk calls educators’ attention. He asserts,

There is no mistaking the societal trend over the past couple of decades from a highly competitive focus, in schools and in industry, toward the need for greater collaboration and teamwork skills. … For a couple of decades, educators have been promoting computer-supported collaboration as one solution to this challenge. (249)

With the emphasis on both reflection and collaboration in education, the ability to reflect in a collaborative environment becomes a skill that college students should master and demonstrate.

With a discussion on the importance of reflection and collaboration, this chapter explores ways that blogs, as an exemplary Web 2.0 tool, may encourage positive learning during the postwriting stage while proposing ways that blogs can assist reflective and interactive learning during this stage. Recognizing the social aspects and teaching postwriting from a social perspective promote positive learning experiences among students. The collaboration generated by blogs form a learning community for the students and instructor. When this community is
composed of participants from different ethnic, racial, and gender groups, the encouragement of
diverse opinions heightens the effectiveness of the blogs. Only when different voices and
opinions are valued and respected by participants of the community, can they be exposed to the
differences and allow their own opinions to emerge out of these differences.

Bell hooks states her understanding of teaching with feminist pedagogy: “The classroom,
with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility” and within “that field of possibility we
have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an
openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to
move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom” (207). The
transition from a possibility to a reality is enabled when minds are open, authorities challenged,
and tension explored. Choosing blogs as the medium increases this possibility due to the
democratic and interactive features discussed earlier.

Equally important, blogs themselves do not promise successful teaching of postwriting.
They need to be applied from the perspective of feminist pedagogy to maximize its potential for
collaborative and reflective learning. When blogs are used for the postwriting stage, the different
reflections shared by students need to be treated equally while being commented on, critiqued,
and evaluated. As a tool that aims to promote connectivity and democracy, blogs have a potential
in academia and should be related to composition teaching to reveal its strength to transform
students into critical, reflective learners. Equally important, the discussion of integrating blogs
into postwriting stages does not suggest that the blog is the only tool appropriate for this stage.

Other Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, Facebook, Google, and podcasts all invite
collaboration, and their potential in the postwriting stage can be examined in similar ways. In
fact, other than postwriting, many Web 2.0 tools connect students and empower them during the
prewriting and writing stages. After an extensive discussion of the interactive, democratic, and collaborative learning environment that some Web 2.0 technologies potentially create when feminist pedagogy is implemented, the next chapter concludes with the implications and limitations of my discussion about Web 2.0 tools, the writing process, and feminist pedagogy in this dissertation.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

Gerben observes, “Web 2.0 sites provide the clearest form of widely-available potential for collaboration than any technology preceding it. By providing users with ready-made communities who interact primarily via textual production, these sites offer undeniable overlap between social and academic fields of thought.” Web 2.0 sites, thus, blur the line between academic and social arenas, connecting individuals, communities, and production. Such a connection enables collaboration, providing a space where participants can communicate across borders. This interactive communication among various groups attracts the attention of educators, who then explore the potential of Web 2.0 in classrooms. The incorporation of technology in writing classes started in the 1980s; educators in the composition field continue to tackle various concerns regarding the use of technology with a permanent goal—improving students’ composing skills. With the advent of new Web 2.0 technology, composition scholars should continue to address the changes Web 2.0 has exerted on students’ learning styles and explore its social implications on teaching and learning. Attending to the promises and challenges that Web 2.0 embodies in the writing classrooms, this dissertation builds on the past and present discussions of computers and writing.

Regarding writing as a reflective, collaborative, and social process, I have investigated the extent to which Web 2.0 technology promotes democratic and collaborative learning among class participants, training students to be critical thinkers while preparing them to compose competently in various modes. I have argued for the pedagogical promise of Web 2.0 tools for composition teachers who practice innovative teaching in first-year and intermediate college writing courses. With its focus on the writing process, this project emphasized YouTube, Google Docs, and blogs as exemplary tools to showcase the positive possibilities that Web 2.0 technology can bring to the prewriting, writing/revising, and postwriting stages while addressing
the constraints of Web 2.0 technology. Reiterating that technology itself is not a promise of successful teaching, I recognize the challenges that technology imposes on teaching writing, and thus weave Web 2.0 technology with feminist pedagogy to show the collaborative, interactive, and democratic learning environments that Web 2.0 technology has the potential to create during the writing process.

As indicated in Chapter One, many college students are digital natives who display comfort working with digital tools. To serve these digital natives, instructors need to consider their pedagogies carefully and, in this case, the dissertation has chosen to weave Web 2.0 with feminist pedagogy to maximize the benefits of such technology. A comprehensive exploration of the potential of Web 2.0 tools in the teaching of writing acknowledges and respects students’ skills and interests, empowering and transforming them into skillful learners in this participatory culture. The following sections highlight the issues addressed in the previous chapters, discuss the implications of this research for instructors and writing program administrators, and then propose future research to further this area of interests.

Issues Addressed

This dissertation is a pedagogical discussion, aiming to empower instructors and students so that both sides acquire the teaching/learning skills essential in the digital age. The earlier chapters employed specific tools to argue for alternative ways of teaching composition in the new digital age. Though most Web 2.0 technology was initially created to invite more users through its intuitive design, building an inclusive and democratic platform for participants to connect, converse, and collaborate is not a given. Due to the diverse population to which Web 2.0 technology appeals, groups with various opinions treat the virtual environments that Web 2.0 creates as a space to exchange thoughts. The differences represented by this population add new
dynamics to teaching; however, the inclusion of Web 2.0 in the teaching of writing does not guarantee collaborative and productive learning and teaching.

The previous chapters argue that online learning spaces, especially spaces enabled through Web 2.0 technology, were considered ideal learning environments for students due to the democracy and diversification it intentionally promotes. Educators in the composition field had hoped that virtual spaces would create safe havens for students. Nevertheless, the virtual spaces were also characterized with conflicts just like the physical spaces. The emergence of diverse voices and groups in writing classrooms through integrating Web 2.0 technology not only attracts students as well as instructors due to its potential, but also challenges them because of the new issues that they need to address.

In the new learning environment supported by Web 2.0, as explained throughout this dissertation, oppression likely exists. Such oppression stifles voices, which subsequently disables democratic and interactive dialogues. Addressing such oppression during the writing process propels the instructors to examine its causes to gain an understanding of what groups are marginalized/centered, who are liberated/oppressed, and who are empowered/depowered in the new learning environment. Meanwhile, probing into the causes and means of such marginalization/centering, liberation/oppression, and empowerment/depowerment helps tackle the conflicts, therefore, establishing effective pedagogies to empower students.

Feminist pedagogy is noted for its effort to identify and address oppression to promote safety and equality. Due to my effort to combine the nurturing side and the confrontational side that different feminist theorists have initiated, my chapters examined how the power of different tools can be increased if this nurturing and conformational approach is taken. Feminist pedagogy theorists acknowledge that students confront issues that make them feel uncomfortable
(Boostrom; Holma & Freed; Van Soest). However, Holley suggests, “A classroom in which safe
means no conflict, and that no one is ever feeling challenged or uncomfortable is likely to be a
classroom in which little learning and growth are occurring” (52). Therefore, helping students to
find and express their voice in conflicting environments contributes to the growing of students.
Hooks asserts, “One such space has been the feminist focus on coming to voice—on moving
from silence into speech as revolutionary gesture. Once again, the idea of finding one’s voice or
having a voice assumes a primacy in talk, discourse, writing, and action” (*Talking Back* 12). The
key to empowering the students is to break the silence and enable them to talk honestly.

Manicom stresses, “Feminist pedagogy is teaching with a political intent and with visions
of social change and liberation—not simply with an aim to have (some) women ‘make it’ in the
world of (some) men, but to learn to act in and on the world in order to transform oppressive
relations of class, race, and gender” (366). The integration of feminist pedagogy when
introducing Web 2.0 technology during the writing process aims to enhance genuine dialogue,
promoting the establishment of a safe and interactive learning space that includes rather than
excludes some groups.

The possible alienation and silencing of certain groups makes feminist pedagogy a viable
choice due to its potential to empower the marginalized so that they can possibly gain voice,
equality, and social justice. The social, collaborative and reflective feature of the writing process
needs to be taught in a way that maximizes these features. Instructors who practice feminist
pedagogy during the prewriting, writing/revising, and postwriting stages can guide students to
use Web 2.0 technology as a medium to discuss social inequalities and use conflicts as a strategy
to invite voices from different groups through sharing experiences, exposing them to different
perspectives, encouraging collaborative work, and building writing communities.
In order to substantiate the power that different Web 2.0 technology imposes on the different stages of the writing process, Chapters Three, Four, and Five analyzed how YouTube, Google Docs, and blogs conceivably contributed to interactive, democratic, and collaborative learning in the prewriting, writing/revising, and postwriting stages under the lens of feminist pedagogy. These chapters described the advantages and limitations of each given tool, arguing for its power to facilitate the specified stage. The interactive and visual features of these Web 2.0 tools engage students in dialogues so they will invent ideas, draft texts, and reflect on revisions. During this process, instructors who practice feminist pedagogy are likely to motivate students to participate in social dialogues that engage diverse voices. The implementation of feminist pedagogy encourages instructors to be aware of the knowledge and power that students own, to recognize students’ learning curves, and to support shared power in teaching.

The sharing of authority in pedagogical practices encourages diverse voices from mixed populations, fostering genuine dialogues among class participants by promoting a non-threatening atmosphere. Students can communicate via Web 2.0 tools both in oral or written forms to maintain dialogue. The dialogues fostered by the tools from a feminist perspective tackle the complex issues regarding access, race, gender, class, which challenges students’ assumptions and stereotypes. These discussions on complex issues, which challenge assumptions and expose students to other ways of thinking/living, push them to rise above their assumptions. Holley asserts that “Being safe is not the same as being comfortable” (50). A comfortable environment may not promote learning. Holley summarizes earlier feminist scholars’ views, stating that “To grow and learn, students often must confront issues that make them uncomfortable and force them to struggle with who they are and what they believe (Boostrom 1998; Holma & Freed, 1987; Van Soest 1996)” (50). The exposure to differences can
transform students into more critical citizens with a more acute awareness of diversity. In this interactive and transformative process, students sharpen their awareness of audiences, and learn to choose the appropriate rhetorical strategies to fit different rhetorical situations.

Though tension occurs in classrooms, especially when students are encouraged to discuss some complex issues, it does not mean that students cannot reconcile differences. Instead, the outcomes of these conflicts depend on how tension is approached in the classroom. Feminist pedagogy does not negate the existence of tension; rather it encourages students to confront these conflicts, and their unbiased reactions to these conflicts foster collaboration and conversation among participants. The accomplishment of such collaboration prompts us to rethink pedagogy to engage and empower diverse student populations.

Implications for Instructors

The earlier discussions of weaving Web 2.0 and the writing process with feminist pedagogy proposed possible pedagogical strategies to approach new technology and use it to improve students’ writing. Connors and Glenn claim, “Knowledge of the composing process (or process writing) is now considered fundamental information for writing teachers, and integral to their teaching” (123). Hence, teaching this fundamental knowledge in the Web 2.0 age calls for pedagogical innovations, and as “agents of change,” instructors are the ones who can make change happen. The discussions in this dissertation have the following implications for writing instructors: understanding and implementing technology in teaching, experimenting with new technology, and advocating feminist pedagogy.

Implication I: Understanding and Implementing Technology in Teaching

Yancey notes, “The process of writing—and teaching writing—is in the midst of a tectonic change. The change is in the new technological tools writers use, and in how these tools
affect composition and the relationship between writer and audience” (“Using Multiple Technologies to Teach Writing” 38). In fact, Yancey defines the goal of teaching as “helping writers develop fluency and competence in a variety of technologies is a key part of teaching writing in this century” (“Using Multiple Technologies to Teach Writing” 38). This dissertation addressed the pedagogical value of Web 2.0 to tackle such change and to also train students to compose in digital modes competently. Admittedly, the introduction of technology into writing classrooms adds new dynamics to the writing process, making writing a more interactive and collaborative act that includes many social voices. Such complexities urge instructors to reexamine and redefine their teaching goals, displaying effective pedagogies to meet the needs of students and overcoming challenges incurred due to the changes in technology.

Effective instruction derives from being familiar with high-tech tools and also having a thorough understanding of their pros and cons. Adam and Hamm argue, “Only when teachers are able to keep up-to-date and are capable of applying a thorough knowledge of effective instruction can we be sure that high-tech tools will actually help children to reach new plateaus of thinking and learning” (126). Recognizing the potential that technology can bring to students, instructors need to familiarize themselves with new technologies to assist students during the writing process. Similarly, Lundin recognizes the significance for teachers to “reexamine and redefine their goals for the classroom, asking and demonstrating how established teaching practice can be stretched and strained” (433). Fraiberg agrees with Ludin, arguing that it is urgent for instructors “to understand their relationship to pedagogy, learning environments, and computer technology” (422). Adam, Hamm, Lundin, and Fraiberg all purport the significance of understanding and employing technology to promote writing instruction. Thus, understanding
and implementing technology in writing classrooms is a skill expected from 21st century writing instructors.

Implication II: Experimenting with New Technology

To understand and employ technology effectively in writing instruction, instructors are urged to experiment with it. Familiarity with the tools and an understanding of students’ needs may help instructors choose effective pedagogical strategies. Before implementing these strategies, instructors need to experiment with Web 2.0 tools to understand their merits and limitations to make sound choices when deciding which tool to use and how to use it in composition classes. Because technology advances quickly, it is essential that instructors watch for changes and commit to a lifetime of learning.

Being active learners and predicting what the field needs remain imperative for composition instructors. The constant innovation of technology makes learning all technological tools nearly impossible. However, investigating some of these tools and analyzing the learning patterns may aid instructors professionally. Selfe says:

The time is over when teachers can acquire one kind of literacy—usually, in the case of English composition teachers, alphabetic literacy—and then refine their understanding over a lifetime. Rather, as Deborah Brandt suggested, they must become adept at learning new literacies, at accumulating the understandings of different kinds of literacies—on an ongoing basis. (“response” 256)

Trying new tools, becoming familiar with their features, and understanding their advantages and limitations may help instructors implement a more effective writing pedagogy. In order to achieve this goal, instructors can create assignments that connect digital and traditional modes of writing, build network/online learning communities, and give students the opportunities to
explore assumptions.

Implication III: Advocating Feminist Pedagogy

Lovejoy, Fox and Wills state, “As teachers of college writing, we share the common goal of making learning accessible to our students, and we would like to see our writing program move in the direction of a more inclusive pedagogy, providing we can offer other teachers a clear sense of what we can achieve by addressing language differences in the classroom” (263). What they call for here is an inclusion of language diversity in classrooms, and this dissertation promotes such diversity in a broader sense, a diversity of opinions, voices, subjects, learning styles, genres, and writing modes.

The essence of this dissertation encourages a pedagogy that recognizes the interests and needs of all students. Literacy’s recognition of collective intelligence, active participation and collaboration is an expected skill of students. Hence, this participatory culture calls for a pedagogy that decenters authorities and challenges oppression, discrimination, and inequality. With an emphasis on collective intelligence and democratic creation of knowledge, instructors need to implement pedagogies that support these concepts, recognizing students’ abilities to create knowledge and treating students as the center of their teaching, which are key concepts of feminist pedagogy. Blair, Gajjala, and Tulley claim that “Cyberfeminist practices must be fostered through a rich blend of multimedia training, cultural critique, and community action” to ensure that “students are not merely consumers of digital rhetoric but rather are producers of rhetorics” (10). Therefore, in order to promote active and collaborative learning environments, cyberfeminist instructors can introduce multimodal composition, engage students in community-based learning activities, and encourage critical critiques among students.
Implications for Writing Program Administrators

Though instructors significantly influence the learning objectives, it is through the Writing Program Administrators (WPAs) that institutional change can take place. As this dissertation shows, the effective introduction of YouTube, blogs, and Google Docs in writing instruction opens new spaces for the teaching of writing; an investigation of the Web 2.0 technology during the writing process has the following implications for WPAs: the inclusion of digital literacy in curriculum, professional development of instructors, as well as logistics and pedagogical innovation.

Implication I: The Inclusion of Digital Literacy in Curriculum

As mentioned in Chapter One, literacy has been defined as the ability to write in a variety of media; CCCC has declared that the curriculum of composition includes a literacy of print and screen. Therefore, WPAs need to address how this new definition changes the writing curriculum and encourages instructors to design course materials to positively foster students’ skills in composing in multiple modes. Every writing program is unique with its history, mission, and practices, indicating the importance for each program to promote digital literacy in a way that works best under given contexts.

Though promoting digital literacy becomes common in various writing programs, WPAs should give instructors the freedom to choose whether to add digital literacy in their curricula or not. Many instructors show low comfort level or diffidence using technology, and a forced inclusion of digital literacy might cause negative effects in classroom practices. In other words, WPAs should not mandate instructors to introduce digital literacy unless instructors demonstrate competence and comfort integrating it into their teaching practices.
**Implication II: Professional Development of Instructors**

To develop an effective teaching pedagogy to welcome a new-media mediated curriculum, instructors’ individual effort to learn and experiment with new tools and to design course materials is an important strategy. However, a rigorous program that supports and trains instructors will prepare them on a larger scale and more instructors benefit from such training. Here, the larger scale refers to the material and human resources that programs can access. The WPAs need to carefully consider who trains their instructors, how they are trained, and build networks within the program and with other programs to prepare its instructors to teach multimodal writing.

The professional development of instructors largely contributes to the success of the innovative endeavor to integrate digital literacy into writing curricula. According to “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition” on the Council of Writing Program Administrators website, it has become clear that “writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing.” The “WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition” outlines that by taking first-year composition courses, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts
The outlined skills clearly indicate that digital literacy has been a goal of first year composition teaching. To prepare instructors who demonstrate different levels of competence and willingness to use technology and teach students digital literacy skills, WPAs need to survey and research their program instructors to discover the most efficient ways to expose and educate them regarding the introduction of digital literacy.

Lastly, due to the importance of assessment in the teaching of writing and also the proposed change of curriculum, WPAs need to consider inventing new assessment strategies and feasible ways to implement these new strategies. A program cannot blindly accept technology and urge its instructors to integrate it into classrooms. WPAs need to investigate their universities’ student population, teacher preparedness, and feasibility before requiring all instructors to teach multimodal composition and use technology in classrooms.

*Implication III: Logistics of the Pedagogical Innovation*

The innovation of pedagogy involves the whole campus; it is not just a matter within the English department or the writing program. Fraiberg declares, “Integrating computer technology into classrooms demands the participation of all sorts of people on campus” (422). In other words, the incorporation of technology into curricula design is a project that needs participation and attention from many on campus, and it is not just the instructors’ or just the administrators’ responsibility. Rather, it is a project that matters and affects everyone. To fulfill the goals of innovative teaching, and in this case, the incorporation of digital tools and digital rhetorics, WPAs need to carefully calculate the resources needed and propose detailed and feasible plans to relevant parties to realize the goal of integrating digital literacy in college writing courses.

*Future Research*

This dissertation is an endeavor to scrutinize the pedagogical possibilities of the Web 2.0
technology. Its value lies in its exploration of a theoretical juxtaposition of the fundamental concept, the writing process, and a key concept, digital literacy, through a powerful pedagogy. The future research that can come from this dissertation include an empirical study of Web 2.0, an investigation of social networks in academic arena, an understanding of online instructional media, and implications for writing instruction and assessment.

*An Empirical Study of Web 2.0*

This dissertation is a theoretical discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of employing Web 2.0 technology to promote learning outcomes advocated by feminist pedagogy. To vitalize teaching practices, scholars need to investigate Web 2.0 from a combined perspective, both practical and theoretical. That said, an empirical study of web 2.0 technology supplements the unexplored areas in this dissertation.

Empirical research discussing how Web 2.0 technology is used and received provides concrete teaching practices to instructors. Likewise, this research also offers possibilities to inspect the learning outcomes achieved through learning in virtual spaces when feminist pedagogy is employed. Blair, Gajjala, & Tulley argue,

> Just as we attempt to develop both physical and virtual spaces to foster feminist values and practices within classroom contexts, there are limitations, in part because of the inevitable constraints of technology in fostering dialogue and collaboration, even as researchers come together to create more egalitarian spaces for all students. (9)

Though some of the constraints of technology and the subsequent pedagogical restrictions have been addressed in earlier chapters, the potential and limitations of virtual learning spaces should be further investigated to guide future teaching practices. Web 2.0 is
noted for its potential to connect, collaborate, and democratize, and the next generation of technology might be more interactive and democratic. A detailed and thoughtful empirical study reveals its potential from the perspective of hard data, shedding lights on the use of Web 2.0 in teaching of writing, which not only benefits current teaching practices but also future teaching that may employ newer technology.

An Investigation of Social Networks in Academic Spaces

Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and wikis are tools originally designed to help users network. Their collaborative and participatory features attract many young people to participate in virtual social networking, which inspires educators to discover ways to integrate them into teaching. To continue this important research, we can further investigate the impacts of social network in academia. Specifically, students’ resistance/acceptance/indifference to these social network tools in formal school learning is worth investigation. By blurring students’ academic and personal lives, educators attempt to aid students to find the pleasure of composing. However, such a well-intentioned endeavor is not always appreciated by students, which was mentioned in Chapter Four when some students expressed reluctance to use Google Docs for academic purposes. A detailed examination of the erosion of academic and personal borders presents challenges and possibilities of integrating Web 2.0 into curricula. As a network technology to foster collaboration and democracy in education, Web 2.0 also informs teaching with the evolution of new tools. Students’ reactions to the integration of social networking tools into composition teaching informs scholars and educators of the possible scenarios, so that they can invent curricula that motivate students.

A Critical Understanding of Online Instructional Media

According to Hewett, “There are nuances to synchronous instruction that requires
systematic and ongoing investigation of online teaching methods and results. Such investigation can then suggest practical applications for developing instructor training methods that address the hybrid nature of synchronous instructional conferences as well as how to prepare students to facilitate their own learning” (23). Online instructional media has its constraints and promises, and further study of this area will show both sides of teaching writing with new media, painting a detailed picture of what is expected while employing these tools.

Another interesting subject to explore is the possibilities of Web 2.0 technology in online/distance education. Due to the rising cost of education and also scheduling conflicts, more students choose to take online classes. The integration of Web 2.0 into online writing classes can be beneficial because it might inform us about ways to build strong communities through computer technology from a new perspective. Though there have been discussions of distance education in the field of computers and writing, a systematic study of the implications of Web 2.0 in distance education is much needed.

Implications for Writing Instruction and Assessment

Assessment is key in the teaching of writing that guides teaching practices. With the emergence of collaborative digital writing in public spaces, the traditional notions of authorship and literacy have been contested. This transition into the new digital writing space calls for serious investigations of how knowledge created by Web 2.0 technology is evaluated. Due to changes in audience/reader relationship, expression modes, collaboration style, and teaching methods, etc., texts produced with Web 2.0 are presented differently. How to assess the effectiveness of these products subsequently guides instructors in real teaching, which makes it a significant area to study. Equally important, we need to research the assessment of teaching
effectiveness in the digital environment. Therefore, establishing assessment criteria for work produced and also teaching practices deserves scholarly attention.

*Writing Process Revisited*

To enhance teaching effectiveness, instructors need to generate powerful curriculum to facilitate a mediated writing process. The writing process is a concept formally accepted in late 1970s, but the writing environments have changed so much that a serious study of a computer-mediated writing process is urgently needed. Though the writing process is an old concept, it still influences the teaching of writing enormously. Redefining the writing process lays theoretical foundations for instructors, thus providing them with tangible research findings to guide their teaching practices.

Though various technological tools have been implemented to facilitate the writing process in college writing classrooms, systematic studies of how computer tools have impacted the writing process are limited. Therefore, the writing process needs to be revisited so that innovative teaching practices are built on solid ground, and the writing process theory can effectively guide the teaching of writing in new genres.

*Afterwords*

Rice claims, “When we ask ‘What should college English be?’ I want to respond, ‘College English should be new media’” (127). He explains:

Making that claim is not a rejection of current work but rather a desire to draw attention to one aspect of new media, the network, whose role in shaping and sharing information continues to increase within the media world we inhabit. In particular, the network manifests itself online on the Web, via social software in stand-alone and Web applications, through email, within databases, within
marketing, through public policy, and among other related new-media applications and experiences. (127)

If college English is new media, the investigation and application of new media becomes an important component of the teaching of writing. The earlier discussions in previous chapters, implications of the dissertation, and proposal for further research delineate the efforts to pursue effective ways to teach the writing process.

The influence of new media is pervasive. With its advancement, literacy has been redefined, thus the teaching of writing faces new promises and new challenges. The digital natives today might become digital immigrants, and may need to migrate to another digital land to survive. As a digital immigrant who has successfully migrated and has been identified as a digital native by many, maybe, one day, I will ask my son or my grandchild a question, “How do I watch this Chinese episode on …?” You never know.
Works Cited

http://computersandcomposition.osu.edu/html/history.htm


http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/convergence/


http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/bartonlowe/barton-lowe.htm


Chandler, Sally W., Joshua Burnett, and Jacklyn Lopez. "On the Bright Side of the Screen: Material-world Interactions Surrounding the Socialization of Outsiders to Digital Space."


http://www.bgsu.edu/econline/colbyet_al/colbyet_al.htm

Crafton, Robert E. "Promises, Promises: Computer-assisted Revision and Basic Writers.


http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/podcasting/


http://www.educause.edu/ECAR/TheECARStudyofUndergraduateStu/163283>.


http://filebox.vt.edu/users/bhausman/information/femped.html


Jarratt, Susan C. "Feminism and Composition: The Case for Conflict." *Contending With Words*:


---. "Toward a Richer Theory of Feminist Pedagogy: A Comparison of 'Liberation' and 'Gender' Models For teaching And Learning." *Journal of Education* 169.3 (1987): 91-


“NCTE Guidelines on Multimodal Literacies a Summary Statement Developed by the Multimodal Literacies Issue Management Team of the NCTE Executive Committee.”


http://www.ncte.org/edpolicy/multimodal/resources/123213.htm


http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html


Rohman, Gordan “Pre-Writing the Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process.” College Composition and Communication 16.2 (1965): 106-12.


Selfe, Cynthia L. “Response: Paying Attention to Digital Media: three feminist Corollaries.” *Webbing Cyberfeminist Practice: Communities, Pedagogies and Social Action.* Eds.
Zhao 173


Zhao 175


http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/WhippleC&COline/start.html


Consent Form

Dear Students:

I am writing with a request to cite your work in English 207 in upcoming presentations and research I will do on the topic of Web 2.0 and the Writing Classroom.

Your permission is voluntary and there is no penalty for declining. Your grade will not be affected, and I will not review these permission forms until after the semester is over and your final grade submitted.

Your work will not be utilized in any negative form and will only be used to provide an example of the types of student projects that evolve from the use of these tools in the classroom.

Your work will be cited anonymously and your identity will not be revealed, unless you provide me permission to do so.

Please check the one that applies:

__________ I give permission to cite my work anonymously

__________ I give permission to cite my work using my name

__________ I do not give permission.

Signature_________________ Date_________________

Thank you very much!

Ruijie Zhao