**Recommendations and Food for Thought when starting your own blogging project…**

* Experiment with a personal blog first. This will help you be prepared for challenges students may have.
* See what other people are doing on their blogs. It will give you a window into the possibilities. You can also bring in examples to class as models. Have students find a blog on a subject they like and use the content for reading activities. They can respond to articles they read as well. You can also use models to discuss the format of blog posts, including titles, tags, picture captions, etc.
* Many blogging sites are free. Some have paid options. Usually the paid options offer more storage for uploaded media and have a wider range of customization options for the page format. However, there are lots of options for customizing free Wordpress accounts, so test those out first.
* Consider whether students will post with their full names, their first names only, or a username. If working with younger students, or if privacy/appropriacy/maturity may be issues, you can keep the blog private, so it can only be read by approved readers. The approved readers are invited by the admin. The readers could be the students themselves, their peers in other classes, family and friends, etc.
* It is always possible as the admin to remove or make a post private if the content is not appropriate. Making the post private has the advantage of saving the student’s writing, but removing it from the public site if necessary
* Know your priorities and plan accordingly. You may need to make sacrifices.
* Usernames/accounts. Decide on universal or individual. Again, priorities. Don’t underestimate how much time it can take to create accounts, approve new users, verify student email accounts, etc.
* Choose a URL that is easy for students to remember. This is also important if using a universal user account and password
* Prepare additional support materials . How will you walk students through the process? It’s very helpful to include screenshots in instructional handouts. What vocabulary do students need to understand to navigate the site? Take the vocabulary used on the editing screen into account. How much of it is important for students to understand? How will you handle that? Individually? As a class activity? On a case by case basis?
* Incorporate other forms of media, photos, videos, polls, etc. Lots of options.
* Error correction: what is the best approach for your situation? This could be a presentation in itself.
* Publishing immediately vs. saving drafts. In one case, I had students publish their pages immediately, since those pages were easier to find in the main dashboard page of our account. Using drafts meant navigating through several windows. It was more than some students could follow at the beginning. In the other case, the higher level students didn’t struggle as much with the vocabulary or computer use, so they found it easy to use the drafts. In that case, when they were working but didn’t finish at the end of class, I encouraged them to use that function.
* Encourage creativity!
* Be patient…wait for the spark to catch fire! Students may initially stick to the class assignments, but once they become more familiar with the process and accustomed to using their page, they will (probably/possibly) start adding their own content. Be patient and let it unfold.

I am happy to be in touch with anyone who has questions about this topic. My contact information is below:

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