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Print Version A blog is a kind of social media tool that allows one to share ideas with authentic audiences and to engage those audiences in conversation. Most blogs look something like journals, with a series of “posts” appearing on the blog in reverse chronological order (newest posts at the top, older posts below). Blogs can address any number of topics, from travel to food to parenting to politics, and they can be written by single authors or by groups of writers. Typically, blogging software is very easy to use, but also flexible enough to allow for customization in both style and structure. Although people often think of social media as a space for non-academic interactions, blogs can be helpful tools for instructors interested in enhancing their students’ communication skills and increasing their students’ investment in learning. Blogs can be spaces for informal or formal writing by students, and the capacity of blogs to support multiple forms of media (images, videos, links, and so on) can help students bring creativity to their communication. Most blogs includes tools for commenting and discussion, enabling students to engage their ideas in conversation with others, either within their local learning communities or on the open Web. Student writing is often seen by just one person on the planet (their instructor), which can make writing assignments feel like “busy work.” The dynamic interaction between writer and audience that blogs facilitate can help students see real value in their academic writing and take that writing more seriously. Moreover, the public, persistent nature of blogs can help students practice more integrative learning, finding connections among their personal, professional, and academic experiences. When writing for blogs, students can experiment and interact digitally in a relaxed and low-risk environment. Blogs can be an excellent balance between the rigor and structure of a formal written assignment and the freedom to experiment with ideas and arguments. Instructors interested in teaching with blogs face a number of decisions for incorporating blogs in their courses. Here are three of the most important decisions for teaching with blogs: What dynamic will there be between blog and classroom?  
The online writing environment should act as an extension of the classroom. Make this interaction between the digital learning environment and the classroom clear to your students by expressing how you expect the blog work to contribute to the course’s overall learning goals. What blogging platform will you use?  
The learning curve with an educational blog use can be steep. From choosing a platform to designing the interaction structure, there are many options that arise from using blogs. Making these decisions can be time consuming. Will your students’ blogs be public or private?  
Consider if you want outside community members to comment, view, and possibly interact with your course blog. It is also important for you to understand the rules of your institution and determine if photos on blog pages or student writing samples are releasable to the public.