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| Challenge Area | Key Problems | Strategies to address challenges |
| Developing technical confidence and competence | * **Gaining access** * Navigating the dashboard * Finding others’ blogs * Uncertainty around visibility and privacy levels | * Set up accounts and blogs face-to-face in a computer lab * Set regular tasks and deadlines as checkpoints * Monitor individuals’ activity closely in early stages * ‘Buddy-up’ less confident with more experienced and/or confident users * Use group activities to ensure participants gain experience as both an author and a subscriber/commenter * Ensure activities have a relevance and purpose *beyond* learning to use a blog – this helps participants to ‘over-ride’ frustration with the technology |
| Sharing and open practice | * Overestimation of the likelihood of negative judgement * Reluctance due to self-consciousness or perfectionism * Underappreciation of the value of one’s contributions to others | * Acknowledge challenges of sharing while emphasising the positive aspects (learning benefit to self - through feedback - and others) * Show examples to emphasise positive and supportive interactions in similar contexts * Build in opportunities for low-stakes practice * Encourage use of ‘preview’ feature before posting * Emphasise ease of editing post-publication * Use peer grading exercises to demonstrate that others often value our contributions more highly than we do ourselves |
| Communication and collaborative working | * Preference for engaging passively rather than actively with others’ posts and ideas | * Use regular peer assessment of participation * Show examples of interactions that have clearly impacted on understanding * Build in synchronous online communication opportunities (e.g. webinars) to promote interaction between participants * Allow & encourage participants to meet face-to-face and document conversations on their blogs as an alternative or ‘stepping stone’ to actually conversing online * Acknowledge that online communication may feel strange or ‘false’ at first and that effective communication in this mode (like all things) takes practice |
| Writing in an online forum | * Difficulty communicating complex ideas succinctly and/or in simple terms * Difficulty finding a written ‘voice’ that does not sound inappropriately academic, formal or structured * Discomfort with writing generally, including dyslexia | * Acknowledge challenges of writing online while emphasising the positive aspects (value of trying to explain a concept in simple terms, time to analyse, reflect and check things through before posting) * Allow & encourage participants to meet face-to-face and document conversations on their blogs as an alternative or ‘stepping stone’ to actually conversing online * Emphasise options for alternative modes of communication; show examples of posts with images, sketches, video and audio |

*Lessons learned from introducing blogging to teaching staff in the context of a compulsory professional development programme*