Title of lesson: Using Blogs in Composition Class, or Writing for an Audience Who Is Not My Teacher

Suggested grade: 11/12

Approximate time needed to complete lesson: This is a recurring lesson.

Learning objective(s) and significance of lesson:
(Why is this lesson important in the development of your students' skills or knowledge? What do you want students to learn or be able to do? What “best practice” does this lesson incorporate?)

My objective for this ongoing lesson is to get students writing for a real audience. Their primary audience will be their classmates, but their blogs are public so they can reach a larger audience if they choose to attract it. I find that a live audience has a positive influence on students’ engagement with their own writing.

Brief summary/outline of lesson:
(What steps do you take to implement this lesson in your classroom? Where is this lesson located in the school year or unit—beginning, middle, end? Does this lesson scaffold or build to a culminating assessment or demonstration of learning?)

Students will build a blog and write at least one post per week that demonstrates their understanding of a writing concept they are practicing in class that week. Students will comment on each classmate’s blog least once during the quarter. Students will assess their own blog and their classmates’ blogs twice during the quarter and write brief reflections after each of these “blog crawls.”

Related Resources:
(What technology, articles, books, or supplies do you recommend?)

Like most people, my students all have easy access to Google Apps. We use Google’s Blogger as the platform for this activity. I have found a lot of helpful guidance at ReadWriteThink.org and Langwitches.org. I use this rubric to facilitate a discussion with my students about what makes a blog appealing: http://langwitches.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/blogging-rubric1.jpg

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:
I use blogs as an informal writing space, and as such, anything a student might do in a notebook or journal can be done on a blog. Teachers looking for more formal, polished digital writing assignments could certainly articulate those requirements to students and scaffold that writing activity as necessary.

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