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Little Rock, AR 72205. *The Big 'BUT' about Blogs in Online Calculus*. Preliminary report.

Sometimes as teachers we must ask students to do things they do not like. For instance I require Blog writing in my online Calculus classes where I use writing prompts. At semester's end, every student comment received basically stated "I hated the Blogs, BUT I learned so much from writing them." I will present how blogs and discussions are used to foster deep understanding and reflection. Many students are afraid to "speak up". The solution is to provide a place where students feel safe to ask questions, interact and post their ideas. Weekly prompts in the Blogs start the student's thought process and the discussions build from those. The amazing responses incorporate historical and amusing comments and hyperlinks. The students come to realize how mathematics makes an impact on their lives and learn to think in new ways. The discussions are graded by a rubric based on quality not quantity. There is a stark difference between the students' first few posts and their mathematical explanations versus their posts at the end of the semester. One student comment reinforces this: "Writing the Blogs gave me the Blogs BUT they forced more interaction with the material. Admittedly I have a stronger grasp of the material because I had to do them." (Received September 06, 2011)