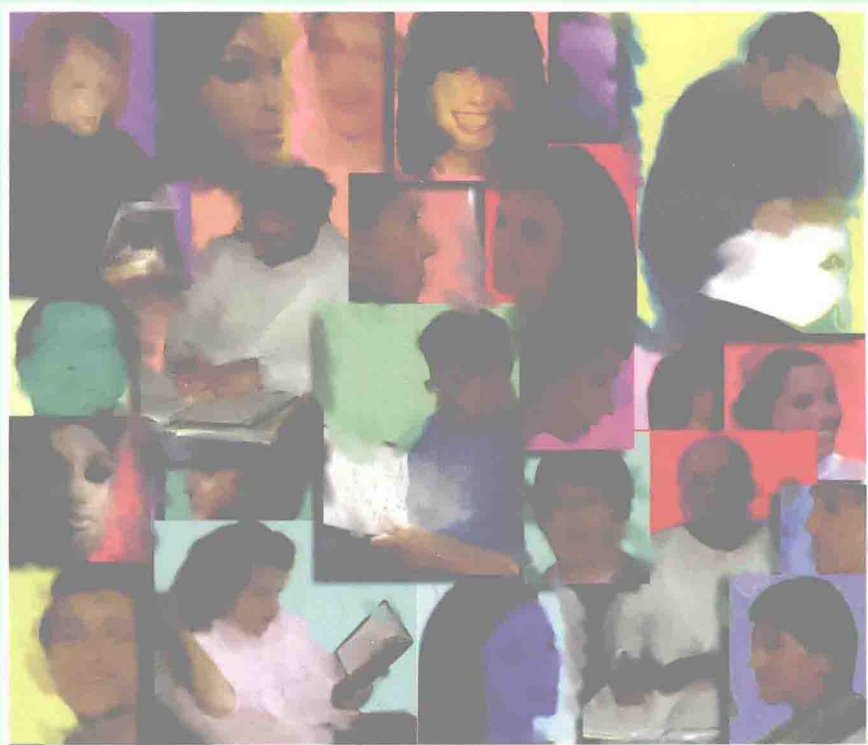


Responding Voices

A Reader for Emerging Writers



Jon Ford & Elaine Hughes

Responding Voices: A Reader for Emerging Writers

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*RESPONDING VOICES:
A Reader For Emerging Writers*

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About the Authors

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Preface to the Instructor

OVERVIEW

Responding Voices is a thematic anthology designed to bridge the gap between the developmental and transfer-level composition course through motivating the student to produce writing that is powerful and committed in its voice, ideas, support, and structure. The book encourages students to write in response to a range of essays, stories, and poems, as well as take strong positions on controversial contemporary issues related to the major themes of the text: education, family, gender, health, nature, work, and community. Although the essays and fictional texts are fairly short, ranging from one to four pages, both the professional and the student readings in each chapter will challenge students' comprehension and engage their critical thinking abilities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOOK

- Warm, engaging tone that invites student involvement
- Two full-length introductory chapters, one on the reading process and the reading journal; one on the writing process, collaboration, and peer editing
- A total of forty-seven professional writings, including essays developed using narration, description, illustration, process, definition, comparison, classification, causal reasoning, and argument, as well as seven poems and seven short stories
- Twenty-eight student essays, four per chapter, written in response to the chapter themes and to the professional writings in the chapter

- Special emphasis on journal-keeping, with numerous journal writing suggestions throughout the book.
- Consistent organization pattern that makes the book easier to use and helps keep focus on student writing
- Apparatus that invites critical thinking, close reading, small-group discussions, and strong written response
- Rich mixture of different types of writing represented: shorter argumentative pieces, some from current periodicals, mixed with quality memoir, fiction, and poetry
- Longer end-of-chapter activities that help students make connections among readings and develop longer, independent projects

APPARATUS

The apparatus for *Responding Voices* focuses on close reading, critical thinking, and group work, inviting informal written responses in the reader's journal as well as more formal essay responses. The same apparatus is used for the student essays as for the professional writings. Each selection in the text begins with a brief headnote that gives information about the author's background, themes, and concerns. After the reading selection there is a suggestion for freewriting in response to the major issue of the story; often a personal response is asked for. The freewriting is followed by three "Responding through Interpretation" questions; these call for doing a close reading of the selection and for drawing some conclusions about the writer's ideas. The "Responding through Discussion" questions, which come next, focus on evaluation and further study of the text. Many of these questions are designed for collaborative, small-group work. Finally, two options are provided under "Responding through Writing" for either longer journal responses or essays. Our suggestions give students a wide range of writing types to practice, from stories and narratives to formal argumentation. Another aspect of our apparatus that instructors and students should find helpful is the use of initial journal writings in response to the chapter theme in each of the seven chapter introductions. In addition, each chapter ends with several suggestions for longer projects that involve either doing outside research or creating connections among the themes and issues raised by several of the writers in the chapter.

PROFESSIONAL READINGS

In preparing this book we tried to select and arrange thematically what we felt to be the most stimulating and enjoyable readings we could find, re-

ardless of period and genre limitations. We let ourselves be guided by our tastes as well as by what we have received in feedback from students. Rather than including only recent selections, we have tried for a balance between newer essays that probe often controversial issues and more familiar fictional works with strong thematic concerns, such as Tillie Olsen's "I Stand There Ironing," Shirley Jackson's "Charles," and William Carlos Williams's classic story, "The Use of Force." We have included texts from writers from a wide range of cultural backgrounds—Amy Tan, Richard Rodriguez, Roberto Alvaro Rios, Alice Walker, and Maya Angelou, among others—trying to create a reader that is both multicultural as well as universal in its concerns. We hope that the works we have selected will make reading a pleasure for students in the course, as well as a valuable learning experience.

FOCUS ON STUDENT WRITING

Perhaps the most unusual feature of *Responding Voices* is its emphasis on student writings: Twenty-eight student essays are included in the book, four for each chapter. We have never particularly liked the way student essays are presented in textbooks, which usually treat student works simply as examples of correct or incorrect writing, as necessary stages in the writing process. In contrast, we have designed our entire book to focus on students as "voiced" authors writing *in response* to other authors and to ideas; thus each chapter is arranged as a kind of conversation among the student and professional writers included. We begin with two short professional pieces on the theme of the chapter and then provide two student essays that comment on the chapter issues from their own perspective, often disagreeing with one another as in a typical energized class discussion. At the end of each chapter, two student essays respond to a professional writing immediately preceding. These student writers take diverse perspectives, some agreeing with the professional author's perspective, some dissenting, each one bringing unique experiences to enrich the discussion. Although we think the quality of the essays we have included is generally high, the essays certainly are not flawless; thus we invite your class to debate the ideas and writing strategies used in the student essays, not to perceive them simply as models to imitate.

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL

An instructor's manual will be available for use with *Responding Voices*. It will provide possible responses to the interpretation and discussion questions in the book, additional suggestions for writing and discussion, and

some helpful ideas for working with students both individually and in groups to enhance their reading skills and to develop strong student essays. Computer tips will also be available for instructors working in electronic classrooms or in colleges with strong computer support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank all the people at McGraw-Hill who encouraged us with this book: Lesley Denton, who urged us to submit the original proposal; Allison Husting, who helped us develop the concept; Phil Butcher, who worked out the contractual issues; and English editor Tim Julet, whose patience and flexibility were invaluable assets as we revised and shaped the book. We would also like to thank David Damstra for his assistance in production and design, Judy Duguid for her copy editing, as well as Santi Buscemi and Marjorie Ford for their suggestions in the early stages. Special thanks is also due to the students whose work is featured in *Responding Voices*: All of them worked hard on their essays, and this book wouldn't have been possible without their efforts.

Finally, we would like to thank our reviewers for their insightful comments and observations: Judith Branzberg, Pasadena City College; Alan Brown, University of West Alabama; Liz Buckley, East Texas State University; Sandra Stefani Comerford, College of San Mateo; Jo Devine, University of Alaska; Jack Halligan, Johnson Community College; Chris Hayes, University of Georgia; Ellen King, Vincennes University; Janet Marting, University of Akron; Suzanne Norton, Norwalk Community Technical College; Peggy Porter, Houston Community College; Richard Prystowsky, Irvine Valley College; Christie Rubio, American River College; Stephen Straight, Manchester Community-Technical College; Joseph Ugoretz, Borough of Manhattan Community College.

To the Student

We have based *Responding Voices* on three concepts that have helped guide us in the writing of this book, and we encourage you to keep these concepts in mind as you go through the book, both as a reader and as a writer:

First, becoming the writer you want to be involves writing often—not just when you are in class or when you have a particular assignment due. Because we know firsthand the value of writing regularly, we have asked you to keep a journal in order to develop your potential as a writer.

Second, reading can become one of your most inspiring teachers. Through reading a wide variety of writers and thoughtfully relating what you read to your own life, you will find enrichment, both in content and in style, for your writing. Your journal, in which we've asked you to record your responses to the readings, can serve as a permanent resource of ideas for pieces you might want to write.

Third, becoming a writer means having something to say and believing in your right to say it. You are a unique individual with a wealth of experiences and observations from which to write. You already have something worthwhile to say, and you need to believe in yourself as someone who deserves to be heard.

Responding Voices is primarily a sourcebook of readings that we have organized around seven topics: *education, family, gender, nature, health, work, and community*. We have chosen these topics because we feel that they have particular relevance for you at this stage of your life when you are enrolled in college and possibly making decisions about your future. We hope

that the readings we've selected will give you information and ideas that will become important to you as you go along your current path.

Each of the seven chapters of readings contains eleven selections: five professional essays, four student essays, one short story, and one poem. Some of the professional pieces are complete essays, chapters from a book, or magazine or newspaper articles. Others are excerpts from books. In the headnotes to each section, we've indicated which pieces are excerpted from a longer work and give you the title of the book in case you would like to find it and read further. We've also included one poem and one short story in each of the units.

The four student essays in each chapter are of two types: Two are general essays about the topic, and two are student responses to one or more of the professional essays in the chapter. We've included them for your analysis to illustrate the wide range of possibilities for student essays. We think you can learn something about writing your own papers by looking at both the strengths and the weaknesses of the student papers.

After each reading a freewriting assignment gives you an opportunity to respond quickly to the piece. Then three short groups of questions and suggestions follow:

Responding through Interpretation

Responding through Discussion

Responding through Writing

These questions should help you in responding more fully to the piece. At the end of each chapter (and also at the end of the book) a section entitled "Making Connections" gives you an opportunity to look at several of the pieces in the unit and make connections among them through writing.

Although *Responding Voices* is primarily a reader, we have included two general chapters at the front of the book—one to help you with your reading and one to help you with your writing. You may find that your instructor will assign the chapters in a different sequence from the way we have ordered them; each set of readings can stand on its own. We hope you and your instructor will select from *Responding Voices* what you need, when you need it. Beyond that—and most of all—we hope that you will have an enjoyable time with both your reading and your writing as you study this book and practice the writing activities we have included.

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