RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

Bender, Sheila. *Creative Writing Demystified*. New York, NY, Mcgraw-Hill, 2011.

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There are positive and constructive ways to respond to other authors' writing. This involves highlighting strong parts, conveying how a piece makes you feel, asking questions and even offering suggestions. This will provide the basic structure for on-line responses.

Read this little story excerpt:

"She poured herself a glass of milk and went to sit on the sofa. She did this every night when she had finished her homework. Her two cats always sat with her. One was big, one was small; one was young, one was old. Tonight she was particularly bored of her current book, which wasn't very good; she murmured a complaint to the older cat and got up to find another. The cat groaned in complaint about being disturbed. She carefully examined the books on the shelves, trying to find one she hadn't read yet. Finally she decided to re-read *Little Women*, one of her old favorites. This particular volume had belonged to her mother and always reminded her of how much her mom had liked to read, too. A sound from the bedroom made her look up. Both cats had heard it, too."

Now, let's review this piece:

1. **VELCRO WORDS (phrases that stick to you)**
2. **How does it make you feel? Do you wish you felt different? Respond to each part there may be emotion.**
3. **Curiosity. Where do you want to know more? I wonder…**
4. **Suggestions. What could make this more interesting, provide twists or irony, improve with symbolism, and what future direction could this be taken.**

RESPONDING TO LITERATURE – some reasonable responses

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Now, let's review this piece:

1. **VELCRO WORDS (phrases that stick to you)**
* "both cats had heard it too", murmured a complaint, carefully examined
1. **How does it make you feel? Do you wish you felt different? Respond to each part there may be emotion.**
* Boring at first,
* Suspenseful at end
* Wish would have felt more at peace, elated
* More relief, relaxation, rewarded
1. **Curiosity. Where do you want to know more? I wonder…**
* What was the noise.
* How old is she
* Why can't her mom read anymore?
* What book did she not like and why?
* Why so attached to the book, and why not choose one she hadn't read?
* What was her \name?
* What type of milk? Why does she like milk?
* What homework, going to night school, student of young, teacher, job?
* What type of cats, which one is big one.
* What was reaction of cats to noise?
1. **Suggestions. What could make this more interesting, provide twists or irony, improve with symbolism, and what future direction could this be taken.**

More description, more Velcro words, create a mood. More specific about everything, create the environment, vary sentence openers.