Reading Guide for Sommers “Responding to Student Writing”

Pages 148 through the first paragraph on 149 discuss why teachers comment on student drafts and the importance of these comments.

**What surprised you in this section?**

The large paragraph on page 148 describes the research experiment Sommers conducted to study instructors’ comments on student writing.

**Do you agree with the description of the instructors’ tone in written comments in the last sentence of the paragraph? Have your instructors written comments that sounded “hostile” or “mean-spirited”? (149).**

The last paragraph on page 149 through the paragraph beginning “The Process of Revising” on page 152 presents a set of connected problems in teacher comments to students.

**What are the main problems in this section? What does Sommers mean by appropriate? Have you**

**received comments like the ones she describes here?**

The paragraph beginning “The second finding” on 152 through the paragraph beginning “The problem here” on page 154 presents another category of problems in teacher comments to students.

**What are the main problems in this section? What does Sommers mean by rubber stamp? Have you received comments like the ones she describes here?**

**Are there other kinds of unhelpful comments you’ve experiences that Sommers doesn’t mention in either of the two previous sections?**

The large paragraph beginning “our summary finding” on page 154 explains why teachers give the kidn of comments they give.

The last paragraph on page 154 repeats what the authors sees as the most distressing problem.

Pages 155 through the second to last paragraph argues what Sommers believes teacher comments on drafts should look like and what they should do.

**What should these comments looks like? Have you received comments like the ones she describes here? Were they indeed helpful?**

The last paragraph of the article powerfully reiterates why teachers comments matter and what the goal of these comments should be.

**In what ways do YOU think teacher comments matter and what do you think teacher comments should help students do? In what ways is your answer similar to and different than Sommers?**