

Responding to Student Writers

Nancy Sommers

General Housekeeping

- Everyone will be muted upon entry to the Webinar
- The webinar will be recorded. By participating in the webinar, you are agreeing to be recorded.
- If you have questions during the presentation, please use the **question** or **chat** function.
- In light of current circumstances, we will highlight Bedford resources available to assist with online teaching.
- At the end of the webinar, we will have a live Q&A option. If you want to ask a question at the end of the webinar, raise your hand and you will be unmuted to ask your question.



Nancy Sommers



From Bunker Hill Community College students:

Encouraging comments=

“someone who walks with you”

“someone who is on the same
page with you”



From Bunker Hill Community College students:

Discouraging comments= “something has been taken away from you”

“feels like you don’t have anything left”



From Harvard College students:

“Too many comments are written to the paper, not to the student.”

“An effective comment offers one lesson at a time.”

How to respond online with a *less-is-more* approach

Connect comments to specific draft goals

Assignment goals provide a context for our comments. We are more likely to avoid a deficit model of responding—that is, looking for what is wrong in a draft—if we show students how their drafts meet specific draft goals.

How to respond online with a *less-is-more* approach

Connect comments to patterns

When we identify a pattern in a draft, both strengths and weaknesses, we don't need to comment on every instance of the problem. A pattern—*Strong transitional sentences* or *Too much summary, not enough analysis*—focuses students' attention on manageable chunks.

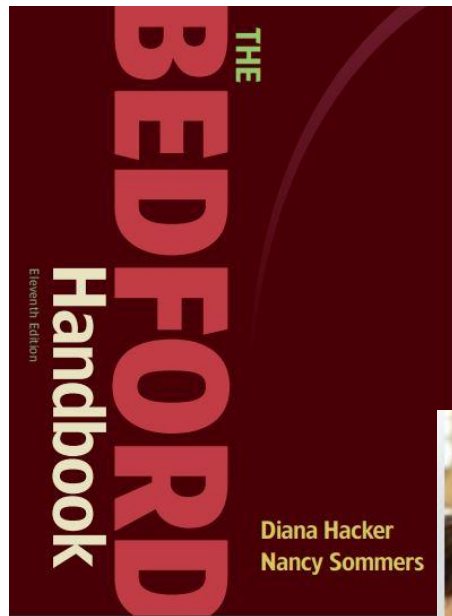
How to respond online with a *less-is-more* approach

Connect comments to students' specific questions

Asking students to submit a Dear Reader letter provides an easy method to offer specific advice. When students initiate the conversation, they are more willing to accept feedback. When students ask us their questions—*Is my evidence persuasive? Are my paragraphs organized?*—we save time and become more effective in responding.

Q & A with Nancy Sommers





How can we help you?

Nancy Sommers

nancy_sommers@gse.harvard.edu

Michelle Clark

Michelle.clark@macmillan.com

Vivian Garcia,

Marketing Manager, English

Vivian.Garcia@macmillan.com