

This appropriation of the text by the teacher happens particularly when teachers identify errors in usage, diction, and style in a first draft and ask students to correct these errors when they revise; such comments give the student an impression of the importance of these errors that is all out of proportion to how they should view these errors at this point in the process. The comments create the concern that these "accidents of discourse" need to be attended to before the meaning of the text is attended to.

It would not be so bad if students were only commanded to correct errors, but, more often than not, students are given contradictory messages; they are commanded to edit a sentence to avoid an error or to condense a sentence to achieve greater brevity of style, and then told in the margins that the particular paragraph needs to be more specific or to be developed more. An example of this problem can be seen in the following student paragraph:

wordy - be precise *which Sunday?* *comma needed*

Every year [on one Sunday in the middle of January] ↓
 tens of millions of people *word choice* cancel all events, plans
 or work to watch the Super Bowl. This audience in-
 cludes [little boys and girls, old people, and house- *wordy*
 wives and men.] *Be specific - what reasons?* Many reasons have been given to ex-
 plain why the Super Bowl has become so popular that *and why*
 commercial spots/cost up to \$100,000.00. *what spots?* One explana-
 tion is that *awkward* people like to take sides and root for a
 team. *another what?* Another is that some people like the *spelling* pageantry
 and excitement of the event. These reasons alone,
 however, do not explain *too colloquial* a happening as big as the
 Super Bowl.

You need to do more research.

This paragraph needs to be expanded in order to be more interesting to the reader.

In commenting on this draft, the teacher has shown the student how to edit the sentences, but then commands the student to expand the paragraph in order to make it more interesting to a reader. The interlinear comments and the marginal comments represent two separate tasks for this student; the interlinear comments encourage the student to see the text as a fixed piece, frozen in time, that just needs some editing. The marginal comments, however, suggest that the meaning of the text is not fixed, but rather that the student still needs to develop the meaning by doing some more research. Students are com-