SHARING CONTROL:

EMANCIPATORY AUTHORITY IN THE POETRY WRITING CLASSROOM

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What is the benefit of a poetry writing classroom in which a teacher relinquishes much of the authority she normally holds and provides it to students? What can a teacher learn from student experiences in a traditional creative writing classroom, and translate this knowledge to help students think about not just methods of learning, but also their perceptions of authority within the classroom?

Beyond the boundaries of the classroom, the idea of emancipatory authority is a worldview which encourages the empowerment of the public to embrace different roles of authority, and take action as members of the local, regional, and global community. Within the classroom, emancipatory authority provides students and teachers with opportunities to create an atmosphere where both parties take responsibility for the development of education in one community, as well as creating a diverse environment where voices and ideas blend, and without the traditional classroom hierarchy.

To explore the benefits of emancipatory authority as it pertains to the poetry writing classroom, I will examine it in three areas: discourse, student response to written work, and implementation of the ideas delivered – paying specific attention to the elements of student/teacher roles, assessment, and the structure of the writers' workshop. In this chapter, surveying the literature of education theorists and professionals, I present the benefits and challenges of a shared authority classroom. In my second chapter, conversations with students about different aspects of authority, I examine student opinions on specific elements of emancipatory authority: students leading discussion and presenting materials, choosing texts, having input on the weight of assignments, and the impact of the workshop. And in the final chapter, I will present a shared authority

curriculum in poetry writing based on the information revealed in the previous chapters. The conclusion will provide creative writing teachers new viewpoints and ideas to critically examine their own methods of teaching.

Emancipatory Authority – A Personal Experience

During my undergraduate education at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, like many other beginning students, I switched my major a few times until finally settling into the English department as a creative writing major. I began my academic career in communications, and later journalism, and though I loved the skills associated with nearly every aspect of writing and rhetoric, there was something about each of the respective majors that was too restricting for my educational needs, and to be honest, I expected little to be different when it came to English. This was not the case. Rather than my introductory creative writing teacher telling me how a poem or short fiction should be written, he instead introduced the material and more or less let me at it, with most restrictions left at the door. In many cases this would be through a discussion about an assigned poem or poetry format. Discussions would largely be carried by the class – rather than the teacher outlining the poem's specific themes or writing techniques, we as a community would talk about our experience reading the poem, how we interpreted the poem, and our likes or dislikes that came from it. There really would be no right or wrong answer, and in the instances where we, the class, had no answer, the instructor would prompt us into discussion, with probing questions about ideas we might have missed. This experience was not limited to my first introductory class – I found it to be commonplace to have a number of options, in regards to structure or content, when a poem was assigned, and if the options didn't fit for me, I could create my own. I had a

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voice in some of my creative writing courses that I did not feel I had in previous courses. Through the writers' workshop, or general discourse in my classroom with my peers, I could raise an issue or idea about a story, written by myself, a peer, or a published author, and not be dismissed as merely a student; rather, I was treated as a peer by everyone in the classroom, the teacher included. When the time came to gather up my poems and short fiction into a portfolio, there generally were no mandates on what I was to include: I was given an active role, and responsibility in choosing the works that determined my overall grade for many of my courses.

Once my classes ended, their impact remained. I graduated, got married, and moved from Indianapolis to Boston, all within the span of three months. As I moved from the academic world to the "real" world, I carried with me the empowerment I was given in the classroom. Though still a learner (and to this day, still a learner), I was also an educator, and a strong voice on issues when it came to my professional and societal peers.

Little did I know at the time, or for that matter, several years after my undergraduate work, that I had been exposed to emancipatory authority.

What is Emancipatory Authority?

I first encountered the term emancipatory authority while reading Patrick Bizzaro's "Reading the Creative Writing Course: The Teacher's Many Selves," in Wendy Bishop's and Hans Ostrom's collection *Colors of a Different Horse.* Emancipatory authority was a term first coined by the education theorist Henry Giroux in "Schooling as a Form of Cultural Politics: Towards a Pedagogy of and for Difference." In that text, Giroux describes emancipatory authority as follows:

The concept of emancipatory authority suggests that teachers are bearers
of critical knowledge, rules, and values through which they consciously
articulate and problematize their relationships to each other, to students, to
subject matter, and to the wider community. Such a view of authority
challenges the dominant view of teachers as primarily technicians or
public servants, whose role is primarily to implement rather than
conceptualize pedagogical practice…In other words, emancipatory
authority establishes as a central principle the need for teachers and others
to critically engage the ideological and practical conditions which allow
them to meditate, legitimate, and function in their capacity as authority-
minded intellectuals…This means that such educators are not merely
concerned with forms of empowerment that promote individual
achievement and traditional forms of academic success. Instead, they are
also concerned in their teaching with linking empowerment – the ability to
think and act critically – to the concept of social engagement and
transformation: that is, teaching for social transformation means educating
students to take risks and to struggle within ongoing relations of power in
order to be able to envision and promote those unrealized possibilities in
the wider society that point to a more humane and democratic future.
(138)

As Giroux describes, one of the main goals of emancipatory authority is for the

teacher to empower students beyond the traditional academic definition of success. To

clarify the definition further, emancipatory authority is a practice not limited to the

classroom; instead, it is a worldview which in practice empowers members of society to

embrace responsibility and take action as active citizens in the local, national and global

community. The key to emancipatory authority lies within the societal impact it can

engineer. With this in mind, the poetry writing classroom could be considered an ideal

environment for a student's first exposure to the idea of emancipatory authority in a more

controlled setting. Instead of providing vocational training, the liberal arts ideally

encourage students to model in the classroom behaviors and practices that will allow

them to become participating citizens. The purpose of student empowerment then

becomes twofold – not only does it require students to take more responsibility for their

education, but it also allows for a significantly more enriching environment as the

students explore, deliver and question socially-relevant materials that would traditionally be handed to them through a lecture.

To further identify the benefits of a pedagogy in which students share the power of creating the course curriculum with the teacher, it is important to understand the history of the idea of emancipatory authority in a broader sense: particularly, how components of the pedagogy have been used, or challenged, in the past by other educators.

In addition to Giroux's definition, the idea of emancipatory authority (though not the term) in an educational setting is often attributed to the Brazilian exile and theorist Paulo Freire. In *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire uses an economic metaphor while discussing education in what he considers its traditional format. Freire employs a mercantile metaphor – essentially, students begin an investment by enrolling in a college or university; the teacher "deposits" the knowledge, while the student gains "interest" through listening and building on the accrued knowledge. In the end, assuming the student's "investment" was sound, and the teacher's "deposits" were reliable, the student has an ROI in the form of a grade, or terminally, a degree. Freire calls for a revolution in classroom pedagogy, moving away from the traditional "banking" method, and more towards a model in which the learner should be more of an equal in the classroom. One of the overarching problems with the banking method is that it assumes that the teacher is no longer able to learn. Further, the banking method also presupposes that students are absorbing information as it is presented by the teacher, and that they are interested either in the topic, or the delivery method. However, Freire's proposed model instead

challenges the teacher to also undertake the role of the learner, and students to embrace the role of the educator.

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on "authority" are no longer valid; in order to function, authority must be *on the side of* freedom, not *against* it. People teach each other, mediated by the world, by the cognizable objects which in banking education are "owned" by the teacher. (Freire 80)

However, as Giroux points out, when teachers decide to undertake a Freirean pedagogy, they often misappropriate Freire's work, doing so by approaching a pedagogy more from the standpoint of a "colonist" than a "border-crosser."A specific example of this would be a teacher at a well-funded private school who wants his or her students to emulate the social experience of a classroom in a poorly-funded public school, without changing their location. While the teacher may have the best intentions to expose her students to that which they have not experienced, her classroom or school is not actually devoid of its resources. In other words, the teacher always has that magical reset button to return the classroom to the well-funded private school. Giroux states that in order to fully embrace Freire's pedagogic ideology, the educator must take the role of the "border crosser" just as Freire did as an exile.

By using the term "border crosser," Giroux refers to someone who leaves the comfort of their usual pedagogy. The problem with pseudo- Freirean teachers is that they still have a "home" to return to (in this case, the pedagogy previously used), putting them in a "colonist" role – meaning that it is just an extension of the oppression Freire calls for a revolt against (Giroux Reader 290). Should the teacher not opt out of her or his original

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pedagogy by choice, but instead, by force, they would then lose the "colonist" label, as they would then be working from the standpoint of an exile, without their usual comforts to return to. However, an equal argument could be made for the teacher who attempts to break her colonist role by choice, for the betterment of her students, regardless of failure or success.

Though most educators would not intentionally take the "colonist" role, Giroux's warning about embracing Freire is valid. How do you approach Freire's ideas without accidentally turning into that which he is fighting against? For example, what if as the teacher, you are in fact forcing liberation onto students when they do not want it? Further, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to completely relinquish teacher-authority if they are not a true "exile" in Giroux's sense. It may be enticing to create a classroom where everyone is an equal; however, due to the differences in student learning styles, and teaching styles, too, holding onto at least a shred of authority may be necessary so that teachers are not hindering students more than they are aiding them. For example, if an emancipated classroom decides to have student group A introduce the sestina poetic form to the class, what happens if the group presenting does not understand the nuances of the form? What happens if the students listening to their peers' lecture do not grasp the structure? These are simple examples as to why the teacher must be prepared to step in when needed. The teacher's role can be to provide support to the lecturing group, or meet with the students prior to their presentation to ensure they grasp the concepts. This would be minimal impact authority – yes, the teacher is retaining some of the "expert" position in the subject; however, he or she would be retaining it in the wings, waiting for the students to reach out to him or her.

Further, Giroux argues that another problem with Freire's ideology is that when given the power, the students can easily misuse authority, thus becoming oppressors to those who should be their peers (Giroux Reader 291-2). With this in mind, the idea of emancipatory authority should not be seen as a teacher completely handing the classroom to students, but instead, sharing the direction of the curriculum, thus returning to Freire's previously stated goal of teacher-student with student-teachers.

Shared Authority in the Poetry Writing Classroom

Poetry writing – a subfield in creative writing – is a field rife with opportunities for an emancipatory authority-based pedagogy. Though other academic fields such as mathematics or science courses also have their own radical forms of pedagogy that goes against what is considered the norm, it is typical in a generalized sense that the learning method within such disciplines is that of teacher lecture and student memorization. In a poetry writing class, such a traditional model can restrict the classroom community. Poetry is an art in which the primary goal is to convey ideas that are important to the writer, and it is also one where interpretations of the work can vary. One purpose of the poetry writing course is to teach students how to develop and convey these messages through exploring different poetic forms, and examining word choices. With this in mind, it can be argued that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to write a poem (which is not say there is no such thing as bad poetry, of course). Though a teacher in a college creative writing course may have an advanced degree and most are acknowledged experts in the field, the fact remains that a richer environment can be created by having that teacher take a step back and allow the students to step forward to share the authority. By taking a less prominent role in the classroom, the teacher can help create an environment in which

the students learn through a mode of self-direction; however this does not make the role of the teacher obsolete, as there is still a responsibility to participate in the classroom community, ensuring that students do not accidentally lead each other astray.

Course design accentuated by emancipatory authority, as defined by Giroux, can be beneficial to students in multiple ways. By allowing students to share in the creation and implementation of a course, the teacher is empowering students to take on the responsibility that previously was the teacher's alone. By taking an active role in course design, students are preparing themselves for the decision-making and risk-taking that they will assume in the post-graduation "real world." Such empowerment may also call upon students to defend their decisions and ideas to their peers. The most obvious example of this would be in a setting where one student introduces a poem, and another student (or others) interprets the poem differently. However, sharing authority with students is hardly an idea that would be met with little resistance. As Ira Shor detailed in *When Students Have Power: Negotiating Authority in a Critical Pedagogy,* his own experiments with a shared-authority class he called "Utopia" revealed that the classroom status quo is understandably safe for both teachers and students, and experimenting with shared authority could cause discomfort. However, if a classroom is to reflect something larger than a physical location to learn, it is necessary to realize that human society is particularly susceptible to the unexpected, and is defined by what we as individuals or groups say, or do. One of the benefits of sharing authority with students, as Shor states, is its ability to replicate elements of the world outside the classroom, and to provide students a more realistic and global view of learning beyond what is traditionally right or wrong: "Critical-democratic pedagogy intervenes in this ongoing process of development

to question the traditional construction of self and society. For interrupting the routine ways we learn, talk and develop, Utopia is a theme with some promise and surprise" (Shor 62).

Much of poetry is about individual interpretation, and therefore it is common to have different understandings, though depending on the scope of divergence of meaning, it may be required for one of the parties to justify their understanding. Take, for example, the poem "Pink Dog" by Elizabeth Bishop, which, on the surface offers a satire of the how the poor were treated during Carnival in Rio de Janeiro. However, the interpretation can easily shift from reader to reader. A feminist reader may have a different interpretation than someone in the class who has lived in Rio de Janeiro, just as that reader may discover a personal understanding of the poem that differs from someone who has only been a tourist there. All the while, there is still Bishop's original intent; or, as best we can discern it. Is it fair to say that a reader cannot gain an experience from a poem which that from the poet's original intent? The deconstructionist would say that authorial intention is a fiction, and that the author herself is no more an expert on her own work than any other reader. This may be a difficult question to wrestle with in the case of poetry written by a classroom peer, though it is not necessarily something the author should argue, and in many cases challenging the author's intention may provide some insight to look at her poem in a new light. The point is that while poets have her own intent they are conveying, readers can also have their own views based on their experiences which can serve as a supplement (reader-response) to the original meaning of the text.

A class based on emancipatory authority also encourages students to take more risks and a more active role in the development of their education. If students have an equal say with the instructor as to what types of poetry and specific poems will be studied throughout the semester, then it could be easier for students to maintain interest in the materials. Stronger interest and inclusion of the students' choices would likely result in greater participation, and greater results academically within the classroom, both in terms of a rich environment for discourse, and through traditional standards of assessment.

However, when undertaking such a transformation of pedagogy, it is imperative too that the teacher remember the overarching purpose of education. The fundamental mission of a course, whether it is poetry writing, trigonometry, Western civilization, and so forth, is to create an environment in which the student is capable of learning. If a teacher creates a classroom marked by emancipatory authority with the sole purpose of teaching students how to challenge authority, then that teacher has ultimately failed the students before the course has even begun. The definitive goal of a classroom should be to educate students about the subject at hand, which for our purposes would be poetry writing; the inclusion of pedagogy in which students are taught to be more vocal and responsible members of society should be an additional supplement to the main goal of the course, and further such a pedagogy should only be used with the overall benefit to student learning.

Assessment and Student/Teacher Roles

What should the teacher's and student's role be when it comes to the assessment of work in a shared-authority classroom? While teaching a fiction writing class during the mid-90s, Suzanne Greenburg found her methods of grading often questioned by her

students. Initially, her grading was very micromanaged – each assignment had a

corresponding handout detailing impact on the overall percentage she awarded to

students, and the more detailed she was, the more questions students would have. This

ultimately brought upon the realization that students were not completing assignments to

become better writers; instead, they were over concerning themselves with the fine

details to elevate their grade by a percentage or two. The notion of assessment within the

poetry-writing classroom is equally challenging: as Greenburg cites, do we grade based

on a student's logic (i.e. completing course work as detailed by the teacher), or on talent

(Greenburg 122)? As Greenburg states, assessment can create an almost double bind for

the classroom:

> Grading can trivialize the work. Yet, most of us teach in communities
> where grades are the common currency. If creative writing is to be
> recognized as a worthy academic subject – and many of us are still
> battling department assumptions that what we teach is simply fun or, at
> best, a kind of sideways means for improving students' writing skills – we
> cannot opt out of the responsibility for grading. (126)

In the academic setting, the question is never "should we grade," but rather, "how

should we grade," because forgoing assessment would mean removing both student and

teacher accountability from the curriculum, and for the shared-authority class in

particular, how can we grade in a way that reflects the responsibility of both teachers and

students. Power-sharing in the classroom can have several positive effects on both

student and teacher alike. As Wendy Bishop detailed in her own classroom accounts, by

providing students with a more generalized curriculum – one in which they had

responsibility in creating – the freedom allowed students to explore more of their own

interests, and influenced them in a way to write for the purpose of writing, rather than for

an assignment. Bishop created academic contracts with her students that would impact

both the curriculum of the course, and the overall assessment, through which Bishop and

her students worked together to devise a standard which would determine the final grade.

As one student in Bishop's class stated, he didn't feel so much like a student writer, but a

writer (Bishop 117). Bizzaro addressed the same notion, exploring the value of

addressing student work as literature, rather than student poems. He also stated that that

the teacher's goal may not always be to teach people "how to write," but rather, what the

benefit of student empowerment can be:

> Without advocating the teaching of theory per se any more than touting
> any single theory, we must nonetheless reassess the ways we teach reading
> and writing. This reassessment may require us to respond to what seems to
> be our students' underlying request: that we spend less time telling them
> what they should do when they write and more time showing them who
> they can be. (Bizzaro 13)

This goal, as Bizzaro mentions, can be achieved through an open forum of

discussion. Instead of having a teacher stand before the class explaining different

elements of a poetic form, students (and the teacher) can experience growth as writers

and members of a community through self-direction – evaluating with their peers why

different techniques in a poem are necessary, and how they may or may not work for

different poems.

The benefit, as Bizzaro described it, falls in line closely with Giroux's ideas of

emancipatory authority, which is that the impact of such education can carry itself outside

of the classroom. Though a teacher's immediate goal for a course may be to identify and

explain processes in a poetry-writing course, through a curriculum shaped by

emancipatory authority, this goal is extended, and also requires students to become

accountable for their own education, as well as the education of their peers. This

accountability can filter its way into the "real world" – by allowing students to exercise

their ideas, voices and opinions in the classroom, the teacher is in essence preparing them to do the same outside of the classroom as well.

Similar to Bishop's teacher-student contracts, Asao B. Inoue examined elements of emancipatory authority as they relate to his perceptions of student assessment in his own classroom. Inoue argued that by assessing the work of his students, he is ultimately not serving them any benefit if the overall goal of a writing course is to provide students the knowledge to assess their own work and other literature as a means to improve their own skills as writers.

> …For me to evaluate or grade my students' writing would reduce their writing and assessment practices to mere busywork, meaningless activities with little educative value and no real communicative function. Their own rubrics and assessments — what they come to understand about writing and then apply to others' work — would mean even less in this kind of environment. The weight of the teacher's feedback always trumps a student's, even an entire class of students. Our class would fall into a familiar paradigm: teacher assigns writing, students write, teacher evaluates writing. The teacher still ranks everyone, still gives the grades. Sarah, a recent student of mine (and quite typical), reflects on the communicative function of her writing in our class, saying that because her ideas for our rubric and about her peer's writing count in our class, she can "write to get [her] message out [to the class] … where as in other English classes, [she] would be entirely trying to please the teacher." (211)

The weight of student assignments, as we will see in the forthcoming interviews, is an issue that can have multiple repercussions. In some cases, as Inoue mentioned, assessment can be seen by students with busywork, essentially padding to a grade that provides students multiple opportunities to succeed beyond the scope of their own writing. Instead, Inoue empowered his students to provide their peers with assessment. To achieve this element of authority-sharing, Inoue's class did not blindly make the leap into the teacher's traditional role of assessment, instead, they spent time first looking at what their individual goals were, what they hope to achieve from a paper, both as readers

and writers. Once these goals were determined, the class decided on a set of rubrics that

are agreed on by consensus as a model of what is "good writing."

> Community-based assessment pedagogy resists in theory and denies in
> practice the traditional way evaluation, assessment, and grading happen in
> the classroom. In the conventional paradigm, the teacher is the evaluator
> or assessor in the classroom who comes down from the mountain to bless
> the unclean ones, the students who are incapable of assessing themselves,
> or at least when it really counts. If assessment is a part of writing
> processes, and if we want our students to be able to assess their
> performances adequately, then it seems we typically give them little
> opportunity to practice, and thus constrain their ability to learn to write
> better. (222)

However, this notion of community-based assessment is questioned by Peter

Elbow, not for the consideration of empowering students through sharing authority, but

instead due to the notion that each student will have their own ideas of "good writing."

Elbow argued that Inoue's inclination to provide students with the authority to assess is

limited by the consensus definition of "good writing" (89). There should not be one

agreed upon standard, or lens, for students-as-teachers to review writing and deem it as

good or bad. In terms of the poetry writing class, a teacher who undertakes empowering

her students with the ability to asses each other is doing so to fully replicate the

experience of writers writing for the public, or editors, each student who is assessing his

peer should bring his own biases to the table.

> Admittedly most students already see the divergent standards among
> teachers – even in the same department – but too often they see it only
> through a cynical lens. "All teachers have their own personal prejudices.
> 'Good writing' is just a crap shoot concept." Such a lens devalues serious
> thinking about the notion of excellence as a complex social construction.
> And if we want to help students learn to read and write better, we need to
> help them see competing standards as a positive resource for
> understanding quality – and a testimony to the complexity and diversity
> both in pieces of writing and in pieces of humanity. Multiple lenses for
> excellence permit not just richer, but also more accurate perceptions of

texts. A single lens always hides or distorts aspects of what is being looked at. (91)

As Elbow later stated, the inclusion of different standards of assessment provides multiple benefits to students: following his notion that each teacher, even within the same department, may have different biases as to what is good writing, from the theoretical standpoint, such a method prepares students for the experience of writing for multiple audiences, and thus receiving feedback from different reviewers; practically speaking, Elbow cited the benefit of allowing students to bring their own ideas of good writing to the classroom aids students to become good writers, by allowing them to see their work through competing criteria (92). The writing classroom has the functionality to emulate experiences that writers encounter trying to attain publication. After all, students must learn that there are countless audiences that will each have their own biases when it comes to the strength of a writer's work. To provide students with the authority to assess their peers' writing, but mandate such assessment follows upon certain agreed-upon guidelines has the potential to dilute the overall impact of the empowerment provided in the beginning. However, in defense to Asao's community-based assessment, it can also be argued that if the intent of a writing class is to create a replication of real-world review, in terms of publication, individual magazines likely have their own agreed upon standards of what is acceptable for print, or otherwise.

The Politics of Shared Classroom Authority and the Roles of Students

A classroom in which authority is shared through contracts agreed upon by students and the teacher is an idea that carries with it political implications and questions. When a teacher attempts to create a classroom in which she allows the students to hold equal ground in terms of what they can offer to the classroom, she is in fact working to

create a democratic classroom. In an argument against the idea of a classroom democracy, in the specific terms of the writers' workshop setting, Dan Barden, a professor at Butler University, stated "I usually say something like, 'This is a democracy, but I have 51 percent of the vote,' which is just a silly way to describe a process that is, essentially, impossible to articulate. It reminds me of how Churchill described democracy itself: the worst possible system, except for all the others" (84). Though by definition it is impossible to have a democracy in which one voice carries more weight than others, Barden does raise valid questions in stating that at their worst, the "democratic" writing workshops "become Ouija board games where only the most ham-fisted participants get to spell out their grandmothers' names. Even in a political system as bizarre as democracy, there still needs to be leaders and followers" (85). However, this then raises the question of who are the "leaders," and who then are the "followers"? Such a question is not going to have a universal answer for every classroom. Some students and teachers may determine (as a whole) that the tie-breaker role should belong to the teacher, whereas others may designate a particular member of the classroom, or a rotation of students to lead the class throughout the term. Whichever solution is determined, if a teacher does design his or her curriculum with a model of emancipatory authority, then it should be a decision made by the classroom as a whole, as opposed to by the teacher alone.

However, as Barden questioned who the leaders are, Mike Mutschelknaus responded by placing this particular responsibility in the students' hands. To improve the workings of a shared-authority classroom, Mutschelknaus implemented a student management team (SMT) for three of his classes: a technical writing class for adult

learners, a literature class for traditional college students, and a literature course for ESL students. Members of Mutschelknaus' SMT served as almost an advisory board for the direction of a class, chosen by the class. Members of the SMT were responsible for logging anonymous student comments, such as suggestions for change in required texts, or clarification on assignments, or assessment practices. They would meet weekly to discuss issues without Mutschelknaus present, and every other week, the SMT would present Mutschelknaus with their ideas for improving the class, based on class consensus vote (Mutschelknaus 4). The benefit to this system, according to Mutschelknaus, is that SMTs take the "fear" out of a class. It provides students a resource in which they can take a more active role in their learning, empower them make recommendations to their teacher to better the direction of the class, and "help teachers to alter the structure of courses so that more effective learning behaviors can occur" (7). The idea of SMTs works two-fold: not only does the system provide students with an active voice within the classroom, but it also allows the teacher to assess what her students are thinking, what they expect from a course, and from a teacher.

In Mutschelknaus' system of SMTs, it is not just the advisory team that has responsibilities in the classroom. The teacher must ensure the independence of the team; for example, if she is going to compensate the team for participating, it must not be compensation reflected in assessment. Instead, Mutschelknaus stated that at the end of the semester, he would compensate the participants with a pizza dinner at his house, but ultimately, student participation in the system did not result in a grade factored by elements not considered for non-SMT peers. In addition to supporting the group's independence, the teacher does have the right to pick one student to be a member of the

team. Since the teacher benefits from the actions of the SMT just as much as students, it is also the responsibility of the teacher to work with the class to set the overall objective of the SMT, goals such as to improve the level of questions asked within a class, or how to handle racially charged topics (5).

Implementation of SMTs also requires participation from students who are not elected to the team, in order to be successful. One of the goals of a SMT is to create an environment in which student voices lead the direction of the class in such a way that a richer environment manifests, and the needs and expectations of both teacher and students are met. Mutschelknaus notes that the individual's role in an SMT-driven classroom is not just to have a venue to express their complaints about a class, but it is also a tool which students can use to improve the overall quality of their education (6). Among the student duties include determining which elements of a class should be left to students to improve, and which are the responsibility of the teacher.

Similar to Mutschelknaus' SMTs, as Shor begun his experiment with "Utopia," he did so by starting the term with his students' desires in mind. Rather than handing out a syllabus on the first day of class and reading what he termed the traditional "riot act," he instead enacted a "pedagogy of questions," asking students why they enrolled in his class, which allowed him to legitimize his position as the teacher, yet dually ensuring that his position was not the dominating authority role (Shor 30). By asking the question of "why," Shor created shifted authority to his students, and created a syllabus that wasn't pre-determined before the students entered the classroom, but instead reflected their own goals and interests for the curriculum.

As a routine feature of formal education, there are no democratic
mechanisms for students to propose their own courses, themes, or syllabi.
They have no institutional power to plan courses; curriculum is made for
them by others, by teachers and academics who often love knowledge and
have the best interests of the students in mind. Nevertheless, when people
are not consulted about policy and process in their experiences, they are
denied citizen status as members of a democracy… (31)

Shor's class was further adapted to allow students to take active roles in the
development of the curriculum, placing the responsibility on the students to ultimately
determine the direction of the class, through collaborative groups. Such a structure
allowed for students to develop and critically defend their own ideas as a community,
without Shor pre-empting ideas or discussions (47-48).

Such notions of allowing students to create their own broader roles within the
classroom recalls Giroux's definition, in which he argues for "teaching a social
transformation." An emancipatory authority-based classroom is one undeniably with a
political agenda; not only does it seek to give students a stronger voice within the specific
classroom, but it aims also to transform these students into more active members of
society as a whole. One should not consider the overarching goal of emancipatory
authority as simply dismantling or recklessly questioning authority; instead, it supports
the individual, or groups, to promote change through realizing their own authority. On the
level of the individual, emancipatory authority provides the resources for students to
think and act critically. Ideally, the effects of this libratory pedagogy help students to
embrace the authority they may not yet realize, and empower them to take risks, whether
it be through awareness, questioning, or challenging ideas to make a change within the
greater population. However, and this is a point that will be reiterated, while the teacher
should keep the larger view of the impact of emancipatory authority in mind when

designing a course marked by it, she must also remember the fundamental point of a classroom, which is an environment in which learners have the resources to enrich their knowledge of a particular subject.

The Writers' workshop

Some of the components of a curriculum based on the ideas of emancipatory authority are not without their critics and concerns. One such component is the writers' workshop, which traditionally is composed of a writer presenting her or his work to peers, to which the peers critique as the writer sits silently. In this forum, it is not uncommon for the teacher to take a more muted role than she or he may typically take, usually interjecting to maintain discussion or civility. Though the workshop can take on countless different forms that may vary from classroom to classroom, it largely works within the tradition of emancipatory authority. One opponent of this method of emancipatory authority is Francois Camoin, who states:

> The workshop may take place in the same classroom as the literature course, but what goes on there is a scandal, an affront to the English department. Imagine a class in which the teacher is, for the most part, silent. Imagine texts which deny their own authority. (For it is the Law of the Workshop, as powerful as the law of incest is in the culture at large, that *the author must not speak.* This fundamental Law shapes the workshop, makes it what it is.) Imagine a place in which fictions are not studied, but written. It denies everything, this place. Most of all it contradicts the metaphysics of literary study, which asserts that there is a place outside of texts where the scholar, the critic, can stand, and, like Aristotle's God, comment without being commented upon. In the workshop there is no outside; we speak and everything changes. We suggest a new narrative sequence, the collapsing of two characters into one, the elimination of a third, a new ending. Everything is different now; the text under study is no longer the text under study. We are always inside the text, working feverishly to make it different, to make it more complex, to change it. Nothing in the workshop is *less* (emphasis as in original) sacred than the text. (Camoin 4)

Though Camoin does raise valid issues with the writers' workshop, he presents his ideas in what may be considered *the worst case scenario.* While it can be true that a text, whether it be a poem, story, or nonfiction essay, can be critiqued to where it would fundamentally change the author's original intent, it is ultimately up to the author to ensure that does not happen. Conversely, as a benefit of the workshop, the author may decide to adjust the original intent, due to the interpretations and ideas raised in the workshop, but again, this is a decision the author must make. Suggestions that come up in a workshop setting should never be law. The purpose of the workshop is for students to help their peers with their text by critiquing and providing advice in sections of the work where the author may be struggling. Also, by providing editorial suggestions to their peers, student critics often get ideas for improving their own work. It is common for students to bring a sketch of their intention into a workshop, and then use their peers' reaction to bring that intention into being. Camoin argues that the text in a workshop isn't "sacred," and he is correct – instead it's fluid and alive. Once authors receive these suggestions, it is their responsibility to examine and consider the comments while keeping their intentions for the text alive, or perhaps, to scrap the original intention all together. A critical component of emancipatory authority, both in and outside of the workshop, is to empower students to take ownership of their ideas, written or otherwise. It is not enough for students to bring forth an idea, only to have it manipulated beyond their original recognition; instead, they must retain the ownership of their work and ideas, yet be open to ideas for improvement.

In further defense of the workshop, particularly in response to Camoin's poignant phrase "*the author must not speak,*" it is necessary to look at the purpose of the workshop

to begin with: published texts must stand alone with readers; once a poem, or any other form of text is published, it is offered to the public realm, meaning that the author does not necessarily have the opportunity to respond to each of his or her readers' comments. In the poetry writing classroom, the workshop replicates this reader-text relationship. Further, the silence of the author may be considered necessary for the civility of the classroom, though it is commonplace to even forego this "Law." To allow a workshop with the writer participating actively introduces the potential of a session that is little more than a shoving match – one student pushes, and the other pushes back harder. Bizzaro provides an example of such an exchange, though his intent was to describe the negotiating of identities that arise in the workshop setting (171-185). During his workshop, while critiquing one student's poem, students established authority roles (some more successfully than others) – some relevant to the critique, whereas others strayed from the intended discussion. The diversion from the discussion led to confrontational exchanges between the author and one of her peers, as she was defending her work and herself. However, as Bizzaro states, such discourse is reflective of society as a whole – people take on different roles. For example, some attempt to be dominant figures, whereas others may take on the responsibility of keeping a group together and stable.

> The workshop provides students with an excellent opportunity to improve as readers and writers, especially if they are given the tools with which to respond to their peers' writing…When they adopt a critical perspective for oral exchange in the workshop situation, they are also by necessity negotiating their identities. We need to remember that we read the world by using the same tools of perception, the same lenses that we use when we read a poem. (Bizzaro 188)

With this in mind, returning to Giroux's theory of emancipatory which teachers to be concerned with critical thinking and empowerment both in and outside of the classroom, it could be argued that allowing the student to speak during the workshop is vital; or at the very least, allowing students to respond to their peers once the silence has ended. By completely disallowing a student a voice in the classroom, particularly in regards to her or his own work, the teacher, or class as a whole, is in fact silencing students, rather than empowering them.

Challenges of a Shared-Authority Classroom

If Bizzaro's workshop demonstrates the necessity of allowing students to maintain a voice during a workshop, it also exhibits the challenges. The overall perception of Bizzaro's class did show the roles each of his students took, but it also revealed that not all students were equally prepared, and just how easily a critique can become personal. Further critics of emancipatory authority, specifically of Giroux's theory of practice, cite the ideology to have the potential of causing more problems than good for students. In particular, Barbara Thayer-Bacon describes emancipatory authority as a constant struggle between competing authorities:

> Giroux's emancipatory authority clings to a view of human subjectivity based on individual autonomy and agency, which is a holdover from modernist democratic theories. His view of human subjectivity creates problems for him as emancipatory authority ends up still placing the teacher in the position of higher authority and students in the "othered" category as somehow lacking power and in need of assistance in gaining power…Emancipatory authority has to work at defending itself against the possibility of the teacher's authority co-opting students' authorities, taking over and directing their struggles for the end of oppressions. (Thayer-Bacon 105-106)

Simply granting independence to a student will not create an instant shared-authority classroom, nor will it suddenly bring the teacher down to a lower rank in

hierarchy. The difficulty in Giroux's definition of emancipatory authority lies within the fact that due to a teacher's background and previous education, a power struggle will not change with a teacher suddenly offering up authority to his or her students. In fact, Thayer-Bacon argues, the mere notion of an emancipatory authority classroom would in fact create an atmosphere in which such a shift is largely impossible, as the teacher's views on authority would ultimately be leading the entire class, setting the tone for a shared-authority classroom that is largely dominated by one viewpoint.

With this in mind, it is important to consider sharing authority from a different angle: to successfully integrate the ideas of emancipatory authority into the classroom, in addition to the teacher's personal goals, it is important to consider what the students' expectations are for a class. Due to student unfamiliarity with course content, uncertainty with the knowledge of their peers, to name some challenges, it is much more reasonable to approach the ideas of authority sharing from the standpoint of a series of contracts equally decided upon by the entire classroom community. This would mean that while the teacher does still hold some authority, for example, assisting a student-as-a-teacher when a certain concept isn't being completely grasped, and generally fulfilling her or his agreed upon role, it also provides students with the same standards of authority, creating an environment that both is conducive to learning, and upholds the benefits of emancipatory authority. An example of this would be the overall assessment of student progress in a course; such an issue could be approached in such a way that while the teacher does make an overall decision in regards to the final grade, can help determine the evaluation criteria, thus sharing on different levels the responsibility for the entire community.

The Teacher's Role in Sharing Authority

It is not impossible for an instructor to also take on the role of a member of the classroom who is also learning, as implied by Thayer-Bacon. There is a middle ground where the teacher does lend her own expertise to the forum, just as there is the possibility of the teacher including materials in the curriculum which are unfamiliar subjects. For example, in "Dismantling Authority," Katharine Haake details how she finally did away with the tedium of writing up long lectures and reading them in front of her class. She started over from scratch, without lecture notes or her own experiences as either a teacher or a reader to back her up. She taught that which she didn't know.

> Several things happen in such a course: (1) the professor is, *de facto* (emphasis as in original), dislodged as the center of authority, the person to whom students turn for the answer, the one who's in charge of what happens; (2) students themselves are not just given permission to become active agents in their own learning, they are required to do so, and – more – the class, the other learners, depend on each other doing so; (3) a kind of modeling occurs for what is popularly called 'lifelong learning,' where students participate in problem- or curiosity-based inquiry and writing; and (4) writing itself is linked, in important ways, to other writing and the world, and its practice becomes more explicitly intertextual, the way writers work. (Haake 102)

In short, Haake's practice of teaching the unknown achieves much of what Giroux set out for with his ideas of emancipatory authority by (1) definitively removing the teacher as the central figure of authority; (2) requiring students to take a more active role within the classroom, thus claiming more authority in the immediate environment; and (3) teaching a curriculum that goes beyond required reading and classroom walls. However, a classroom in which these three goals are met can also cause angst, particularly if students and teachers are looking to seize the authority role, rather than share it. This can result in a divided classroom.

Mary Ann Browder Brock and Janet Ellerby experienced such frustrations from the perspectives of the teacher (Ellerby) and teaching assistant (Brock) in a shared-authority classroom. Because they had different ideological approaches, the teacher and assistant often found they were at odds, and had to walk the fine line of not creating a divided classroom**.** The first instance of this near division came on the first day of class. Ellerby had clearly stated to Brock that it was her intent to create a classroom where all participants were on equal ground; however, when it came to introductions, she introduced herself as Dr. Ellerby, and Brock as a graduate teaching assistant (120). Though unintentional, Ellerby immediately created a hierarchy. The duo combated this unintended consequence by moving Brock to the front of the classroom alongside Ellerby. Further, both Ellerby and Brock, as mentioned often had divisive viewpoints on classroom discussions, which often led to students rallying to either of their sides; however, this in turn ended up being beneficial for the classroom community, as Brock states:

> She spoke honestly and with conviction about her life and her beliefs, I saw hesitant students blossom. I saw students respond willingly and enthusiastically. They agreed with her, disagreed with her, and learned to risk sharing their own stories. Janet gave her students – our students – permission to risk by respecting views different from her own, showing the student that she was there to learn with them, valuing their contributions, and modeling for them how to communicate with those who hold differing opinions. (121)

As Brock points out, what could have been a disaster, actually turned out to be quite beneficial for all members of the classroom community by creating a forum in which all participants had equal voices, and were each learners, teacher included. The division that challenged Brock and Ellerby on first day introductions, however, illustrates the fine line one must walk to maintain a truly emancipatory classroom. As previously

mentioned, to conduct a classroom in which certain aspects of power are shared, and where other aspects are held, including creating an unintentional hierarchy, largely defeats the contract created between the teacher and the students for sharing authority in the first place – it essentially tells the students that the teacher trusts them for certain tasks, but not quite for all tasks, and for the sake of learning, this may be true and would require the teacher to explain the rationale behind such a decision. Again, in addition to maintaining a balance of authority-sharing the general purpose of a classroom cannot be forgotten. Students enroll in a class to learn, and the social responsibility gained from emancipatory authority should not create an environment in which this primary mission of education is pushed aside in favor of dismantling authority. It is necessary for the teacher, when planning how the curriculum will be conducted, to take into consideration the impact emancipatory authority can have. Though incorporating all of these factors may seem like a monumental undertaking (and, in fact, it is), such a classroom is achievable, through various forms of democratic agreements, contracts and understandings created.

According to Mano Singham, impeding the environment of the classroom and opportunities for student empowerment is the syllabus itself. Singham argues that the traditional syllabus – i.e., one that breaks down student grades through what he defines as bribes and forced threats – do little in the way to educate, or excite the student to take the initiative to learn for reasons other than a good grade. Signham calls for the death of the syllabus in its current incarnation, replacing it with a flexible timeline of assignments as a way to better connect and engage the students.

We discuss what might be the best way of assigning meaningful grades. We collectively decide what goes into a good paper or talk, what good participation means, and together create rubrics to assess them. While I make the judgments about performance, I give the students maximum flexibility and choice in what we do and how we do it – within the broad constraint that the course has to have integrity and coherence and that the grades have to be a good measures of the level of student performance in the course. (Singham par 13)

By incorporating elements of emancipatory authority into his classroom, as an effort to move the syllabus away from what one colleague defined as a "legally enforceable contract" (par 7), Signham empowers his students to share authority with him by taking a more prominent role in the direction of their course. His that comment "the course has to have integrity and coherence and that the grades have to be a good measures of the level of student performance in the course" does beg the question of who decides what is considered success. The answer to this is not easy – on one hand by having the teacher cite what is success and what is failure ultimately can undermine the philosophy of shared authority, whereas on the other hand, the opposite, where the students make the final decision, would in turn strip the teacher of the same shared right of authority. Ultimately, the determination of benchmarks for success or failure is a key contract to be settled on by the classroom community as a whole, with both the teacher and the students having the opportunity to provide equal input. Further, Singham cites that in his experience, his students "consistently reject creating detailed marking schemes for things like participation," and instead trust the teacher to use fair judgment. This example illustrates one of the benefits of emancipatory authority – in addition to empowering students, the pedagogy is also creating an environment in which students trust the teacher to make a decision, which is fair authority sharing.

Chapter Two: Students Speak on Classroom Experiences

When students are asked about their experiences in regards to the design of their classroom, both in general terms, as well as specifically in regards to the hierarchy of classroom authority, what do they say? Further, what can teachers take away from the comments of students, and how can they use this information to create a classroom dialogue on authority? In the first chapter, I offered a definition of emancipatory authority, as well as the challenges and benefits that come with the notion of a shared-authority poetry writing classroom from the perspective of educators and educational theorists. To further define the idea, benefits and challenges of emancipatory authority within a poetry-writing classroom, I believe it necessary to discuss shared authority from the perspective of the students who would be participating. Specifically, students have provided their personal input on the topics ofstudents leading discussion and presenting materials, choosing texts, having input on the weight of assignments, and deciding on the structure of the workshop

Method and Participants

The original purpose of this study was to explore how students currently enrolled in poetry writing classes viewed the structure of their classroom and to gauge their receptiveness to the implementation of the practice of emancipatory authority in the structure.

The selection of seven participants in the study was determined by their willingness to participate – the only requirement was that they were enrolled in a poetry writing class at the time of the interview. My invitation was extended to the students through their teachers either in the classroom, or through online learning environments

and/or email. It was also my intent to provide equal representation of male and female

students, at introductory, intermediate and advanced levels of poetry writing courses.

Students were invited from three different four-year universities: Land State University

which is a large (38,000+ students) traditional state university; City University, which is

a small (Less than 5,000 students) private urban university; and Metro University, which

is a large (29,000+ students) public urban university. The students who participated in the

study largely represented the traditional college-age demographics (21 years and

younger), with the exception of two participants, one being a slightly older student than

the traditional age, and the other significantly older.

Each student picked or was assigned a pseudonym, and the location of the

interview took place in a neutral location at the time of their choice. Prior to beginning

each interview, I provided each student with a generalized definition of emancipatory

authority, in addition to examples of emancipatory authority in the poetry writing

classroom that they may have previously experienced.

Due to the open nature of the student selection, and the presentation of the student

responses in the form of short case studies, it is important to note that these students do

not represent a broad cross-section of students enrolled in poetry writing classes, but

rather, provide a small sample of students viewpoints on the methods of pedagogy used

in each of their classrooms. Students who participated in the interviews were:

Abernathy: a traditional-aged sophomore English major enrolled in an intermediate

poetry writing course at Metro University.

Angela: a traditional-aged sophomore literature major at Metro University enrolled in an

introductory poetry writing course.

Claire: a traditional-aged sophomore history major enrolled in a first-year poetry writing course at Land State University. Unlike the other students who participated in the study, Claire was in a class which concentrated on writing with very little additional reading incorporated into the syllabus, except for an occasional handout to supplement different styles being taught.

Daniel: a traditional-aged senior English major at City University, enrolled in an advanced level poetry writing course, which was the last of many creative writing courses he took during his education.

Donald: a senior English major and an adult student in his 50s, also at Metro University, enrolled in an introductory poetry writing course.

Sarah: a traditional aged sophomore enrolled in the General Studies degree program at Metro University, and at the time of the interview was enrolled in her first creative writing class, which was an introductory poetry writing class.

Patrick: a junior enrolled in an intermediate level poetry writing course, who had transferred into the creative writing program at Metro University from another college.

Analysis of Responses

As the only information collected throughout the series of the studies consisted of individual one-on-one interviews with the student, the results of the interviews are subjective conversations, which I compared to the answers provided to me by their peers. Each of the seven students was asked the same questions, with deviations to the standard list only if prompted by something the student said during the interview. The questions explored the following:

(1) Their overall perception of the structure of their class, particularly examining what role their teacher took in delivering, leading or prompting discussions.

(2) Their expectations of response from their teacher and peers when one of their poems was critiqued.

(3) Their personal perception of what is important when they critiqued a poem.

(4) Their perception of the challenges or benefits of a classroom marked by emancipatory authority, and how such a classroom may influence their understanding of poetry, as well as their abilities as a writer.

The results of the first two questions, which examined each student's perception of their teacher's role, were unsurprising. Each student described their classroom as a setting where their teacher initiated discussion of a poem, allowing the students to delve further into specific themes, techniques, strengths and questions they may have. In situations where the class had little to say about a poem, the teacher generally prompted responses by posing specific questions about areas of discussion the students did not touch upon. Responses varied greatly from student to student when it came to talking about the qualities of the classroom they felt were most important. Rather than discussing how their class was made up, they provided their own personal values, and perceptions of how a shift in authority may impact them as students.

Students Sharing Authority by Leading Discussion & Presenting Materials

The idea of sharing authority by students taking the traditional "teacher" role through leading class discussion and presenting new materials to their peers was introduced to the study participants in such a way that they had to imagine a setting where their teacher sat back quietly, an extreme mode of emancipatory authority.

SARAH: I think I would like definitely and especially…where students could initiate and continue discussions, because sometimes I feel like the professor does know it all, and it would probably be hard for him not to just tell us, you know, and I like that sense of like self discovery, where…in a group you're talking and you can run across something.

The benefit, as Sarah sees it, is when the teacher is taken out of the equation, students are responsible for delivering their own education, or prompting their peers for insight, creating a community that is much more conducive to the exploration of different ideas. As Sarah implies, such exploration through group direction and discussion may lead students in directions the teacher did not previously conceive as part of the original lecture. However, as Angela states, even though emancipatory authority would require students to take on roles they may not normally undertake, which she believes is a good thing, she also believes it's important to maintain the shared authority classroom in such a way that the benefit of the teacher's experience is not lost altogether.

ANGELA: I both like and dislike [the idea of shared authority], for two very different reasons, I mean, as far as values go, I like that idea of…I think that would work really, really well with a class of passionate individuals, if you get into some of the upper-level classes, because students…because that teaches the student that is really kind… laissez-faire, of how to teach students, because they have to go out and pick materials, and when I read that, that's what I like the most, is students going out to pick materials to read in class, because they're forced to completely understand the literature before they show it…you know, it's not like somebody's there and just is, like, posing the questions, or you know, sort of like trying to make you think about stuff…You have to sit there and figure it out yourself, which is one of the things in literary interpretation class, we did that a lot. So I think that if you're going to have creative writing or literature majors who have taken that class, then that would be a really good exercise for them as…academic individuals…so I guess the reason I don't like it so much is because I do like a lot of the instructor in the classroom, because otherwise what's the instructor there for? Obviously the instructor is going to be professional and is going to look over your writing, and give you that kind of feedback, but I like…I like a classroom where everybody is discussing and the teacher is kind of back there, but he or she is also being a student as well.

Angela's thoughts on shared-authority illustrate both what could go right and what could go wrong with such a classroom. On the plus side, the classroom may inspire students to take a more active role in understanding the materials and participating in the community. However, as she implies – if a student doesn't carry his or her weight in the class, it's the entire class that suffers. Angela also had concerns about the role of the teacher, if the students themselves embrace the role of teachers. For this reason, in any shared-authority class, but particularly in one with students such as Angela, it would be vital for the teacher to clearly state what their role is in the classroom – just as Angela cites, the teacher does have the opportunity to become part of the class, as both an educator and a learner, lending their expertise to the overall community.

However, in addition to concerns about students not performing their roles, the idea of the muted teacher role can also prompt questions of the validity of the information being delivered:

> CLAIRE: I don't really know how [shared authority] would impact my writing, but I would probably be more inclined to do more reading outside of class, just to get more experience from reading, rather than listening to the students presenting the materials. Not that I wouldn't listen to them, but I'd probably take [their presentations] with a grain of salt, and I would probably do a lot more work on my own, to develop my understanding more.

The idea that Claire would take student-based research and presentations, as she puts it "with a grain of salt," indicates one of the challenges to a classroom designed according to the principles of shared authority. A teacher creating a classroom with shared authority should expect the classroom to take their roles as student-teachers seriously. It is natural for students to be skeptical early on at the delivery of information because respect of this kind is not instantly granted; it is something that should be earned.

Such a classroom should be designed in a way to foster respect for the entire community, and to ensure that each student is given the opportunity to present information in such a way that is on par with lectures students may receive from the teacher. This could be achieved in a few ways: first by giving students opportunity early on to gain the trust of their peers through large and small group collaboration, and with the teacher working closely with students prior to a presentation, assisting them in their research, listening to their content, and during the class, participating in assignments, and genuinely asking questions to complement a presentation, instead of undermining it. The question of a class in which the teacher has a significantly pronounced role in the delivery of curriculum also raises the question of the teacher's overall role in the classroom.

> DONALD: On the one hand I can see where [shared authority] has some advantages, on the other hand, the one thing I wouldn't like is if she's sitting back quietly. Why am I not just buying the book and doing this myself and paying tuition? No I don't think I would like that. I think one of the reasons I'm paying the expensive tuition I'm paying here [is] the benefit of having her experience and her knowledge.

> RB: And that's due in large part to the fact that you pay the tuition.

> DONALD: I pay the tuition, but the thing is, it can't be a democracy. Somebody has to be in charge. Hopefully somebody who knows what they are doing. I mean my instructor has had several pieces published, and three or four books published. She should know her stuff, rather than the guy next to me who knows just as much or less about it than I do. I'm not there for the benefit of his experience; I'm there for the benefit of hers.

> RB: You also mentioned that you could see some good in [emancipatory authority] as well. What do you think that would be?

> DONALD: Sometimes it's good getting lost. Having a lesson plan is all nice and well, but sometimes it's good to go off on a tangent. It takes you to places you hadn't really anticipated, and sometimes those are good places. Sometimes they are very scary places, but it's all part of the experience.

As Donald states, and as mentioned in the first chapter, when creating a classroom with the intent to share authority with students, it is vital for the teacher not to forget why they (both the teacher and the students) are there in the first place. The teacher should not conduct the class quietly from the shadows, but instead, allow her experience to be part of the overall classroom community. What is interesting in Donald's response is the idea that he opposes a classroom in which the students and the teacher are on equal levels, yet is open to the idea of a experientially based classroom that occasionally wanders in focus, which as a result, could have the same impact of peer-led classrooms.

Creating Assignments

In a poetry writing classroom, the teacher's primary goal is to improve students' understanding of poetry, among other things, through the practice of improving technique and understanding of different uses of poetic form. With this in mind, to further the idea of students participating in class as both educators and learners, the interview participants were also asked what sort of impact a shared authority as writers.

> ABERNATHY: …Because [emancipatory authority] allows you to be
> [freer in your writing], and like, you can push your boundaries a little bit.
> So, I don't know, maybe that would cause you to write a poem you
> wouldn't normally write about or, try another form.

Abernathy believes a classroom marked with the ideas of emancipatory authority would benefit her in that it would inspire her to take chances with her work, by trying forms and techniques since she would have more freedom developing her ideas without the standard restrictions of a more specific assignment. Further, when other students and the teacher are discussing poems, it gives her the opportunity to hear different points of view, and perhaps even change her mind as to what a poem may be about.

In addition to Abernathy's idea of shared authority allowing students to take risks in their work, Sarah also believes a beneficial result of shared authority is that it would encourage students to write for themselves, opposed to writing for a teacher, or a grade.

> SARAH: Since we'd all be involved, I'd get a really broad spectrum of ideas and you know, sometimes in writing classes I feel like really what you are writing is whatever the professor wants, and not necessarily the way that you want to write, and so, I might, we might all be able to have freer development of our own style in the classroom, and not necessarily just outside of it, which is what I feel like a lot of it is now.

Sarah's ideas of a class in which authority is shared between students and teacher exemplifies some of the challenges and benefits the classroom may face, particularly the benefit of self-discovery, and the students writing for themselves, rather than the teacher. However, writing assignments teachers assign can be seen from two standpoints: (1) the teacher gives specific assignments to ensure the students are being challenged in their poetry, or (2) the teacher assigns poetry that he or she prefers. The bias of teacher preference can be overcome either through student-created assignments, or allowing students to write a poem from a list of different assignment options. Sarah also brings to light the challenge that students may not take their peers quite as seriously as they would the teacher. This could be a greater challenge particularly at the introductory level, since students in an introductory course may not have as much experience in a college classroom in general, and in a writing classroom specifically. Additionally, introductory students, given their limited exposure to criticism and writing, often lack confidences in themselves as critics and/or writers.

Student Role in the Weight of Assignments

Though not specifically asked, during his interview Patrick stated one of the few elements in his poetry writing class was the fact that his teacher gave "a lot of extra

assignments and deemphasized the portfolio." While he seemed to understand why she

gave the assignments, he felt she went overboard.

> PATRICK: [S]tudents kind of get discouraged, you know, they want to
> write poetry, they want to workshop each other's poems, they want to see
> what their classmates are doing, they want to see their own progress, you
> know, and if you're kind of filling it up so that more people can get better
> grades than they would've originally…

In detailing his experiences, Patrick's experience implies that the syllabi his

teachers have traditionally created are padded in such a way to benefit all students,

regardless of writing ability. One resolution to prevent what students may perceive as

"filling up" a syllabus with assignments which deemphasize the portfolio is to do as

Wendy Bishop, and allow students to ultimately form a contract with the teacher,

together determining assignment weights, and how they would relate to the overall

assessment of the course. In defense of the teacher, who is working to ensure her class is

educated, it may be the case that certain assignments must be present, in which case it is

the teacher's task to clearly emphasize the importance of each assignment, as a means to

prevent it being perceived as a "filler" item.

Student Opinions on the Benefits of Workshops

As we saw in the first chapter, the writers' workshop can take on many different

roles for students. It can serve instill a sense of validation for writers, or through the

interpretations of their peers, lead them to experience their own work beyond their

original intent. However, from both Patrick and Daniel's perspectives, the workshop can

also be a chance at building the classroom community.

> PATRICK: I think it makes for a friendlier environment, and not such an
> austere one, you know. People who are in writing workshops really need
> the kind of reassurance that everyone's in the same boat, that we all have
> to do the same thing, and that none of us are, you know, better than, or

worse than anyone else…that we're partitioned off, that we're separate from everyone. Usually we sit in circles and things like that so we can see each other as we're talking to one another, there are just certain things that I think…where you have a history class, lecture should be more emphasized, where, you know, [with writing classes], I think …collaborative learning should be emphasized to kind of take down the tension.

DANIEL: There's a sense of camaraderie, were all in this class, we're all really focused… if my peers like it, well, that's a good sign because you know, I'm not writing to impress my professor, I'm writing for me, but also maybe…to inspire others…so they can take something from [my work]….

Both Daniel's and Patrick's response illustrates the opportunity in a shared-authority classroom to build a community in which students are more comfortable talking to one another. Not only does Patrick refer to the specific impact this community could have, but also the way it should be physically shaped– instead of a classroom in which the students all face front, and the teacher, or presenter is at the head, it is obvious that he preferred the setting where the emphasis is on the entire community. Patrick also stated, similar to Donald, that a shared-authority classroom does provide an exploratory discourse: "sometimes it goes in a direction and it's bad, and we're not really talking about anything important, or maybe we're just misguided of what we're speaking of, and the teacher is there to correct that…maybe in a subtle way, and sometimes students will do the same. But basically, having that very vocal and you know, friendly environment like that, it's easy to get back on track." Again, similar to Angela's questioning of the role of the teacher, early on the teacher would have to define his or her position in the classroom. In Patrick's classroom, his teacher would allow them to get lost a bit and build a discussion that diverted from the original topic; however, while doing this, she would not sit back and allow misinformation to be presented as truth. In doing so, she would not

be creating a hierarchy that places her at the top, instead, she is drawing on her own expertise in a way that edifies, rather than suppresses.

Conclusion

Angela, Donald, and Claire each stated to some extent their concern that the classroom would not be as conducive for learning if the teacher did not take on a traditional role and a substantial portion of the authority. What they did not understand is that shared-authority pedagogy should never be used by a teacher as an excuse to sit back and do nothing; again, the primary goal should be the empowerment of those participating in the classroom. Each member of the classroom community has a necessary role to play in the development and delivery of the curriculum. When faced with concerns such as Angela's, Donald's and Claire's, a teacher could simply create a series of roles for each member to be responsible for fulfilling, similar to the structure of SMTs detailed in the first chapter. For example, this could mean that the teacher is responsible for the overall introduction of the materials, Student A is responsible for discussion of poems, and Student B creates the assignment for the class session. It is also important for the teacher to make sure the class knows that he or she is part of the community providing the overarching discussion, such as the case with Patrick's teacher, who allowed discussions to veer in unintended directions, but also made sure that the information being disseminated was accurate.

As previously mentioned in the case of Sarah and Abernathy, introducing emancipatory authority in a classroom can create opportunities for students they may not normally have, particularly when it comes to facing the question "who are you writing for?" Instead of writing what a student thinks a teacher wants her to write, emancipatory

authority supplies her with the empowerment and confidence to use her take advantage of her knowledge, and write the poem she wishes to write. This is beneficial to a student as it would encourage him or her to take risks, hopefully beyond the boundaries of an assignment. Further, as Claire, Angela and Daniel each mentioned, providing students with a more active role in the class may also lead to new exposure when the students have chosen to present their own materials. For example, Claire mentioned that she prefers more classical poetry than contemporary. Though her classmates may introduce a form that she does not particularly care for, she would later have the opportunity to immerse herself in the work of a poet that is much more to her liking, which may result in the development of greater interest in the course content for all students.

What can we learn when students talk about their experiences and expectations in the classroom? Obviously when teachers listen to her or his students discuss aspects of the classroom and curriculum, they will see that there is no single answer as to what students might expect. This is due, of course, to the different backgrounds students come from – whether they are like Donald, a non-traditional student at an urban state university, or Daniel, a traditional-aged student at a private school. Each student comes to the class with different expectations and values, and this is important for the teacher to recognize. When reviewing the responses of the students who participated in the study, it is obvious that there is equal desire and resistance to build a classroom marked by emancipatory authority. Though some students in the study stated that they would not care for such a classroom structure, they also indicated on different levels that they would like to experiment with different aspects of shared authority.

Though not implicitly stated by all of the participants, it can be determined that students do not want to be involved in a classroom where everyone is moving about blindly without purpose or the benefit of experience. At the early stages of structuring such a classroom, as stated several times before, it is vital that the ideologies of Giroux's original definition of emancipatory authority be considered within the course's development and rationale. It is not enough to create such a classroom just to create it, just as it is equally important for the teacher to take an active role in the community and ensure that the students are actually committed to fostering an academic environment.

Further, the teacher must take into consideration that students, either as a group, or as individuals, may not want to be involved in a course in which they are required to contribute to the classroom on a level traditionally reserved for the teacher. At the very minimum, the teacher should give students early notice of the class design, either on the first day of the class, or in advance through an online student portal (if applicable), so not to surprise the students, or allow them to find a class more to their liking.

Chapter Three: Designing a Course Using Emancipatory Authority

Having viewed emancipatory authority into poetry classroom both from the perspectives of theorists and students, I would now like to consider the structure of the curriculum itself.

The sections to follow examine a series of hypothetical syllabi for introductory and advanced college poetry writing courses utilizing the ideology of emancipatory authority, as well as the rationale behind the decisions made as to why I included (or did not include) particular elements. The purpose of these samples in course design is not to provide a definitive "how to," but rather, to suggest some strategies for implementing emancipatory authority. For example, it could be argued that a true syllabus designed with emancipatory authority in mind would be nothing more than a blank page, allowing students to determine what aspects of poetry they will study, and when they will be introduced to these elements.

The syllabi I have created allow for a progressive exposure to emancipatory authority. For example, in the introductory course, given that it may be a student's first exposure to poetry writing (and in some cases, creative writing in general), the course is designed so that the elements of emancipatory authority do not become prominent until a few weeks after the class has begun, whereas the intermediate course would examine the work of specific authors and how they incorporated the elements, such as the use of meter, imagery and repetition, introduced in the previous level. In the advanced section, taking into consideration that students enrolling in the course should be much more comfortable with a poetry writing course, elements of emancipatory authority are put into action very early on, and the focus of the writing is based on types of poetic form, rather than on the specific elements or techniques of specific poets.

Disclaimers and "Opt Outs"

As mentioned in chapter two, it is necessary to provide students with advance notification as to how a shared-authority class may differ from a section of a poetry writing course that does not utilize emancipatory authority. On my hypothetical syllabi, I have one standard disclaimer that is used for each section of the course:

About this course: *this course is modeled on theorist Henry Giroux's idea of emancipatory authority. In short, the idea of emancipatory authority is a worldview, which when applied in the classroom shifts much of the authority originally reserved for the teacher into the hands of the students in order to empower them to go beyond the traditional academic definition of success. This shared authority will ideally create an enriching environment that encourages you to critically examine and voice ideas inside the classroom. This practice will require you to take a more active role in your education. Each of us will be educators and learners during our class meetings. Students who are uncomfortable taking on this role are encouraged to contact me directly to address any questions you may have.*

In addition to this disclaimer, I would, on the first day of class, give students a handout with Giroux's definition and rationale for emancipatory authority, as well as examples of shared-authority elements the students should expect. The purpose of the disclaimer as a whole is to ensure that students know at the onset what the course will demand of them. The reasoning behind this is that a shared-authority classroom may not be what some of students expected or, want.

The First Day of Class

Just as each syllabus contains disclaimers about the proposed course design, it should list objectives for overall student outcomes in the course. Following Shor's idea of not reading students the "riot act" of do's and don'ts the moment the walk into the class, the first meeting begins with an informal discussion about their expectations – why did they register for the class? What do they hope to learn? Undertaking this task at the start of the semester helps them understand early the open-nature of the course. Ultimately, one of the goals of the course is to provide a community where students know their voices will be heard, and this could be achieved by giving them the authority early-on to adjust the overall objectives of the course.

Additionally, given the nature of both courses as writing classes, an initial low-pressure writing exercise (see appendix III) is assigned. The purpose of the assignment, which precedes any lecture, is another way for me to get students to think about their own ideas. In the case of the assignment, students are asked to write a poem, with no specific requirements, other than it has to be a poem about poetry. With this assignment, and those that would follow, I provide students with a brief description of the task at hand, and follow it up with optional prompts, but simultaneously offer enough flexibility that students can essentially create their own terms.

Student Roles: Curriculum Advisory Committee

Similar to Mutschelknaus' Student Management Teams, students in each section of a class will have the opportunity to participate as members of Curriculum Advisory Committee. Committees consist of three students, chosen by the class during the fourth week of the semester, and serve as representatives for the student community in matters

of the overall direction of the course. For example, just as several students in the previous chapter mentioned their concern with the idea of their peers' understanding of a component of the curriculum, or information I relayed, they could approach the committee and anonymously present their concerns, which would then allow for clarification on the subject matter. There would be no incentive for students to serve on the CAC, short of the positive sense of assisting their peers.

Curriculum Differences: Introductory and Advanced

The syllabus for the first course marked by emancipatory authority naturally is the introductory level of poetry writing (see appendix I). Unlike the more advanced poetry writing class (appendix II), this syllabus takes into the account the assumption that enrolled students are not very familiar with the specific details of poetry writing. In this example, major elements of emancipatory authority are not incorporated into the course until week 7, which is roughly a halfway point in the semester.

At first, the advanced course syllabus may seem to be more restrictive, with fewer opportunities for authority sharing. Unlike the introductory course, which begins student presentations at the seventh week, it's not until week 11 that the advanced students take full control of the course. In reality, the expectation for sharing authority begins in the third week of the semester. Students in my 400 level course are required to provide a journal entry about the subject of the week every other week (two groups, alternating weeks), and these reader responses will be the foundation of weekly discussions. For example, if the class was studying the poetic form of the pantoum, and we read Peter Meinke's "Atomic Reaction," each student could decide to respond to the form, the poem, incorporating elements of both, or examples of pantoums by a different poet

altogether. What this means to the implementation of emancipatory authority is that students will have early exposure (which continues throughout the semester) taking control of discussion in the classroom through their own discourse and research.

Further justifications for handing complete control of the course design to the students so late in the semester also considers the difference between the 200 and 400 levels. While the 200 level students are required to take control of a half of a class meeting, the advanced groups are responsible for the final weeks, including discussion, as well as in and out-of-class writing assignments, and workshop moderation.

Introductory Curriculum Design

Rather than explore specific authors and uses of form within poetry in the early stages of the course, the class instead looks at the foundations of a poem – starting with introductory exposure to poetry, the details of revision, and working through other aspects such as sound, imagery, meter and poetic lines. Beginning an introductory course with this approach allows students to learn about the fundamental elements to successfully write their own poems.

Once the initial introductions of poetry writing are covered, students will be responsible for exploring other elements of a poem in groups of two (or three, depending on the class size). For example, though students may study rhyme in a broader sense, a group may decide to present to their peers much more specific definitions, such as slant rhyme, or alliteration. The main objective of allowing each group to determine which element they are introducing to their peers is to allow the leaders (and in some cases, the rest of the classroom) the opportunity to immerse themselves in a particular area of their interest. In addition to leading their peers in the understanding of different aspects of

poetry, it is also the responsibility of the section leaders to develop an assignment for their peers (myself included), which theoretically would encourage complete participation in the class, instead of a dismissive attitude negating their research. For the most part, presentation topics would be limited to those provided in the course texts, though I would allow the students to work with other texts, after reviewing them.

However, as stated in the second chapter by both Claire and Donald, it is important to consider that the students leading the class do not always have the benefit of experience the teacher may typically have. This lack of experience could be detrimental to a class, particularly if the presenters stumbled across inaccurate information. For this reason, I would schedule individual meetings with the groups outside of class in order to preview their presentation and assignment to ensure its clarity, and answer any questions they may have. During the presentations themselves, I would defer any questions by the class about the material to the presenters, unless that authority is handed to me by those introducing the materials. Further, as the student presenters do not have the benefit of office hours, once the presenting session had ended, I would also make myself available to the entire class to answer any clarifying questions outside of the regular meeting time.

Another key component of any introductory writing class is to assist students not just with writing, but also rewriting. In addition to devoting time in the class to the matter, students in the introductory course are responsible to look at revision through more than one lens. Specifically, the elements of revision are addressed through student work by first having a student turn a critical eye to their poem, and mark it up as though they were an editor reading someone else's work, and after a workshop session in which their poem is critiqued, students will write a summary of their peer's comments, to help

disseminate the influx of information they have just received. Additionally, students will serve each other by writing short responses to poems presented to the workshop.

Advanced Curriculum Design

Unlike the introductory course, students in an advanced course should be able to demonstrate their understanding of the fundamental necessities of poetry writing. For this reason, the focus of my advanced course looks at different types of form, and the individual strengths. As mentioned, students in the advanced course will be responsible for much more of the overall direction of the course. As previously mentioned, their reading responses of the materials will guide most of the discussions, and will not have mandated themes (with the exception of that week's topic). As the teacher in the 400 level courses, in regards to what would typically be reserved for my lecture on the materials, I would instead serve more as a moderator, allowing students to come to their own conclusions or the topics, and stepping in only to keep the discussion on track.

As in the 200 level course, I also meet with students to preview their leading of a class. Again, this is to ensure the presenters do not have any questions about the material (which would possibly require research on my end if it was a form I was unfamiliar with), and to make sure their expectations of the session were not too demanding, or for that matter, demanding enough.

Assignments

In the previous chapter, Patrick stated one of the few elements in his poetry writing class was the fact that his teacher gave "a lot of extra assignments and deemphasized the portfolio." Though he conceded that there needs to be a fine balance between the merits of a portfolio and the weight of other assignments, his expectations

were that when he signed up for a writing class, much of the focus within the curriculum would be on the portfolio students create throughout the term. With this statement in mind, I personally felt it was important to look at the primary objectives of the class, and determine where much of the weight fell in regards to what is assigned to the students. Given that the main objective of the class is to provide students with an environment that will nurture their skills as a writer, and to create a community that provides students an avenue to explore their critical ideas, I attempted to gear emphasis of the assignments to be in line with these ideals. Initially, I had included assignments such as a book review, because after all, isn't that what you are supposed to do as a writing teacher? But then I questioned what the value of that was. True, it may provide students access to a poet they may not have previously considered, but ultimately, isn't that goal also being achieved with when students are leading their section?

As a result of these considerations, I stripped away several of the elements that I felt may have been "fillers," and focused the assignments to reflect the idea of creating a better writer and critic of poetry. For example, in the introductory course, students are exploring poetry writing from the standpoint of novices to the craft, and therefore they are required to not only examine some of the basic elements of poetry, but also how to revise their own work and respond to their peers. For the advanced course, the objective of the course has shifted. Though I still require students to provide responses to their peers, as it is essential for a poet to receive feedback to their work, I feel that it may be a bit demeaning to require them to provide a digest of the responses they receive, since students should have a much better grasp on revision, and evaluating their peer responses at the 400 level of a writing course. However, the advanced-level students are also

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required to present to the entire class a review about a publication or journal that accepts

poetry submissions. Though at first this may seem akin to a book review, I feel it is better

justified once you consider where the students are in regards to their writing. At the 400

level, poems written by students should be on, or at very least, near, the quality of

publication. If other levels of poetry writing emphasizes on building the understanding of

how a poem is created, or why certain forms of poetry are more apt, then it is important

for the end of the 400 level to answer the "what next" question. Whereas an introductory

course provides students with the mechanics to start writing poetry, an advanced course

bookends the experience with the resources to take the skills of what they've learned in

the class and make use of them in the literary world.

Poems, the Portfolio and Assessment as a Whole

In both the introductory and advanced sections of poetry writing, I do not believe

it to be in the student's best interest for poems to be individually graded, either in draft

form, or in the portfolio. While the portfolio as a whole is graded, that grade is

determined by two things: (1) the content of the preface, in which they discuss their

influences, their thoughts and process for revision, and defending the decisions they made

for including a poem (2) achieving the standards set forth by the rest of the class detailing

which elements are included in the portfolio. This can lead to several judgment calls on

the part of the teacher. For example, if the class voted that each portfolio should have one

haiku, and a student submitted a haiku, but the second line contained 10 syllables, I could

theoretically factor that into the overall portfolio assessment, because he did not follow

the guidelines set by his peers. Instead, the class will come up with a clearly defined set

of standards that need to be considered when determining their grade for the course. In

some cases, this may be broad – such as the requirement of submitting a maximum of four of their best poems in the portfolio, whereas in other instances, it may include that participation encompasses ten percent of their grade, based on attendance and submission of course materials. Ultimately though, my addition to the discourse on assessment will be that the weight of a single poem will not factor into a grade, for better or worse.

The decision not to grade poems is one I have made for a number of reasons. Echoing Elbow and Inoue, no matter how many poems I have written, no matter how many I have read, I feel it is impossible for me to say with preciseness what a good poem is. Yes, I do have my own personal preferences to what a good poem is, but that is subjective at best. Second, by putting a letter grade on a poem, the teacher positions the student not to take risks. For example, recalling Greenburg, if Joe Student writes a pretty decent poem, which I grade as a B, the thought from the student isn't generally "what can I do to make that poem better," it would likely be "what can I do to get an A." This in turns means that the student is writing for you, the teacher, rather than for a broader audience.

The Writers' workshop

Both the introductory and advanced level course share the common element of the workshop; however, they are executed in my classrooms in two very different ways. As stated in the first chapter, the workshop replicates the reader-text relationship. The notion of the writers' workshop where a student is unable to speak as his or her work is critiqued is in many ways an affront to the underlying notion of emancipatory authority. By this, I mean that one person out of the entire class is silenced, and given strict orders not to convey their own thoughts. When deciding to incorporate a workshop into a shared-

authority classroom, not only is it important to weigh the benefits and drawbacks that come along with the workshop, but also, it is important to determine just what sort of workshop to implement.

The benefit of the workshop's ability to provide multiple perspectives on one piece of poetry written by a student actually works in the favor of the student, rather than simply hearing the feedback from the teacher alone. In the introductory course, the workshop is set up in its pretty traditional format. Prior to the first official workshop, the class would conduct a "mock" workshop on a poem I have written (though I would not reveal the author). This provides the students the opportunity to experience a workshop before working with their peer writing, ideally allowing for greater comfort on the commenter side. As mentioned, each student will be required to write a response to the poem being critiqued (with the exception to mock workshop), and provide the written comments to the author on the day of the workshop. The workshop would begin with the previously assigned first reader, a member of the class other than the author, to read the poem aloud. This allows the author to hear their poem in a voice other than their own, and the opportunity to catch where a reader may stumble, or hear different levels of emotion or interest. Once the poem has been read, the author will have the opportunity to present the group with any specific questions about their poem his or her peers may have. It is then the responsibility of the first reader to lead the class in discussion, starting with questions about the poem she (the first reader) has written with prior to class, and moderating through the discussion raised by the rest of the peers, while not ignoring the questions brought up by the author. Once the overall discussion of the poem has ended (either through time, or lack of further questions), the author will have an opportunity to

answer any questions his or peers may have had, or respond to other comments. As the teacher in the workshop, I would be part of the peer community, with the ability to comment or ask questions in the same capacity as the rest of the class. Two things are being achieved by allowing a student whose poem is being critiqued the opportunity to speak before and after a workshop: first, it allows the student to ensure their own questions or concerns about their poem are addressed; second, it ensures that all participants of the workshop, critic and author alike, are given a voice during the workshop process.

In the case of the advanced poetry writing course, the overall organization of the workshop takes on a different shape. While it does share traits with the 200 level course, such as giving the author the opportunity to question before hand, or comment after, I also provide the author the opportunity as to how they wish to have their responses delivered from a finite group of selections. The "Choose Your Own Workshop" allows the author to determine if he or she wishes to have responses delivered to them from the perspective of New Criticism, Reader-Response Criticism, Deconstruction, or Feminist perspectives. Prior to the commencement of the workshop, the class will read chapters detailing these different methods in Bizzaro's *Responding to Student Poems: Applications of Critical Theory,* as a way not only to consider different perspectives to write a poem, but also different ways to respond to a poem.

In both instances of the workshop, it is the author's decision which poem they wish to have critiqued. This requires students to take accountability for their own education; for example, if a student decides to have their first poem written critiqued in

two workshops, they are minimizing the opportunities to have their work read before they make their final decisions as to which are entered into their portfolio.

Conclusion

Emancipatory authority practiced within a poetry writing course provides teachers the opportunity to empower students to take on roles that they may not take otherwise. In the broader sense, recalling Giroux's definition, emancipatory authority within the classroom provides students with the foundational resources to critically question their own decisions, and those of society, instilling within them a means to implement change in their world. When sharing authority with students and allowing them take part in the decision making in a course, the teacher is empowering students to take on the responsibility that previously was the teacher's alone, which can also serve to demystify the curriculum. Through sharing authority, we have the opportunity to build student interest in the material, and ultimately better encourage students to focus on their writing, rather than on the micromanaged steps they need to complete to receive an 'A'.

By taking an active role in course design, students are preparing themselves for the roles and risk-taking that they will assume after graduation. This notion is furthered when consideration is made for students who seek a career their writing – the classroom has the ability to mirror the types of initiatives and criticism a student should expect in publication, either as educators, editors or writers.

Emancipatory authority should not be viewed as a means for teachers to somehow be absolved from teaching their classes; instead, it should challenge them to take a more active role in the development of the curriculum and to incorporate the ideas of students, and to learn.

As teachers, the benefit of emancipatory authority requires us to listen to students more closely, and puts us more in touch with their needs and desires. When we listen to students talk about authority we are bound to hear different things that could shape the direction of our classroom. We may hear students, like Patrick, who do not see the benefit of small assignments, and has the expectation that as a member of a writing class, his desire is to allow the writing itself to be central to the curriculum. This teaches us at least two things: first, we should examine our curriculum to assess the actual value of our assignments; second, we should be aware that the benefit to doing such small assignments may not filter through to our students and instead might require further explanation. Or when we talk about sharing authority with the class, maybe we have students like Claire, who is skeptical about what her peers have to offer her academically, which might lead a teacher to question the environment of the class itself. In considering a pedagogy marked by emancipatory authority, when we ultimately question the practices and decisions we make, we in turn strengthen our role as teachers by putting students' interests first.

Appendix I: Introduction to Writing Poetry

Course Guide

A poet can survive everything but a misprint. ~ Oscar Wilde

About this course: this course is modeled on theorist Henry Giroux's idea of emancipatory authority. In short, the idea of emancipatory authority is a worldview, which when applied in the classroom shifts much of the authority originally reserved for the teacher into the hands of the students in order to empower them to go beyond the traditional academic definition of success. This shared authority will ideally create an enriching environment that encourages you to critically examine and voice ideas inside the classroom. This practice will require you to take a more active role in your education. Each of us will be educators and learners during our class meetings. Students who are uncomfortable taking on this role are encouraged to contact me directly to address any questions you may have.

The basics: throughout the course of the semester, we will examine and practice poetry writing in some of its most basic (yet invaluable) elements. For the novice writer pursuing a future in creative writing and those of you enrolling in this course for simply achieving a better understanding of poetry, this course should provide you with the foundation to begin that path.

 Your role: as a member of this academic community, it will be your responsibility to take an active role in the development of our understanding of poetry. You will be asked to create assignments, introduce materials, and provide thoughtful, yet critical feedback to your peers.

My role: as a member of this community, it will also be my responsibility to actively participate in the progression of your understanding, and also serve as moderator during discussions to assist with issues of clarity or confusion.

Course direction: just as we will each take on different roles in this course, each of you also has the opportunity to participate in a three-student Curriculum Advisory Committee. The responsibility of this committee will be help shape the overall direction of our course, and serve as liaison when necessary to individual members of the class, and myself. The CAC will be chosen by the entire class by the fourth week of the semester. More on this to follow.

Grading: ultimately, grading during the course of the semester will be determined by negotiations & ideas presented before the entire class.

Introduction to Writing Poetry Sample Syllabus

Required Texts:

A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry – Mary Oliver

The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasure of Writing Poetry – Kim Addonizio &

Dorianne Laux

Additional handouts will also be provided

What You Can Expect

1. Write: This is a writing course, and therefore it is only natural that the class be expected to create poems and responses to their peers and other literary works examined throughout the semester. You are not expected to begin this class as a master poet. You are not expected to finish this class as a master poet. However, it is my goal that you will leave the class with a better understanding of the necessary elements in writing poetry, and that noticeable growth is seen in the work you produce. You should be prepared to write each week, whether it is part of an in-class exercise, or an out-of-class assignment.

2. Read: It is very difficult to understand the inner-workings of a poem without experiencing the work of writers who have already completed a body of poems. *Most* people would not jump into repairing their car without some background in maintenance, and writing poetry is no different. We will examine and interpret poems from a variety published writers to build an understanding of both what does and does not work in writing. Additionally, it is my goal that you develop a greater appreciation for poetry – whether it is poetry as a whole, or a specific form/poet.

3. Communicate: Each student in this course is expected to maintain an active and constructive voice during class sessions. It is my goal that at the end of the semester you are able to walk away with an improved ability to critically respond to not just poetry, but whatever life may put in front of you.

Workshops: Students will participate in peer –led critiques of each other's poems. Workshops will come in two forms: large and small group. Each poem will have one first-reader who will start the discussion of the poem and continue serving as the workshop leader until it is determined to move on to another poem. It is critical that while providing feedback to a classmate's poem that we maintain a constructive tone. Malicious attacks on the author will not be tolerated.

<u>**Major Assignments**</u>

Poetry: Each student is responsible for submitting seven new poems throughout the course of the semester. Initial drafts will not be graded (however, failure to submit them by the deadline will result in a deduction in participation). Assigned poems (in-class writings will work too) will be chosen by the student to submit for a letter grade, along with a prefatory essay, as a portfolio showcasing which he or she feels is the best work produced over the course of the semester.

Final Portfolio: At the end of the semester, we will compile a list of items to be included in your final portfolio. Your final portfolio should showcase what you feel is your best work of the semester. Exact details of the portfolio will be determined by the class. Examples of this would be how many poems should the portfolio contain? Should one contain a quote? Does one need to have a strict meter scheme? These are all possible elements that may be offered up by the class, and anonymously voted on by the class.

Personal Review: One week after submitting a poem, students will return to their poem with a critical eye. It should be marked up as though it is being read by someone other than the author. Examples will be shown in advance of the first submission deadline.

Peer Reviews: Students will write a minimum two paragraph response to each of their peers presenting a poem in both the large group and small group workshop. Responses should contain a thoughtful analysis of the poem in question, providing critical, yet constructive, feedback and suggestions for revision.

Peer Response Summary: With the results of one workshop, students are required to review the responses to their poem written by their peers. They must then summarize the responses (1-2 pages) into one collective response. Additionally, the collective response should serve as vessel to respond to their responses, and provide an action plan for revising the poem.

Class Leadership: Students, in pairs of two, will be responsible for developing the curriculum for one half of a class session. The first group (the order to be determined by the two groups) will be responsible for one reading/discussion and an in-class writing. The second group will be responsible for one reading/discussion and developing an out-of-class assignment for the following week. Both groups will meet with me prior to developing their half-period curriculum.

In-Class Writing: Students should expect to participate in an in-class writing assignment most weeks of class. The assignments will not be graded; however, completing them will be factored into your class participation.

Participation & Attendance

Participation and attendance are critical to the community of the classroom. Overall grades for students missing more than two unexcused sessions will be reduced by one letter grade per day missed.

Additionally, students in this course must do more than simply show up. Failure to take an active role in the classroom, or to come to class unprepared, will result in a reduction of the letter grade.

Grading Elements

Within the first three weeks of the semester the class as a whole will determine what the weight of each assignment to be. The list below is a guideline, though completely adjustable if other factors not listed are chosen to have a stronger representation.

Portfolio and Prefatory Essay

Participation

Classroom Leadership

Peer Reviews

Peer Review Summary

Class Schedule

Week 1: Syllabus, and introduction to the class. **Assign Poem 1.**

Week 2:`Introductions: Poet's Companion 19-29. Poetry Handbook 1-12. **Poem 1 due.**

Small Group Workshop

Week 3: Revision: Poet's Companion 187-192. Workshops: Poetry Handbook 112-118.

Workshop 1

Week 4: Imitation/voice: Poets Companion 12-18. Poet's Companion 115-128. **Assign Poem 2.**

Week 5: Images: Poet's Companion 85-93. A Poetry Handbook 92-108. **Poem 2 due.**

Small Group Workshop

Week 6: The Poetic Line: Poet's Companion 105-114. **Assign Poem 3.**

Workshop 2

Week 7: Class lead by_____ &_____

Poem 3 due. Peer developed poem assigned (Poem 4)

Week 8: Meter/Rhyme/Form: Poet's Companion 139-150.

Small Group Workshop. Peer assigned poem due (Poem 4).

Week 9: Repetition: Poet's Companion 151-170. **Assign Poem 5.**

Workshop 3

Week 10: Class lead by_____ &_____

Poem 5 due.

Peer developed poem assigned (Poem 6).

Week 11: Prose Poetry: Handout – Poetic Form 226-236.

Workshop 4

Week 12: Class lead by_____ &_____

Peer assigned poem due (Poem 6). Peer developed poem assigned (Poem 7).

Week 13: Getting Published: Poet's Companion 217-223.

Small Group Workshop. Peer developed poem due (Poem 7).

Week 14: Workshop Marathon.

Week 15: Final portfolios due at 5 p.m.

Appendix II: Advanced Poetry Writing

Course Guide

You will find poetry nowhere unless you bring some of it with you. ~Joseph Joubert

About this course: this course is modeled on theorist Henry Giroux's idea of emancipatory authority. In short, the idea of emancipatory authority is a worldview, which when applied in the classroom shifts much of the authority originally reserved for the teacher into the hands of the students in order to empower them to go beyond the traditional academic definition of success. This shared authority will ideally create an enriching environment that encourages you to critically examine and voice ideas inside the classroom. This practice will require you to take a more active role in your education. Each of us will be educators and learners during our class meetings. Students who are uncomfortable taking on this role are encouraged to contact me directly to address any questions you may have.

The basics: the goal of Advanced Poetry Writing is to explore poetry in the many different forms it can take, and the different poets who have utilized these forms in the past. Objectives will be met through rigorous reading, writing and interpretations of poets and their work.

Your role: as a member of this academic community, it will be your responsibility to take an active role in the development of our understanding of poetry. You will be asked to create assignments, introduce materials, and provide thoughtful, yet critical feedback to your peers.

My role: as a member of this community, it will also be my responsibility to actively participate in the progression of your understanding, and also serve as moderator during discussions to assist with issues of clarity or confusion.

Course direction: just as we will each take on different roles in this course, each of you also has the opportunity to participate in a three-student Curriculum Advisory Committee. The responsibility of this committee will be help shape the overall direction of our course, and serve as liaison when necessary to individual members of the class, and myself. The CAC will be chosen by the entire class by the fourth week of the semester. More on this to follow.

Grading: ultimately, grading during the course of the semester will be determined by negotiations & ideas presented before the entire class.

Advanced Poetry Writing Sample Syllabus

Required Texts:

Thirteen Ways of Looking for a Poem – Wendy Bishop

Poetic Form – David Caplan

Additional handouts will also be provided

Course Description: The goal of Advanced Poetry Writing is to explore poetry in the many different forms it can take, and the different poets who have utilized these forms in the past. Objectives will be met through rigorous reading, writing and interpretations of poets and their work.

What You Can Expect

1. Write: This is a writing course, and therefore it is only natural that the class be expected to create poems and responses to their peers and other literary works examined throughout the semester. You are not expected to know or succeed at every form we attempt in this course; however, you must at least try. It is my goal that you will leave the class with a better understanding of different forms available to you when writing poetry, and that noticeable growth is seen in the work you produce. You should be prepared to write each week, whether it is part of an in-class exercise, or an out-of-class assignment.

2. Read: It is very difficult to understand the inner-workings of a poem without experiencing the work of writers who have already completed a body of poems. *Most* people would not jump into repairing their car without some background in maintenance, and to an extent, writing poetry is no different.

3. Communicate: Each student in this course is expected to maintain an active and constructive voice during class sessions. It is my goal that at the end of the semester you are able to walk away with an improved ability to critically respond to not just poetry, but whatever life may put in front of you.

4. Take charge: Much of this course is designed to empower you as a learner and to broaden your experience outside of the typical boundaries of a classroom. You will be responsible for creating many aspects of the class, and it is my hope that you will use these opportunities to the best of your advantage.

Participation & Attendance

Participation and attendance are critical to the community of the classroom. Overall grades for students missing more than two unexcused sessions will be reduced by one letter grade per day missed.

Additionally, students in this course must do more than simply show up. Failure to take an active role in the classroom, or to come to class unprepared, will result in a reduction of the participation points.

The Workshop

Choose Your Own Workshop: Students will participate in a minimum of two large-class workshops (and one to two small group workshops during weeks 8 and 9). Prior to these workshops they will determine which method of workshop they wish to have their poems evaluated under, based off the handouts from in Patrick Bizzaro's *Responding to Student Poems*. Once a student chooses a workshop method, they must choose a different method for future workshops.

Other Workshop Details: Each workshop will be lead by one first reader, other than the poet, who will be responsible to lead discussion and formulate questions about the poem. Additionally, each student is responsible for writing a ½ to 1 page letter providing critical feedback to the poet's work

<u>**Major Assignments**</u>

Reading Responses: Each week, one half of the class (groups 1 & 2) will be responsible for posting a brief response (2 to 5 paragraphs) to the topic of the reading for the week prior to the start of class. Responses can cover well thought-out ideas such as why they may like or dislike the particular topic, discussion of a poem covered in the text (or one previously read), etc…however, keep in mind that all posts will be submitted in the public sphere, and your thoughts must be original, or provide appropriate citation. Students who do not have the technological capabilities to complete this assignment should contact me after the first class meeting (or as soon as possible if something arises mid-semester). The result of these responses will be used to lead discussion in class, however it should be noted that all students, regardless of the posting week, should be prepared to discuss the materials.

Weekly Assignments: Each week that a poem is assigned, students will choose from three assignments I have created based off the form studied that week. Additionally, for each assignment, students may also choose to create their own "wild card" assignment, still based of that week's reading. However, prior to submitting the assignment, the student should contact me explaining a) what the assignment is, and b) what the value of your own assignment is opposed to the general class assignment. In most cases the assignment will be approved, if justified, within 24 hours. Assignments must be

submitted within three days of the next class meeting. Poems will not be assigned a letter

grade upon their first submission; instead, you will gain points automatically for

submitting the poem on time.

Lead a Class/Lead a Poem: Student will work together in four groups (3-5 students in

each group) to lead a class session examining a form of poetry from the texts that is not

covered in the general course syllabus. Additionally, each student will individually lead a

discussion on a poem (either from the text or otherwise approved) that utilizes that form.

Each group will meet with me a few days prior to their presentation date, and we will

discuss their strategy for discussing both the group exercise and the individual poem.

Journal/Publication Review: Students will research and 3 to 5 page report on a poetry

journal or other publication that showcases poetry to which they are interested in

submitting a poem to for publication and present their findings to the class in a five

minute presentation. As part of the presentation, students will put together a package as

though they are actually submitting to the publication in question (and I strongly

recommend that you do!). Additional requirements for the report will include: 1) a history

of the publication 2) submission guidelines 3) the types of poems they've included in the

past 4) examples of poems they've published in the past 5) a brief statement explaining

why you chose the publication, and where it fits in regards to your own body of work that

you are submitting. I will have a current copy of *Poet's Market* for students to use as

reference; however, they should also consult libraries, bookstores that carry the journal,

or credible online resources.

Portfolio & Assessment Criteria: At the end of the semester, students will be

responsible for submitting a portfolio of six to eight original poems written throughout

the course. During week 7, the class as a whole will determine the criteria to be used for grading the portfolio. For example, should one of the poems include a type of rhyme? How many different poems utilizing the same form can be submitted? We will start the exercise the week before by building an online forum with your ideas, and vote in class for the favored suggestions. Additionally, as part of the portfolio statement, also to be determined by the class, students will write a 1 to 2 page statement negotiating what they feel their overall grade for the course should be. Students should be prepared to provide detailed examples of their growth over the course, and a fair assessment of their role in the classroom in regards to assignments, participation and the portfolio. Portfolios will be assigned a set amount of points/letter grade based off of a) achieving the criteria set forth by the class, b) statements shown as examples in your grade negotiation, and c) quality of revision of poetry.

<u>Grading</u>

The following is a breakdown of how your grade for the course will be determined. Assignments such as the weekly assignments, blog entries, and response letters are given a grade for completion rather than assessment of quality. That said, this is a contract of good faith that you will complete these assignments to the best of your ability. If the materials you turn in are obviously ones that you started and finished five minutes before class, I will see this as a breach of the classroom contract and adjust the grade accordingly. Additionally, regular assignments (blog entries, poems, and response letters) that are late will be deducted one half point per day. Late journal reviews will be deducted 5 points per day. Late portfolios will not be accepted, nor will any assignment that is more than two weeks late.

Grading Elements

Within the first three weeks of the semester the class as a whole will determine what the weight of each assignment to be. The list below is a guideline, though completely adjustable if other factors not listed are chosen to have a stronger representation.

> Portfolio
>
> Participation
>
> Journal Review
>
> ReadingResponses
>
> Response Letters

Midterm Conferences: I will meet with each student individually during weeks 8 and 9 to discuss their progress in the class at the midway point in the semester, as well as discuss their preliminary plans for the final portfolio. During this time, I encourage students to provide feedback in regards to their opinion to the course, as well as any changes they wish to see implemented or ideas they may have.

Class Schedule (Note: Reading assignments are due the following meeting).

Week 1: Introductions. Read Bishop 1-36.

Week 2: Read Bishop 37-62; Caplan 11-14, 17-25, 34-37. Poem 1: Accentual and Syllabic Verse.

Week 3: Read Handout by P. Bizzaro; Bishop 63-88. Poem 2: Couplet

> Poem 1 due
>
> Group 1 Response

Week 4: Read Bishop 266-290. Poem 3: Quatrain

> Poem 2 due

Mock Workshop

Group 2 Response

Week 5: Bishop 180-215. Poem 4: Lists & Repetition

Poem 3 due

Workshop 1

Group 1 Response

Week 6: Read Bishop 153-180; Caplan 161-165. Poem 5: Haiku

Poem 4 due

Workshop 2

Portfolio Criteria Due Online

Group 2 Response

Week 7: Caplan 166-175; Bishop 127-152. Poem 6: Ghazal /Pantoum (All due week 10)

Workshop 3

Vote for Portfolio Criteria

Group 1 Response

Week 8: Midterm Meetings/Small Group Workshop

Week 9: Midterm Meetings/Small Group Workshop

Week 10: Read TBD by group 1. Poem 7: TBD

Poem 6 due

Workshop 4

Group 2 Response

Week 11: Group 1 Leads Class. Read TBD by group 2. Poem 8: TBD

Poem 7 due

Workshop 5

Group 1 Response

Week 12: Group 2 Leads Class. Read TBD by group 3. Poem 9: TBD

Poem 8 due

Workshop 6

Group 2 Response

Week 13: Group 3 Leads Class. Read TBD by group 4.

Workshop 7

Group 1 Response

Week 14: Group 4 Leads Class

Workshop 8

Group 2 Response

Week 15: Presentations/final business

Appendix III: Assignment 1

Our first assignment for the semester is rather straightforward. Write a poem about

poetry. There is no minimum or maximum length, nor is it required to contain specific

elements or structure, just what you consider to be a poem. As we just finished our first

class session, the purpose of this assignment is to explore what's on each of our minds.

Some writing prompts you may consider could be:

- **What is poetry:** write a poem about what you define poetry to be. Maybe it

    involves a favorite poem or poet you have read in the past, maybe it harks back to

    your eighth grade literature teacher.

- **Write about your perceptions of the class structure:** looking at the direction of

    the course, write about what's on your mind. Are you excited? Scared? Bored

    (hopefully not!).

- **Write about the first thing you remember about class:** what was it like

    listening to the class talk? What were your thoughts as you waited for the class to

    begin?

- **Write a poem using the syllabus & course guide:** pick out specific words from

    the syllabus, or even use William S. Burroughs' method of "cut ups," literally

    cutting lines from the text and pasting them randomly into a poem (make a copy

    first!).

The sky is the limit. You do not have to use the prompts above. This assignment will be

due next week, and we'll start the class by reading poems by those who volunteer.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education:
M.A., English, Indiana University, earned at IUPUI
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Honors, Awards, Fellowships:
Co-winner of the Los Angeles Times/Associate Collegiate Press 1999 News Story of the Year
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Multicultural/Diversity Story of the Year Society of Professional Journalists 1999 Regional
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Professional Experience:
2008-Present Assistant Director   IUPUI Office of Undergraduate Admissions,
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2006-2008   Enrollment Specialist   IUPUI Enrollment Center, Indianapolis, IN
2005-2006   Freelance Reporter   Indianapolis Star North Bureau, Fishers, IN
2003   Freelance Reporter   Taunton Daily Gazette, Taunton, MA
1998-2001   Paraprofessional   Indianapolis Star, Indianapolis, IN
1997-2000   Editor   IUPUI Sagamore, Indianapolis, IN
1997-1998   Obituary Intern   Indianapolis Star, Indianapolis, IN

Professional Affiliations:
American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers
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Conferences Attended:
October 2008: Indiana Association of College Admissions Counselors Fall Congress,
Indianapolis, IN
July 2008: EduWeb, Atlantic City, NJ
April 2008: Indiana Association of College Admissions Counselors Spring Congress,
Indianapolis, IN. Co-Presenter: Using Technology to Recruit Students
November 2007: Stamats Generating Interactive Marketing Strategies: Stamats, San
Diego, CA
October 2007: Indiana Association of College Admissions Counselors Fall Congress,
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March 2007: American Association of College Admissions Officers and Registrars,
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Genesis (Spring 2002) "Yellow"
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