The students I teach are the people whose writing I'm most interested in reading. This is the generation who will create the next dictionary, who will decide what the next "books" (maybe not books at all) will look like. But often, because I have frequently worked with students called "basic writers" or "generation 1.5" or "at-risk" or any number of other uncomfortable labels, these students feel that they are terrible writers. It's my task to get them engaged in reading and writing, to help them feel a sense of mastery while at the same time encouraging them to experiment. Therefore, while final essay assignments are often complex, in class, through drawing and poetry, we play. The in-class experiments we do give writers a structure in which to put their (often very serious) ideas. After the students do enough of these experiments, they begin to see patterns. Last semester, one student realized that almost all of his low-stakes assignments were questioning where the line is between safety and liberty, while another student realized that his were largely about how the majority often takes on the language of those at the margins. From there, both students wrote formal essays on these topics. The culture of play is more than simply generative. For writers for whom writing feels dangerous, play allows for a somewhat safe footing from which to try new ideas.

Last year, I taught a two-semester class for students on football scholarship, some of whom struggled to engage with the academic essay despite extreme intelligence and verbal proficiency. It was the students themselves who suggested that we write poetry in this class, insisting that in poetry you could "be yourself" and you weren't so tied down by language rules. We used poetry as a jumping-off point to study published essays that expand ideas of the essay form, looking to these essays as *possibilities* for structure.This pedagogy, which asks the students to help the teacher develop the curriculum is one of supported autonomy that spans a wide range of courses and levels. For the past four years, I've taught Written Professional Communication, a course that attracts students from a wide range of disciplines, from Sculpture to Computer Science to Engineering. Because the course includes such a range of writers, I can't teach lessons in writing in each specific discipline. Instead, I teach students how to notice the features of writing that are important in their fields. For the final project, students write a how-to instructing other novice writers to write a professional document of their choosing. This helps them to learn, not only about that particular document, but how to examine and recreate other documents they may need to write in the future. Likewise, when I teach literature, I prefer to organize my courses around a question rather than an epoch or author so that students consider themselves thinkers who are investigating this question *with* me, instead of simply listening *to* me.

Some years ago, I wrote up a memo about a book club unit I often teach in my courses from Basic Writing classes with mostly second language learners to upper-level literature classes with mostly English majors. I've since rewritten the memo as an article, which is published in the journal *Reader*. In the book club unit, each class picks a course theme, then splits into groups and each group picks a book to read on that theme. Students write individual papers, but each "book club" is tasked with teaching the class about the book's relationship to the theme of the course. Since I wrote the memo, which has been widely distributed among my colleagues in various disciplines, the class has been taught by a number of other instructors, not only in Composition courses, but in upper level Literature classes at San Francisco State, Environmental Science courses at Lane Community College, Information Science courses at the University of Illinois, and I just learned it will be taught in a Journalism course at Laney College this spring. With this, as with all of my assignments, the hope is that at a certain point, "supported autonomy" simply becomes "autonomy" and the student leaves the class a little more curious and a little more inclined to investigate that curiosity.