

## Acknowledgments

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Without the people in this first paragraph, the life from which I write isn't possible, so I need to thank them first. Thank you to Jesus Christ, to whom I owe everything. May my work be an echo of Your excellence. Second, thank you to Crystal, whose sacrifices for the work I do far exceed my own. She earns no awards, and she receives no emails from thankful readers. And yet, her life's work is much more impressive than mine: Haddie, Laura, Marlena, and Dean. I love you, Crystal. (And I love you, kids! Your dad admires you so much.)

The staff and students of Cedar Springs give me far more daily inspiration, encouragement, and support than I deserve. Thank you all for your grace toward me and investment in me. I can still remember how dumb I felt around all of you when I first started—not much has changed! Anne and Ron, you are courageous leaders. Steve Seward, thank you for your mentorship. I'm also thankful for the staff of Thornapple-Kellogg Public Schools, who gave me a wonderful education growing up. The key beliefs were planted in me everywhere in that district.

Nearly six years ago, I decided that I wanted to write a book for teachers, so I started reading about how to do that, and I discovered that it was next to hopeless without some audience of my own. I didn't have one of those, so I started a blog called *Teaching the Core*. Initially, my goal was to help people (including me) who were struggling to wrap their heads around the Common Core and the freaking out that seemed to attend it. Little did I know, starting out, how much of a blessing it would be to write for earnest, like-hearted colleagues around the country and the world. It is for good reason that I've dedicated this book to them. Thank you.

I've talked through the material in this book at nearly one hundred different speaking events in almost half of the states in the United States over the past five years, so there are countless people whose in-person attention and questions and pushback have made this book better. I wish I knew all of their names, but the best I can do is thank them as a group. Here's a hearty thanks to folks who spent time with me in the following places, starting back in 2013: Allendale, MI; Harrah, OK; Lebanon, MO; Peterborough, NH; Royal Oak, MI; Grand Rapids, MI; Louisville, KY; Oak Brook Terrace, IL; Cleveland, OH; Independence, CA; Bishop, CA; Turlock, CA; Hartsburg, IL; Dublin, OH; New Lothrop, MI; Dearborn, MI; Sacramento, CA; Attica, NY; Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, IL; Rowan University in Glassboro, NJ; Parma, MI; Las Vegas, NV; St. Louis, MO; Mobile,

AL; Vancouver, WA; Bethel, WA; Plainwell, MI; Minneapolis, MN; Centralia, IL; Columbus, OH; Oshkosh, WI; Chicago, IL; Flint, MI; Desert Sands, CA; Round Rock, TX; Berwyn South, IL; Dubuque, IA; Grafton, MI; Austin, TX; DeSoto, MS; Atlanta, GA; Raleigh, NC; Cincinnati, OH; Murfreesboro, TN; Weston, MO; Turtle Lake, WI; Houston, TX; Beavercreek City, OH; Denver, CO; Palatine, IL; Normal, IL; Wausau, WI; Madison, WI; and Hailey, ID. (I'm still waiting for that invite to Hawaii . . .)

The first time I ever led professional development for teachers, it was because I was required to by a Lake Michigan Writing Project (LMWP) Invitational Summer Institute (ISI). That ISI was so formative for me. It was Lindsay Ellis, director of the LMWP, who told me, "You are not writing for publication. You are writing because it is a spiritual practice." I hold to that. Thank you also to Susan Mowers and Kari Reynolds, who co-led our institute with Lindsay that summer. This book grew from the practice of regular writing.

Finally, I've got an amazing publisher. Thanks most of all to the work that Lisa Luedeke did in cultivating me into a Corwin author. I've got a long way to go before I feel like I belong with such a strong publishing company, but I sure am honored to be a part. Two authors, in particular, helped me decide on Corwin Literacy: ReLeah Cossett Lent and Jim Burke. Corwin found great reviewers for my initial manuscript, too: I'm indebted to the exhaustive feedback of Eddie Johns, Erica Beaton, Gerard Dawson, Lydia Bowden, Jennifer Wheat Townsend, and Marsha Voigt. Tori Bachman was a godsend at just the right time, and she and I shared a special experience: mine was her first book at Corwin Literacy, too. The main difference between Tori and me is that I'm a rookie, and she's a pro—there are many times when she talked me out of insanity. This book is so much sharper (and I am much saner) because of her. Thank you! A special thank you, as well, to the many people at Corwin Literacy who worked to put this book in teachers' hands: Diana Breti, Gail Buschman, Wendy Jo Dymond, Laureen Gleason, Brian Grimm, Julie Nemer, Amy Schroller, Maria Sosnowski, Maura Sullivan, and Sharon Wu.

**For the introduction**, I owe a debt of gratitude to Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, whose iconic achievement provides me with a metaphor I use all the time. Mike Schmoker's comments on a later draft of the chapter made it sharper and more focused. Tori Bachman came up with "Everest Island," a term I like a lot. The following people contributed Everest sentences in response to my query, but due to unexpected constraints I wasn't able to include them: Luke Wilcox, Lisa Vahey, Chris Vander Ark, Dana Schmaling, Jane Tawel, Eddie Johns, Leslie Lucas,

Jenna Bragas, Sarah Garcia, Jennifer Baker, Heather Quinn, Kim Rensch, Janelle Miles, Celia Duran, Trisch Vessar, Todd Finley, Liz Coman, and Diane LaGrone.

**For the key beliefs chapter,** I've got to go back years ago to when my colleague Steve Vree pointed me to a Paul Tough article in the *New York Times*. Tough's writing got me thinking (and writing, and speaking) about character, and it also eventually pointed me toward Camille Farrington et. al.'s (2012) seminal *Teaching Adolescents to Become Learners*, where four of the five key beliefs are found. (Camille was also helpful when I emailed with questions.) Lisa Luedeke sent me a copy of Fisher, Frey, and Hattie's (2016b) *Visible Learning for Literacy*, and that book mentioned teacher credibility in a way that turned the light bulb on for me. Penny Kittle gave feedback on a section that featured her work, and she gave me the permission I unconsciously needed to remove that section. I'd still want my kids in your classes, Penny.

Character Lab, an organization that seeks to bridge the gap between character research and teacher practice, is owed a special thank you for this chapter. My colleague Tanya Ramm forwarded me a Character Lab grant opportunity several years ago, and that grant gave me the chance to learn about research at a workshop led by Angela Duckworth. Even better, it put me in close touch for a year with the brilliant Michelle McNamara, whose friendship has made me a lot smarter. Character Lab's annual Educator Summit also connected me with Chris Hulleman, Theresa Hulleman, and Meg Foran, three people who directly improved the Build Connections portion of this chapter. Ethan Kross and Matt Kraft were two other researchers I corresponded with while writing this chapter—thank you.

Finally, Brian Davidson of the Intrinsic Institute in Olathe, KS, gave me sage advice one summer over beer and BBQ, telling me that I should *not* use the label “non-cognitive factors” for this part of the bull's-eye. That was really good advice, Brian.

**For the knowledge chapter,** *Make It Stick* (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014) was a critical read for me several years ago, and I wouldn't have read it were it not for the recommendations of Jenn Gonzalez, of CultofPedagogy.com, and Erica Beaton, of EricaLeeBeaton.com. Also, my principal Anne Kostus was nice enough to buy me a copy. Bill Strickland of East Grand Rapids taught me to balance knowledge and skill at an AP Summer Institute. Daniel Willingham's articles on knowledge are a treasure trove of the internet—everyone needs to visit Dan's website. Mike Schmoker's thoughts on reducing standards gave me permission I needed, years ago, to focus. The LMWP introduced me to the idea of “burning questions,” which planted the seed in my mind for what would eventually become BQYs.

**For the argument chapter,** Jerry Graff and Cathy Birkenstein have become good friends, and their work continues to guide me. Lindsay Ellis gave me a last minute insight when we met in St. Louis; her writing on pragma-dialectics helped me clarify “earnest and amicable arguments,” and Erica Beaton helped me land on the word *amicable*. Les Lynn is the debate-infused pedagogy genius over at *Argument-Centered Education*—I am not worthy to mention the word *debate* in his presence. Mike Schmoker and Jerry Graff wrote an article for *Ed Leadership* years ago that prompted me to host my first in-class debate—from there, eventually, grew Pop-Up Debates, Paraphrase Plus, and so on. Shelley Alvarez, friend and colleague, was instrumental in helping me relocate the Caulkins epigraph.

**For the reading chapter,** reviewer Lydia Bowden of Georgia gave withering feedback that ultimately made the chapter much, much better. I want Lydia to review all my books now. Thank you, too, to the several hundred people who have taken my online professional development course “Teaching With Articles”—their conversations in the course have made me smarter.

**For the writing chapter,** I’ve got to start by nodding again to the LMWP, where I learned to teach writing by practicing writing. That logic has stuck somewhere deep inside me. Perini, Dewing, and Silver’s (2012) “writing to learn” concept in *The Core Six* has been seminal for me. The science teachers at Flint Powers Catholic High School let me participate in a seriously inspirational meeting where they demonstrated how writing throughout the school day can be a lot better and saner than it tends to be. Finally, Jim Burke, an ever-faithful friend and mentor, coached me through writing parts of the book like this one that I did not feel “ready” for.

**For the speaking chapter,** just Erik Palmer. Nobody writes books on teaching speaking like that guy. Actually, almost nobody writes books on teaching speaking at all. That’s a problem that Erik made me aware of and that Erik is helping to fix. Thank you.

A few final notes: Barrett Brooks coached me to do this book. Thank you for your friendship, Barrett, which has kept me superglued to *why* I write. Rachael Farwell faithfully proofreads for all the moronic errors I make as a writer. Thank you, Rachael, for making my work look better than it does when I’m done with it. And finally, thank you to my parents, who believe in me and spend a lot of time loving on my children, which makes it more possible for me to write and travel. I love you guys.