

Acknowledgments

In the acknowledgments to *Football for a Buck*, Jeff Pearlman notes that “writing a book is a nightmare” (p. 331). Spot on, Jeff. Couldn’t have said it better myself. I only wish I had known that going in. But, here we are. It’s all finished. There’s nothing left to do but pick up the shattered remnants of my broken psyche and thank the people who helped me cling to sanity as I endured this process. The people I mention below are responsible for all that this book does well. All of its shortcomings can be attributed to me.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone at the WAC Clearinghouse for your thoughtful support throughout this project. The struggles of this project had everything to do with me putting words into the world, and not the process of publication. That was more painless than I could have possibly imagined, and it’s all thanks to a great team. From really generative reviews to figuring out how to make an image easier to see on a range of screens, the WAC Clearinghouse really has it together.

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The students at UMaine—though they may not know it—were also helpful as this project moved to completion. I’d like in particular to thank the students in my English 402: Lifespan Writing Development class. Their thinking (and writing!) about lifespan writing research helped my own thinking as I wrapped this project up. But all of the students I have had here, from English 101 to graduate courses, have helped me return to the act of writing and the development of that

act again and again as I tried to hammer out useful language for other teachers and researchers in this book.

Thanks also to the participants included in this book—Emily, Alice, Marianne, Alexis, Nick, Holly, Don, May, Lilly, Tom, John, James, and Michelle. I appreciate your time, attention, and kindness in talking with me about your writing, and sharing your writing with me. You’ve helped me answer a great many questions about writing and writing development that have been troubling me for some time, and I can’t express my appreciation deeply enough.

Before I set about answering the questions I had, however, I had to figure out what those questions *were*, and it was the wonderful faculty at UC Santa Barbara who helped me with that. Readers will no doubt recognize the influence of Charles Bazerman’s work on this book. His ongoing research, his helpful guidance as an advisor, and his willingness to take the time to think through problems have been invaluable to me as I developed my research trajectory and, eventually, took aim at lifespan writing research. A heartfelt thanks also to Linda Adler-Kassner, whose guidance during the data collection for Part I was crucial, and who could always offer helpful advice on a range of topics, be it teaching, research, or administration. A special thanks to Jason Raley, who pushed me to explore what ethnomethodology had to offer and what I might be able to do with its approach. Finally, thanks to Judith Green and Tim Dewar, whose courses, conversations, and ideas can be seen running through the background (and, sometimes, the foreground) of this text.

My attention to writing, to the complexities of writing development, dates back to my earliest days as a teacher, and so I also owe a thank you to Delaware Valley High School in Milford, Pennsylvania, where many, many students endured my learning how to teach. The talented, committed, and generous teachers there helped me get on my feet as a teacher, and figure out the questions that really drove me and my work in the classroom. A particular thank you goes out to Keith Olsommer and the entire the DV football coaching staff. For about two decades running, DV’s coaching staff has focused on getting every player—no matter how far from the starting line-up they are—reps in practice, opportunities to play, and positive experiences. It was from those coaches that I really began thinking long-term about development, about how an individual can be helped along, a little at a time, to great results.

Thanks also to all of my friends and their support through this work. I’m sure the reader can imagine, after reading this text, that I’m probably not the most fun person on earth. I mean, I titled chapter one “Respecifying Literate Action Development Ethnomethodologically.” Would *you* want to be friends with a person who comes up with a chapter title like that? No, you would not. These people have really hung in there over the years, and I can’t thank them enough for it. Jeff, Jason, Josh, and Kristen, friends from college who have stayed in remarkably good touch no matter how many different time zones we’re spread across, thanks for being there to lend an ear when I needed it. I’ve known Jessie since I was eleven,

and in all these years, no matter how far apart we were or how different our lives are (she's a stunt woman and I come up with titles like chapter one), she's always there for a random, silly conversation about anything and everything.

Thanks to the support of my family—my parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and grandparents—through all the years of this work. You've been hearing me talk a lot about this project, unprompted. Now that the book is out, you can let out a sigh of relief over the mistaken impression that I am going to stop talking about it. But, seriously, thank you for your patience and support through this.

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