Drafting a big writing textbook during what is definitely an era of decline for big writing textbooks, revising it during a global pandemic, and finishing it during what—in part due to new generative artificial intelligence tools—is being hailed as possibly the end of the writing class era, is not for the faint of heart, and not a project that anyone completes unaided. I am thus grateful to literally a cast of thousands, some of whom I can call out here.

Textbooks begin with students and their questions, and this one is no exception. Hundreds of students have worked patiently through iterations of these materials well before they were part of a textbook project. They have taught me so much about why writing is hard—and about how and especially why we should continually seek to make it a less mysterious and more empowering endeavor. Seven classes of students at George Mason University in particular piloted and gave feedback on the emerging textbook chapters; I am grateful to those students for their patience and positivity, and I hope they are out there somewhere knowing they have become and are still becoming good writers.

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