First Time Up
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This book distills much of what I’ve learned about teaching writing since I first graded a student paper thirty years ago. A thorough acknowledgments page would include every student and colleague I’ve worked with during that time. Without the memory required to create such a list, I will mention only those people directly involved in bringing this book to print.

As she has done often during our thirty-four years together, my wife Melody Graulich provided the initial idea and the firm push for this project. My colleagues in the FHE writing group helped me improve the initial proposal and the most difficult chapter. Tom Newkirk and John Ernest at the University of New Hampshire, Bruce Ballenger and Michelle Payne at Boise State University, and Lynn Meeks at Utah State University shared ideas with me and put me in touch with new graduate students—Alisha Geary, Steve Harrison, Julie Johns, Leslie Lewis, Emma Mecham, Tim Orme, Mandy Page, Rebecca Perkins, Jim Webber—whose insights and fears helped me update my own thoughts. My Spring 2004 Teaching Writing class at USU added to my list of new teachers’ concerns.

Rachel Rich interviewed students and combed the Web for me. Susan Andersen co-authored the academic integrity packet, which became Appendix E. Marina Hall, Tim Slocum, and Denice Turner helped keep my wheels on the tracks, while my kids, Corey and Larkin, coped with the old man off in his study again. I owe particular gratitude to Shanan Ballam, who filled in for me when I was on research leave and again when I was sick in 2004; Andrea Barnes, who took over my family duties when I was in the hospital and saved me from a misdiagnosis; Lynn Meeks, who shouldered without complaint the administrative burdens I had to unload; and Sheila McNamee, who explained the distinction between constructionist and constructivist while driving me to radiation treatments.

I hope that the wisdom of Donald Murray infuses this book; the spirit of Murray guides everything I do in a writing classroom, and I’m far from alone in my loyalty to that spirit and to the belief that writing should be fun.

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my work on this project, and to the English department for a research leave that gave me the time to complete it. And thanks to the Northern Rockies Consortium for Higher Education, which sponsored the creation of the ethics packet with its 2003 Instructional Improvement prize.

A nod to someone in the publishing house is, I suppose, obligatory, but I owe particular and unique thanks to Michael Spooner of USU Press. At a writing group meeting where everyone else saw weaknesses in my proposal, Michael saw a book. Here it is.