

Preface

Why write a book about writing for educational leaders? For three reasons: because I think that experienced leaders have much to say to the profession; because I hope to reach those who are reluctant writers, having been there myself; and finally, because many leaders who have a story to tell just aren't sure how they should tell it.

Those reasons perhaps explain the special features of the book. First, you will note that the style is less formal. I know how to write the academic style (see Stuffy, 2003), but I wanted to speak to you directly. So, the only references you will see are those where I felt compelled to acknowledge my sources. And I hope that the style achieves its informality by my use of short sentences, colloquial expressions, and brief paragraphs.

Second, from time to time, I refer to my own experience as a writer, using the dreaded pronoun "I." Doing so was not an attempt at self-aggrandizement. Rather, it was a modest way to identify with writers who are still developing. I have known self-doubt as a writer. I have received numerous rejection letters. And I have made a bunch of mistakes, both major and minor ones.

Next, I make much use of figures, boxes, and exhibits in order to increase clarity. Let me define those terms briefly. A *figure* is a drawing, a sketch, or an illustration. A *box* (a term suggested by publisher Gracia Alkema) is a summary of key ideas and processes, set off from the regular text. And an *exhibit* is an extended example of a process or strategy.

Also, I have designed the book so that it may be used flexibly. If you would like some guidance, read the first nine chapters as they are

sequenced here; then, select from the remaining chapters those you need most.

Finally, I make specific and direct recommendations about how to write the various kinds of messages because I know that developing writers want that kind of help. Yet at the same time, I encourage all readers to develop their own models and processes. In a sense, I hope I have achieved a balance of teacher-like directness and mentor-like support.