For success in school and life, students need more than proficiency in academic subjects and good scores on tests; those goals should form the floor, not the ceiling, of their education. To truly thrive, students need to develop attributes that aren’t typically measured on standardized tests. In this lively, engaging book by veteran school leader Tom Hoerr, educators will learn how to foster the “Formative Five” success skills that today’s students need, including:

- **Empathy**: learning to see the world through others’ perspectives.
- **Self-control**: cultivating the abilities to focus and delay self-gratification.
- **Integrity**: recognizing right from wrong and practicing ethical behavior.
- **Embracing diversity**: recognizing and appreciating human differences.
- **Grit**: persevering in the face of challenge.

When educators engage students in understanding and developing these five skills, they change mindsets and raise expectations for student learning. As an added benefit, they see significant improvements in school and classroom culture. With specific suggestions and strategies, *The Formative Five* will help teachers, principals, and anyone else who has a stake in education prepare their students—and themselves—for a future in which the only constant will be change.

[leave space for an endorsement]

*Fostering Grit, Empathy, and Other SUCCESS SKILLS Every Student Needs*
Introduction

*Character is higher than intellect.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

About a decade ago, I attended a conference for principals that changed how I think about the purpose of schools and the focus of my work. One of the speakers, James Honan of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, asked us to consider the following question: “How do you know when your school is successful?” We thought silently to ourselves for a moment before engaging in animated discussions at our tables. After a few minutes, we shared our responses with Honan, who wrote them down on a paper attached to a large easel.

Unsurprisingly, answers included high test scores, strong graduation rates, good student attendance, and graduates being accepted at schools of their choice. Someone shouted out “winning sports teams,” to which a wise person replied, “How about winning sports teams where everyone plays?” eliciting lots of smiles and affirming nods. Another person suggested that a good mark of success would be going a week without the toilets getting clogged and with no school bus delays. Again there were many smiles and nods. Others mentioned going a week with no discipline problems; still others, going a week with productively involved parents. A couple of folks, myself included, mentioned the value of
students being engaged in learning. When we were all done sharing, Honan spoke.

“You’re all missing the boat,” he said.

The room was silent.

“These achievements are important,” he continued, “but you should be asking yourselves whether your students are going to be productive and happy citizens at age 25, 45, and 65. What kinds of adults will they be? Will they be good spouses, good friends, and good parents? Will they be respectful and honest, and will they work to make the world a better place? Those are the qualities that we should be valuing and pursuing in our schools. And those are the measures of your school’s effectiveness.”

Our Challenges

Of course, Honan was right. We must teach students to read, write, and calculate, but that’s only the beginning; those goals should form the floor, not the ceiling, of their education. Our timeline is too short and our aspirations are too low if we limit our curriculum and pedagogical focus to tests, grades, and diplomas. We must step back and look at what’s needed to achieve success in the real world, not just in school.

Although it has not been a significant part of the dialogue among educators, the distinction between what is needed to succeed in school versus out of it is one that writers and leaders have talked about for some time. Among the implications of Tom Friedman’s “flattened world” (2005), for example, is that our workers increasingly compete against people who live thousands of miles away in other countries, rendering traditional scholastic skills important but insufficient. As Friedman put it more recently, “Thanks to the merger of, and advances in, globalization and the information technology revolution, every boss now has cheaper, easier access to more above-average software, automation, robotics, cheap labor and cheap genius than ever before” (2012). We need to prepare our students to be adaptable and flexible to meet a future in which the only constant will be change.
Friedman is not alone in expressing concern; there is a growing awareness that our graduates will need much more than mastery of the three Rs to make it in the work. As Kay and Greenhill (2012) note, “Doing well in school no longer guarantees a lifelong job or career as it did for previous generations of Americans . . . only people who have the knowledge and skills to negotiate constant changes and reinvent themselves for new situations will succeed” (p. xvi). Paul Tough, referring to those who question the “cognitive hypothesis” of academic accomplishment being the singular key to success, says, “What matters most in a child’s development, they say, is not how much information we can stuff into her brain in the first few years. What matters, instead, is whether we are able to help her develop a very different set of qualities, a list that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit, and self-confidence” (2012, p. xv).

Henry Cloud makes a similar point in his 2009 book, Integrity. After describing the traditional skills that are commonly associated with leadership, he cites the greater importance of factors that are not generally considered part of schools’ curriculum or measured on scholastic tests. The qualities that determine good leaders, says Cloud,

have little to do with IQ, talent, brains, education, training, or most of the other important components of success. Instead, they have to do with the other aspects of character functioning that we pay way too little attention to in training people to be leaders and to be successful. The most important tool is the person and his or her makeup, and yet it seems to get the least amount of attention and work. Mostly, we focus on professional skills and knowledge instead. (p. 10)

Similarly, Jensen (2012) cites research by the Carnegie Institute of Technology showing “that 85 percent of your financial success is due to skills in ‘human engineering,’ your personality and ability to communicate, negotiate, and lead. Shockingly, only 15 percent is due to technical knowledge.”
As difficult as it is to transition from the cognitive hypothesis to a focus on success in life after graduation, we really have no choice: continuing to teach the same content does a disservice to our students. We cannot be deterred by fear from venturing into the non-scholastic realm. To quote Lisa Firestone (2016):

Too often, we tend to think of our kids as less sophisticated and incapable of processing or understanding the emotional complexities of their world. We think we’re protecting them by not bringing up the trickier, less pleasant subjects. But I can tell you firsthand that kids absorb a tremendous amount. Pretty much as soon as they’re verbal, children can be taught to identify and communicate their feelings. In a trusted environment where emotions are talked about openly, most kids will speak freely about their feelings and are quick to have empathy for their peers.

In Social Emotional Learning: Opportunities for Massachusetts and Lessons for the Nation (2016), Rennie Center and ASCD note that success “in our increasingly dynamic global society requires students to develop skills that extend far beyond mastery of academic content” (p. 1). They continue:

Various terms have been used to refer to these abilities, such as noncognitive skills, soft skills, or 21st century skills. More important, however, is the growing acknowledgment that students’ social and emotional learning (SEL)—or the processes through which students and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions—is critical to developing competencies besides academic content knowledge that are necessary to succeed in college and in careers. (p. 1)

Perhaps the need for this book is captured best by Smith, McGovern, Peck, Larson, & Hillaker (2016):
Not long ago, success in school meant success in life. We also believed that things like grit and determination were traits people were born with, not skills that could be developed over time. Over the past few decades, hard and soft sciences have produced an impressive body of evidence that teaches us two very new, very important things. First, that we can take our innate abilities and cultivate them, just like we build up muscle, dexterity, and language fluency. And secondly, that social and emotional skills matter just as much in determining life satisfaction and success as traditional intelligence. The use of the word “skills” here is intentional. These qualities are not only innate. They can be taught. And, they can be learned. (p. v)

Our Solution

Who you are is more important than what you know—to me, this phrase captures the priorities that we as educators must embrace. For years I’ve cited it at faculty meetings, during back-to-school nights, and I refer to it in my weekly letters to parents (see Appendix B). This isn’t to denigrate scholastic knowledge or traditional learning in any way—absolutely, students do need to learn to read, write, and calculate. Rather, I repeat the phrase—who you are is more important than what you know—to make the sentiment an integral part of our school culture. And I believe that I’ve been successful: for example, the first page of students’ New City School report cards is now devoted to sharing their progress on the personal intelligences (confidence, motivation, problem solving, responsibility, effort and work habits, appreciation for diversity, and teamwork). We also begin parent-teacher conferences by talking about students’ strengths and weakness in these areas.

Of course, it hasn’t always been easy. Investing time and energy in areas that may not lead to higher test scores or broadening the curriculum to include nonacademic spheres of instruction can be an uphill struggle. At our school, some teachers struggled to focus their instruction and assessment on less measurable areas because they were trained
solely to measure success (both their students’ and their own) according to progress in the three Rs. We spent time talking at faculty meetings not just about how we would determine students’ progress in the personal intelligences, but about why it was important to do so. The messages our graduates sent helped: they would talk about how valuable it was for them to appreciate and work with peers of different races and socioeconomic levels. Sometimes teachers would focus one of their professional goals on how to teach “the personals.”

Our faculty also read books—typically during the summer, but occasionally as part of a committee’s work—that reinforced the message: who you are is more important than what you know. Daniel Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence (1995) was one of them, as was Melba Beals’s Warriors Don’t Cry (1994). We read Beals’s account of being one of the Little Rock Nine for what it had to reveal about our nation’s racial consciousness and progress, but it was also a way to learn about and admire Beals’s personal intelligences.

As with some of our teachers, some of our students’ parents also found it hard to accept a wider definition of our goals and broader focus of our efforts. During large meetings with parents, I found that one effective technique of addressing this was to begin by asking parents to think of successful people they know—making a point not to provide a definition of successful. I would give them a minute or so to think and then ask them to talk in groups of three or four. After a few more minutes, I would ask the parents how many of them used income as a measure of success. A small number of hands went up. Then I would ask how many used qualities related to personal intelligences as criteria instead (e.g., working well with others; making a difference in the world; being good parents, spouses, and friends)—and a forest of hands would go up!

“The characteristics you are using,” I would say, “are what we have listed on the first page of your students’ report cards. We cannot stop with simply teaching students the three Rs.”

The continued need to explain our rationale for measuring personal intelligence is not a surprise, because our schools have been focused
almost exclusively on academic outcomes. Many parents naturally anticipate that the education their children receive in school will mirror their own experiences. The “cognitive hypothesis” to which Tough refers is strong!

**The Purpose of This Book**

I have high hopes for the difference that this book can make. It is designed to be an asset for teachers and principals to use in preparing their students for success beyond school—students who will be kind and caring people, responsible and productive workers, and citizens who make a positive difference in the world. Of course, such outcomes are the result of the incredibly hard work that parents and educators do to make a difference for young people. This book is meant to be a useful tool for them to use in that quest.

**A Word on Terminology**

Perhaps the most common phrase used to describe the important qualities that are not captured on standardized tests is *noncognitive skills*. I find the term *noncognitive* awkward; it is rooted in something that is *not* rather than in something that exists, which makes it hard to garner enthusiasm for it despite its ubiquity and the importance of what it represents. An example of the power of terminology comes from Howard Gardner, creator of the theory of multiple intelligences. He has noted that his theory would not have generated so much enthusiasm if he had called it the theory of multiple talents.

So, what *should* we call the important qualities that are not assessed in standardized testing? *Social-emotional learning* is frequently used, as are *emotional intelligence* (Goleman, 1995) and *personal intelligences* (Gardner, 1983). From this point on, I will be referring to these areas of learning as *success skills*, because I believe that they will promote success in every arena of life.
The Formative Five Success Skills

It was no easy task to determine which skills to select for the Formative Five. After all, there’s at least one for every letter in the alphabet:

- Acceptance
- Bravery
- Creativity
- Diplomacy
- Engagement
- Friendliness
- Generosity
- Helpfulness
- Insight
- Judiciousness
- Kindness
- Loving
- Magnanimity
- Nurturing
- Optimism
- Persistence
- Questioning
- Responsibility
- Sincerity
- Truthfulness
- Understanding
- Vigorousness
- Warmth
- Xenial
- Youthfulness
- Zest

Thank goodness there are only 26 letters in the alphabet!

Although each of the qualities listed above has merit, it is important that we focus our efforts on those factors that are the most significant. To
that end, I’ve identified the following five formative skills necessary for success in both the work world and relationships of all kinds:

- Empathy
- Self-control
- Integrity
- Embracing diversity
- Grit

There also is another set of skills—courage, curiosity, responsibility, and receptivity—that is quite important to success in the real world but that I believe that all of these qualities inhere in the Formative Five:

- **Courage**: This is really a combination of integrity, self-control, and grit. Courage is having the integrity to know the correct path, as well as the self-control and grit to pursue it. Integrity requires courage, too.

- **Curiosity**: This is embedded in empathy and embracing diversity, both of which lead us to get to know and understand people from unfamiliar backgrounds.

- **Responsibility**: Very similar to self-control, this requires us to take ownership of our goals and have the grit to follow through.

- **Receptivity**: This skill is about being open to new ideas and experiences, which is at the root of empathy and embracing diversity. Understanding and appreciating others dissuades us from egocentrically believing that only existing practices and attitudes are worthy and that new ideas are to be shunned.

I recognize that identifying an absolute set of attributes is a bit like determining how many angels can dance on the head of a pin: it can’t really be done. But I do believe that the Formative Five encompass the skills and understandings that we want our students to possess.

I realize that reasonable people can choose to focus on a different set of success skills, or on more or fewer attributes. My goal was to select ones that are important in every setting. Developing and cultivating these attributes in our students will greatly increase the likelihood that they will find success as adults, however they define it. In a sense, the Formative
Five are all “habits of mind” (Costa & Kallick, 2008)—that is, they reflect an individual’s sense of self and his or her relationship to others.

Two of the Formative Five success skills—empathy and embracing diversity—are relationship-oriented; that is, they define how individuals orient themselves and behave toward others. In contrast, the other three skills—self-control, integrity, and grit—are self-oriented: focused on how we frame and control our thoughts and actions. Each of the Formative Five success skills reflects an aspect of Gardner’s personal intelligences: empathy and embracing diversity are primarily interpersonal in nature, whereas self-control, integrity, and grit are intrapersonal. How Gardner’s personal intelligences, Goleman’s emotional intelligence, and the Formative Five interrelate is shown in Figure 1.

Of the five skills, only one—embracing diversity—requires a verb to connote its depth. That’s because simply having a mix of demographics in the classroom isn’t enough; educators must actively embrace the concept. Self-control, integrity, and embracing diversity are all discussed in Gardner’s Five Minds for the Future (2006), and they are implicit in David Brooks’s term “legacy virtues” (2015). Indeed, most leadership books refer to the Formative Five attributes even if the exact terms aren’t the same (see Figure 2 for associated terms for each of the five skills). For

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example, Stanley McChrystal discusses them in his book *Team of Teams* (2015), and Brené Brown’s *Rising Strong* (2015) focuses on the need to cultivate empathy, self-control, and integrity. Perhaps not surprisingly, each of the Formative Five success skills can also be applied to Abraham Lincoln as depicted in Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *Team of Rivals* (2005).

Significantly and encouragingly, the Formative Five skills are teachable, regardless of the students’ ages. Of course, it is most effective to teach the skills when students are younger and more receptive, but they must be taught regardless of when this happens, because students can always learn to adopt them. By contrast, traditional measures of intelligence are fairly rigid and harder to improve upon. As Tough (2012) notes, “pure IQ is stubbornly resistant to improvement after about age eight. But executive functions and the ability to handle stress and manage strong emotions can be improved, sometimes dramatically, well into adolescence and even adulthood” (p. 48). Empathy, self-control, integrity, and grit are all component parts of executive function.

How to teach the Formative Five is the focus of this book. By going beyond what is required to achieve standardized test success, educators can better prepare their students for life outside of school. Teachers can design their curriculum and teaching strategies to help students develop the Formative Five regardless of the type or level of school, and principals can create a larger context by addressing the physical setting—the
halls and walls—and their expectations for staff, students, and parents to support such a focus. In a school committed to instilling the Formative Five in students, everyone works together to prepare students for the real world.

When I use the term *teaching*, I mean much more than simply formal instruction and dedicated lessons, although they are very important; rather, I mean *all* interactions among adults and students. Modeling skills, bringing students together to discuss issues, and framing the school’s values—that is, what we say, do, and display—are all parts of “teaching.” Nell Sears, the director of studies at the Friends School of Portland, Maine, puts it well: “Values are taught best when they are a core part of the school culture” (personal communication, February 1, 2016).

**My Journey**

Because our biases frame our thinking and determine how we envision schools, learning, and leadership, we must delve within to ascertain what we value before looking outside and taking action. Simply put, our perceptions form our reality; we act upon what we see. With that in mind, I’d like to share my educational background, perceptions, and principles of learning so that you can more fully understand where I’m coming from. I write as a former teacher and principal, but mostly as a student of learning—although I was not always receptive to it. My experiences are captured by what Winston Churchill once said, “I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.”

For three years, I served as the principal of a high-poverty school in which standardized test scores were given much weight, so my suggestions in this book can be implemented in schools facing similar challenges. (Candidly, despite the 2015 passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act, I am not confident that we will be able to move away from overrelying on standardized tests as curriculum frameworks and measures of progress. I hope that I am wrong.)

For 34 years, I led a multiple intelligences (MI) school: New City School in St. Louis, Missouri. This MI experience widened my perspective
and caused me to think in new ways not only about how we teach and assess, but also about what we should teach. Although the faculty and I believed that all eight of the multiple intelligences are important, we felt that the personal intelligences should carry the most weight. This perspective—that focusing on mastering oneself and establishing relationships with others is critical to student success—frames my thinking.

For a decade, I have written the “Principal Connection” column in *Educational Leadership* magazine, contributed to education blogs, and written many articles and books. I agree with writer Joan Didion who said, “I write entirely to find out what I am thinking (1980).” Writing has caused me to reflect on both the goals of education and the ways that leaders can help children and adults grow.

For the past six years, I have led the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) New Heads Network, a program that I helped create to support new school leaders at independent schools in the Midwest, and for three years I served on the ISACS’s board of trustees. I am also currently a faculty member at the College of Education at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, working to prepare principals in the School Leadership for Innovation and Design Program. In each of these roles, I have been fortunate to participate in many discussions about how school leaders—both teachers and principals—can facilitate change that leads to good outcomes for students.

## My Seven Principles of Learning

Here are the seven principles of learning that have guided me in writing this book:

1. **Constructivism:** We learn by creating and by making meaning. This is true for children as well as adults; in fact, we are all much more alike than different in how we learn. The best lessons are a combination of explanations and activities.

2. **Collegiality:** The quality of a school is determined by how well faculty members learn with and from one another (Barth, 1990). Teachers and principals embrace collegiality by serving as resources for one
another. The principal’s job is to help everyone in the building grow and learn—starting with the faculty.

3. **Multiple intelligences**: We each have a different intelligence profile and we all learn differently. Opportunities to use a range of intelligences in our learning increase our capacity to learn and should therefore be routine. Using MI in teaching also allows students to learn by doing.

4. **Principal leadership**: The principal’s job is not to make teachers or students happy. Happy teachers and happy students will certainly be more effective and productive, but happiness comes from growth. The principal’s job is to create a setting where everyone grows by learning, and strong leaders create an environment where people are willing to step out of their comfort zones.

5. **Teacher leadership**: In good schools, leadership is not identified by a title. Though principals may be primarily responsible for many decisions, teachers also play vital leadership roles by implementing plans and working to help students succeed. This is particularly the case when the focus is on the Formative Five skills, which require teachers to use novel approaches with students, parents, and colleagues.

6. **Role models**: All adults in a school need to visibly “walk the talk.” They must embody and display the success skills that they want to develop in students. In addition to helping students improve on their skills, educators should be comfortable sharing their journeys, both successes and failures, with students.

7. **Parental involvement**: Because students learn best when their parents are involved in their learning, teachers need to inform parents about their goals for their students and engage them in the work of meeting those goals. Teachers and principals need to prioritize parental involvement, devoting the time and energy necessary to help parents understand what is happening in their children’s school.

I believe that these seven learning principles hold true for all schools, but particularly for those focused on the Formative Five skills, which are best learned through active engagement. Teachers will use role-plays, simulations, and experiential activities so that students can experience
success skills in action. Settings where learners of all ages come to understanding by doing, reflecting, getting out of their comfort zones and taking risks, working collaboratively, reflecting again, and beginning anew are places where learners are bound to thrive.

The Importance of Transparency

The principles of learning on which the advice in this book rest are all predicated on transparency. Agendas are difficult to enact if they are not made public or if there exists confusion about the reasons for enacting them. Believe me, I’ve learned that even when I had the “right” solution (not often!), it wasn’t fully right until others at the school embraced it. Maybe there was a time when top-down solutions worked well (although I doubt it), but if there was, it’s certainly no longer the case. If we want our colleagues to be effective in pursuing the Formative Five (or any other thrust, for that matter), they need to understand our thinking and be part of the solution. Leaders don’t have a patent on knowledge, particularly when it comes to sensitive and unconventional issues. Transparency at every level—with faculty, with students, and with students’ parents—is absolutely essential. Leaders need to share their goals and plans for teaching the Formative Five with all stakeholders as often as possible: at the student assembly on the first day of school, at faculty committee meetings, in correspondences with parents, on the signs that hang on the walls, and so on. When asked to describe the school, every member of the school community should be able to easily discuss the importance of the Formative Five; educators should explicitly and routinely use the term success skills so that it’s on everybody’s lips.

How We Got Here

Formal, large-scale schooling began in the United States well over a century ago with a focus on the 3 Rs. Much more recently, the focus has only gotten stronger since the release of the National Commission on
Excellence in Education’s landmark 1983 report, *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, which criticized the state of U.S. education and recommended “that schools, colleges, and universities adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their requirements for admission” and that “significantly more time be devoted to teaching the New Basics.” Of course, the vast majority of improvement efforts since the report’s release have been tied to academic performance. Student conduct, though essential to student success, has received hardly any attention.

The federal government has continued to insert itself into educational policy and goals since 1983, most notably with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation of 2001 and the Department of Education’s Race to the Top campaign, which began in 2009. These political thrusts into the educational arena vary in the details but share a laser-like focus on academics and standardized measures of student progress and school effectiveness. In some cases, data from standardized tests have been used to determine whether or not schools remained opened or educators’ contracts were renewed. Naturally, the result of these federal policies has resulted in a highly test-focused educational system. In many communities, schools’ performances on standardized tests are featured on the front page of the local newspaper. In today’s world of pervasive technology and instantaneous communication, it is quick and easy to embrace data that are reliable without questioning whether they are valid; we compare schools by using numbers regardless of whether or not they provide a full picture of what’s being assessed.

On the official White House blog, U.S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan notes that, “although well-intended, the No Child Left Behind Act . . . has long been broken. We can no longer afford that law’s one-size-fits-all approach, uneven standards, and low expectations for our educational system” (2015). As assessment guru Grant Wiggins often put it, “what you measure is what you value,” so it is no surprise that curriculum has been designed to drive standardized test results and that
teachers and principals have worked diligently to improve students’ performance on these tests (Hoerr, 2009). In Harvard magazine, David Perkins notes that “it’s clear that NCLB has not worked well” and warns that the intense pressure it has caused can lead to cheating (Hough, 2015).

Every child attending a school under the NCLB’s sword of Damocles has suffered to a degree because we have placed success on standardized tests ahead of developing the whole child. The focus on test metrics has narrowed curriculum and, in some schools, led to limiting the teaching of such subjects as art and music. In virtually all schools, devoting time to disciplines that are not directly tied to test scores has become less of a priority than ever.

Teachers and principals routinely complain about the amount of time they must spend preparing for and implementing standardized tests—a concern recently echoed by President Obama, who in 2015 “called for capping standardized testing at 2 percent of classroom time and said the government shares responsibility for turning tests into the be-all and end-all of American schools” (Associated Press, 2015). It was also noted that students take standardized tests for 20–25 hours per year and “between pre-K and 12th grade, students take about 112 standardized exams, according to the council report. It said testing amounts to 2.3 percent of classroom time for the average 8th-grader” (Associated Press, 2015).

Fortunately, the educational landscape appears to be tilting a bit. In December of 2015, President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) “a sweeping rewrite of the No Child Left Behind act that returns power to states and local districts to determine how to improve troubled schools” (Davis, 2015). Though mandatory standardized tests for reading and math remain, state and local officials can now decide for themselves how to measure student progress and school success. The likelihood of schools being closed as a result of students’ poor performance on standardized tests will now be greatly reduced.

As the passing of the ESSA indicates, people are starting to push back against the overemphasis on test results. Educators increasingly
recognize that we must lead children to grow in ways that are not captured by standardized measures. A salient example of this sentiment is ASCD’s “whole child” movement (www.wholechildeducation.org), which reminds us that we must consider all aspects of a children’s growth, including safety and health.
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About the Author

Thomas R. Hoerr retired after leading the New City School in St. Louis, Missouri, for 34 years and is now the Emeritus Head of School. He teaches at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and holds a PhD from Washington University in St. Louis. Hoerr has written four books—Becoming a Multiple Intelligences School (2000), The Art of School Leadership (2005), School Leadership for the Future (2009), and Fostering Grit (2013)—and more than 100 articles, including “The Principal Connection” column in Educational Leadership. Hoerr is an enthusiastic but poor basketball player. Readers who would like to continue the dialogue may contact him at trhoerr@newcityschool.org or trhoerr@aol.com.
I have been talking about the personal intelligences since the 1980’s and writing about success for more than a decade, but bringing it all together in a book was a new and difficult experience. I could not have done it without the help of many friends and colleagues. Naming the people who helped me on this book—those who offered specific information and suggestions and those who provided the context for it to be written—is both fun and a bit daunting. I love the thought of publicly thanking and recognizing these people; that’s fun! But listing their names is also daunting because I worry that someone will be omitted. As has been the case throughout my career, I am indebted to so many people for whatever successes I have achieved.

First, a big hug of appreciation goes to the faculty of the New City School and everyone in our school community. For 34 years I was fortunate to work—to live—in a setting in which student growth was the focus and children were viewed through all of their intelligences. I was surrounded by and learned from remarkably talented teachers and administrators. Within that group, special gratitude goes to Joe Corbett, Carla Duncan, Laurie Falk, Ben Griffiths, Eileen Griffiths, Nina Nichols, Stephanie Teachout, and Chris Wallach for their input on this book. Thanks, too, to the New City School Board of Trustees for recognizing that there are differences between success in life and success in school,
and for supporting my growth. Not a day passed that I didn’t think “I wish that I had attended New City School.”

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