

WARM DEMANDER TEACHERS

WARM DEMANDER TEACHERS

Healthy, Whole, and
Transformational

FRANITA WARE

CORWIN

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1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
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SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
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Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews, 11.1)

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About the Author



Franita Ware is the CEO of F Ware PhD Consulting LLC and a Qualitative Data Analysis Consultant with Innovative Learning Center LLC.

She is a member of the Board of Directors of Scholars Unlimited.

Through a collaboration with Dr. Robin Greene, Dr. Ellen Honeck, and Mrs. Imani Morning, Dr. Ware and her col-

leagues were awarded the Professional Learning Network Award from the National Association for Gifted Children for Culturally Responsive Gifted Education.

She is also a founding member of Sistagraphy, The Collective of African American Female Photographers.

Dr. Ware received her doctorate degree from Emory University. She attained her master of arts degree in Early Childhood Education and School Leadership credentials from Clark Atlanta University.

She began her education and her teaching career in Atlanta Public Schools.

Learn more about bringing Franita Ware to your school or district at <https://www.franitawarephd.com>.

An Invitation to Become a Warm Demander Teacher

1

I'm going to ask you a question that I'm sure you've been asked before.

Why Did You Become a Teacher?

Although I can't speak for everybody who chose to enter the K–12 education profession, I believe that you did so for very good reasons: You wanted to help children/students improve their lives and their communities through education, and in the process, make the world a better place.

You're not alone. In a 2015 research study (Heinz, 2015) on motivations for choosing teaching as a career, teachers representing 23 countries and five continents confirmed my suspicion: The majority entered the profession for altruistic reasons.

Next, I have a follow-up question:

Has Your Career in Education Met Your Expectations?

I hope you have experienced recurring joy with your students and the excitement of many well-received lessons, yet I have reason to believe that this may not be the case for many of my readers for a number of reasons. A recent McKinsey study (Bryant et al., 2023) found that the annual attrition rate for classroom teachers amounted to approximately 8% over the past 10 years. At schools designated for Title 1 funding,

the rate is nearly double. While a proportion of attrition may be due to retirements, promotions, and lateral moves, between 2021 and 2022 the overall attrition rate rose by 17%. Moreover, 64% of 2022 attrition can be attributed to quitting. Further, the Institute of Educational Sciences (Taie et al., 2023) found the attrition rate for Asian teachers was 13%, for Black, African American teachers was 10%, and for Hispanic teachers, 6%. Collectively, the loss of these teachers impacts the schools and the students who lost a respected teacher who provided representation of their cultural or racial identity.

Clearly, the Covid-19 pandemic played a role in these increases. Aside from the challenge of shifting from in-person to online and hybrid teaching, many educators were simultaneously confronted with life-altering realities such as illness, death of family members, and reduction of income due to the job loss of a partner or other household contributors. And when teachers finally were able to resume face-to-face instruction, the faces they greeted were often those of students whose lives had also been turned upside down, many suffering from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). It's no wonder that reported levels of teacher stress, burnout, and mental illness reached an all-time high during this period.

We know that teacher working conditions were problematic well before the pandemic. Poor compensation, long hours (an average of 53 hours each week), and a general lack of respect for the profession are long-standing problems (Walker, 2023). Public school teachers, in particular, are too often blamed by politicians and the media for a host of ills, many of which are products of misguided and inequitable policies that were imposed upon them by people with no understanding of teaching and learning, let alone the students they teach. And more recently, onerous state policies have sanctioned book bans and silenced critical examination of the harm caused by school policies specific to race, American history, and sexual and gender identities. This form of censorship not only severely limits teachers' academic freedom but is extremely harmful to students as well.

If you have ever experienced moments in which you feel frustrated, disparaged, lonely, or even wounded, take comfort in the fact that you are not alone. Many of us are sorely in need of healing, but all too often, what we get is toxic positivity and insincere reminders to "take care of yourselves (but please don't take a day off because we can't get a substitute)."

My intention is not to rub salt in a wound or discourage anybody from entering the field of education. I believe teaching is the noblest of professions—it is politically, spiritually, and personally rewarding, and teachers are some of the most brilliant, dedicated, and loving people I know. Many teachers have healed their own hearts and lives through caring for students and watching them succeed. We *need* excellent teachers more than ever! Let me offer some reassurance: In all likelihood, the “problem” isn’t you, and it certainly isn’t your students or their families. The problem is the system in which you work. And just to be clear, by “system” I’m not referring to your administration or your school district. I am referring to an education system that was never designed to serve the majority of our children in public schools.

If I haven’t convinced you to stay in the profession, here’s some additional reassurance: Emotional and physical hurt *can* be healed, and systems can be changed. The best part is that *you* can be part of that change.

In my career in education, I have listened to and learned from scholars, dedicated teachers, and school leaders who have disclosed not only their struggles but also their triumphs. I believe many, if not most, of you see quality education for our children as a moral and social justice imperative and a viable path of resistance to the systems designed to oppress communities. I believe that your intentions are honorable, and you share my heartfelt commitment to promote educational and racial equity and disrupt oppressive systems. Yet despite our goal to make education better, our education system is frequently unhealthy.

I want to create in our classrooms, schools, systems, and our profession a culture of health and humanity that is inclusive of all the people who work in the school and support students, but I can’t do it without you. You and I can become the change. It’s time to take steps to begin healing both teachers and students. In that spirit, consider this chapter a personal invitation: I invite you to start your journey to become a **Warm Demander Teacher**. This book seeks to provide the support you need to become a healthy, whole, and transformational educator.

Warm Demander Teachers ground their practice in high expectations for their students. But as I learned from my own research and practice, reversing the toxic effects of systemic racism and centuries of oppression takes more than holding high expectations. It also involves forming positive relationships with students that are grounded in trust and a finely

honed awareness of the cultural nuances of relationships. When teachers establish such relationships, they can also lovingly nudge their students to take on increasing levels of academic challenge and, ultimately, take responsibility for their own learning. Warm Demander Teachers further promote student agency through frequent use of inquiry-based teaching strategies. The delicate dance between expressing our loving care *and* demanding excellence is the dynamic of Warm Demander teaching. And we master this dance by first looking closely within ourselves. My “choreography” rests on an important idea: In order to transform our systems, we must first transform ourselves through honest reflection, self-awareness, and self-healing.

While becoming a Warm Demander Teacher requires strength, courage, and perseverance, the rewards will astonish you. In addition to improving your relationships with your students and restoring your ideals about teaching to expand the lives of young people, imagine simply increasing the number of rewarding and even fun days where students are not only engaged but are active participants in their learning. And remind yourself that the promise of such days, the promise of watching your students soar, were the primary reasons that you made the choice to become a teacher.

I invite you to envision a new reality.

The Basis of This Book and Why I Wrote It

The first Warm Demander Teacher in my life was my mother, M. Frances Ware. I didn’t know it at the time, but I now realize I was born into a Warm Demander style of mothering that was culturally consistent with my community and delivered a clear expectation for me to excel at life. My mother taught me through her actions and phenomenal creativity that our current reality is not a limitation if we choose to envision and work to create a new reality.

My mother was clear that my success in school was her unwavering expectation. Consistent with the loving reciprocity we see in Warm Demander Teacher/Student relationships, I wanted to achieve her high expectations so she would be proud of me. Fortunately, I was part of a stable school community with teachers who not only shared my mother’s goal but also shared my cultural/racial identity (Howell et al., 2019). My teachers were, for the most part, committed and held high expectations

for their students. We experienced loving reciprocity, the school embodied a strong sense of community, and students benefited from its high teacher-retention rate. My sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Henson-Fulton, was an excellent Warm Demander Teacher who, later in life, introduced me to the teaching profession when she invited me to be a substitute teacher at the school where she served as the principal. In that environment, Warm Demander pedagogy was frequent and normalized. On my first, not-so-successful day as a substitute teacher, her feedback to me exemplified an honest Warm Demander perspective: “You’re going to let kindergarteners run over you?”

Later, as a graduate student of Dr. Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, I was introduced to the article that would define my research, an article she coauthored on Warm Demanders (Irvine & Fraser, 1998). While the term *warm demander* initially appeared in articles by researcher Judith Kleinfeld (1975) and later, James Vasquez (1988), it was Dr. Irvine’s article that resonated for me. The article explored the unique, culturally specific pedagogical style of African American teachers—a style that, at least at the time of Dr. Irvine’s article publication, seemed incongruent with mainstream professional standards such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. As I studied the article, I affectionately reflected on my prior Warm Demander Teachers. I was also struck by the realization that I was simultaneously learning from and experiencing Dr. Irvine as a Warm Demander Teacher. These realizations, combined with my own awareness of how I benefited from the efforts of my Warm Demander Teachers, sparked my desire to conduct further research into Warm Demander pedagogy.

I synthesized this research in a widely read paper published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2006 (Ware, 2006). My research methodology was qualitative, and my data were collected from interviews and hours of observations with two African American Warm Demander Teachers, Ms. Willis, a 30-year veteran teacher, and Mrs. Carter, who was in her sixth year of teaching at the time I conducted my research. Ms. Willis, an exemplary Warm Demander Teacher, taught in a building in the center of a low-income housing community. In the course of my observation, I was struck by the realization that her students were likely to have been labeled “at-risk” or judged as “deficient” by non-Warm Demander educators on the basis of their culture, race, and socioeconomic status. Like my

sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Henson-Fulton, Ms. Willis exemplified teachers who were influential, loving, and encouraging, while demanding nothing short of excellence. Her high expectations for academic growth and achievement served to help her students to reject the deficit narratives they were exposed to from anyone outside of their classroom, to rid themselves of internalized racism, and to believe in themselves despite external narratives (Foster, 1997; Walker, 1995, 2018). The style of teaching that I observed in both Ms. Willis's and Mrs. Carter's classroom fostered family-like relationships that served to build trust and motivate students to take on increasingly demanding challenges. Their students positively responded to their teachers' culturally nuanced, loving, and sometimes "fussy" demands to refocus on the academic materials and attain the expected intellectual rigor that the teachers expected and fully believed that they were capable of. Significantly, these teachers had a relationship with their students so that the fussy demands were interpreted as neither harmful nor traumatizing. Instead, it signaled the teachers' sincere beliefs that "they are too smart to be acting the way they are acting, or submitting the work they are turning in (or not turning in) . . . a belief in a child's ability to do better, that is the message that many children are eager to hear" (Delpit, 2012, p. 81).

These Warm Demander Teachers, by virtue of their shared, collectivist racial and cultural identities had a natural way of engaging with their students that built upon familial roles, culturally contextualized humor, warmth, and empowering care for students who needed support for their physical or academic needs. They also modeled their belief in the intrinsic value of their shared African heritage, a belief that inspired greatness. These complex relationships created loving reciprocity that welcomed demands for excellence from students who were supported by these empowered teachers.

My interest in Warm Demander pedagogy was far more than a research endeavor. My observations gave me a perspective on teaching that I, too, embraced when I taught college students at Spellman College, a Historically Black College for Women in Atlanta, Georgia. My relationship with these amazing students (some of whom were students at Morehouse College, a Historically Black College for Men) was synergistic: We respectively embraced culturally responsive, inquiry-based teaching and learning strategies. The pathway to this synergistic relationship

was Warm Demander teaching, and collectively, we created a culture of achievement that is far from typical in many classrooms. Ultimately, they became exceptional, well-respected educators/scholars who appreciated Warm Demander teaching, but the benefits were reciprocal: They also made me a better teacher.

Further, my students helped me qualify and understand the less observable but significant traits of a Warm Demander Teacher. Long before it became a buzzword, my students and I touched briefly on the importance of self-care because, like James Baldwin (1963), I knew that teaching African American students was indeed a revolutionary act, and my students had to be healthy and whole to teach well. Many years passed before I understood that what is frequently identified as “self-care” often did not have the life-transforming effects of **Radical Self-Care**, a topic that is described in-depth in the following chapter. While developing workshops on Radical Self-Care, I came to understand what Audre Lorde (1988) was expressing when she stated, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

One of the benefits of being a lifelong learner and gaining new experience is that we cultivate a more insightful understanding of what we learned in the past. I now fully appreciate the efforts and influence of my Warm Demander Teachers, as well as the manner in which other writers and researchers have examined this unique form of pedagogy. This book is grounded in the principles of **Sankofa**—a word from the language of the Akan of Ghana—that tells us that we can “go back and get it” or we can learn from the past to build the future. I have looked back to those who contributed to the classical canon of culturally responsive teaching (Bartolomé, 2008; Delpit, 1995, 2006; Irvine, 1990, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Rolón-Dow, 2005; Walker, 1995, 2018) as well as more contemporary scholars who continue to build on this work and remind us that the journey is a lifelong endeavor (Emdin, 2016; Fergus, 2017; Hammond, 2015; Love, 2019, 2023; Muhammad, 2020, 2023; Singh, 2019; and Steele & Cohn-Vargas, 2013.)

Writing a book is both a leap of faith and a labor of love. I would be remiss in not acknowledging the influence of important scholars and authors who played essential roles in my decision to write this book. In her extensive body of brilliant scholarship, Jacqueline Jordan Irvine

(2002) introduced the genus of culturally responsive teachers who were complex and, most importantly, *whole* in her edited volume *In Search of Wholeness: African American Teachers and Their Culturally Specific Classroom Practices*. Lisa Delpit, particularly in her transformational book *Multiplication Is for White People: Raising Expectations for Other People's Children* (2012), reawakened my desire to revisit this research with intentionality. Zaretta Hammond, who read my article and encouraged me to write this book, authored *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* (2015), another landmark work, and appreciated Warm Demander practices as pedagogy rather than classroom management. Finally, I continue to learn from the practitioners with whom I collaborate in my educational leadership and consulting work. I have learned from and been inspired by their journeys to Warm Demander practice, and from them, I have honed my understanding of both the catalysts and barriers to becoming healthy and whole.

The Guiding Principles of This Work

Before you begin your journey, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with some fundamental assumptions and principles that are foundational to my approach to Warm Demander Teaching.

#1: You can't heal others without first healing yourself.

The essence of reflective practice is learning from and responding to our own (and, in some cases, others') experiences. As I began to develop and deliver workshops on Warm Demander pedagogy, I came to realize that teacher behaviors that inspired student achievement that were the norm in my cultural/racial community were complex, and the teachers' actions were their positive response to the external stress of American schools. One of the things that I learned early on is that the high level of stress that is endemic to the American workplace—including our schools—is a barrier to engaging in the inner work that is prerequisite to becoming a Warm Demander Teacher. Similarly, when our brains continually revert to fight-or-flight mode, we are unlikely to form positive relationships with our students. But most importantly, stress at high levels, when left unchecked, can become an "occupational hazard," the consequences of which are fatigue, anxiety, sleeplessness, occupational burnout, disease, and, in the worst cases,

death. This understanding led me to research and practice Radical Self-Care, which is now an integral part of my workshops and teachings on Warm Demander pedagogy. When you think about the word “radical,” you may envision a dramatic and total transformation of yourself and everything you do, but it’s the opposite; instead, think about taking small, consistent, and sustainable actions that lead to much larger and observable improvements in physical, emotional, and brain health. What makes it “radical” is that in doing so we reject an oppressive culture that values stress and embrace the habits and beliefs that heal ourselves and our students.

#2: Warm Demander pedagogy is more than a bag of tricks; it begins with our own self-awareness.

If you are a seasoned teacher, you’ve probably heard about the latest silver-bullet curriculum, instructional framework, or teaching strategy that will engage your students, accelerate their learning, wash your car, and change your life! After being exposed to such promises or pitches, you may even have a healthy degree of cynicism. The dominant culture of our schools and society favors quick fixes and simplistic cause-and-effect reasoning over deep reflection and complexity. If nothing else, you’ve learned that teaching and learning are highly complex endeavors. What I’ve learned is that, especially when you and your students don’t share common racial or cultural identities, you not only have to cultivate a deep knowledge of your students, but you have to know yourself, your purpose, and motivation for teaching—inner work that carries its own complexity.

For this reason, the theory of action that informs this book is that a deeper knowledge of ourselves as educators and humans will make us more effective practitioners of Warm Demander pedagogy. The “inner work” that is the subject matter of subsequent chapters, including exploring our beliefs, biases, and cultural/racial identities, is essential to forming the relationships that are at the heart of Warm Demander teaching. For most of us, the journey comes with a fair amount of emotional labor, cognitive dissonance, and occasional discomfort. It also is a lifelong endeavor, but again, the rewards, including enhanced job satisfaction, improved relationships with your students and peers, increased student agency, and your own restored health and wholeness, are immeasurable.

#3: Self-knowledge is great, but will it make me a better teacher?

The brief answer is yes, but I also appreciate the need to connect the self-discovery process to one's own decisions and actions as a teacher. For this reason, I've sought to close "knowing-doing" gaps by exploring how understanding ourselves, our students, and the systems in which we live and work relate to Warm Demander pedagogy. In most cases, I accomplish this through providing opportunities for the reader to engage in reflective practice (Cadray, 1999) by providing examples of the process of forming new beliefs that inform Warm Demander practices, decisions, and moves.

#4: With enhanced self-knowledge comes cultural humility.

As we become more self-aware, we gain a greater understanding of how our lived experiences, beliefs, and cultures are alike or different from those of our students. One of the ways in which our education system has failed to serve *all* our student populations is by not acknowledging the inherent strengths and cultural wealth of these children and their families. Cultural humility (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998) combines self-knowledge with curiosity and a willingness to listen to and learn from others. In doing so, we are aware of our own biases and how they can contribute to deficit-based and judgmental thinking. Instead, we gain both an appreciation for and knowledge of our students that supports our high expectations of them. Learning to listen humbly to and learn from our students and their community is an essential prerequisite to Warm Demander teaching.

#5: You can become a Warm Demander Teacher without sharing the cultural and racial identities of your students.

I had my own biases initially, but as I continued to engage in professional development with teachers, I had to expand my beliefs and hope, especially after I met teachers who *willingly* embraced the internal work become Warm Demander Teachers. My research, as well as that of my graduate school professor, Dr. Irvine, explored the exemplary practices of Black teachers who taught Black students. Yet Dr. Irvine always emphasized that *all teachers could be Warm Demander Teachers*. I've come to understand that it requires a deeper level of introspection, learning, and, of course, cultural humility, *and* it is within your reach,

even if you don't share common backgrounds and cultural nuances with your students. It may take some time to establish a level of trust with BIPOC¹ students who don't look like you, but as you begin to understand the historical and sociocultural reasons for their hesitation, you will gradually appreciate earning their trust. The framework that I share in this book can support *all* teachers on the journey and has had a proven impact on practice, based on the feedback I have received from teachers and educational leaders.

#6: Although my research focused on African American teachers and students, Warm Demander pedagogy benefits all BIPOC student groups.

As in my 2006 article, this book includes a number of examples and quotes from Black, African American Warm Demander Teachers who are primarily responsible for Black, African American, and other identities of students. I focused on this group of educators for several reasons:

- (1) As I shared previously, my own Warm Demander Teachers had a tremendous positive impact on me, yet Black, African American teachers make up a small portion of our nation's teaching force and they are typically undervalued by their schools as well as researchers and the media. While I remain hopeful that this will change, I believe that an acknowledgement of their gifts, skills, and accomplishments is long overdue. Moreover, I believe that teachers who don't identify as Black or African American can learn a great deal by listening and learning from them and how they have humanized Black, African American students (Howell et al., 2019).
- (2) Since I share the racial and cultural identities of these teachers and their students, consequently, I'm most comfortable writing about them. In contrast, I don't think I can fairly or accurately capture the experiences or cultural nuances of other BIPOC communities.

¹BIPOC is an acronym used in the United States that means Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. While some argue that the term is problematic in that it blurs the distinctions between each group's histories and cultures, I use it as a form of shorthand in the context of this book. What these groups have in common are histories of discrimination and marginalization that have endured across generations and into the present, as evidenced by the deficit narratives about children that pervade our schools.

With that said, I've seen evidence in both research and practice that Warm Demander pedagogy benefits *all* students—especially BIPOC students. We can acknowledge the important differences between the cultures and histories of these populations while, at the same time, acknowledging some important commonalities: Not only do they share common histories of systemic oppression, discrimination, and marginalization, but many of them are also members of collectivist cultures.

An early example of research that explored aspects of Warm Demander pedagogy (long before the term was coined) with a racial/ethnic student population comes from Kleinfeld (1975), who studied Alaskan Indigenous teachers and students. Warm Demander Teachers who participated in this study demonstrated belief in students' success and rejected deficit beliefs and about them. Examples of their behaviors are consistent with the canon of classic literature on culturally responsive teaching (Delpit, 1995, 2006; Foster, 1997; Irvine, 1990, 2002; Irvine & Armento, 2001; Irvine & Fraser, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Rolón-Dow, 2005; and Walker, 1995, 2018). Warm Demander Teachers also enjoyed their students and classroom interactions. The loving synergy created between students and teachers improved everyone's lives. Similarly, Schhneider et al. (2006) concluded that, consistent with all students, Hispanic students benefit from teachers who build upon personal relationships to encourage academic achievement through high expectations for students growth. If you are familiar with the work and legacy of the late Jaime Escalante, who taught math to low-income, Latinx students at Garfield High in East Los Angeles, you already have a sense of what Warm Demander pedagogy "looks like." While nobody believed that Escalante's students were capable of learning high-level mathematics (or anything, for that matter), Escalante and his students proved them wrong. Not only did they learn calculus, but many achieved high scores on the challenging AP exam. Portrayed by Edward James Olmos in the 1988 film *Stand and Deliver*, Escalante demanded nothing short of excellence from his students. He also continually affirmed their cultural identities as well as their learner identities by reminding them that it was the Mayans who gave us the concept of zero.

Prior to the *Stand and Deliver* film, Hollins (1982) published the article "The Marva Collins Story Revisited: Implications for Regular Classroom Instructions." Collins's instructional strategies were identified to be

culturally congruent, building upon interaction patterns found in traditional Black family and church culture. In her class, competition was minimized, and students worked in cooperative or complementary dyads or triads. Strategies that are also found in Warm Demander teaching, Hollins noted that “good teaching that was displayed in the Marva Collins story may appear obvious. There was good discipline, high motivation, high teacher expectation, positive reinforcement, adequate/quality time on task, well-organized curriculum, and genuine concern for children” (p. 39).

Additionally, Marva Collins’ pedagogy was presented in the 1981 television film titled *The Marva Collins Story*. As the founder of the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago Garfield Park in 1975, Collins’s success was documented in a 1977 article in *The Chicago Sun-Times* and a 1995 *60 Minutes* interview.

While there is ample research to support these guiding principles, there is nothing like the evidence from one’s own practice. The framework I have developed to support all teachers on their personal journey has had a proven impact in my professional development sessions, based on the feedback I have received from teachers and educational leaders. Moreover, throughout you’ll find quotes from teachers who’ve shared their journey and who will inspire you to embark on your own journey.

Are You Ready to Do *This* Work?

This book is not “one more thing” for you to do or another examination of equity and bias training. The contents will not be completed and forgotten by winter break. Instead, it is a guide that serves to spark a continuing process of reflection and growth. While I call upon my readers to face some uncomfortable truths, my intent is not to oppress or shame teachers. To the contrary, I believe in the power of excellent teaching, and I also believe that deficit thinking about the profession, teachers, and students ultimately harms everyone. Warm Demander Teachers engage in acts of multiple acts of liberation. First, they liberate themselves from the American ideal that overwhelming stress is a healthy environment in which to live and work. As they engage in Radical Self-Care and experience the long-term health benefits, Warm Demander Teachers can better engage in critical analyses of their areas of growth and the schools in which they teach. I’ve seen the contents of

this book, when applied with intentionality, as having the potential to be transformative.

If you have a sincere desire to return to the ideals that brought you into the teaching profession to begin with, I believe you *are* ready for this work. If you think of yourself as a lifelong learner, you are absolutely ready for this book. Warm Demander Teachers have historically been excited to explore new ways of thinking about instruction and are open to examining the realities of race as a variable of how students experience schools and their teachers. These teachers *willingly* discuss students' and their own cultural/racial identity as one element in the success of the relationship, as well as their perceptions of safety and the academic and leadership development of students. They realize that classrooms are not race-neutral and that colorblindness is a harmful myth. They understand that the educational debt that is owed to the children who have systematically been denied access to high-quality education by a system that is inequitable by design is enormous (Ladson-Billings, 2006). They also understand their unique role in reframing a new reality that is characterized by justice, healing, and love. And they reject the idea of "other people's children" (Delpit, 1995, 2006) and embrace "our children," which they demonstrate every day in their authentic relationships with students through loving reciprocity.

Gholdy Muhammad (2020), one of our leading education visionaries, examined the othering of students by teachers who referred to students as "my students" and then made disparaging comments about their students. Muhammad wonders "why are we still 'othering' children?" (p. 65). More than 40 years ago, James Baldwin (1980) solidified collective responsibility when he wrote, "The children are always ours, every single one of them, all over the globe." I believe that when we engage as a collective community and see our students' worth, we then will take responsibility for their progress. As such, the children/students in this book will be lovingly referred to as "our students," and I invite you to engage in collective responsibility for their growth.

A Brief Walk-Through of This Book

Systemic racism and intersecting systems of oppression disproportionately harm communities throughout the United States and globally, but *all* of us suffer their consequences. Healing from the toxic effects of

an inequitable educational system is another important theme of this book, but as I've already stated, we can't begin healing others without first healing ourselves. For this reason, the journey to becoming a Warm Demander Teacher begins with a deep dive into Radical Self-Care—the subject matter of Chapter 2. As the journey unfolds in subsequent chapters, I offer repeated reminders to draw upon your Radical Self-Care practices as needed. Another “radical” aspect is recognizing the unanticipated health benefits through consistent implementation of Radical Self-Care practices. The work of challenging our deep-seated beliefs and biases, unpacking whiteness, and confronting our own fears can be emotionally taxing and even triggering. Through my own educational leadership and consulting practice, I've learned that in the absence of a Radical Self-Care toolbox, few are able to complete the journey. I cannot stress its importance enough.

Chapter 3 begins the journey into self-knowledge with some fundamental concepts that create Warm Demander pedagogy, including coming to terms with interrupting our biases, practicing cultural humility, and recognizing our own power and authority as educators. Further, this understanding can be directed toward the good of our students, through learning to practice critical care—a form of caring that honors students' identities and interrupts systems of oppression.

The journey continues in Chapter 4, which begins by unpacking whiteness—an essential concept that is frequently misrepresented and misunderstood but one that helps us to critically analyze the norms and practices of our classrooms, schools, education systems, and society at large. We then take a deep dive into cultural/racial identity—both our own and those of our students. Again, this understanding is foundational to the work of Warm Demander Teachers, who must first work to develop their own healthy cultural/racial identities before helping their students do the same. Related to this is the formation of positive *learner* identities in our students to counter the effects of stereotype threat and deficit assumptions. The chapter also touches on intersectionality—since teachers and students alike share multiple identities that are impacted by systems of oppression apart from race. Finally, we unpack the components of Warm Demander Teacher identities. Throughout Chapters 3 and 4, I have included practical examples of how these foundational concepts inform our pedagogical practice.

Chapter 5 provides a closer look at Warm Demander pedagogical practices through the voices of two highly effective Warm Demander Teachers. In addition to illustrating concepts discussed in prior chapters, *culturally responsive inquiry* is introduced as a Warm Demander teaching methodology that promotes higher levels of engagement, enhances critical thinking capacity, and promotes creativity, while simultaneously affirming student identity.

Finally, Chapter 6 returns to the theme of healing from the harm caused by an inequitable, dehumanizing system. Both educators and students have been harmed by the deficit narratives that have supported diminished expectations, erosion of student–learner identities, and what scholar and author Bettina Love calls “spirit murdering” (2019). We can and must work collectively with all members of the school community to promote cultures of healing and inclusivity.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm my belief that such harms are reparable and that healing begins with you! To be sure, healing is hard work that requires you to reject false narratives about students, teachers, and their communities that are engrained in our policies and practices. You may be the one teacher who initiates the change, but rest assured, the goal is achievable, one school community at a time.

Let’s begin the journey together!

Facilitator Guide

Encourage participants to create a journal to document their experiences and reflections from the professional development experiences of the book.

- What are your feelings about teaching?
- Do you have colleagues and friends who have decided to leave teaching?
 - What do you believe is needed to retain and recruit teachers?
- What are your beliefs about Warm Demander Teachers?
- Have you experienced a Warm Demander Teacher relationship?
 - Analyze what made them Warm Demanders.
- Are you open to new ideas about your ability to be a Warm Demander Teacher, your relationship with your students and their ability to be successful, and the healing of your school community?
- What are your initial ideas on how to identify a Warm Demander Teacher?

