



# Introduction

Those entrusted with preparing future teachers find themselves in the midst of an evolution in the field of education. Pre-service teaching institutions must recognize as their primary task to prepare new teachers with the skills and resources necessary to meet the demanding professional challenges of today *and* tomorrow. We can no longer focus on the skills needed to teach in today's world, but we must now prepare teachers with the skills to meet tomorrow's world. We have not attempted to communicate through an oracle, nor can we begin to describe what the future will look like. Nevertheless, we feel strongly that the pre-service teacher equipped with skills in Human Relations will be in the best position to conquer the challenges of tomorrow's world, whatever the challenges may look like.

An area in teacher preparation that is presently under-examined and potentially the most essential for educator professional development is the field of Human Relations. The most important challenge facing any teacher, at any time, exists in the human exchange and relationship-building with those he/she works *under* (e.g., administrators, principals, superintendents, etc.), works *with* (e.g., faculty, colleagues, paraprofessionals, etc.), and works *for* (e.g., students, parents, the community, etc.). This text is designed to give the pre-service teacher the essential skills to promote productive interactions and build on existing relations.

The overriding emphasis of this text is on being *applied*. This applied approach is not only intentional on our part, but, we believe, essential for the new teacher. We have been very selective in the materials used in this text. Whether we are examining the historical contributors to the field of Human Relations, theories, concepts, or best practices, all information presented has an applied nature.

The first step in becoming an exceptional teacher is to know who you are and how you became who you are. The text begins with a discussion on how the self, or who we are, is developed; then, future teachers are asked to examine themselves in a chapter called, “Who Is This Person Whom People Call An Exceptional Teacher?” This section is designed for educators to see the importance of self-reflection in everything they do, how values, beliefs, and attitudes play a major role in building relationships, the significance of being ethical in the many decisions a teacher makes throughout the day, and the importance of being an encouraging teacher.

The second section of the text addresses the prerequisite background knowledge the new teacher must possess in order to establish and maintain productive relationships. This information includes the understanding of perceptions, communication skills (including active listening, verbal, and nonverbal communication), and conflict management.

The last section of the text includes the understanding, development, and maintenance of relationship building with supervisors, colleagues, faculty, paraprofessionals, and parents. We then spend the bulk of this section looking at establishing and maintaining productive relationships with students.

There lies only one conscious motivation for writing this text; an emphasis must be placed on creating a continuous dialogue on the training needs of pre-service teachers in the context of Human Relations. Without continuous discussions and the recognition of the relationship-building skills needed, pre-service teachers will find themselves at a great disadvantage when confronted with the new challenges of tomorrow.

## **BIOGRPHIES**

The appendix presents biographical information on each contributor to this text. The pre-service teacher should visit these biographies, which often offer events and insight into the thinking of the theorists and practitioners highlighted.