Preface

This book, whose primary audience is teacher-leaders, assistant principals, principals, central office leaders, and superintendents of schools, focuses on three keys to successful educational leadership: (1) *Know thyself*, a foundation of understanding that helps one construct meaning from what has been experienced as well as a sense of what one is becoming; (2) *know how to present yourself well* in order to achieve personal and organizational goals and objectives; and (3) *know how to give leadership to the creation of educational settings.*

Earlier research we conducted on assistant principal, principal, and superintendent derailment revealed that problems with interpersonal relations were a key factor (Brubaker & Coble, 1997). Lack of communication and poor communication were frequently cited by respondents as examples of poor interpersonal skills. Incompetence, defined as the inability to carry out major role functions, was another leadership problem that led to derailment. Internal and external political conflict, difficulty in molding a staff, lack of follow-through, and overdependence on the board of education were other causes of administrator derailment.

Most of these problems were related to poor presentation-of-self skills and inadequate knowledge as to how to give leadership to the creation of educational settings. When we used the term *presentation of self*, we meant *performances*—defined as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (Goffman, 1959, p. 15). In short, a major challenge facing educational leaders is to find ways to improve their own performances

as well as the performances of those they lead—especially teachers. Performances, therefore, have both *a personal face* and *an organizational face.* This is to say that individuals and organizations may thrive or become derailed. Their relationship is symbiotic.

Educational leaders as professionals are able to articulate what they are doing and why. This articulation occurs in performances, and these performances take many forms: speaking, written communication (hard copy and electronic), nonverbal communication (body language and fronts), and listening.

Unfortunately, *teacher education programs,* usually centered in colleges and universities, provide few opportunities for prospective and present teachers to practice speaking to adults (Gordon, 2004; Sarason, 1999, 2004). It is this vacuum in teacher education that calls for special attention in professional development efforts. At the same time, the matters of written communication, nonverbal communication, and listening need to be emphasized more.

It is also true that *administrator education programs,* usually centered in colleges and universities, can provide more and richer opportunities to practice speaking to adults about what they are doing as professional educators and why (Gordon, 2004; Sarason, 2004). Written communication, nonverbal communication, and listening also need greater emphasis. (It is recognized that many teacher and administrator education programs are giving more attention to reflective thinking and writing than in the past. In previous years, too many programs overemphasized technical activities and skills.)

Two major figures who did research and writing on the presentation of self and the creation of educational settings deserve greater attention in teacher education and administrator education: Erving Goffman (1959), author of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* and Seymour B. Sarason (1972), author of *The Creation of Settings and the Future Societies.* These seminal works and the conceptual frameworks constructed by their authors are the springboard for the present book.

"The Prologue: A Cautionary Tale" takes us into a junior high school's "walk your child's schedule night," an open-house situation where a math teacher demonstrates his incompetence in a dramatic way. It raises the questions, "Why is it that presentation of self is such a problem for many educators?" "And, why is it that the junior high school math teacher's principal gave little, if any, attention to teachers' presentation of self problems?" More specifically, "Why didn't the principal create professional development settings that would give teachers an opportunity to improve their presentation of self?" The ninth-grade algebra teacher's poor presentation of self is a public relations problem, for it calls into question in a public forum his competence and by association the expertise of his colleagues as well as the school's administration. Perhaps even more important, the algebra teacher's inability to articulate a rationale for his instruction in relation to his colleagues' classes demonstrates a major communication problem within the school as a learning community. Teachers, administrators, and support staff have probably spent little time *talking* about their teaching practices and the reasons for such practices among themselves. We may also assume that without such talk there is little opportunity for adult educators to sharpen their *listening* skills on such matters. Furthermore, it calls into question whether adult educators in the school have engaged in *written communication* with each other, parents, and others that highlights best instructional practices and the rationale for such practices. In short, the cautionary tale demonstrates that a sense of *connection* is missing between the ninth-grade algebra teacher and the subject matter he uses as well as a connection with others involved in instruction and learning in the school community (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Chapter 1, "The Civilities of Leadership: Attitudes, Behaviors, Tools, and Skills," focuses on civilities essential in order to present oneself well while creating educational settings. Seemingly small acts of kindness and acceptance of responsibilities can make a real difference in the culture of schools and school systems. It is also true that a major characteristic of

civil leadership is willingness to stand up and be counted in influencing the governance of the school system as a whole and learning settings in the schools where leaders reside.

Chapter 2, "Teams, Teaming, and the Creation of Educational Settings," discusses ways in which working with others can help you avoid the twin enemies of loneliness and boredom. We tend to think of settings and communities in a geographical sense, but this chapter makes its clear that there are also communities of shared experience.

Chapter 3, "Professional Development on the Presentation of Self and the Creation of Educational Settings," describes teacher and administrator professional development ideas aimed at helping participants become more effective in presenting self and creating educational settings. The need for more attention to meeting this challenge is established, after which ways in which this need can be met are brought to the reader's attention. The question that will be addressed is, "Now that I am conscious of the importance of presentation of self and the creation of educational settings, what can I do as a professional development leader to apply my new understandings?"

Effective professional development doesn't simply spring from school culture. Effective professional development leadership creates an enriched school culture. And, "any significant attempt at school improvement will have a greater chance of success if it is integrated with effective professional development" (Gordon, 2004, p. 7).

The Charismatic Leader: The Presentation of Self and the Creation of Educational Settings emphasizes the idea that the leader you are becoming is what is really important. You are not a static, closed-system organism; you are instead in the process of experiencing possibilities that you have not yet even imagined. It is precisely this idea of becoming a better leader that is so exciting and challenging. This thesis fits with my definition of creative leadership as using your talents to help others identify and use their talents. The pleasure associated with these understandings grows when it is shared.

It is interesting to turn to any dictionary to discover the meaning of *charisma.* You will find that it is a gift that allows you to influence others. It is a kind of virtue associated with an assigned position, such as a teacher leader, an assistant principal, a principal, a central office administrator, or superintendent of schools. To use this gift wisely is an awesome responsibility and opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children, young adults, colleagues, parents, and others in the community. The purpose of this book is to help you as an educational leader to meet this challenge.

The Charismatic Leader: The Presentation of Self and the Creation of Educational Settings presents several snapshots—brief sketches—that illustrate key points in a personal way. The effect of these snapshots is to take you, the reader, backstage into the lives of educators as decision makers as they present themselves in creating educational settings.

You, the reader, will discover in reading this book that preservice and advanced education of teachers and administrators gives considerable attention to the matters of "What should I do?" and "How should I do it?" Methods for doing things have had a central place in teacher and administrator education since education's inception. They appeal to the pragmatic inclinations of teachers and administrators. However, effective presentation of self by educators must move beyond technical skills to the "Why?" question: "What is the rationale for the decisions I make and how can I clearly articulate my reasons for doing things when conversing with parents and others?" It is my belief that the successful integration of rationale and presentation-of-self skills depends on the educator's love of ideas. It is this passion for ideas and ways to implement them in educational settings that will make a real difference in reaching children, colleagues, parents, and others interested in improving our schools. When the passion of the leader meets the curiosity of others, learning takes root and action follows. It is at this point that persistence becomes important so that the core values of the leader and core group are sustained in the culture of the school and/or school system.

Finally, students, colleagues, and I have entered into spirited conversations in answering the question, "How much can an educator improve his or her presentation of self?" If you are shy, can you become an extrovert? If your strength is in presenting broad conceptual ideas rather than details to an audience, can you become a detail expert, or vice versa? If you are basically a person who blends in, can you become an outgoing leader? Goffman (1959) answers this question by saying that the cornerstone of presentation of self must be authenticity or genuineness. To try to become the opposite of your basic personality or inner self is to become a performance risk as the audience will quickly recognize you as a phony (Brubaker & Coble, 2005). Some politicians and television personalities have tried to change their basic personalities with the result being that the audience joins the performer in giving more attention to the way the self is presented than to the message being conveyed. The thesis of the present book is that you as an effective leader will learn to present yourself: "Know thyself" and "To thine own self be true." The first proverb is from Socrates and the second proverb is Polonius' advice to his son Laertes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* The marriage of knowing self and being true to self makes it possible for both the leader and the audience to recognize that courage is "the most precious asset anyone can bring to the public arena" (Califano, 2004, p. 491). Courage is the bedrock of two other characteristics necessary for success in the public arena: determining the right course of action and having "the tenacity to stay the course" (Califano, 2004, p. 492). School and school-system leaders who exercise these characteristics are civil servants, citizens, who demonstrate civility and leadership.

What, then, can you learn about presentation of self while not changing your basic personality? Richard Amme (2003c), former television anchor and CEO of Rick Amme Associates, advises us to concentrate on skills such as "listening, message content, focus, strategy, tactics, doing and saying the right thing, preparation, rehearsal, collaboration, motivation, and team building" (p. 4). It is in participating in these professional

development experiences that *nuances,* subtle experiences or variations, become *instinct,* patterns of activity that reflect one's inner self (Brubaker & Coble, 2005). When you achieve this state, you achieve a kind of presentation-of-self success that leads to the feeling of true community beneficial to others and yourself. You have met the challenge of doing something interesting for your audience *and* yourself.

You will note that appendices are included to help you personally as you read this book and also give leadership to others in professional development settings. For example, Appendix A provides you, the professional development leader, with a detailed outline or map to help those you lead improve their presentation of self. Other appendices are self-inventories relating to presentation-of-self attitudes and skills. References to appropriate appendices are in parentheses throughout the text. We found with our pilot program on the presentation of self and the creation of educational settings that the self-inventories gave each participant the opportunity to assess self, after which these assessments were useful in stimulating group discussion. The result was personal and group ownership of ideas learned.

In order to have a conversation about what happens to you in reading and applying ideas from this book, please e-mail me at <dlbrubak@uncg.edu>. I promise a response.