

Preface

We have been working on district-wide reform for over 30 years, and on whole-system reform (province, state, country) since 1997. In the course of this work, capacity building has come to play a central role—strategies that develop individual and collective knowledge, competencies, and dispositions essential for improvement of student learning.

In this book we delve more specifically and comprehensively into what capacity building looks like and how to achieve more of it—what we call the nitty-gritty of doing it. This is important in its own right because the term *capacity building* can easily become superficial and vague in its use.

But we have a deeper interest and purpose, which is how to institutionalize and sustain capacity building for every teacher and every student—what we call realization—the 14th parameter that crystallizes the environment created by satisfying the demands of the other 13 parameters that formed the basis of our original model. Thus having worked with capacity building for two decades, the next strategy question is how to embed it in large systems.

In Chapter 1 we set the frame by reviewing the main core elements of capacity building and its relationship to realization. Chapter 2 talks about the nitty-gritty of capacity building, and Chapter 3 is about the day-to-day modeling, sharing, and guiding of effective practice.

In Chapter 4 we consolidate system-wide capacity building as interdependent practice, or realization. It is here that we introduce the system as a whole, including the role of the state or province. In Chapter 5 we worry about the barriers to going deeper, and in Chapter 6 we take up the question of whole-system reform involving the school, district, and state levels as a means of sustaining realization.

This book melds theory and practice. We have always had a strong knowledge base, but theory is advanced best through purposeful action. We can no longer tell where theory begins and practice ends or vice versa. When the system has achieved realization, theory and practice become seamless.