

Preface

Teaching for Deep Understanding is the product of collaboration between a teachers federation (the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario [ETFO]) and a university (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto [OISE/UT]). These organizations had collaborated before, but not often and not around such an ambitious set of purposes.

This publication attests to the value of collaboration among academic and practice communities. The synergies are obvious and fundamental. Teachers want to provide the best possible education for their students. In fact, a resolution at the 2002 ETFO Annual Meeting started this project. ETFO members identified a problem with the Ontario elementary curriculum and wanted further study to pinpoint the source and extent of the problem. ETFO approached faculty at OISE/UT, and our research partnership was formed.

The worlds of educational practice and of research, often working in isolation from one another, have been described as "two solitudes," and the distance between them often seems formidable. Not so in this project. And we believe the recommendations growing out of this collaborative effort are much more significant as a result. Educational policy makers, for example, typically consult with members of the teaching and research communities separately in the formation of their policies.

A significant challenge often arising from these parallel consultation processes is to reconcile differences in the advice received. School leaders, admonished to be "data driven" in their decision making, often find the "implications" of research obtuse or remote from the real-life solutions they need to their problems. Recommendations in *Teaching for Deep Understanding* represent the combined advice of both communities. While this eliminates the need to reconcile conflicting advice, it also reduces the sometimes politically attractive possibility of trading off one source of advice against another in the justification of policies supported by neither source. The practical nature of our recommendations should also be congenial to the actual world of teachers, administrators, and others offering leadership in their schools.