

## **Bridges Research Philosophy**

### **Statement of Purpose**

Whether through internally or externally funded projects, individual efforts, or part of a teaching program, research provides us with critical resources and contributes an intellectual rigor and discipline to our work, all of which impacts on instruction. Both teaching and research activities must interact to strengthen each other.

Research – our own and that of others -- guides all of our practices and must, therefore be sound, valid and reliable. All research should be in the service of deepening our theoretical and intellectual understandings and improving our instructional work.

### **How we conduct Bridges research**

Having ideas and research questions are only part of conducting research. In order to have the greatest effect, ideas should address current or future needs and have the funding, staffing, and facilities to be fully explored. In Bridges research, we try to adhere to the following guidelines:

- *Identify a problem or question of importance:* Such issues can be in the realm of curricula, professional development, technology, materials development and use, assessment, instructional practices, student outcomes, teacher outcomes, administrative and school support, classroom and school environment, funding sources, language and literacy principles and practices, short or long-term strategic plans, etc.
- *Explore the problem deeply and widely and review various solutions or interpretations:* We need to spend time exploring an issue in detail, holding discussions with both academics and pedagogical team members, meeting with outside experts, surveying previous literature and personal experiences, collecting and analyzing data – if warranted, calling on specialists and external evaluators when necessary, as well as teachers and other practitioners.
- *Collaborate:* Collaboration between Bridges practitioners and researchers, between Bridges researchers and researchers at different institutions and in different fields and disciplines help us to broaden our views and take fresh perspectives.
- *Balance theory and practice:* Theoretical and experimental studies are both important, as is observational research, documentation, quasi-experimental studies, case studies, longitudinal studies, formative and summative evaluations, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Informal and action research also has its place, especially when it leads to more rigorous research.