RESEARCH AREA & SOURCE	DESCRIPTION & MAIN FINDINGS / ARGUMENTS
Assessment *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 3 - 13*	**Andrade, H., Du, Y. & Wang, X. (2008) Putting rubrics to the test: The effect of a model, criteria generation, and rubric-references self-assessment on elementary school student's writing.** Researchers in the US examined the effect of using models and rubrics on student writing. The test treatment involved: (1) reading a model piece of writing and discussing its strengths and weaknesses, followed by generating a list of qualities of effective writing; (2) giving students a written rubric for the writing task; and (3) using the rubric to self-assess a first draft. Learners in a comparison group also generated a list of qualities of effective writing, but without the support of a model and without receiving a rubric or engaging in self-assessment. Prior rubric use, previous achievement in language and gender were examined for the effect they might have on results. The rubric used to assess writing was based on the 6 + 1 Writing Traits (traits include: ideas, organization, paragraphs, voice, words, sentences and conventions). **Main Findings:** • Prior rubric use did not significantly affect writing scores (possibly because though most learners had been given rubrics in previous classes, they had not used them to self-assess) • Girls achieved slightly better writing scores than boys, but the difference was not significant. • Previous achievement in language was positively related to writing scores. • The treatment group's writing scores were significantly higher than those of the comparison group on all of the writing traits assessed except for 'sentences' and 'conventions'. This was true even when controlling for previous achievement in language. The average grade for the treatment group was a low B and for the comparison group a high C.
ESL *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*	**Thomas, W. & Collier, V. (1997) School effectiveness for language minority students.** Researchers at George Mason university in the US tracked the progress of various categories language minority learners from the time they entered the US school system up to the end of their schooling in Grade 12. The study examined the student records of more than 700,000 language minority students, representing the largest database ever examined in the field. **Main Findings:** **Research question one - How much time is needed for language minority students who are English language learners to reach and sustain on-grade-level achievement in their second language?** • Students who arrived between ages 8 and 11, who had received at least 2 – 5 years of schooling taught through their primary language (L1) in their home country, took 5 – 7 years. • Students who arrived before age 8 took 7 – 10 years or longer - the critical difference between the two groups was that the

	younger children had received little or no schooling in their L1. • The most powerful predictor of academic success in L2 was formal schooling in L1. • The main reason it takes ESL learners so long to reach grade-level performance is that native speakers are not standing still. ESL learners must progress at a faster rate than their native peers in order to catch up. **Research question two - Which program & instructional variables strongly affect the long-term academic achievement of language minority students?** • **L1 instruction -** The more cognitively challenging work provided in L1, the higher the long term achievement of students. This factor meant that bilingual programs produced significantly better results than other types of programs. It appears that strong L1 cognitive and academic development for the first 6 – 7 years of schooling provides the basis needed for ESL learners to maintain academic success in English throughout the secondary years. • Students being schooled all in English make dramatic gains in the early grades, but as they reach higher grades where the work becomes more cognitively demanding, their rate of progress on average drops to below that of their native-speaker peers. • **Type of L2 instruction -** The most effective L2 instruction was delivered by ESL-certified teachers teaching language though academic content, with simultaneous language and content objectives. The difference between this and programs where ESL teaching focused on only the structure of English was very significant. • **Teaching style -** Interactive teaching styles resulted in significantly higher achievement for ESL learners. Such teaching included - cooperative learning, negotiation of meaning, connections to prior knowledge, performance and portfolio assessment, inquiry-based learning, process writing, learning strategies… • **Sociocultural support –** Student academic achievement was highest when bilingual / ESL staff felt positive about the school environment and believed language minority learners were respected and valued and where their bilingual and bicultural experience were considered a knowledge base for teachers to build on. Essentially, the language programs of the school were seen as enrichment programs rather than remedial. • **Integration with the curricular mainstream –** ESL learners need meaningful interaction with native-speaking peers. • The schools with higher achievement had eliminated most forms of ability grouping and tracking and had found ways to provide access to the full curriculum and avoid dumming it down. • Of all the variables above, L1 support explained the most variance in student achievement.
Instructional Strategies / Cooperative Learning	**Oortwijn, M., Boekaerts, M. Vedder, P. & Stijbos, J. (2008) Helping behaviour during cooperative learning and learning gains: The role of the teacher and of pupils' prior knowledge and ethnic background.** Based on previous research, 'high quality helping behaviours' were identified. These were defined as "utterances of peers that ask for explanations, give explanations, or apply them to the task at hand" (p. 147). A CL curriculum of 9 one-hour mathematics lessons was the

Learning and Instruction Vol. 18, pp. 146 - 159	focus for the study. The experimental groups received 2 lessons of training in effective group work prior to commencing the 9 lessons. The first lesson revolved around general CL rules such as cooperation and listening to each other. The second lesson introduced practices more specific to high quality helping behaviour. Students were instructed when seeking help to "(a) ask precise questions, (b) continue asking questions in case of ambiguities, (c) think before asking a question, and (d) ask for help on time" (p. 152). When giving help students were instructed to "(a) fine-tune the level of help to the need for help that is being requested, (b) give a clear and precise answer, (c) let the receiver apply the help that is given, (d) continue to ask if the question for help is unclear, and (e) give help when needed" (p. 152). Teachers in the experimental classes were asked to support learners in implementing these behaviours. The control classes participated in the same sequence of 9 cooperative learning mathematics lessons without the 2 lessons of instruction and without teacher support for behaviours beyond general cooperative learning practices. **Main Findings:** • Giving help a high number of times was a positive predictor of posttest mathematical performance • Requesting explanations a high number of times was a negative predictor of posttest mathematical performance • Immigrant pupils engaged in less helping behaviours than non-immigrant pupils • No relationship was found between high quality helping behaviours and subsequent mathematical performance beyond that already stated above. • Teachers were unable to stimulate high quality helping behaviour, though they were successful in reducing low quality behaviour.
Instructional Strategies / Cooperative Learning *Learning and Instruction Vol. 18, pp. 83 - 95*	**Kutnick, P., Ota, C. & Berdondini, L. (2008) Improving the effects of group working in classrooms with young school-aged children: Facilitating attainment, interaction and classroom activity.** This study was conducted with 980 children aged 5 – 7 in the United Kingdom and sought to investigate whether activities explicitly designed to foster trusting, interdependent relationships among children could lead to group work which supported cognitive development. The study took place over a full school year. The activities used to address the skills involved in building relationships were designed by the classroom teachers involved in the study. They followed a developmental sequence over the school year beginning with activities emphasizing trust (such as 'blind walk'), continuing with activities practicing communication skills (such as 'partnered discussions of favorite actions') and leading to the final component - activities around joint problem-solving (such as 'joint drawings'). For the purposes of comparison, only the experimental classes were offered these activities. Control classes did not participate in them. **Main Findings:** • ***Group Work*** - During group work experimental classes were less dependent on the teacher for 'procedural' guidance and showed significantly higher levels of 'on-task' behavior. Learners in experimental classes also showed significantly higher levels of

	'co-regulation' (meaning active participation from all group members) and significantly lower levels of 'disengagement' (meaning either that one member was disruptive or that group members did not share any aspect of the activity). These differences became more pronounced as the year progressed. Overall, learners in the experimental classes became more task-focused, engaged and aware of other group members in communication compared with learners in control classes. • ***Attainment*** - Pre- and post-tests in reading / literacy showed increased attainment for all pupils with experimental classes gaining more than control classes. In the area of mathematics the experimental learners demonstrated significantly higher gains over learners in control classes. • ***Motivation*** - At the beginning of the year there were no significant differences between the classes in relation to their attitude to group work. By the end of the year the experimental classes demonstrated an increased liking of group work, reporting that it helped them 'think better', 'learn more' and 'try harder', while control classes showed a decreased liking for group work.
Instructional Supervision / Action Research *NASSP Bulletin, Vol. 89, No. 643, pp. 17 - 27*	**Glanz, J. (2007) Action Research as Instructional Supervision: Suggestions for Principals.** This paper examines two case studies of action research being used by principals as an instructional supervision strategy and then makes some recommendations for principal's wishing to implement AR . **Main Arguments:** • Principals, as instructional leaders, are first and foremost responsible for promoting best teaching practices. • The field of supervision has moved towards more collaborative, participatory and reflective methods. • Action research can be used to help principals and teachers discover which pedagogical practices are most effective in raising achievement levels for particular classes or students in a given school. • Both case studies used demonstrate that action research can be used to engage teachers in reflection that leads to improved instructional practices.