

## **It Is Not Just the Solution Anymore**

### **Abstract**

In this action research study of a fifth grade enrichment mathematics class, I investigate how problem solving strategies and group work opportunities influence the students' use of strategies and graphic representations. Though there are no large gains in the students' use of strategies, some students show minor gains in their use of representations. I also investigate the influence of group work upon usage of representations. At the beginning of the study most students indicate that working in groups is helpful in finding solutions. Toward the end, 52.9 percent of the students indicate that while group work is beneficial for "reasoning" problems, working in groups on story problems hinders their problem solving efforts. The research complicates our understanding of group work in teaching mathematics and specifically for the student use of graphic representations in problem solving contexts.