

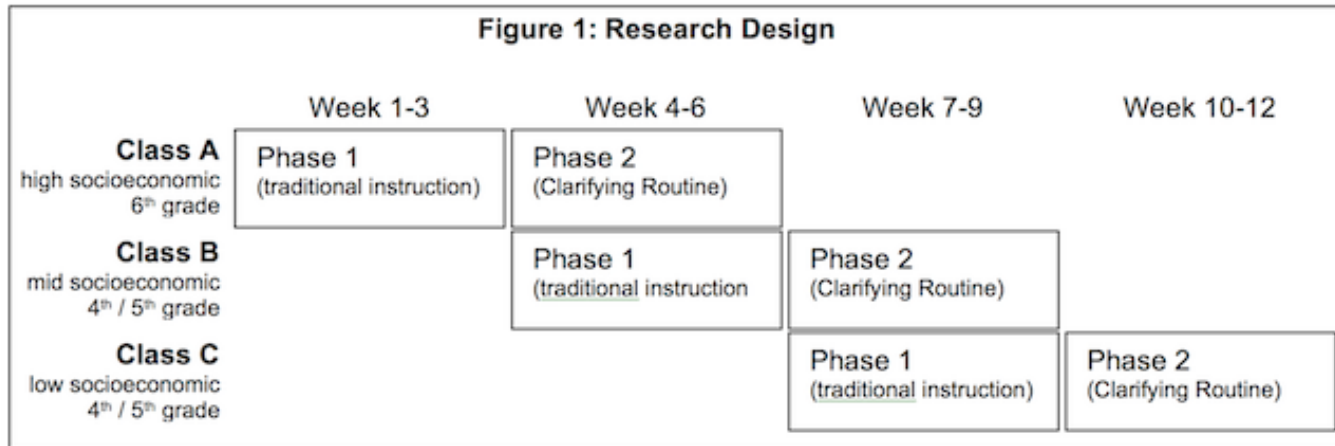
Research: The Clarifying Routine

Overview

The Clarifying Routine is used by teachers to teach students about an abstract idea or concept through exploration of its critical features, examples and non-examples associate with it, and its connections to background knowledge. This study examined the effects of using the Clarifying Routine on the learning of 53 students. The study took place in three general education classes, with each class from a different school. The 6th-grade class (Class A) was composed of students attending a middle school located in a high socioeconomic metropolitan area. The second group of students (Class B) attended a "looping class" for 4th- and 5th-grade students in an elementary school located in a middle socioeconomic area of a small town. The third group of students (Class C) attended a "looping class" for 4th- and 5th-grade students in an elementary school located in a low socioeconomic (inner-city) metropolitan area.

Each class experienced two instructional phases. Phase 1 involved traditional instruction; Phase 2 featured use of the Clarifying Routine by the teacher. The study employed a staggered pretest/posttest design where the point in time in which the Clarifying Routine was implemented served as the primary control for the study (see Figure 1). Thus, when Class A completed Phase 1 instruction, Class B began Phase 1 instruction. When Class B completed Phase 1 instruction, Class C began Phase 1 instruction. In all phases, students took a multiple-choice exam over the content of the lessons. During each phase, three pre- and post-instruction measures were taken.

Figure 1: Research Design



Results

Table 1 shows the results of the study. Markedly similar results were found regardless of socioeconomic status. When the Clarifying Routine was employed to teach abstract concepts, the mean number of questions answered correctly by students attending the high-socioeconomic-status school increased by an average of 14 points over traditional instruction. The performance of students in the middle-socioeconomic-status school increased by an average of 30 points, and the performance of students in the low- socioeconomic-status

school increased by an average of 20 points.

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Table 1: Mean percentage of answers correct on tests

	Phase 1: Traditional Instruction	Phase 2: Clarifying Routine Instruction
Class A High socioeconomic 6 th grade	65	79
Class B Mid socioeconomic 4 th / 5 th grade	62	92
Class C Low socioeconomic 4 th / 5 th grade	63	83

Conclusions

In short, these data show that students answered substantially more test questions correctly when the Clarifying Routine was used to teach abstract concepts than when traditional instructional methods were employed. The routine improved performance across socioeconomic levels and grades four through six.

Reference

Ellis, E. S., Raines, C., Farmer, T., & Tyree, A. (in prep). *Effectiveness of a concept clarifying routine in upper-elementary and middle-school general education classes.*