

# **BEFORE DURING AFTER READING: STRATEGIES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS**

**ANDREA KARPf**

*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

## **ABSTRACT**

*This article serves as a review of literature regarding the importance of supporting English Learner (EL) students in the grade level classroom by utilizing a Before, During, and After (BDA) reading lesson framework. This article includes 6 researched strategies that are encouraged in the before, during, and after reading model.*

English Learner (EL) students spend most of their school day in the grade level classroom; therefore, it is crucial for that time to be effective and supportive for the EL student. Classroom teachers recognize the importance of creating a reading lesson with a Before, During, and After (BDA) framework. Being intentional with this BDA model helps organize the lesson and helps support students throughout the lesson. Additionally, this model is highly effective for EL students as well. Wright (2019) emphasized the importance of this model toward supporting EL students to “become proficient readers of English” (p. 207). As a classroom teacher plans a lesson to support a BDA framework, there are a variety of techniques to include which will enhance this model and further help support the lesson for EL students. Six techniques are described to encourage enhancement.

## **BEFORE READING**

Wright (2019) described the importance of before reading by acknowledging, “[E]ffective teachers help their students activate their prior knowledge, survey or preview the

text before reading it, and pre-teach essential vocabulary necessary to comprehend the story” (p. 207). A crucial component for all learners, not just EL students, is to build background knowledge prior to reading. We all have schema, and it is important to recognize this and build on it as we gain new knowledge. McGregor (2007) encouraged teachers to turn schema from abstract into a tangible concept by relating it to a spider web or a lint roller since both of these examples serve as a means to naturally collect. “Having schema allows our thinking to go deeper, faster” (McGregor, 2007, p. 30). As background knowledge is built in the classroom, it helps to make a personal connection to the material as well as create a shared classroom experience.

The second vital component to include before reading is the emphasis on vocabulary. This can feel like a daunting task due to the sheer number of vocabulary words in any given text, yet it is important to prioritize the words and place more time and emphasis on the terms that revolve around the key concept of the reading. Herrell and Jordan (2016) suggested that vocabulary should be connected to background knowledge and used and practiced in practical settings as well as connected to visuals and actions to convey meaning.

## **DURING READING**

“During reading, effective teachers model reading strategies, help students learn new vocabulary and grammatical forms, and help readers make connections between the text at hand and other texts they have read or experiences they have had” (Wright, 2019, p. 207). Conducting a think aloud is an important element to help students hear a teacher’s thinking. Thus, it should be a strategy used often during the reading process. Herrell and Jordan (2016) encouraged teachers to conduct a “modeled talk” in which the teacher is conducting a think aloud as well as demonstrating simultaneously (p. 33). As teachers talk about their thinking, it will strengthen

student understanding and emphasize important information in the lesson (Herrell & Jordan, 2016).

Reading aloud to students is an incredibly vital component in the classroom. It might be a read aloud in the primary elementary setting or even reading content material in the intermediate and beyond classroom. While reading aloud it is crucial to pause at different times to clarify, summarize, or question the content (Herrell & Jordan, 2016). Additionally, this will help build a classroom community, foster critical thinking skills, and model an effective way to interact with a book (Moses, 2015).

Checks for understanding are an important component throughout the reading process, and one that is effective during the reading process is a strategy called “report back” (Herrell & Jordan, 2016, p. 101). This is an effective way to keep students interacting with the content while being supportive to EL students. After a question is asked in whole group, students have an opportunity to share ideas with a partner or in a small group before a student is called on to share out in whole group (Herrell & Jordan, 2016).

## **AFTER READING**

In addition to the variety of checks for understanding that need to be administered throughout a lesson, there are some important components to include after reading. To emphasize the after reading component, “effective teachers help readers consolidate, elaborate, and deepen their understanding of the text and the connections they have made and provide review and further instruction as needed on new vocabulary words and grammatical forms learned from the text” (Wright, 2019, p. 207). Herrell and Jordan (2016) encouraged a strategy called “Preview/Review” in which a teacher will think about what skill or concept was taught at the beginning of the lesson and revisit the concept further at the end of the lesson (p.169). In

addition to reviewing the concept, the next step is for the students to have an opportunity to practice and apply the skill (Herrell & Jordan, 2016).

Another after reading strategy that is valuable is the skill of summarizing. There are a variety of ways to implement summarizing in a reading lesson and emphasis must be placed on making a summary concrete for student understanding. McGregor (2007) suggested teachers to bring in a colander and discuss how this spaghetti strainer can connect to summarizing. This example helps connect the idea of how to strain out the water and save the spaghetti as a tangible example to explain how to strain all information to save the most important information necessary for a summary (McGregor, 2017). Once this concept can be seen as a concrete experience, students have that support when it is time to summarize at the end of the lesson.

“Working as a team, every educator has a distinct yet complimentary role to ensure that students have seamless access to and participate in appropriate relevant curriculum, instruction and assessment” (Gottlieb, 2016, p. 6). These strategies align with these sentiments in order to support the needs of all learners, especially EL students. Additionally, it is important to “value English learners’ assets, expect excellence from every English learner and reflect in inquiry about your impact” (Ward Singer, 2018, p. 19). As a classroom teacher plans a reading lesson, the use of the BDA model will support all learners in the classroom. Taking time to process these specific strategies described will enhance this BDA model in support of EL students in the grade level classroom.

## **THE AUTHOR**

*Andrea Karpf is a graduate assistant earning a doctoral degree in educational leadership. Her main role is to serve as a literacy coach and literacy instructor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She is a former K-12 ELS instructor, and her current passion is to support teacher candidates with English Learner awareness and preparedness.*

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