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By Valerie SchifferDanoff

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These strategies provide opportunities for all students to read, write, listen, and speak in a variety of contexts. They also provide ways for you to organize lessons and student work, and encourage students to be accountable. While most of these strategies are designed for use in a balanced literacy program, you can easily adapt them to meet your specific program needs.

* For unit studies, gather a variety of books on the same subject, making sure that the books reflect the range of reading levels in your class.
* Teach comprehension first. Skills like phonics can be developed after meaning is established or receptive and expressive vocabulary is strong.
* Plan comprehension-building activities before, during, and after the reading, such as picture walks (looking at and discussing the pictures in a book before reading to build background) and writing a personal response.
* Brainstorm with the whole class to generate a [Word Bank for Writing](http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/e/powerofwordsbank.pdf) (PDF).
* Teach the strategy of using pictorial, semantic, and syntax cues, and conventions of print to read for meaning.
* Encourage children to predict, confirm, and self correct.
* Generate a list of questions about what you are reading.
* Discuss new words in context. For ELLs, reading experiences are filled with unfamiliar vocabulary that is specific to our culture.
* Teach word-study skills. For example, classifying and sorting words by spelling patterns helps students develop vocabulary and provides opportunities to transfer spelling concepts from reading to writing.
* Integrate reading with writing and use a variety of genres and formats as a springboard for writing activities.
  + Work with recipes. Recipes are a great example of meaningful procedural text. They are a motivating hands-on activity and can serve as models for procedural writing.
  + Have students keep journals for personal narratives and content-area learning. Journals keep students organized and accountable for their work. After a weekend or holiday, rereading what has been recorded in journals lets ELLs review the subject and get back on track. Parents love seeing these too.
* Incorporate environmental print into your classroom with examples from magazines, newspapers, ads, street signs, and other sources.