

Language Arts

The goal of all learning, including that for students with significant cognitive disabilities, is to enhance quality of life. Language arts instruction provides a unique tool for promoting quality of life through increasing communicative competence. A balanced language arts program for students with significant cognitive disabilities will include instruction in writing, reading, research, and communication. How does language arts instruction differ or augment communication instruction in general? Certainly, listening and speaking or using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) are important strands for language arts. In contrast, students with significant cognitive disabilities have historically received inadequate instruction in early literacy. While not all students may learn to read, all should have the opportunity to learn to produce and access text. In writing, this may range from the traditional form of typing or composing passages to using assistive technology to develop a permanent product. Students need opportunities to learn to produce both narrative and informational segments. In reading, all students should have the opportunity to learn to read regardless of their disability label. Besides gaining increased independence as a reader, students with significant cognitive disabilities should have the opportunity for lifelong access to literature that is both narrative and informational. While some students will learn to access this literature through reading (decoding with comprehension), others will gain access through shared stories (read alouds) or the use of technology (e.g., AAC, electronic switches). Students with significant cognitive disabilities also should have the opportunity to research topics and learn more about areas of interest that are needed for fuller participation in general education. This research may be as introductory as choosing a topic for a peer to assist with locating pictures or as complex as completing the steps of a class research project.

Sample Middle School Story-based Lesson Task Analysis

Book or piece of literature to be used: *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell

What the teacher will do	Materials to Present	What the student will do	E.g., student responses
1. Get students attention	Show anticipatory set and allow student to interact with materials (e.g., sand to represent Island)	Interact with materials	Eye gaze, touch, label
2. Review vocabulary and new symbols	Flashcards with words/ picture symbol and/or object of key vocabulary word(s) (e.g. Karana, girl, island, brother, Ramo, father)	Say repeat/point to word or symbol	Touch, say, VOCA
3. Ask for prediction	Picture walk through the book. Provide prediction options with words/pictures/ objects. Present plausible, semi plausible, and not plausible (e.g. What do you think this chapter is going to be about)	Indicates response to prediction	Verbally answer questions or Look at, touch, reach toward response board with options
4. Read the title	Text point to title of book while labeling it as "title" (e.g. The title of this chapter is called <i>What will happen to Karana's Island. Can you find the title?</i>)	Point to title	Eye gaze word for word, point
5. Read the author	Text point to title of book while labeling it as "author" (e.g. The author of this story is named Scott O'Dell. Can you find the title?)	Point to author	Eye gaze word for word, point
6. Ask, "how do we get started?"	Present the book upside down and backwards (e.g. Can you help me get the story started?)	Opens book to first page of the book	Reorients book and opens, activates VOCA to request open
7. Reads text and provide chance to turn page	Text point along with reading and pauses at end of page (e.g. How do we keep the story going?)	Turns pages when appropriate	Turns page, looks at pic symbol, or activates VOCA
8. Pauses for repeated story line	Reads up to repeated story line or half of repeated story line (e.g. What will happen to...)	Anticipates repeated story line or finishes repeated story line	Says story line or activates switch
9. Pauses for finding the vocabulary on page	"Can you find the one of our vocabulary words on the page?" (e.g. "island")	Points to picture/ word object that teacher says	Look at, touch, says word
10. Give student an opportunity to point to chosen line on "text point page" in own book	Wait for student to respond (e.g. can you help me read this line on the page? "Karana's father is the chief of the village.")	Text point to chosen line in book	Point, eye gaze
11. Provide phonetic awareness opportunity (Blending, segmenting a specific word)	Provide an opportunity for student to participate in phonetic awareness opportunity (e.g. Can you tap out the syllables to the word Island?)	Independently demonstrates blending, segmenting, or identifying a target sound	Tap out, VOCA, speak
12. Asks comprehension question/ review prediction	Provide comprehension options with words/pictures/ objects. Present plausible, semi plausible, and not plausible (can be same as prediction question) (e.g. What was this chapter about?)	Answers question	Eye gaze, touch, speak, reach toward, VOCA, AAC

State Standard to embed and where to embed (what step of the task-analysis): Produce an artifact (e.g., short report) which can be a synthesis of what others said on a topic or issue, a formal presentation that may or may not include powerpoint, a poster display or webquest.- Step 13.

Conceptual Model of Language Arts for Students with Significant Disabilities



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Conceptual Model of Language Arts

Q. What is the goal of learning for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

A. The goal of all learning is **to enhance quality of life**.

Q. How can language arts instruction accomplish this?

A. Instruction in ELA provides a unique tool for promoting quality of life through increasing communicative competence, including a **balanced language arts program**.

Q. Will all students learn to read through a balanced language arts program?

A. While not all students may learn to read, all should have the opportunity to learn to produce and access text.

Q. What does a balanced language arts program for students with significant disabilities include?

A. Writing, reading, research, and communication.

Q. What do all students need from the balanced language how can students demonstrate learning?

Writing

Students need opportunities to learn to produce narrative and informational segments.

How can my students show what they know?

May be typing, composing passages, or using assistive technology to develop a permanent product.

Reading

Students should have the opportunity to learn to read to increase independence as a reader, and have the opportunity for lifelong access to narrative and informational literature.

How can my students show what they know?

May be access this literature through reading (decoding with comprehension), through shared stores (read alouds), and/ or the use of technology (e.g., AAC, electronic switches).

Research

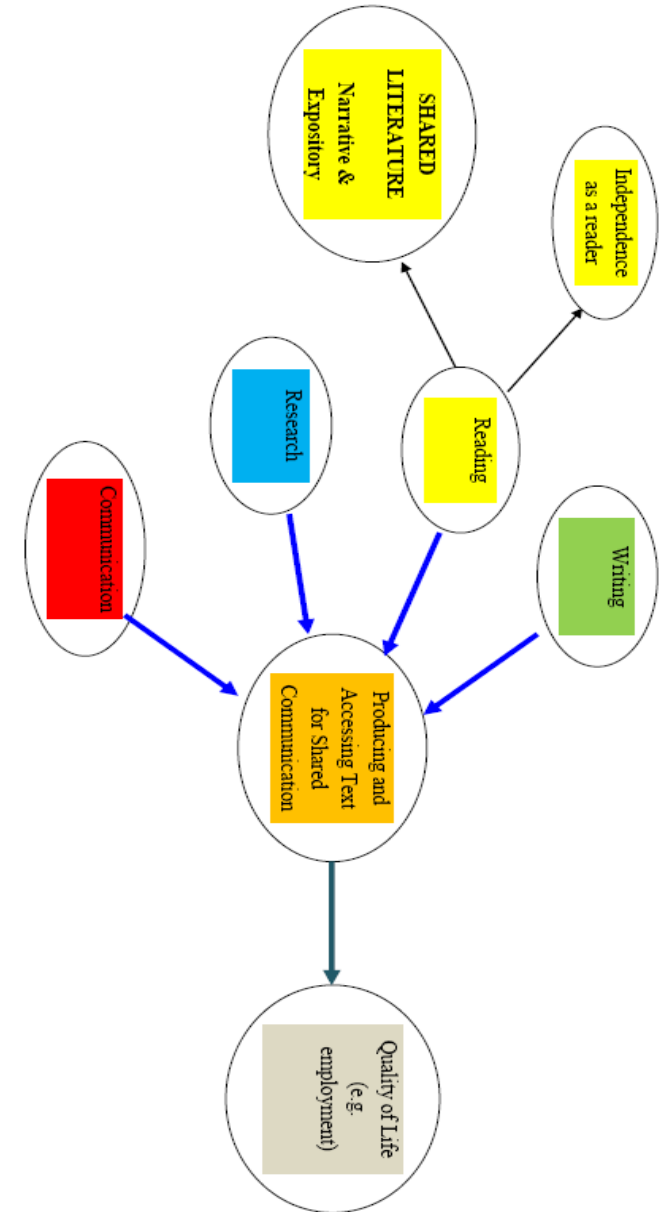
Students should have the opportunity to research topics and learn more about areas of interest that are needed for fuller participation in general education.

How can my students show what they know?

May include choosing a topic for a peer to assist with locating pictures or completing the steps of a class research project.

Communication

In the integral strands of listening and speaking, students may use augmentative and alternative communication.



Conceptual Diagram of Language Arts

*For Language Arts,
"It's about the meaning."*