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.

Conceptual Model of Language Arts for Students with Significant Disabilities

http://education.uncc.edu/access
NAAC OSEP Grant# H324U040001
UNC at Charlotte
For permission to replicate or use please contact
Dr. Diane Browder at dbrowder@uncc.edu

Sample Middle School Story-based Lesson Task Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the reader will do</th>
<th>What the reader will do</th>
<th>How, when, where, with whom, and why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get familiar impressions</td>
<td>Get familiar impressions</td>
<td>Get familiar impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize symbols and use symbols</td>
<td>Recognize symbols and use symbols</td>
<td>Recognize symbols and use symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for predictions</td>
<td>Ask for predictions</td>
<td>Ask for predictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the title</td>
<td>Read the title</td>
<td>Read the title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read the story</td>
<td>Read the story</td>
<td>Read the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for familiar story</td>
<td>Ask for familiar story</td>
<td>Ask for familiar story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for existing vocabulary</td>
<td>Ask for existing vocabulary</td>
<td>Ask for existing vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get students to respond</td>
<td>Get students to respond</td>
<td>Get students to respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include programmatic strategies</td>
<td>Include programmatic strategies</td>
<td>Include programmatic strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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 balance 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.