



Case Studies of Students with Significant Disabilities

These case studies were written by educators who created the resources and field tested them with teachers and students in schools across the United States. They were then adapted to Louisiana standards and curricula in both English language arts and mathematics. While providing a path through the resources available on the Louisiana Believes website, each case study gives examples of how the resources might apply to students of varying abilities. The case studies described here are fictitious, but based on composites of students who participated in these field tests. Any similarity of a case study to an actual student is purely coincidental.

The 21st century has created the need for all students to leave school with higher levels of academic proficiency than prior generations have had to achieve. Students with significant cognitive disabilities also need the opportunity to prepare for a world where they can access and understand text, use mathematical problem solving, and engage in other academic expectations. Teaching state standards to students who participate in alternate assessments means teachers create educational opportunities for students to learn the content of the assigned grade level. While addressing this same content, differential expectations for achievement are set by prioritizing and simplifying the content and using adaptations for students with significant disabilities to learn the same concepts. The Louisiana Believes resources helps teachers create lesson plans that align with state standards.

Individualization will always be an important component of special education. The case studies offer examples of how to take the resources and make them responsive to individual student's current level of functioning. Through high expectations and individualization, teachers can help more students meet the higher academic outcomes needed to function in today's world.

For these case studies, we are indebted to the work of Browder, D., Wakeman, S., & Flowers, C. (2016). How to teach state standards to students who take alternate assessments. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center and State Collaborative.