Sustainability will be a unifying concept throughout EDSP 652: Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary Special Education. Last year, Dr. Susan De La Paz worked with Dr. Stacy Pritchett to integrate the concept of sustainability through a focus on water use and watershed health. During a one class session, they conducted a stream survey of Paint Branch Creek to have students engage in a hands-on experience to explore the impact of development on the Chesapeake Bay. This year, I hope to further integrate the concept of sustainability through two major assignments in the class.

The first assignment will be a Group Science Lesson plan that students will be asked to create through a collaborative online Wiki. The Maryland Voluntary State Standards have 17 curriculum standards and objectives that explicitly relate to the concept of sustainability. Using these as a starting point, students will be asked to work in groups to make each of these curriculum standards accessible to students with disabilities through engaging lessons and activities. Each group’s lesson plans will be compiled on a Wiki page in ELMS. The end goal of this assignment will be a sufficient number of lesson plans such that a unit of study on the concept of sustainability in the elementary school curriculum can be developed.

The second assignment will be a group Digital Story lesson plan. For this assignment, students will be asked look at three aspects of social studies (social justice, culture, and current events) through the lens of sustainability. Students will be asked integrate aspects of sustainability such as resource management, the environment, economics, social decision making, and problem solving, from both local and global perspectives into their Digital Story lesson plans. Through this assignment, students will not only learn how to use a Digital Story to teach these concepts, they will also learn the extent to which the issue of sustainable practices is an important part of not only the science curriculum, but the social studies curriculum as well.