

**SPECIAL EDUCATION: EDU 210  
BRYN MAWR AND HAVERFORD COLLEGES  
FALL 2007**

INSTRUCTOR: Debbie Flaks

CLASS MEETING TIMES: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:30am – 1:00pm

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 10:30am – 11:30am or by appointment

CELL PHONE: (610) 405-7759

EMAIL: dflaks@brynmawr.edu

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Special Education 210 is designed as a survey course. The goal is to introduce you, the student, to a range of topics, challenges, dilemmas and strategies in understanding and educating all learners, those considered typical learners, and those considered 'special' learners. The field of 'Special Education' is vast; therefore, as the course progresses, students will be encouraged to narrow their research and area of interest on a student or group of students who share similar challenges as learners. By the end of the course, you should understand more about:

- How students' learning profiles impact their learning in school from a functional perspective
- Why students are considered 'atypical learners'
- How and why students' educational experience is impacted by special education law
- How all professionals who work with students can and should make the students' educational experience meaningful and provide opportunities for success

As I am a life-long teacher and have a strong belief that good teachers are life-long learners, the course will be intentionally taught in such a way to model, make explicit, and make available for inquiry some of the current pedagogical strategies and philosophies of education. Some of these include the implications of brain-based learning, differentiated instruction, inquiry-based education, Understanding by Design, and metacognition. While I recognize that not every student in EDU 210 is intending to become a teacher, I do believe that every person who intends to work with children should at least be familiar with current pedagogical issues and dilemmas. I will therefore try to be flexible in making the course relevant to all learners, and will be open to suggestions about ways for you to demonstrate outcomes that are authentic to your intended goals.

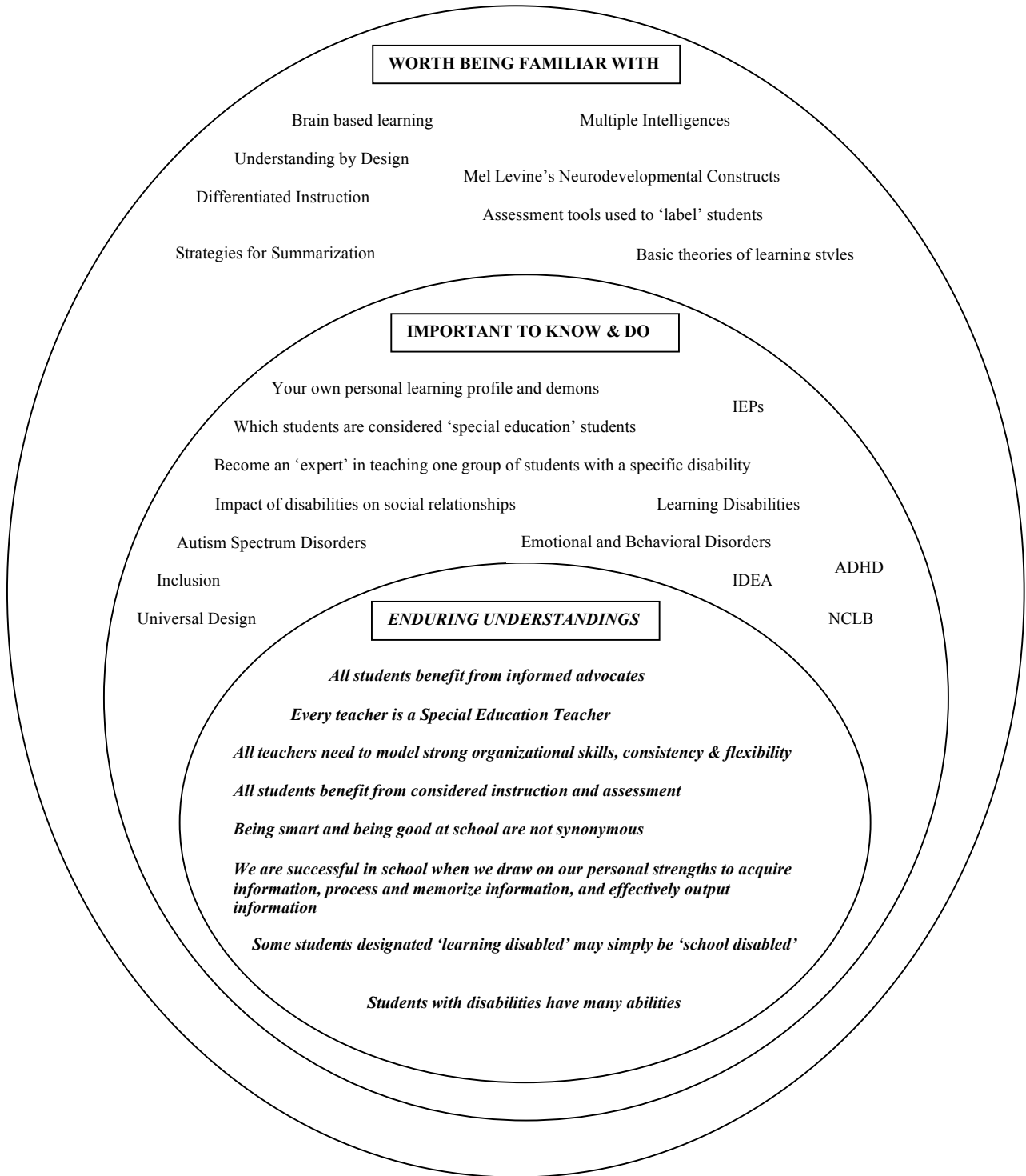
**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**

- All students benefit from informed advocates
- Every teacher is a 'special education' teacher
- All teachers need to model strong organization skills, consistency and flexibility
- All students benefit from considered instruction and assessment
- Being smart and being good at school are not synonymous
- We are successful in school when we draw on our personal strengths to acquire information, process and memorize information, and effectively output information
- Some students designated 'learning disabled' may simply be 'school disabled'
- Students with disabilities have many abilities

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

- What is my own learning profile?
- Who *are* my students?
- What does brain-based research teach us about the most effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities?
- How can I make my classroom a safe place for ALL students?
- What are the socially constructed barriers to making schools a place where ALL learners can thrive?
- How can I recognize and respond to these barriers as a future teacher, policy-maker, and/or citizen?

# Course Overview



## UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

The course will be divided into **4 main curriculum units**. At the beginning of each unit, you will be given a separate unit outline. The curriculum units are:

### UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND EACH OTHER

In this unit, we will

- Focus on our roadmap for the course
- Make explicit the hidden curriculum
- Introduce ourselves
- Activate prior knowledge and emotional connection to 'special education'
- Define our personal interests in 'special education'
- Explore the philosophy behind Differentiated Instruction (DI)
- Define our personal learning goals in relation to future career aspirations and philosophy of DI

### UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING MYSELF AS A LEARNER

In order to help others learn effectively and work through their own barriers to learning, it is important to understand our own learning profiles and some barriers we may have faced (or may still be facing).

### UNIT 3: SOME CURRENT ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

In this unit, we will look at the history of Special Education and current laws and procedures that guide the identification and delivery of services to students served under the umbrella of 'Special Education'. We will also explore current issues such as how our culture interprets and reacts to people who are considered 'different', the over-identification of minority students designated as 'special education students', and inclusion. Finally, we will briefly review and interpret some tools commonly used for assessment and 'labeling' purposes, and explore issues of bias.

### UNIT 4: WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?

In this unit we will get to know some students who are legally identified as 'special education' students, and other students who are not identified by our system, yet are still struggling in school. We will explore the reasons students struggle, and consider how we as educators and advocates can serve ALL students, whether they fall into the neat categories of IDEA or not.

## PRAXIS

As a participant in this course, you will be required to use fieldwork as a form of experiential learning to enrich the study and understanding of the issues and dilemmas presented in the course. One of the goals of the Praxis program is to build a reciprocal relationship with community partners. Therefore, it is the expectation of the college that all Praxis students develop active, engaged partnerships in their placements so that the experiences become beneficial and meaningful for the Praxis students, the field supervisors and, most importantly, the students in the field placement classroom.

EDU 210 students will typically complete one field site visit per week (approximately 3 hours per visit). You will be provided with more detailed information on the logistics and expectations of the Praxis.

**Michael Fratangelo** will coordinate the Praxis component for this class. He can be contacted at (412) 512-3199 or [michael.fratangelo@gmail.com](mailto:michael.fratangelo@gmail.com).

## FIELD NOTES

After **each** visit to your field placement, you will need to take field notes. These notes can take any form that works effectively for you. Some suggestions include:

- Creating a journal
- Webbing
- Jotting down notes and observations and typing them after class
- Visual diagrams (maybe showing relationships or classroom set-ups)

- 2 column notes with Observations in the right hand column, and Questions, Reactions or Evaluations in the left hand column
- A combination of methods

You will be required to *submit* your field notes before the semester break, and at the end of the semester. While you will not be graded on the quality of the notes, you will be graded on completion of notes. You will also be using the notes in class at various times in the semester.

### DISCUSSION BOARD

Each student will be expected to **post at least 3 observations** from their field placements to the Blackboard Discussion Board. These observations can be generated from your field notes, and should somehow relate to our course content, however loosely. The relationship may be as narrow as a comment that directly relates to a student whose learning is impacted functionally in a way we have discussed in class, or as broad as an observation on a school rule or something you heard or happened to read about that may impact non-typical learners in a way others may not have considered. We will take time in class to discuss some of the issues that have been generated by the observations. In addition to the **3 observations**, students must also **post at least 2 responses to your peers' observations**.

*When posting, please remember to replace names of people (students, teachers, administrators, et. al) with fictitious names or descriptions (e.g. 'the very experienced 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher'..., or 'the student who had difficulty raising his hand instead of calling out...'). Also, when talking about students with disabilities, remember to DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOR rather than label the student. Finally, if you have to label the student, please use 'person-first' language (e.g. 'the student who is visually-impaired' instead of 'the visually-impaired student').*

### COURSE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The course performance outcomes will help students experience a model that may be emulated in a classroom. Students will be assessed on the following performance outcomes (see detailed descriptions attached):

- Consistent class and field place attendance (including consistent field notes)*
- Blackboard Discussion: Field placement observations (at least 3) and responses (at least 2)*
- Unit 1: Written assignment: Creating a Personal Roadmap for Learning (ungraded)*
- Unit 2: Written assignment: Personal Learning Reflection*
- Unit 3: Written assignment: Integration of Field Placement Observations*
- Unit 4: Individual and Group Assignment: Literature-Based Assignment*
- Summative Assessment: Integrating Theory and Practice*

### WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments need:

- to include:
  - Name
  - Date
  - Assignment Title
- to be typed
- to be double spaced
- to be in 12 sized font
- to be referenced either according to MLA or APA (I am not a stickler for style, as long as all work is appropriately referenced)

### GRADING POLICY

For each performance outcome, you will be given a detailed description of

- The purpose of the assignment
- The task
- Key criteria for assessment
- Due date

Your assignments will be graded according to the following rubric:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Numerical Value</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
4.0	A	Demonstrates <i>exceptional</i> ability to explain, interpret and apply knowledge with <i>exceptional</i> empathy, and perspective. Demonstrates <i>exceptional</i> self-knowledge.
3.7	A-	
3.3	B+	
3.0	B	Demonstrates <i>good</i> ability to explain, interpret and apply knowledge with empathy, and perspective. Demonstrates <i>thoughtful</i> self-knowledge.
2.7	B-	
2.3	C+	
2.0	C	Demonstrates <i>partial</i> ability to explain, interpret and apply knowledge with some empathy, and perspective. Demonstrates <i>some</i> self-knowledge.
1.7	C-	
1.3	D+	
1.0	D	Demonstrates <i>little</i> ability to explain, interpret and apply knowledge with <i>little</i> empathy, and perspective. Demonstrates <i>little</i> self-knowledge

*When we truly understand, we*

- Can **explain** via generalizations or principles: provide justified and systematic accounts of phenomena, facts, and data; make insightful connections and provide illuminating examples or illustrations.
- Can **interpret**: tell meaningful stories, offer apt translations, provide a revealing historical or personal dimension to ideas and events, make it personal or accessible through images, anecdotes, analogies, and models.
- Can **apply**: effectively use or adapt what we know in diverse and real contexts – we can “do” the subject.
- Have **perspective**: see and hear points of view through critical eyes and ears; see the big picture.
- Display **empathy**: find value in what others might find odd, alien, or implausible; perceive sensitively on the basis of prior direct experience
- Have **self-knowledge**: show metacognitive awareness; perceive the personal style, prejudices, projections, and habits of mind that shape and impede our own understanding; be aware of what we do not understand; reflect on the meaning of learning and experience.

Adapted from Figure 5.2, *Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design*, Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006

**Revision Policy:** As the ultimate goal is mastery, you may revise any paper at any time during the semester. *However, before you do any revision, you need to meet with me to talk about your proposed revisions.* All revisions are due the last class that we meet (Thursday December 13<sup>th</sup>).

**Extensions:** if you need an extension, you have to advocate appropriately (either in person, via phone or email) *at least 24 hours ahead of time*. If an assignment is submitted late without prior arrangement, your assignment will be penalized 1/3 of a point for every day it is late.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

I expect all students to attend class consistently. If the need arises for you to miss class, arrive late or leave early, please call or email me ahead of time.

### SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Based on my belief that *fair is giving students what he or she needs to succeed*, all students will be provided with appropriate accommodations as long as the student:

- Advocates appropriately
- Advocates in a timely manner
- Requests reasonable accommodations based on valid need

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Armstrong, T. (2000). *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Alexandria: Association for Curriculum and Development.

Bateman, B. (2006). *Writing Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives*. Verona: Attainment.

Sousa, D.A. (2007). *How the Special Needs Brain Learns, 2nd Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

#### **Choose one of the following (choice to be discussed in class):**

Gregory, J. (2003). *Sickened: The true story of a lost childhood*. New York: Bantam.

Haddon, M. (2003). *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time*. New York: Vintage Books.

Halse Anderson, L. (1999). *Speak*. New York: Penguin Group

Mooney, J. and Cole, D. (2000). *Learning Outside the Lines*. New York: Simon & Shuster

Mooney, J. (2007). *The Short Bus: A Journey beyond Normal*. New York: Henry Holt

Pelzer, D. (1995). *A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive*. Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, Inc.

### RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Connell, J. D. (2005). *Brain-Based Strategies to Reach Every Learner*. New York: Scholastic.

Levine, M. (2002). *A Mind at a Time*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Levine, M (1990). *Keeping A Head In School*. Cambridge: Educations Publishing Service, Inc.

Tomlinson, C.A. (2003). *Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom*. Alexandria: Association for Curriculum and Development.

Tomlinson, C.A. (1999). *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*. Alexandria: Association for Curriculum and Development.

Wormeli, R. (2005). *Summarization in Any Subject*. Alexandria: Association for Curriculum and Development.

<b>DETAILED COURSE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES</b>
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**UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND EACH OTHER****Assignment: Creating a Personal Roadmap**

*This assignment is designed to access your prior knowledge and experience, and to help us design a roadmap for learning together.*

**Task****Presentation: Written**

Using Tomlinson's philosophy of Differentiated Instruction as a guide, write a 2-3 *page response* in which you outline:

- Your personal connection with 'special education'.
- What you need as a student, and how you have learned to identify these needs.
- What you need from me as an instructor.
- Given your personal goals, career aspirations and the roadmap for this course, what you see as most valuable to you in this course in both curriculum and instruction.

**Due Date:** *Tuesday September 11, 2007*

## **UNIT 2: UNDERSTANDING MYSELF AS A LEARNER**

### **Assignment: Personal Learning Reflection**

*Recognizing that in order to help others learn effectively, and work through own barriers to learning, it is important to understand our own learning profile. Therefore, the goal of this assignment is for you to reflect on yourself as a learner.*

### **Task**

#### **Presentation: Written**

Using your prior knowledge and course readings, write a 3-5 *page reflection* in which you:

- Describe your receptive learning style (Auditory, Visual or Kinesthetic). Give examples, strategies and implications.
- Outline your processing learning style (Right-, Left- or Middle?). Describe examples, strategies and implications.
- Outline your expressive learning style (movement, creative, writing, thinking, talking). Describe examples, strategies and implications.
- Using Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, describe areas in which you have innate intelligences, and areas you are less 'intelligent' at this point in your life. Describe examples, strategies and implications.
- Using Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence, reflect on your on strengths and areas of weakness in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Describe examples and implications.
- Briefly explain the contexts of your prior learning experiences (type of high school you attended, other extra-curricular learning experiences you enjoyed). Describe examples, strategies for learning that you used, learned, and struggled with, and the implications of these for how you think about your own and others' learning.
- Describe any demons you may have faced in prior (or current) learning experiences, and describe strategies that you have implemented (or can implement) to circumvent or conquer those demons. Describe examples, strategies and implications.
- Reflect on how the information about yourself may impact your role as a teacher. Give examples.

REMEMBER TO GIVE CONCRETE EXAMPLES AND STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT WHICH YOU HAVE USED OR COULD USE THROUGHOUT THE REFLECTION

Details of **Key Assessment Criteria** will be provided in Unit Outline.

**Due Date:** *Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

### **UNIT 3: SOME CURRENT ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

#### **Assignment: Integration of Field Placement**

*The purpose of this assignment is for you to think about one of the current issues in special education in relation to your field placement, as well as to historical and pedagogical meaning.*

#### **Task**

##### **Presentation: Written**

Write a 5-7 page paper on the following:

- Write an analysis of your observations about how students' diverse needs are being met at your field placement site. As you are spending little time there, it is important that you think about the experience not in a judgmental, concluding way, but from the perspective of inquiry.
- Based on your observations and your background knowledge in this unit, develop a **key question** relevant to your field site.
- Explore the question using both the resources from within and beyond this course

*(Remember to reference all material appropriately and **not** to use any real names of schools, placement or people).*

Details of **Key Assessment Criteria** will be provided in Unit Outline.

**Due Date:** *Tuesday October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

## **UNIT 4: WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS?**

### **Literature-Based Assignment**

*This assignment is based on the book which you have chosen to read. The assignment has 2 parts, both of which need to be completed by all students.*

#### **Part 1: As an Individual**

##### **Presentation: Written**

- Write a 3-4 page explanation about why you chose to explore the issues presented in the book. What is it about the character or issues the character faces that draws you to find out more about him or her?

Details of **Key Assessment Criteria** will be given in Unit Outline.

**Due Date:** *The written piece is due the day of your group's presentation in Unit 4.*

#### **Part 2: In a Group**

##### **Presentation: Mode of presentation is to be decided by the group**

- At least a week before your presentation, provide the group with appropriate background reading for your presentation. You may, as a group, prepare a way for students to actively interact with the readings as part of your presentation.

##### **Group Presentation:**

- Briefly describe the struggles the protagonist faces in his or her life.
- Based on research, describe how his or her struggles may impact his or her ability to function in school (think about ALL aspects of school including academic, social and emotional).
- Using all your prior knowledge and experience in schools, describe some interventions that you may make as the protagonist's teacher, advocate, or psychologist (again, consider all aspects of school). It is important to create an educational context for your student. You may place the protagonist in a school setting described in the book, or one that you have personally experienced either through your own schooling or field placements. Make sure you describe the setting, and make sure the interventions you suggest are feasible in the particular setting and based on research.

##### **Requirements:**

- Each group must prepare a written component to be distributed to the class. This component must contain a statement of why you chose your mode of presentation. In addition to the statement, the written component may include an outline of the presentation, a copy of visuals you may choose to use, a summary of main points, a list of resources, etc.
- All group members must actively participate in the presentation
- The presentation must be between 30-45 minutes.

Details of **Key Assessment Criteria** will be provided in Unit Outline.

**Due Date:** *We will schedule dates for each group to present in Unit 4 of the semester.*

## **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

### **Integrating Theory and Practice**

*The goal of this assignment is for you to demonstrate the ability to integrate the theory which we have covered in this course, and transfer the theory to practice by focusing on a specific content area or topic explored in this course that resonates with you personally. The assignment has 3 parts, ALL of which need to be completed by all students.*

### **Part 1: Assignment Design**

**Presentation: Written**

#### **Assignment Goal:**

The goal of this part of the assignment is to demonstrate that you can apply the theory we have learned in this course about designing an assignment (performance outcome) for students. In order for students successfully complete an assignment, they need to understand the instructions and expectations, and be given choices to work in areas of their strengths.

#### **Task:**

Imagine you the instructor of EDU 210: Special Education. Based on your own personal interests and future plans, you need to **design an assignment with at least 3 choices on any topic that relates to content or issues explored in this class, and to your future plans.** *You may not explore the same issue you researched in Unit 3. In Part 2 of the assignment, you are going to produce 1 of the choices, so make sure the assignment will allow you to demonstrate mastery. It is strongly encouraged that you discuss your topic and assignment choices with Debbie before proceeding with the assignment.*

#### **Example 1:**

If you are planning to be a math teacher, you may want to design an assignment which relates directly to teaching math.

**Topic:** Teaching Patterns

#### **Assignment choices:**

- Design a curriculum unit on Patterns for an inclusion class of Kindergarten students.
- Create a chapter of a teaching manual for Kindergarten teachers on patterns.
- Create a television show in which you introduce the concept of patterns to children.

#### **Example 2:**

If you are planning to work in the area of advocacy, you may design an assignment which allows you to explore a current issue such as inclusion.

**Topic:** Inclusion

#### **Assignment choices:**

- You have been asked to appear before congress to present a speech either opposing or supporting Inclusion. Write the speech and attach PowerPoint slides.
- Write a 5-7 page paper discussing the advantages and disadvantages of Inclusion for students identified as Special Education students, and students who are not identified.
- Create a 4-6 page brochure for parents of students identified in special education, helping them understand inclusion, and discussing the advantages and/or disadvantages for their children.
- Create a graphic novel with different chapters describing the experiences of an inclusion classroom from the perspective of the teacher, student identified with special needs, and student not identified with special needs.

**Your assignment must include:**

- The topic
- At least 3 assignment choices
- Key Assessment Criteria the choice you intend to produce
- Grading explanation or rubric for the choice you intend to produce

**Key Assessment Criteria:**

- The topic clearly relates to content and theory covered in EDU 210.
- The assignment instructions are precise, thorough and easy to follow, and give options for all learners
- The products reflect theories of learning styles, multiple intelligences and Differentiated Instruction
- Key assessment criteria for the product are clearly explained and applicable
- Grading explanation or rubric is included
- Assignment allows for thoughtful application of content and demonstration of mastery

**Part 2: Completion of Assignment**

**Presentation: Mode of presentation is based on assignment design**

**Task:**

- Choose **one** of the choices you outlined in Part 1 and complete the assignment based on your instructions and key assessment criteria

**Key Assessment Criteria:**

- You will be assessed based on your assessment criteria outlined in Part 1

**Part 3: Reflection**

**Presentation: Written**

Write a 3-4 *page* reflection about the process of Part 1 and Part 2. When reflecting, use the following questions as a guideline for reflection.

- What were the most challenging aspects of this assignment?
- Were your instructions clear? Did you amend Part 1 during or after completing Part 2?
- What aspects of the assignment design allowed for successful completion of the task?
- What are the most important lessons you took away from the experience of both designing the task and completing the task?
- What aspects will you be able to apply to your future goals?

**Key Assessment Criteria:**

- Honest and thoughtful reflection on process
- Insightful feedback on aspects that allow for successful completion of task
- Creative reflection on ways to apply knowledge to future experience

**Due Date: Thursday December 20, 2007**