Abstract #6

Role-Playing in an Inclusive Classroom: Using Realistic Simulation to Explore Differentiated Instruction

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The article describes an activity designed to help preservice teachers negotiate the realities of planning and implementing differentiated instruction in diverse classrooms. Given the frequent lack of models for differentiated instruction in actual classrooms and the need to learn through practice, the activity involves planning and teaching a lesson for a fictitious group of learners for whom individual characteristics are given. After writing a differentiated lesson plan with feedback from the instructor, preservice teachers teach part of the lesson, with their classmates acting as the students. Peer feedback and reflection help students draw crucial lessons from what they experience. This activity is proposed as a way to address the practical facets of differentiation without the limits of current school practices.