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Awareness In Student Teachers About Diverse Learners In Schools

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Introduction:

Because of globalisation, increasing migration movement, various types of exposures to mass media, economic and social conditions of families and genetic differences in learners in the classrooms of Different schools, teachers are facing increasing wide range of diversity in the learners. To Cater the learner's diverse needs of learning has become a challenge before teachers. Today's student- teachers will be tomorrow's teachers. These would be teachers should have the knowledge about diverse learners which includes concept, types and responsibilities of teachers towards diverse learners.

What are these diverse learners?

Diverse learners are the learners who differ in the ways in which they learn. They have different learning styles, modalities, interests, talents, competencies, abilities, social conditions, economic status different behavioural abnormalities lie in psychological conditions etc. All these learners are categorised in following four categories-

1. Learners with different linguistical Socio-cultural socio-economic positions
2. learners with different literary technique ethnic racial and cultural background.
3. learners with different disabilities and gender.
4. learners with different learning styles.

From the above types of learners, to identify the them by their learning styles is the most practical way.

The term learning styles means to under that every student learns differently. Technically the learning style refers to the preferential way in which the student absorbs processes, comprehends and retain information.

One of the Indian education professionals suggested following 10 learning styles-

1. Kinaesthetic learners
2. Read and write learners
3. Visual and special learners
4. Auditory learners
5. Natural learners
6. Linguistic learners
7. Interpersonal learners
8. Intrapersonal learners
9. Logical learners
10. Rhythmic and musical learners,

It is very challenging for today's teachers to critically evaluate the learners under all above 10 types.

Many educationists have suggested and worked on following 4 learning styles of learners for classroom teaching.

1. Kinesthetic learners
2. Read and write learners
3. Visual and special learners
4. Auditory learners

Fleming and Mills (1992) has suggested the four learning styles of learners and compiled it in **VARK** model.

Kinaesthetic learners – These learners like to learn with tangible ways. These are hands-on learning types of learners. They learn best while doing things on their ways. They can give their best when they participate in different activities and solve things on their own ways. Their minds retain things when they get involved in physical activities.

Read and write learners - These learners are remarkably comfortable with written words as they like to gain the information by reading text material. They understand the information and gain the knowledge through study material. To read, revise and repeat the same procedure for well for these types of learners.

Visual and space learners – This type of learners like to learn any topic when they visualise relationships and ideas. Visual learners absorb and retain the information much better for longer time when it is written on board.

Auditory learners – These learners learn in a better way when information is verbally spoken. These learners like to listen to lectures and participate in discussions and debates to understand the information.

It is very arduous for teachers to arrange learning experiences which suit the learning styles of diverse learners. Teacher's role is a key role in handling these diverse learners. They have to take some responsibilities.

Following are the teacher's responsibilities to cater the needs of diverse learners -

1. Creating thought process to know the details about diverse learners.
2. Knowing the terminologies related to diverse learners.
3. Knowing the categories of learners.
4. Accepting and getting to know the type of bias while handling the diverse learners like isolation, selectivity, unreality, exclusion, stereotyping.
5. Describing the strategies used for diverse learners.
6. Reflecting on knowledge about diverse learners
7. Listening the personal belief of teachers regarding diverse learners.

The researcher as an in charge of practical course (conduct of lessons in School classrooms)

To check the awareness in student teachers pursuing B.Ed course, researcher (as a teacher educator) had prepared a questionnaire and distributed it to student teachers through google form.

Following points were considered while preparing the survey questionnaire –

To become well aware about the diverse learners and their learning styles

Student teachers should know –

1. The practical way to categorise the learners in the classroom
2. Concept of learning styles.
3. Categories of diverse learners.
4. Different learning styles.
5. Responsibilities of teachers to handle the diverse learners to make their learning effective.

Questionnaire:

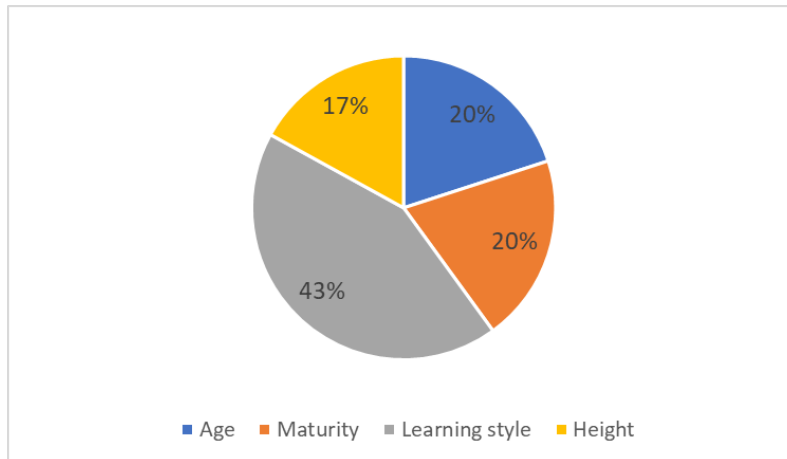
There was total six questions in the questionnaire out of it five questions were multiple choice questions which were based on above four points and the sixth question based on fifth point and it was open ended, responses of this question were evaluated qualitatively by thematic analysis.

Analysis of questions given to 60 student teachers on line through google form –

Analysis in scores for multiple choice questions-

Graphical representation:

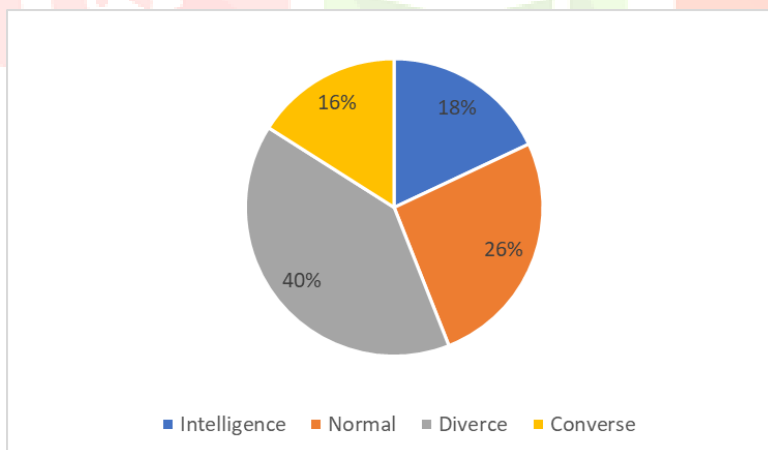
Q1) ----- is the practical way to categorise the learners for their effective learning.



Observation: 43% student teachers selected the option learning style.

Interpretation: 43% student teachers are aware of the practical way to categorise the learners.

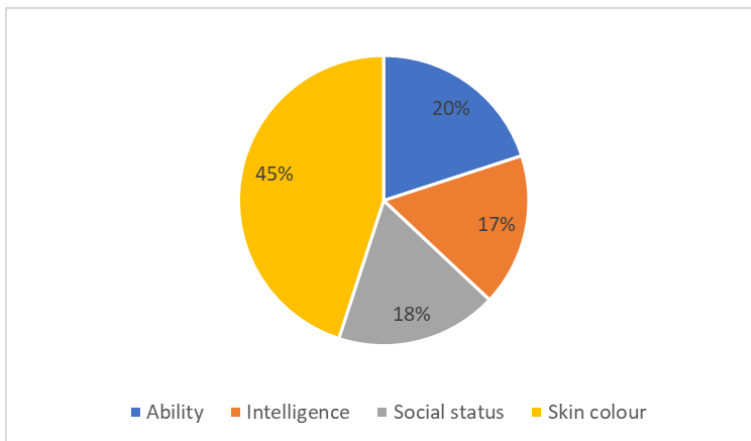
Q2) 2. When the student teachers differ in the way in which they learn are called----- learners.



Observation: 40% student teachers have chosen the option diverse learners.

Interpretation: 40% students are very much aware about who are diverse learners.

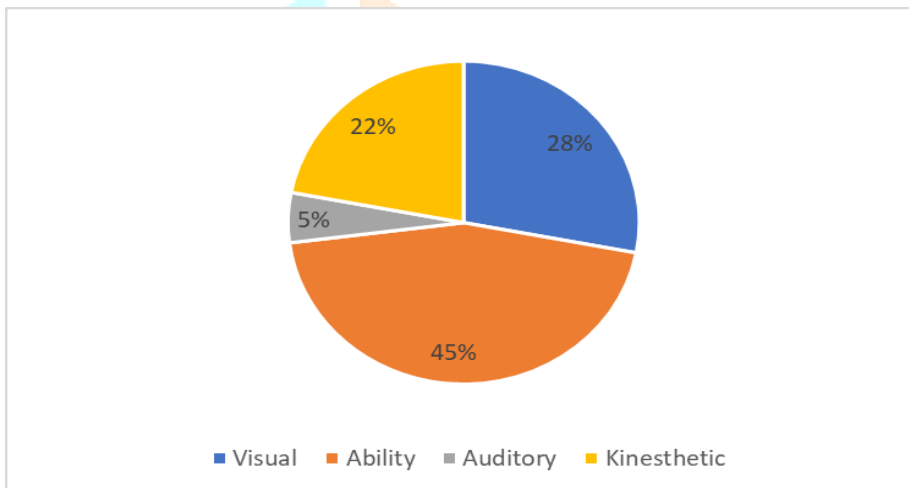
Q3) . From the following -----is not the category under which you will categorise the students who have different learning needs.



Observation: 45% student teachers have selected the option skin colour.

Interpretation: 45% students are well aware of categories under which diverse learners can be categorised.

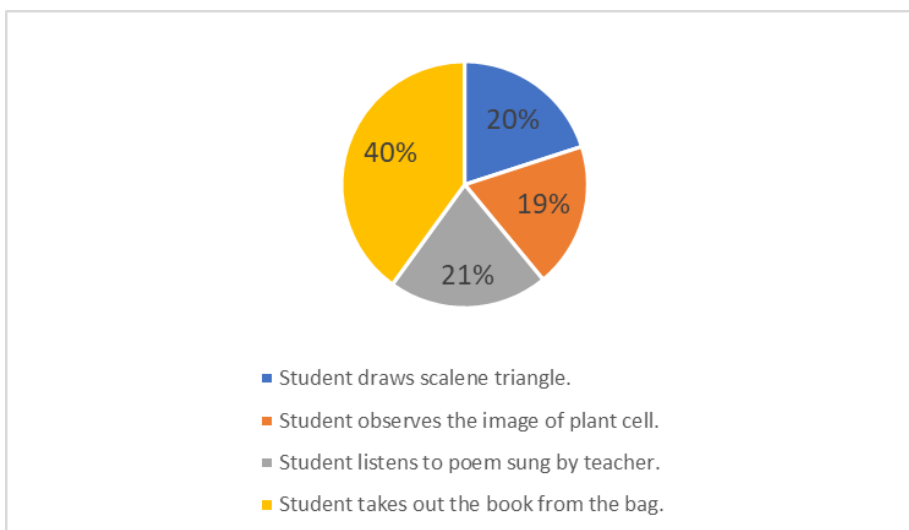
Q4)is not the learning style.



Observation: 45% students have selected the option ability.

Interpretation: 45% student teachers are aware of the types of learning styles.

Q5) From the following -----is not the example of student learning in which they learn by their learning style.



Observation: 40% student teachers have selected the option student takes out the book from the bag.

Interpretation: 40% students can identify the examples of diverse learners.

Conclusion drawn from numerical data: Around 40 to 45 percent student teachers are aware of learning styles of diverse learners.

Qualitative analysis of open question

Q6. As a teacher what will be your responsibilities to make the learning effective for the students having different learning needs?

Researcher has collected the responses of 60 student teachers for the above open question. This would be the qualitative data to be analysed.

Thematic analysis was done by the researcher for this open question.

Researcher has gone through the following steps of thematic analysis -

1. Familiarisation of data
2. Coding
3. Generating themes
4. Reviewing data
5. Defining and naming the themes
6. Writing up

After collecting the data, it is important to get **familiarise** with to dig deep. This includes reading and rereading the whole data. After getting familiarise with the data researcher has highlighted certain words in the data that all together indicate something. This something is caught in **coding**. Researcher has derived the codes for the highlighted words and **codes**. All these codes are generated into **themes**. These themes have many codes indicating the same expressions. Researcher has again compared the themes into original data to look for any missed out points or irrelevant results. Researcher has modified the themes after reviewing it. He has used these themes while writing the **conclusions**.

Highlighted words from data – smart classrooms, updated technology, innovative methods, different teaching aids, updated learning resources, future of students.

Codes from highlighted words – classrooms, practices, learning resources, student's future.

Themes generated from the codes – updated material resources and best practices, student's future.

Conclusion drawn from qualitative data through thematic analysis:

From the above thematic analysis researcher has concluded that Most of the student teachers are very much aware that when they will become teacher they will be responsible for providing them updated material resources and best practices for their better future. Few of the student teachers focused on strengthening their values.

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