

Acknowledging Diversity Amongst Learners in a Science Classroom

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Abstract

Having a diverse group of students means recognizing that every learner in a classroom is unique in its own way. The need to recognize & inculcate learners' experiences in classroom is clearly reflected in policy documents like National Curriculum Framework, 2005. In science teaching a common misconception regarding science is that it is "objective" and "culture free". However science learning is influenced by different aspects of diversity like gender, religion, caste, class, socioeconomic status etc which interact with each other to develop a holistic scientific understanding. Inside a classroom the onus is on the teacher to address issues arising due to difference in thinking as a result of students' diverse background. A teacher's role is to resolve the conflict between "learning in the science class" and "experiences as a result of being part of a certain group". This necessitate the need to convert theory into practical aspects which if followed by the teachers could help reap the benefits of diversity to enrich a science classroom. Therefore it is of critical importance what a teacher thinks regarding linkages between "science" and "diversity" while teaching science in a classroom, what situations do teachers face when a child is in conflict due to its belongingness to a certain group and how do they resolve these.