

## CHALLENGES OF TEACHING IN A DIVERSE CLASSROOM

- Knowing students are, as a group and as individuals, is an important part of good teaching. The variety of students is far greater, and their needs are very different. To facilitate the learning process of students with a variety of backgrounds and needs, the following points are important:
- Treat all students as individuals with unique strengths, weakness, and needs rather than as generalized representatives of particular racial, ethnic or cultural groups.
- Employ a variety of teaching styles to respond to the needs of diverse learners.
- Create an open classroom that values the experiences and perspectives of all students.

### Learning Styles in a Diverse Classroom:

**Eddy (1999)** describes a learning style as the way in which we prefer to organize, classify and assimilate information about the environment.

According to Eddy, there are three main learning styles:

#### 1. Auditory Learners:

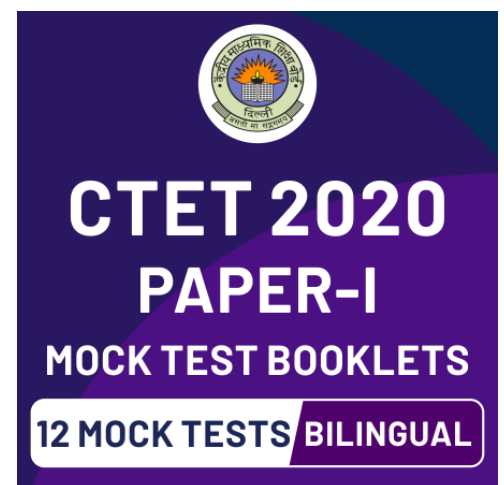
- Prefers to receive ideas and information by hearing them.
- These students may struggle with reading and writing, but excel at memorizing spoken words such as song lyrics.
- They often benefit from discussion - based classes and the opportunity to give oral presentations.

#### 2. Visual Learners:

- Prefers to receive information by seeing it.
- These students pay much attention to detail.
- They are less likely to speak in class than their auditory peers, and generally use few words when they do.
- Outlines, graphs, maps, and pictures are useful in helping these students learn.

#### 3. Kinesthetic- Tactile Learners:

- Tend to learn best via movement and touch.
- These students are often labeled "hyperactive" because they tend to move around a great deal.
- They like movement, they may take notes and learn best when allowed to explore and experience their movement.



## Learning Environment for Children with Learning Difficulties

- Understanding learning styles can help you create more inclusive classrooms where everyone has a chance to succeed.
  - Some students will have unique challenges that make learning in a traditional classroom difficult.
  - Examples include visual or hearing impairments, Attention Deficit Disorder, Mobility challenges, chronic illness and learning disabilities.
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- There are many possible accommodations that help to create a productive learning environment for these students.
  - These are the suggestions to consider when teacher work with students with special needs:
    1. Even though two students may have the same disability, their needs for accommodation may be quite different. Treat each student as an individual.
    2. Keep in mind that disabilities are not always visible to us. It is not required to assess a student's health; teacher should accept authorized documentation concerning an individual student's needs.
    3. Using many modes (written/ verbal/ video/slide, etc.) to present information is one way to help some learners with special needs learn more effectively.

## Tips on Teaching in a Diverse Classroom:

- Appreciating the individuality of each student is important. While generalizations sensitize us to important differences between groups, each individual student has unique values, perspectives, experiences and needs.
- Articulate early in the course that you are committed to meeting the needs of all students and that you are open to conversations about how to help them learn.
- It is important that teacher recognize their own learning styles and cultural assumptions, because these styles and assumptions influence how they teach and what they expect from their students. Being aware of them allows teacher to develop a more inclusive teaching styles.
- Prepare multiple examples to illustrate points. Try to have these examples reflect different cultures, experiences, genders etc. to include all students in learning.
- Help students move between abstract, theoretical knowledge and concrete, specific experiences, to expand everyone's learning.
- Use different teaching methods (lectures, small groups, discussions, collaborative learning) to meet the variety of learning needs.

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