

Exploring Preservice Teachers' Perspectives on Student Diversity

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Abstract

This paper explores preservice teachers' perspectives on student diversity. Specifically, the paper addresses how the preservice teachers understand the concept diversity with regard to their preparedness for working in diverse classroom settings. The empirical data for the study were collected through focus group interviews with the two groups of preservice teachers in Norway. The data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method.

The findings showed that the preservice teachers understand diversity as a way to describe and categorize student differences. Meanwhile they hold positive attitude towards diversity with the beliefs of allowing a space for everyone. Moreover, the findings revealed diversity should be considered as a bigger part in both theory and practice of initial teacher education (ITE) with regard to preparing teachers for diverse classrooms. Paine's (1990) frame for understanding diversity is used to analyse the results. In conclusion, the paper argues that the preservice teachers' orientation toward diversity need to be understood within a larger context of ITE for student diversity in classrooms.

Key words: *Preservice teacher, student diversity, classrooms.*

Reference

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