



Attitudes of teaching staff members towards student diversity

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State of Research

on teachers attitudes towards student diversity

- Teachers have a lot of every day experiences with student diversity.
- Teachers find (missing) prior knowledge particularly challenging. Esdar, Brocke & Wild 2017
- Teachers tend to divide students into “good” and “bad” students often associating those categories to specific groups. Van Middelkoop, Ballafkin & Meerman 2017
- Teachers have difficulties to make their unspecific theories usable for one’s own teaching. Rheinländer & Fischer 2016
- Teacher’s understanding of the effects of diversity does not guarantee diversity-sensitive teaching practices. Van Middelkoop, Ballafkin & Meerman 2017



Population: all teaching staff members
of Münster University of Applied Sciences (MUAS)
invited via E-Mail by the president of MUAS

Sample: 159 professors (quota: 59%)
35 permanent lecturers (quota: 61%)
94 temporal lecturers (quota: 16%)

Instrument: Online questionnaire including

- ✓ about 30 questions on a 6-point-likert-scale
- ✓ 3 single- or multiple-choice questions
- ✓ 5 open-ended questions

Topics:

- Study goals
- Diversity strategy of MUAS
- Prior knowledge of students
- Time budgets of students
- Attitudes towards diversity

Survey period: 18th April until 8th May 2018

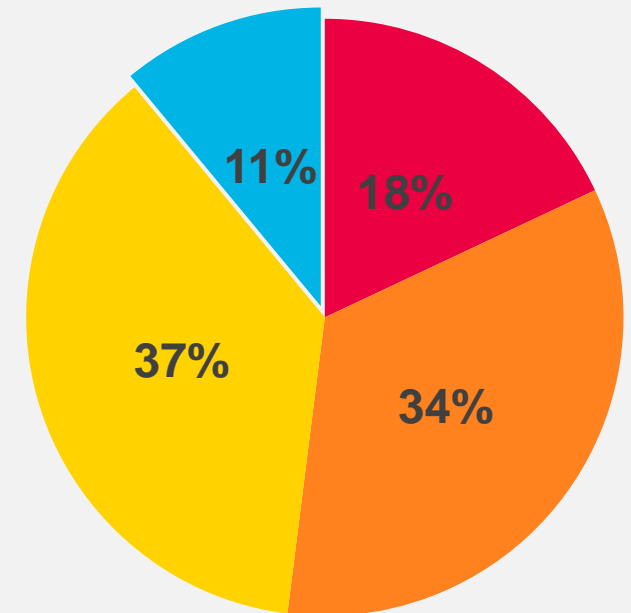
Databasis

Attitudes of Teaching Staff Members

towards student diversity

- The results demonstrate a mainly positive evaluation of student diversity by higher education teachers.
- Main challenge: Not to leave anyone behind while not boring anyone else.
- Main chance: Broadening the view through diverse perspectives on a topic.

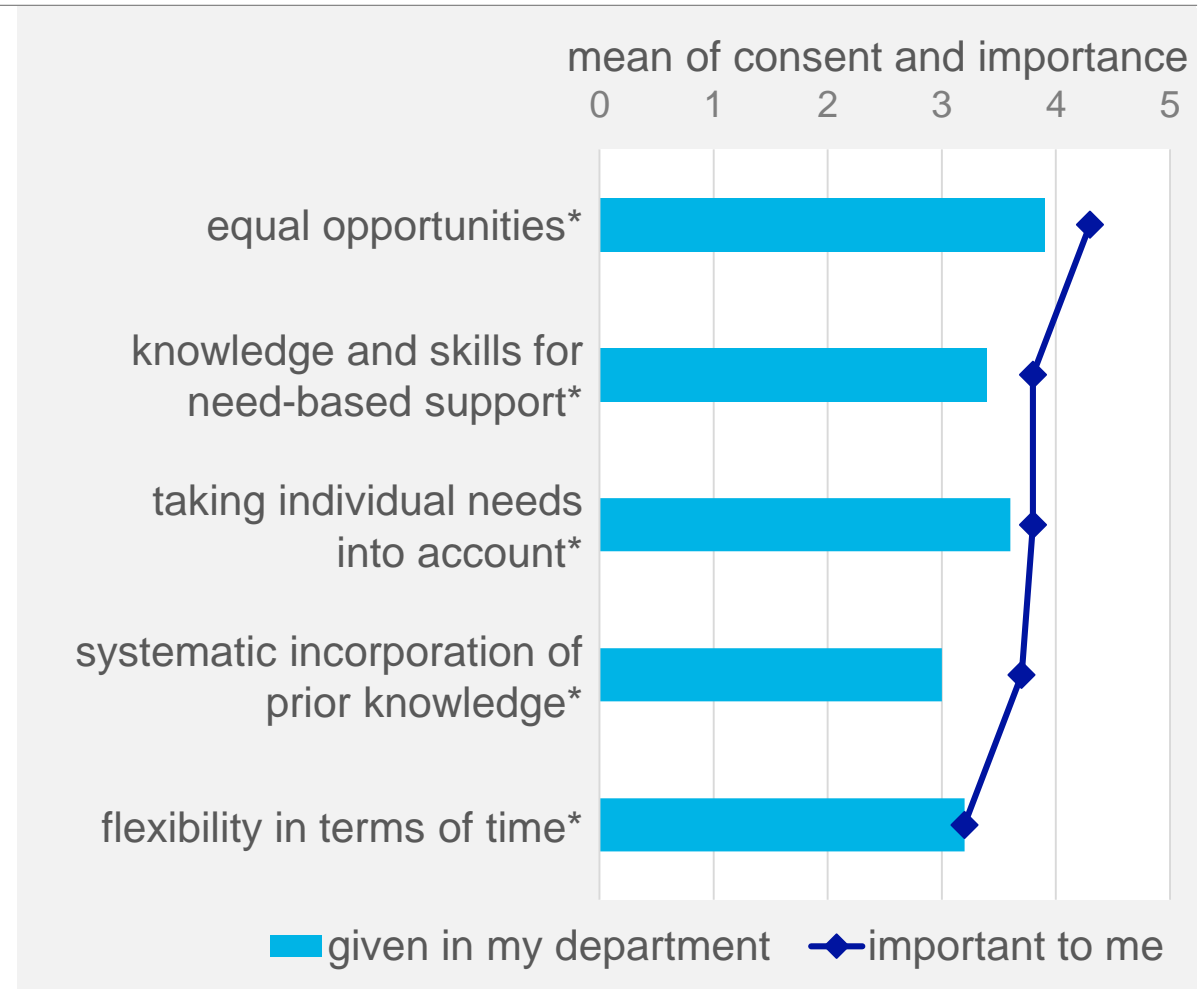
- mainly/rather a challenge
- partly challenge, partly opportunity
- mainly/rather an opportunity
- neither nor



Attitudes of Teaching Staff Members

towards diversity goals

- The diversity goals of MUAS are of high importance for teaching staff members.
- Teachers evaluate the degree of goal achievement of their department as predominantly positive.
- At the same time teachers agree to the statement that student have to meet university's requirements and accept that not all of the students can keep up with those standards.

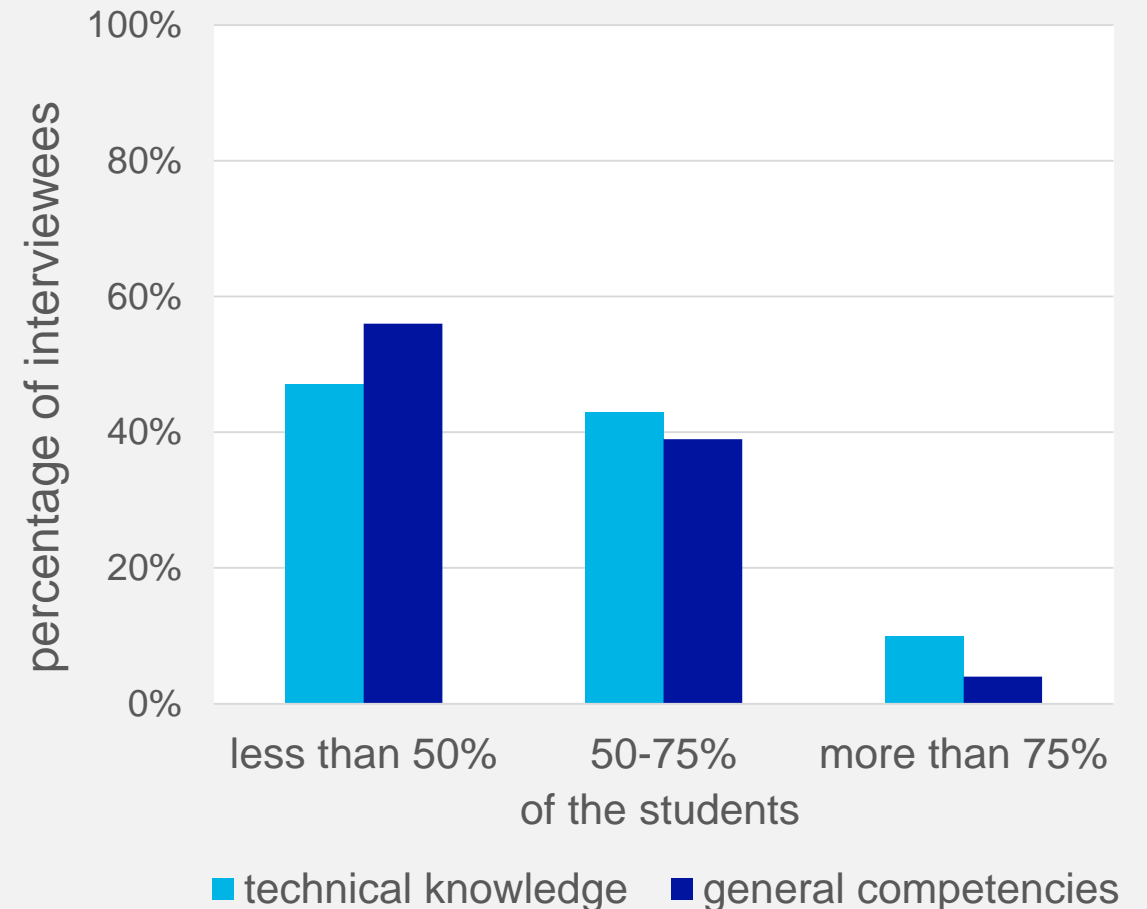


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Evaluation of General Conditions

by teaching staff members

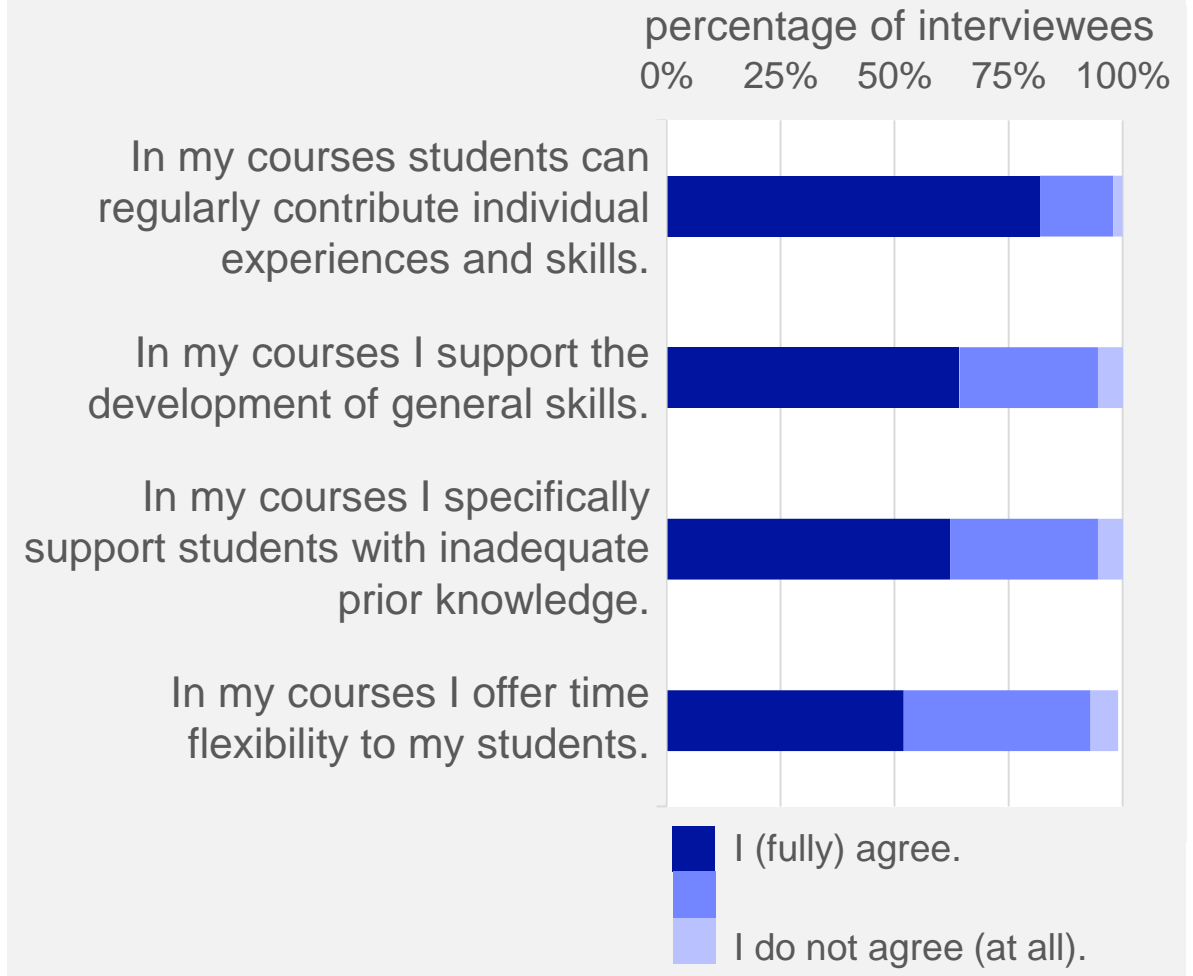
- Two thirds of the engineering teachers and one third of the social science teachers believe that students lack technical knowledge and general competencies when entering university.
- Less than a quarter of teachers consider it mainly as their own task to support students with missing prior knowledge.
- The majority of teachers reckon that a large proportion of students spends less time on course work than they expect them to.



Handling of Student Diversity

by teaching staff members

- About 80% of teachers feel able to deal with the challenges and seize the opportunities of student diversity.
- Teachers evaluate their teaching practices as mainly diversity-sensitive.
- Only few teachers wish for additional activities or support in dealing with student diversity.



Summary and Discussion

of our findings

- In contrast to many academic and political debates, more than 70% of teaching staff members attribute mainly opportunities or at least as much opportunities as challenges to student diversity.
- Teachers have a positive view of their own skills and teaching practices in dealing with student diversity.
- Not seeing a need to adapt one's own teaching practices could signal a denial of the significance of differences.

Futrell, Gomez & Bedden
2003; Marcy 2004; Michalski,
Cunningham & Henry 2017

Van Middelkoop, Ballafkin &
Meerman 2017



- The understanding of the effects of diversity on students' performance has to be strengthened.
- Clarifying the link between diversity, prior knowledge, and time budgets can raise the comprehension of diversity issues.
- Exposure to research results and exchange with colleagues are means to support self-reflection and a change of existing inadequate conceptions.
- Conflicts between professional standards, good teaching practices and individual needs must be avoided by giving teachers the time to work on the quality of learning environments.

Implications



Thank you for your attention!

Dr. Gianna Haake

