Individual Differences

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Respect individual differences and don't laugh at others.

Individual Differences

Individual Differences stand for "The variation or deviations among individual is regard to a single characteristics or a number of characteristics, those differences which in their totality distinguish one individual from another."

------ C. V. Good

(Dictionary of Education,1959)

Types of Individual Differences (Specific Types or Varieties):

- **1. Physical differences:**

Shortness or tallness of stature, darkness or fairness of complexion, fatness, thinness, or weakness are various physical individual differences.

- **2. Differences in intelligence:**

There are differences in intelligence level among different individuals. We can classify the individuals from super-normal (above 120 I.Q.) to idiots (from 0 to 50 I.Q.) on the basis of their intelligence level.

- **3. Differences in attitudes, beliefs & opinions:**

Individuals differ in their attitudes towards different people, objects, institutions and authority(-ve, +ve or indifferent)

- **4. Differences in achievement:**

It has been found through achievement tests that individuals differ in their achievement abilities.

These differences are very much visible in reading, writing and in learning mathematics.

These differences in achievement are even visible among the children who are at the same level of intelligence. These differences are on account of the differences in the various factors of intelligence and the differences in the various experiences, interests and educational background.

- **5. Differences in motor ability:**

There are differences in motor ability. These differences are visible at different ages. Some people can perform mechanical tasks easily, while others, even though they are at the same level, feel much difficulty in performing these tasks.

- **6. Emotional differences:**

Individuals differ in their emotional reactions to a particular situation. Some are irritable and aggressive and they get angry very soon. There are others who are of peaceful nature and do not get angry easily. At a particular thing an individual may be so much enraged that he may be prepared for the worst crime like murder, while another person may only laugh at it.

- **7. Differences on account of sex:**

McNemar and Terman discovered the following differences between men and women, on the basis of some studies:

(i) Women have greater skill in memory while men have greater motor ability.

(ii) Handwriting of women is superior while men excel in mathematics and logic.

(iii) Women show greater skill in making sensory distinctions of taste, touch and smell etc., while men show greater reaction and conscious of size-weight illusion.

(iv) Women are superior to men in languages, while men are superior in physics and chemistry.

(v) Women are better than men in mirror drawing. Faults of speech etc. in men were found to be three times of such faults in women.

(vi) Women are more susceptible to suggestion while there are three times as many colour blind men as there are women.

(vii) Young girls take interest in stories of love, fairy tales, stories of the school and home and day-dreaming and show various levels in their play. On the other hand boys take interest in stories of bravery, science, war, scouting, stories of games and sports, stories and games of occupation and skill.

- **8. Racial differences:**

There are different kinds of racial differences. Differences of environment is a normal factor in causing these differences.

9. Differences due to nationality:

Individuals of different nations differ in respect of physical and mental differences, interests and personality etc. 'Russians are tall and stout'; 'Ceylonese are short and slim'; 'Germans have no sense of humour'; 'Yellow races are cruel and revengeful'; 'Americans are hearty and frank'; Indians are timid and peace-loving' and the like observations enter into our common talk.

- **10. Differences due to economic status:**

Differences in children's interests, tendencies and character are caused by economic differences.

- **11. Differences in interests & aptitute:**

Factors such as sex, family background level of development, differences of race and nationality etc., cause differences in interests.

- **12. Personality differences:**

There are differences in respect of personality. On the basis of differences in personality, individuals have been classified into many groups

Spranger, for example, has classified personalities into six types:

(i)Theoretical,(ii) Economic (পরিমিতব্যয়ী), (iii) Aesthetic, (iv) Social, (v) Political, and (vi) Religious.

Jung classified people into three groups:

(i) Introverts, (ii) Extroverts, and (iii) Ambiverts.

Trottor divided individuals into:

(i) Stable minded, and (ii) Unstable minded.

Jordon thinks of personalities into:

(i) Active, and (ii) Reflective type.

Thorndike has classified people into four categories on the basis of thinking:

(i) Abstract thinkers, (ii) Ideational thinkers, (iii) Object thinkers, and (iv) Thinkers in whom sensory experience is predominant.

Terman has classified people into nine classes according to their level of intelligence:

(i) Genius, (ii) Near genius, (iii) Very superior, (iv) Superior, (v) Average, (vi) Backward, (vii) Feebleminded, (viii) Dull, and (ix) Idiot.

13. Differences in learning Styles:

Fast Learner, Slow Learner, Learning at Moderate Speed.

Some are good at Memorisation, some in Reflection.

Some are good at analysis, some in synthesis, some in evaluation etc.

Some prefer learning in group, some prefer learning alone.

14. Differences in Social & Moral Development:

Proper social adjustment leads to haapy social life while others are socially handicapped, unsocial or antisocial.

People also differ in respect of ethical and moral sense and judgement.

Conclusion:

It is an admitted fact that some people are honest, others are dishonest, some are aggressive, others are humble, some are social, others like to be alone, some are critical and others are sympathetic. As a hole personality of an individual is unique in itself. Thus we see that the differences in behaviour & personality are dependent on personality traits. Hence, no one can be said be exactly similar to another.

Teacher should keep in mind these differences while imparting education to the pupils.

Distribution of Individual Differences: Follows Normal Probability Curve

34%   34%

Lowest   14%   ←——— Average ———→   14%   Highest

2%   2%
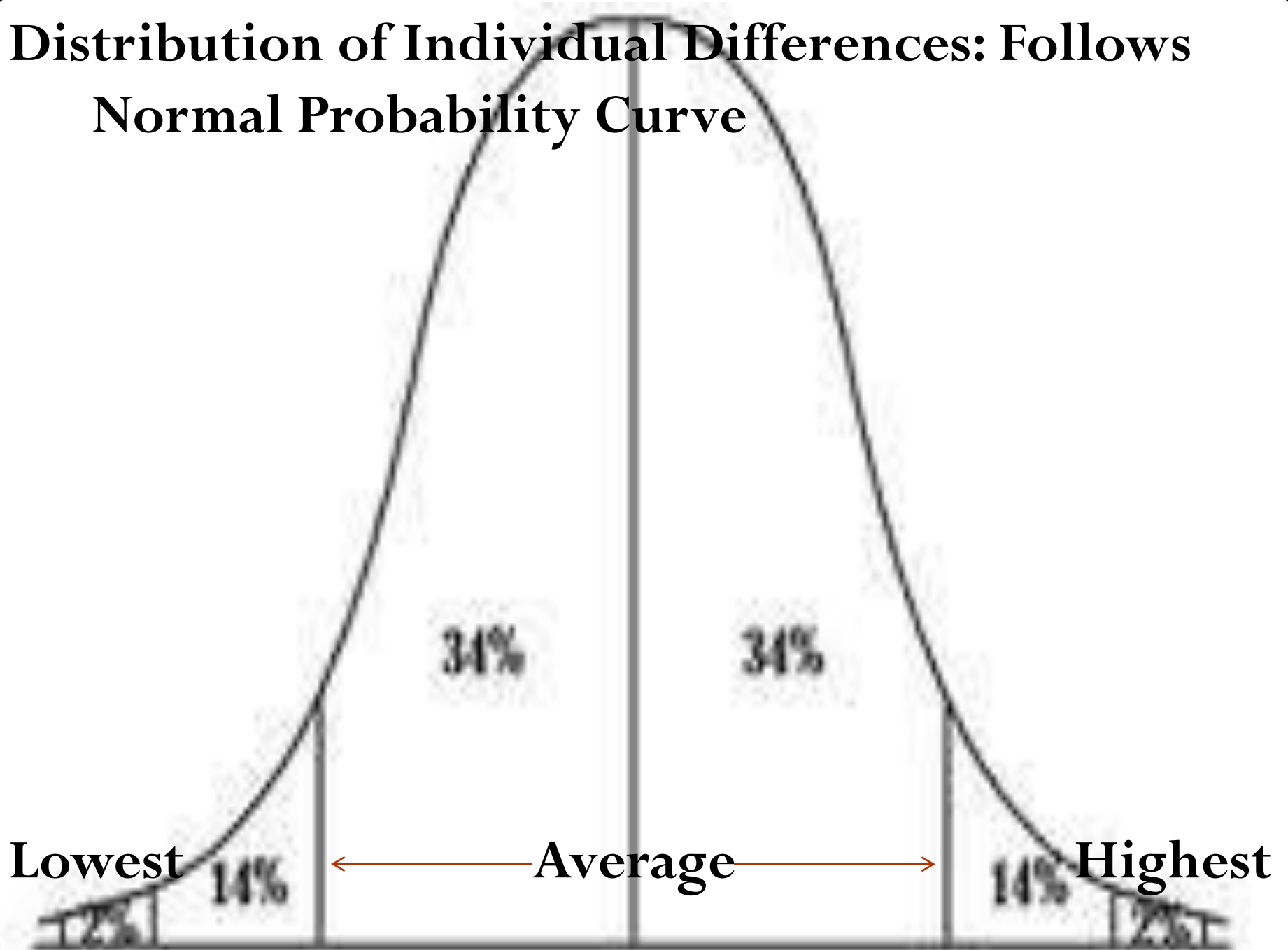
Determinants/Causes of Individual Differences:

1. Hereditary (Nature)

- Individuals have various endowments, abilities, and capacities provided by hereditary. Which decide the path of progress and development of an individual.

- Hereditary contributes significantly towards **Physical Constitution**

- Hereditary also put limits upon individuals' **growth and development** in various dimensions.

- Hereditary also contributes to **sex**

- Role of hereditary ends with conception

2. Environment (Nurture)

- Environment also plays key role in individual differences. No person from conception (start of life) to death gets the same environment. Individual differences occur on the basis of simulation received by individual from his or her internal and external environment. This may include family set up, peer group, economic statues, education etc.

- It is debatable that whether nature or nurture play vital or stronger role in development of an individual in specific direction. Both are strong contenders in order to distinguish one individual from other.

Educational Implications of Individual Differences:

- **i.** Aims of education, curriculum, method of teaching should be linked with individual differences considering the different abilities and traits individual.

- **ii.** Curriculum should be designed as per the interest, abilities and needs of different students.

- **iii.** The teacher has to adopt different types of methods of teaching considering individual difference related to interest, need, etc.

- **iv.** Some co-curricular activities such as Drama, music, literary activities (Essay & Debate Competition) should be assigned to children according to their interest.

- **v.** Boys and girls are to play different roles in society. Hence the factor of sexual biasness should be kept in mind.

- **vi.** Teacher uses certain specific teaching aids which will attract the children towards teaching considering their interest and need.

- **vii.** Various methods such as playing method, project method, Montessori method, story telling methods are to be used considering/discovering how different children respond to a task or a problem.

- **viii.** The division of pupils into classes should not be based only on the mental age or chronological age of children but the physical, social and emotional maturity should be given due consideration.

- **ix.** In case of vocational guidance the counsellor is to plan the guidance technique keeping in view the needs and requirements of the students.

Role of Individual Differences in Education:

- One of the important objectives of modern education is the complete development of the individual.

- Individuals have different goals, different interests, different emotional problems and different abilities.

- We cannot afford to ignore these individual differences in imparting education to children.

- Since school work is planned on group basis it presents a formidable challenge to all teachers.

Hence some practical procedures for adapting school work to individual differences are suggested:

- **1. Limited size of the class:** Generally there are 50 or more than 50 students in a class. In such a large class, it is not possible for the teacher to pay individual attention to the students. The size of the class should be small. It should be divided into various units so that after class-room work their various difficulties may be found out.

- **2. Proper Knowledge of Individual's Potentialities:** Every teacher should try to have the desired knowledge of the abilities, capacities, interests, attitudes, aptitudes and other personality traits of his/her pupils. For this purpose frequents assessment in the form of intelligence tests, cumulative record card, interest inventories, attitude scales, aptitude tests & measures for assessing personality traits shall be carried out.

- **3. Proper division of the class (ability grouping):** Now, the students can be divided into different classes regarding their differences in intelligence, attitude, interest, aptitude, etc forming homogenous groups.

Such classification is beneficial in adjusting the method of instruction to varying individual differences.

While bringing about this classification, the teacher should keep in mind the difference in age, emotional and social qualities.

- **4. Home task:** The teacher should assign home task to the students while keeping in view the individual differences

- **5. Factor of sex:** Boys and girls are to play different roles in society. Hence the factor of sex should be kept in mind.

- **6. Curriculum:** The curriculum should be modified to suit the needs of all types of children. A large number of subjects should be included in the curriculum so that education can be provided to each child according to his interests, needs and abilities. Curriculum should not be rigid but it should be flexible.

If we lay down the same curriculum for all the students, the brilliant students will not be able to have full mental diet, and the backward students and the students of lower I.Q. will lag far behind in the class, and they may start playing truancy from the school.

- **7. Methods of Teaching:** Methods of teaching should be chosen on the basis of individual differences. It is not advisable to use the same method of education in the case of all children-gifted or backward.
- **8. Educational Guidance:** Teacher should impart educational guidance to the students while keeping in view their individual differences. He can assist them in the selection of educational career, selection of subjects, selection of books, selection of hobbies and co-curricular activities and in many other areas connected with education.
- **9. Vocational Guidance:** While keeping in view the individual differences the teacher can guide the students in the vocation that they should adopt.

- **10. Individual Training:** Many plans and techniques for individualizing instructions have been advocated.

Some of these plans are as under:

(i) Dalton Plan:

- This plan was introduced by Miss Helen Parkhurst at Dalton. According to this plan, the school is regarded as a 'children house.' The principles underlying the plan are freedom, co-operation and allocation of time. The pupils are free to continue without interruption the work in which they are absorbed, unhindered by time tables.

- They are not taught in class-rooms. They are given subjects that suit their interests. The advantage of this plan is that each pupil is allowed to proceed at his own rate and in accordance with this individual ability. Thus the instructions are completely individualized.

(ii) Morrison Plan:

- This Plan was devised by Professor H.Q. Morrison of the University of Chicago. This plan is based on directed guidance and stresses unit assignment. To establish learning unit is an important task in the Morrison plan. The plan is based on individual needs and interests.

(iii) Winnetka Plan:

- This plan was instituted by C.W. Washburne in the school of Winnetka, Illinois. This plan is based on the principle that the pupils should be allowed to follow his own rate of learning in each of the subjects of his curriculum. Before instituting this plan it is observed through an examination that how much an individual already knows. On the basis of it, specific learning unit is planned for him.

- Progress is checked by the pupils himself by means of self-administered tests. The advantages of this plan are that the backward and the intelligent are to proceed at their own rates. Moreover, there are no failures since the pupil is measured against his own progress.

(iv) Contract Plan:

- In this plan, the subjects of study are determined like the Dalton method; the pupil's progress is measured through tests like the Winnetka method. Thus this plan is a synthesis of Dalton and Winnetka methods.

(v) Project method:

- This method was suggested by Kilpatrick. In this method each member of the group can work in terms of his interest and ability. Hence this method is also in the direction of individualization of instructions.

Thank You