Rephrasing the teacher’s role in the 21st century: Personal responsiveness and educational responsibility in a heterogeneous world

ZSANETT ÁGNES BICSÁK

Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the mitigation of the normative pedagogy in the value heterogeneous world has elicited the need to rephrase the teacher’s role. While this study cannot reflect on all issues that have recently arisen, some core questions are addressed to examine the teacher-student relationship and highlight a few principles that teachers need to be aware of. This study links to previous works on responsive pedagogy, accepting the ambition to respond to individual needs but also discussing collective terms such as human freedom and cultural differences, which impact children’s perspectives.

Accordingly, this paper is an attempt to provide an interdisciplinary framework based on educational philosophy, psychological evidence, and ethnographic studies to discuss the conflict between individual and community interests, basic human needs, individual differences, and ethical issues arising from diverse cultural backgrounds, and some contemporary phenomena that have affected the operations of schools. As a result, following a critical review of the introduced concepts, this paper suggests considering some educational responsibilities that may improve teachers’ practice in the 21st century.

KEYWORDS

responsive pedagogy, teacher role, educational theories, freedom, basic needs, cultural responsivity, postmodern

* Corresponding author. E-mail: bicsakzsanett@gmail.com
INTRODUCTION

The following study builds upon Skiera’s (2021, 2022) arguments, particularly emphasising the assertion that educational praxis links to educational philosophies, ethics, and psychological concepts. This perspective aligns with the early considerations and globally adopted teacher-training praxis of the Herbartian systematic approach, wherein teaching praxis is rooted in a scientific educational theory that is based on practical philosophy (Herbart, 1806/1887), determining the goal of education and psychology (Herbart, 1825/1890), aiding in the description of the learning process. Nevertheless, since Herbart, new philosophical theories have emerged, and the discipline of psychology has yielded various empirical results on individual differences in learning and educational development. These findings indicate that a holistic (and complex) approach needs to be employed when educating children.

The paper explores how new concepts, trends, and results expand and rephrase teachers’ responsibilities today. As Skiera (2022) and Benner (2023) have emphasized, while general questions on teaching praxis can be drawn from educational concepts and practices, there is also a need to reflect on these questions in the present socio-cultural context. Given recent societal changes, this paper argues that not only the disciplines of educational philosophy and psychology but also cultural studies can contribute to enhancing teaching praxis today. The study does not aim to be comprehensive; however, its objective is to outline why responsible teachers should improve their practices to become more reflective, dialogical, responsive, encouraging, and culturally aware. While this study aims to depict the character of a responsible teacher, there is a continuous reflection on postmodern challenges throughout the discussion.

Therefore, this paper is organised into main sections, delving into core questions raised by different disciplines. The first section explores educational and philosophical approaches to personal freedom. Linking to this, there is an argument a teacher should possess a reflective and dialogical teaching style that respects individual freedom. The following section reflects on psychological concepts and findings related to basic human needs, child development, and individual differences. Here is an argument for affirming teachers’ responsive and encouraging attitudes. The third part of the text discusses some consequences of cultural studies when the relevance of cultural awareness in school practices is claimed. Finally, the paper summarises the key findings of this research and draws some general conclusions from these assertions.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Several concepts in educational philosophy provide different views of educational goals. They held alternative approaches to introducing cultural content and assisting with the conflict between individual and others’ freedom in a societal context, including facing external constraints. While these concepts were developed within specific historical and political contexts, they continue to influence educational practices in Europe today, contributing to an understanding of the foundation for teachers’ support of self-willed actions.

One of the dominant accounts is moral education, aiming to lead individuals as a collective from imperfection to morality. These normative accounts such as Kant’s concept (1803/1900) underline the necessity to internalise moral principles to maintain moral freedom. Kant argued that education should be built upon the principle of humanity which is in a higher order than
individual motivations. The goal of education is to raise respectful and self-directed individuals. However, for Kant, education does not start with restraint. Children must experience “perfect liberty in every respect” (Kant, 1803/1900: 28) prior to being exposed to the freedom of others and learning that they can embrace liberty when they enable others to exercise their liberty. To help students with their autonomy, teachers sought to plan their lessons carefully and be conscious of their teaching methods. A righteous teacher is self-reflective and responsible for shaping moral character.

Corresponding to this consideration, several educational theories were grounded in character education in the 18th and 19th centuries. Herbart’s pedagogical concept (Herbart, 1806/1887) was one of the most significant. He was not only a thinker and practitioner in his time, but his followers relied on his pedagogical principles for maintaining school pedagogy throughout the 19th century and the Herbartian normative pedagogy formed the basis for teacher training that has subsequently come to be adopted across the globe today. Following the Herbartian pedagogy, teaching became a more reflective practice that required lesson planning, goal setting, and considering human development. Herbart emphasised the need for aesthetic presentation of the word during moral education. He argued that ethics is a part of aesthetics, and therefore that virtue does not result from external forces but is the outcome of students’ insights (Herbart, 1818). Students have the freedom to draw their own consequences. The key here is the view that morality is closely connected to realising and understanding conflicting situations and making decisions accordingly. Students become reflective and learn how to interact with others. Therefore, teachers needed to affirm students’ conscious decision-making processes and support them to develop a deeper understanding of the world through the cultivation of many-sided interests.

Based on the aesthetical representation of the world and the aspiration of affirming students’ diversified interests, Herbart’s education linked to Rousseau’s (1762a/1797) pedagogy too. However, Rousseau formulated a strong criticism against formal education (that has been elaborated within the Herbartian pedagogical perspective) and the discipline of the child. In contrast to advocates of Kant and Herbart, Rousseau propagated “negative education” (Bloom, 1978: 8) which refused to set a general educational goal for all individuals. He believed that children must learn from natural consequences and not from external barriers. However, this concept also involved some ambiguity as Rousseau outlined that negative education cannot be upheld during the whole educational process: reaching “the age of reason and intelligence” (Rousseau, 1762a/1797: 88), children encounter barriers, other people’s diverse intentions, and social (in)justice, through which morality plays an important role. Furthermore, social collaboration is an essential part of Rousseau’s consideration and resembles Kant’s doctrines. However, instead of accepting the oppression of individuals, he believed that the social contract (Rousseau, 1762b) should integrate both standpoints of liberty and social justice. Based on this, individuals are ruled by the law, but the law ruling them is chosen and granted by themselves.

In the 20th century, new pedagogical concepts, known as reform pedagogy, introduced new educational principles and didactic-methodological bases. These concepts centred around children’s individuality, emphasising the importance of human freedom, self-will, and individual differences. These concepts stemmed from Rousseau’s ideals and criticised the traditional educational concept. Following remarkable debates in the 20th century on these approaches (Semel & Sadovnik, 2008), numerous public schools became more focused on individual child development. Nevertheless, as Skiera (2018) pointed out, even the representatives of reform pedagogy continued to delineate a teacher’s role as the mediator of a higher will. Based on his argument,
while these educators aimed to assist the children more individually, they still maintained the worldview that acknowledged the existence of a higher order.

With the decline of religious thoughts, monistic ideologies restructured the power relations in society and influenced educational goals. Therefore, philosophers discussed individual freedom concerning social justice and pluralism. Berlin (1969) in the 20th century differentiated between positive and negative freedom (or liberty). Negative liberty emphasises the deficiency of external barriers while positive freedom enables individuals to exercise self-control and make choices pursuing their own interests (Berlin, 1969). According to Berlin, freedom is tied up with a rational decision-making process. In clear opposition to Kant, the process does not involve absolute justification for everyone, and it is free from external forces. However, Berlin also highlighted that freedom includes the control of unconscious drives. This also indicates, in contrast to Rousseau, that a teacher should not nurture all the inner motivations of a pupil. Although Berlin’s concept did not integrate principles for educational settings, his theory provided encouragement for teachers to strengthen children’s self-control and their ability to tackle external obstacles.

However, this is not small task. Foucault (1977) argued that beyond individual limitations, power relations are encoded in the social system. Even by removing several external coercions, institutions preserve power structures that persist to regulate human thoughts and behaviours. An individual cannot escape fully from these relations. The authority of changing existing structures stems from another level of society. Personal freedom manifests when an individual cares for themselves or an individual can experience individual freedom when crossing boundaries. Therefore, the individual always has a certain strength to challenge external limitations. In conjunction with this, Freire (1970/2005) claimed that education encapsulated the opportunity to liberate those who were oppressed in existing structures. Freire argued that the structural change should begin with students’ active involvement in their educational processes. Therefore, a teacher is not a “depositor, prescriber, domesticator” (Freire, 1970/2005: 75) but a person who practices solidarity and assists pupils in becoming aware of external influences.

**BEING REFLECTIVE AND DIALOGICAL**

The aforementioned educational concepts and philosophical considerations suggest that a responsible teacher needs to focus on students’ freedom and foster their self-willed actions. This aspiration is particularly challenging in the postmodern era (Lyotard, 1979), as students may either rely on minimal guidance, making decisions based on diverse influences without conscious decision-making processes, or encounter too many conflicting sources of guidance, leading to confusion.

Freedom, as shown, has different connotations. A reflective teacher summons children to self-activity where children can engage with diverse topics according to their interests. Based on this, Herbart’s argument on many-sided interests is still applicable (Herbart, 1806/1887; Rucker, 2023). Self-willed actions should be built upon a personal interest that is tied up closely with interaction with others and diverse fields of education. However, in contrast to Herbart, cognition of the world is no longer intellectual but is based on one’s own experience as this was presented by Rousseau and representatives of reform pedagogy in the 20th century. Pupils need to be exposed to different experiences and learning objects to enable them to build their understanding of the world and their self-knowledge and choose and act freely.
Despite the historical concepts affirmed that freedom cannot be absolute as this is always restricted by others’ self-interest and freedom practices, Skiera (2021, 2022) and Uljens and his colleagues (Uljens, 2023) argue that individual freedom can be developed through dialogues. When Skiera explains that these conversations should be built upon values such as no harm to others (Skiera, 2021), we recall Kantian principles, however, in the post-mythical time, this arises from real-life experiences and discussions rather than general laws.

Therefore, while the educational goal of representing the world remains significant, it is required to represent and discuss different perspectives. The conversations about the world are predominantly linked to the children’s interests. The issues they may face pertain more to the unknown future than the accumulated knowledge from the past. As Van Manen (1977) argued, while traditionally, teachers were responsible for facilitating conversations where definite answers were available, in the postmodern era, building dialogues can involve open-ended questions and unresolved problems.

Without instant answers and recipes for future problems, the main goal is to foster a dialogical culture and encourage children to become active listeners and questioners. “The actual words of the actual other may force me to reconstruct my opinion as the interaction develops. The actual other questions, challenges, and changes existing positions in the self, and can introduce new ones” (Hermans, 2001: 255). This also assumes a more symmetrical relationship between educators and pupils. Nevertheless, researchers have found that teachers’ instructions can still maintain an authoritative tone, regardless of their intentions. The phenomenon continues to exist even when the language includes dialogical elements (Boyd, Mykula, & Choi, 2019). Therefore, teachers should be reflective about their language usage and its influence on students. As a part of this, in line with earlier theories, teachers should reflect on their own biases related to preferences for topics, perspectives, or judgments. Teachers should cultivate a reflective attitude to enhance students’ self-activity, foster many-sided interests, and manage and transform their biases, ensuring a more equitable learning environment. This includes reflection on personal biases, preferences, and the inequalities that arise in institutions, as asserted by Berlin (1969), Foucault (1977), and Freire (1970/2005).

**PSYCHOLOGY**

While educational philosophy guides teachers in responding to the diverse thoughts and ideologies of society, motivating children to embrace the uncertain future and trusting in their role of shaping society through cooperation, discussion, and respect, psychology provides insight into psychological mechanisms and outlines the conditions under which individuals can develop a self-directed, authentic, open-minded, and cooperative attitude that may essential to cope unforeseen problems in the future (Cluxton, 2017).

To reach a higher level of autonomy (Meece, 2003), theorists (Rawls, 1999; Sen, 1990; Skiera, 2022) and psychologists (Fromm, 1941; Maslow, 1943; Deci & Ryan, 1985) have discussed the complex connection between individual freedom and human needs, and between environmental support and psychological needs. In educational context, the concept of children’s needs incorporates the dimensions of a need to belong, a need for recognition, a need for new experiences, a need for self-efficacy, a need for self-responsibility and co-responsibility, a need for aesthetic perception, and a need for spontaneous expression of his/her inner state (or inner
world) (Skiera, 2022). Expanding on these needs further, some reflective thoughts should be discussed.

The need to belong and the need for recognition have been researched extensively since Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943) was introduced. Attachment Theory (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1969), The Theory of Recognition (Honneth, 1996), and investigations on mattering (Flett, 2022) revolve around the importance of the sense of feeling affiliated and appreciated. Described as “fundamental human motivations” (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), families are often the principal providers of such needs. At the same time, schools are concerned with accountability too, as they should understand children’s vulnerable nature and the demands of attachment. Thus, teachers are typically trained to notice warning signs when students’ basic needs are neglected. In addition, schools are responsible for strengthening students’ belongingness. Affiliation contributes to building emotional stability and therefore resilience.

Similarly, the need for “spontaneous expressions of his/her inner state (or inner world)” (Skiera, 2021) is articulated primarily in families. Self-expression is understood to stem from a nurturing and safe environment. If families respond well to their children’s basic psychological needs, children become confident to show their inner world, including their fears, and ambiguous feelings but their hidden talents and novel perceptions of numerous fields of social practices too.

At the same time, schools can excel at providing scheduled activities and non-structured opportunities for new experiences and improving their aesthetic perception. As previously outlined, early pedagogical concepts have also affirmed the necessity of an aesthetical representation of the world which was inherited in later school practices. Furthermore, the psychological approach complements this aspiration by emphasising the cultivation of creativity when individuals create something beautiful or more harmonious (Maslow, 1970).

However, the need for self-efficacy, and the need for self-responsibility and co-responsibility appear with different emphases in school curriculums. Even if these values are acknowledged, they are more often articulated as personal targets. Nonetheless, attaining self-actualization with self- and co-responsibility results from supportive connection and co-work with children/students rather than placing the focus solely on personal achievement. It is advisory that teachers direct their expectations toward themselves. Teachers must nurture students’ self-beliefs in their abilities to perform (Bandura, 1977). Students equally need opportunities and trust to practice self-responsibility and co-responsibility to grow in these fields.

Beyond reflecting on the concept of children’s basic psychological needs, various psychological theories have emerged as significant, providing valuable insights into educational development. For example, Erikson’s psychological theory (1950) underscores the influence of social and cultural factors on identity. Based on this, school years are especially significant as children need to become confident in their abilities and explore their values and beliefs. Furthermore, other developmental psychologists offer guidance on structuring learning objectives and selecting advantageous methodologies and tools for different stages. The research on cognitive development (Demetriou, Kazi, Makris, & Spanoudis, 2020; Piaget, 1947/2001) developed the most the Herbartian approach as these describe children’s intellectual abilities and processes of understanding the world. Therefore, teachers can comprehend more suitable topics and tasks. However, cognitive psychologists also suggest how to design schoolwork to prepare pupils for the future when new and complex challenges arise. As such, Cluxton (2017) proposed his
learning power approach offers a new way to foster learning and expand students’ capacities. From this perspective, children’s potential can unfold, enabling them to be better prepared for an unforeseen future. This teaching method relies on the assumption and research findings that prove children’s abilities can grow, and teachers can foster these processes.

Furthermore, another group of psychologists has pointed out that many individual differences play a crucial role in determining one’s development beyond the similarities in human nature and personal development (Geary, Hoard, Nugent, Ünal, & Greene, 2023; Han et al., 2023). In the last century, there has been an increasing trend in which new child-centered concepts and practices were elaborated. Such as alternative education aims to ensure personal development and satisfaction by offering diverse tools or teaching methods. Additionally, the strengths-based approach (Lopez & Louise, 2009) helps pupils explore their strengths and talents to rely on in conflicting situations and determine their individual goals.

BEING RESPONSIVE AND ENCOURAGING

Being attentive to personal obstacles, a teacher’s role today goes beyond the classical perception of the responsive teacher who identifies knowledge gaps and designs the curriculum according to students’ individual developmental stages (Hammond, 2015). Teachers’ responsibilities include maintaining learning records as well as tracking behavioural problems, social difficulties, reduced cognitive functioning, and low resilience. Students can underperform as their basic needs are not satisfied (Bolger & Patterson, 2003). Psychological research findings demonstrated that teachers’ expectations, their relationship with children, and their “practices that are responsive to students’ basic developmental needs” (Kiefer, Ellerbrock, & Alley, 2015) considerably impact both students’ autonomy and performance.

Therefore, teachers must pay attention to unspoken problems that students may face too. Open communication, appropriate teacher training, and joint responsibility of staff members and families can help provide the best solution for students’ difficulties. The aspiration for unlocking students’ potential involves understanding how students block themselves and what external influences hinder their fulfilment.

However, teachers do not only need to explore problems, but they must build trust and encourage students to articulate their needs and emotions. As Skiera suggests, pupils and educators should have a “benevolent-empathetic relationship” (Skiera, 2021: 6). In agreement with this suggestion, English (2023) introduced the teacher’s role as that of being a listener. This notion goes beyond passive or mechanical listening as “one who listens deeply to and for the learner’s uncertainty and struggle, thinking, generative ideas, emotional needs, that is, one who listens to and for the learner’s whole being” (English, 2023: 153).

Consequently, students need to learn to speak for themselves. This requires a safe and supportive environment, and teachers demonstrating strength, flexibility, and understanding attitudes in diverse contexts. A teacher has a mentorship role; however, it is not embedded in the affirmative sense of teaching. This mentorship role derives from a teacher’s responsible attitude, reflecting on postmodern hardships.

In the postmodern era, families and responsible teachers confront new challenges. Children are exposed to various political views and competing ideologies, including consumerism, which affects their personal feelings, desires, and thinking through various channels, including media
(Banet-Weiser, 2007; Dyson, 2003; Wenjia & Yuying, 2020). Therefore, teachers have the responsibility to create a learning environment where students can reflect on their own needs and diverse influences. This reflection helps them create distance from their everyday experiences and reconnect with their awareness.1

Teachers can cultivate a novel teaching approach to help pupils become more resourceful, imaginative, and resilient. Teachers should respond to pupils’ mistakes appropriately and foster their growth mindset (Cluxton, 2017). Building on this, teachers should support children to become conscious of their resources and strengths. Following the principles of strengths-based learning, pupils must identify activities and areas where they can grow and their achievements will be acknowledged.

In agreement with diverse psychological concepts (Cluxton, 2017; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Lopez & Louise, 2009), teachers need to help students engage in activities and cooperate with others. This requires an inclusive learning environment and tools to follow students’ interests and talents, enabling them to discover the world through their own experiences and successes.

**CULTURAL STUDIES**

Over the last two decades in the USA (Garcia, 2002; Prater & Devereaux, 2009), and more recently in Europe due to economic migration and refugee crises, the heightened cultural diversity in knowledge, norms, and habits of postmodern societies, has underscored the importance of teachers’ cultural responsiveness. Therefore, an educational model, relying on educational and psychological bases, needs to also incorporate some relevant consequences of cultural studies to provide a comprehensive approach to tackle contemporary challenges.

Cultural and anthropological studies have emphasised, that a (sub)culture significantly influences one’s thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Drawing from this, conflicts within cultures can manifest on personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels. Pupils may experience ambiguous feelings when encountering the host culture, and these differences can lead to crises in one’s life. As Park (1928) highlighted, individuals can develop a divided self that expresses the conflict between new and old identifications. This conflict is not confined to the individual’s internal world; visible signs of this ambivalence emerge in interpersonal relationships, making their positions even more challenging. These children can be treated as strangers and become more marginalised. Cormos (2022) perceives the integration process as more one-sided, as immigrants need to redefine themselves, coping with social pressure and personal distress. Therefore, there are individual differences in the level of the integration or assimilation process. In many cases, the cultural rules, norms, and habits of the host culture cannot always be fully internalised. Weisberger (1992) differentiated four categories of how immigrants reply to the host culture. Based on this, assimilation belongs to only a small cohort of people who “sacrifice” their previous identity. Some choose to return to their culture, while others transcendence the differences in the norms that two cultures offer. The last group of people cannot resolve this conflict and carry the ambiguity of competing feelings and cultures.

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1In line with Bauman (2000), the instability of postmodern life does not necessarily involve only obstacles and difficulties, as they can turn into real opportunities and channels of self-realisation.
Not only personal difficulties but also barriers to interpersonal interaction indicate that a more complex psychological mechanism explains one’s integration and acceptance level in society. In education, there is less attention paid to Haidt and Joseph’s (2004) account. Relying on anthropological studies, they argued that during one’s socialisation process, an individual not only acquires habits, routines, and values but consciously and even unreflectively (instinctively) adopts ethical considerations shaped by their subgroup. This also means that pupils can naturally hold different value systems and may experience conflicts and diverse beliefs. However, when expressing their ethical judgments, normally, these judgments typically stem more from their emotions rather than from logical considerations. Haidt and Joseph (2004) claimed that cultural studies support the assertion that rational thinking follows our instinctive responses. Therefore, emotions are more crucial than reasoning when discussing morality. Simultaneously, in advocating for the affirmation of children’s self-directed actions (their self-will), they need to gain a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage and the motivations of others.

Beyond facilitating interpersonal relations in the classroom, structural solutions or practices can either alleviate or exacerbate one’s difficulties. Building on Foucault’s (1977) argument on institutionalized power, there is a risk that students with underrepresented ethnic backgrounds may not receive equal welcome and attention compared to others. These students may find themselves more easily placed in marginalized positions than their peers, potentially leading to feelings of powerlessness and subordination. Such marginalised students are more likely to experience negative impacts on their performance, self-integrity, and affiliation. While these immigrant children may interact easily with peers sharing the same background, they may encounter difficulties in connecting with others. Therefore, Sleeter (2011) asserts that culturally responsive pedagogy is more than a teaching approach; it should also be viewed as a political act.

**BEING CULTURALLY AWARE**

While responsive pedagogy reflects on individual needs, culturally responsive pedagogy emphasises that individual needs cannot be effectively addressed if the cultural embeddedness of an individual is overlooked. Therefore, an increasing number of research papers have discussed the need for culturally responsive teachers and have provided evidence on how students benefit from teachers’ and educators’ cultural awareness (Rychly & Graves, 2012; Wah & Nasri, 2019).

Therefore, cultural responsibility has become an integral part of the curriculum in many countries, increasing expectations for teachers to address diverse demands and navigate ambiguous feelings. Decolonising the curriculum and responding to diversity with awareness requires constant preparedness. In a multicultural society, teachers can anticipate cultural conflicts; thus, they need to learn how to address differences in a learning environment and help children become open-minded toward these differences, forming an authentic identity that serves them. Cultural responsiveness extends multicultural education. While multicultural education presents multiple cultural perspectives, culturally responsive pedagogy takes into account those aspects and cultures represented in the classroom (Rychly & Graves, 2012).

In correspondence with this, teachers play an important role in reflecting on students’ previous knowledge and skills, as well as navigating the challenges faced by immigrant students when they encounter the host culture (Weisberger, 1992). Integration can be especially problematic if students with minority backgrounds “choose” assimilation and refuse their own
culture. While the assimilation/integration may be evaluated as successful, personal fulfilment could remain problematic if this involves self-denial elements through a refusal of the own cultural heritage. Therefore, teachers need to be aware of this process, must reflect on their own emotions, biases, and judgments regarded others’ cultural habits, and be prepared to tackle various unforeseen situations.

Nevertheless, researchers warn that culturally responsive pedagogy operates on various levels. It’s not solely the responsibility of teachers; politicians also need to foster changes in the educational system (Sleeter, 2011). If society fails to acknowledge the unique barriers and disadvantages faced by immigrants, equal opportunities are not ensured for these children, leading to numerous challenges in society. Students from diverse backgrounds bring different advantages and handicaps to the educational system. It is also well-documented that students do not have an equal chance to access the best schools and universities. Researchers have yet to explore the reasons for the attainment gap between ethnic groups.

CONCLUSION

While this study did not aim to be comprehensive, it focused on three pillars of an educational framework to describe a responsible teacher’s teaching style. In alignment with earlier approaches (Herbart, 1806/1887, 1825/1890; Skiera, 2021, 2022), this study argued that educational philosophy and psychology help outline educational goals, resources, and students’ needs, psychological and learning preparedness.

Reflecting on the postmodern era, this study aimed to depict the philosophical considerations contributing to the understanding of personal freedom, influencing one’s self-willed actions. Teachers must foster dialogues in the classroom and encourage students to be conscious, open-minded, cooperative, and self-driven to deal with new challenges. This necessitates a reflective teaching style that includes awareness of one’s perspectives and biases, along with strategies to help students become open to the world. Teachers should broaden their understanding of basic human needs, being reflective and encouraging to create an optimal learning environment where students’ difficulties and individual barriers are observed and treated appropriately. Beyond these knowledge and teaching skills, a responsible teacher must be prepared for cultural differences and difficulties. Teachers need to be aware and sensitive to diversity. Therefore, their reflective and responsive teaching, incorporating dialogical and encouraging elements, should be expanded with cultural awareness.

Responsibility is not a new term in a teaching context. However, in the post-mythical time, teachers need to be conscious of their responsive and reflective teaching practices which can increase their capacity to be a responsible teacher in the heterogenous world. As explained, teachers must overcome challenges brought on by the postmodern era such as navigating changing principles and opportunities (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). Teachers bear increased responsibility. At the same time, while this study focused on expectations toward teachers, it remained limited as it did not discuss the conditions under which teachers can complete these tasks effectively. Teachers’ appreciation (both financial and social status) and autonomy need affirmation to be in a position to contribute to raising self-willed individuals. It is also prudent to investigate the changes in parental involvement and the influences of non-educators in the 21st century. External conditions need further discussion, along with deeper reflection on these three core disciplines and their findings reflecting in the postmodern.
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