

*Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability,*  
vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 1–4, 2023

## Editorial: How do Teachers Promote the Viability of Education?

Ilga Salīte

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1092-5878>

Ilona Fjodorova

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8387-4982>

Daugavpils University, Daugavpils, Latvia

Oksana Ivanova

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4688-0173>

Riga Technical University, Riga, Latvia

Dear readers and members of Daugavpils University UNESCO Chair Open Network of the Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability (JTES), we offer to you Volume 25, Issue 2 (2023) of the JTES as a source of inspiration for new research activities and pedagogical practices aimed at increasing the viability of education.

In this issue of JTES, the authors of the articles assure us that *teachers improve education* through their personal and professional identity, local knowledge and cooperation. Through the search for more sustainable solutions, the power of ecological consciousness for sustainability, non-linear thinking, pedagogical situations, we see the interest of the authors in the inseparable relationship between *reflexivity* and *action*. This is based on the *synthesis of teachers' lived experience and personally meaningful knowledge*, which has established itself as a fundamental feature of understanding and explaining human life. Teachers preserve and maintain it through real pedagogical situations, where they cannot survive without the synthesis of lived experience and personally meaningful knowledge. Through this synthesis, the evolutionary basis of the *reflexive* and *action* relationship is preserved. Thus, teachers enhance the *viability of education* through their *participation* in the resolution of real pedagogical situations. But the teacher needs support to withstand the various influences and obstacles of the present age and the current education systems, which are the result of unsustainable education. There are many obstacles.

In the early 21st century, the influence of the holistic approach and the emergence of the Anthropocene epoch cannot be separated from each other. The ambiguity of the relationship grows with the intensification of unsustainability. The influence of pedagogy in education, which sustains the exploration of issues of sustainability, inclusiveness, environmentalism, holistic perspectives, deeper human engagement with nature and the human-made environment that are important for human flourishing, has diminished. The use of shallower and narrower perspectives in educational research, where the narrowness of the constraints and perspectives used do not present a vision of sustainability, has become more evident. Such perspectives often become, or can become, theoretically misleading.

The Anthropocene epoch has not yet been sufficiently revealed to present-day humanity, because humanity began to explore it during its emergence, especially in recent years. The strength of the epoch's influence is becoming apparent in the unsustainability of development, based on anthropocentrism combined with egocentrism. The current tendency to seek a basis for educational science within this framework has created risks that are not yet deeply understood. Looking at the proposals that are emerging at the managerial and political levels of education reveals their shallowness, the detachment in the choice of solutions, the confusion of problems

and, unfortunately, even the perceived risks for the future development of educational theory and practice. Unsustainability in education creates uncertainty about the basis for sustainability. These uncertainties are shaped differently at different levels of education. Teachers' lived experience and personally meaningful knowledge are tested and tried out through participation in pedagogical situations in real-life situations. Different perspectives on the problems of education emerge at the management and policy levels, where alienation from real problems, a simplistic understanding or even denial of pedagogy, and other interests prevail.

The current lack of understanding of what is happening in education is no longer limited to the individual, personally meaningful experiences of educators, but has also become a symptom of the times and of life, challenging society to seek explanations and solutions to the current situation in education. The prevailing contradiction of the times seems to have given rise to a series of methodological questions that have already arisen in educational science. The JTES team invites researchers to continue their cooperation to increase the viability of education and to improve education.

Research papers included in Volume 25, Issue 2 (2023) are available at <https://sciendo.com/journal/jtes>, while the summaries of 12 research papers by 37 authors representing ten countries are provided below.

The first paper, *Learning and Teaching of Climate Change, Sustainability and Disaster Risk Reduction in Teacher Education in England and Japan*, by Kaori Kitagawa (United Kingdom) reports the study which explored the learning and teaching of the topics of climate change, sustainability and disaster risk reduction in secondary-level teacher education programs in England and Japan. Through interviewing teacher educators, the study particularly probed how teacher education programs used local knowledge and collaboration in discussing the above topics. The paper aims to fill this gap by bringing together the fields of geography education, climate change and sustainability education, disaster risk reduction education and initial teacher education.

The second paper, *Analysis of the Ecological Attitude and Sustainable Behavior of Students: A Green Campus Model, the Case of the University of Medellín, Colombia*, by Yuri Lorene Hernández Fernández, Sandra Milena Palacio López, Dora Luz Delgado Gómez and Javier A. Sánchez-Torres from Colombia explores the role of environmental education in higher education institutions and analyzes the environmental perception and ecological attitude of university students at the University of Medellín. The results show that the universities that carry out environmental programs and that offer educational activities on this topic generate a responsible attitude towards sustainability and ecology in their students.

Next paper, *Analyzing the Energy Awareness of Pre-Service Teachers Using the Word Association Method*, by the team of authors representing Hungary (Virág Fehér, Balázs Czékman, Magdolna Chrappán, Gyula Lakatos and Ibolya Markóczi-Revák) emphasizes the importance of energy awareness education as part of sustainability education and examines the energy awareness of pre-service teachers. The analysis of association fields proved the interdisciplinary nature of the students' knowledge of energy awareness where the highest association frequency was measured in the area of renewable energy sources and their use, while the least association frequency was measured in the area of empathy. The association graphs showed no meaningful difference in relationships between the studied student groups, and the results showed definitive, unrelated knowledge.

The fourth paper, *Integrating Sustainability Into Curriculum of Legal Education in Latvia: An Insight Into the Main Issues*, by Inga Jekabsone and Laura Ratniece representing Latvia and the Netherlands, discusses the issue of integration of sustainability into the curricula of higher education institutions to address various global challenges and analyzes how the concept of sustainability can be integrated into the curriculum of legal education in general and in Latvia in

particular. The authors conclude that the future strategy for law schools and law faculties in Latvia should involve the incorporation of sustainability into the learning outcomes of law programs and specific courses, teaching strategies, and research opportunities for students; also, by broadening interdisciplinarity of the programs and involving students in collaboration with various stakeholders to promote sustainable development.

In their paper, *Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement: Keys to Translating No Poverty and Quality Education SDGs in Philippine Peripheral Communities*, Marisol T. Maimad, Helina Jean P. Dupa and Jhonnell P. Villegas (Philippines) investigate the recipients of the CCT (conditional cash transfer) and analyze parental involvement and its influence on students' academic achievement. In the current study, parental involvement refers to parenting, learning at home, volunteering, school decision-making, collaborating, and communicating, while academic achievement pertains to the students' academic performance in the core learning areas: Science, Mathematics, English, and Filipino. The results showed that there was no statistical correlation between parental involvement and student's academic achievement. Parents had low involvement in learning at home, volunteering, and school decision-making.

In the sixth paper, *Sustainable Higher Education Management: Career Drivers of Academic Staff*, Jevgenija Dehtjare and Kristine Uzule (Latvia) identify the most dominant career drivers of academic staff based on their career motives and values in order to provide higher education managers with information relevant to academic staff engagement policies to enable shaping of sustainable education policies at higher education institutions (HEIs). The authors are searching for the answer to the following research question: Is there a discrepancy in values between academic staff and managers of HE, who create the work environment for the academic staff? To attain the goal of the research, university lecturers from Ukraine completed Schein's questionnaire online in 2021, while in 2023 middle- and senior managers of universities from Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania were asked to prioritize career drivers for academic staff. Both groups ranked technical / professional competence and service / dedication to a cause as primary priorities. However, the value of security / stability was prioritized only by academic staff, while autonomy / independence and entrepreneurial creativity were selected by HE managers. The findings of the study contribute to the global discussion of career drivers of teachers by providing evidence in support of the increasing importance of professional (technical) competences and creative abilities for quality education.

The seventh paper, *Training Future Kindergarten Teachers on Ecocentric Action*, by Maria Eduarda Ferreira, Catarina Delgado and Rui Pitarma (Portugal) contributes to (trans)formation of the professional profile of the future kindergarten teacher. This study analyzes the didactic-pedagogical potential of a training strategy in science teaching based on reflection-critical thinking about what effective science teaching is and investigates the mediating role of action research methodology in promoting trainee reflexivity. It can be concluded that the role of the supervisor is relevant in the construction of a pedagogical outlook of science teaching aligned with environmental values.

The eighth paper, *Practitioners' Professional Development Needs From a Sustainability Perspective: The Impact of Some Demographic Features*, by Chinedu Ifedi Okeke, Ndileleni P. Mudzielwana and Matseliso Mokhele-Makgalwa (South Africa) highlights that professional development for sustainability in early childhood care and education (ECCE) has been perceived by experts as education that supports the workforce to acquire the right skills, attitudes, and knowledge that resonate through their practices to the benefit of the sector. Professional development for sustainability is aimed at providing quality and continuing development to the ECCE workforce to equip them with the relevant skills to perform their duties for the benefit of the children and society. This paper discusses practitioners' professional development needs from a sustainability perspective and the impacts of some demographic features.

The ninth paper, *Exploring the Influences of Teacher Professional Identity on Teachers' Emotion Among Vietnamese Secondary School Teachers*, by the team of authors representing Vietnam and Malaysia asserts that education for sustainable development recognizes the ways, in which teachers improve education, by utilizing their skills to the fullest extent and reconsidering the conditions of the teaching profession. The relationship between teachers' professional identity and teachers' emotions is an issue that needs to be studied as a basis for improving the effectiveness of their professional activities. The authors used a standardized questionnaire to describe the characteristics of Vietnamese secondary teachers and the influence of teacher professional identity (TPI) on working emotions. Findings revealed that a higher level of TPI social dimension was among participating Vietnamese teachers, and a lower level was towards career with negative emotions such as anger, fear and sadness.

The tenth paper, *Nonlinear Natural Scientific Thinking and Ecological Consciousness for Sustainability*, by Inese Trusina, Elita Jermolajeva and Viktors Gopejenko (Latvia) investigates sustainable development from the holistic perspective, taking into account the complex nature of the world and the dynamism of the socio-economic systems. This interdisciplinary study addresses the issues of economics, mathematics and physics with the main focus on the modern perspective of sustainable development offered in the field of education. The article focuses on key questions concerning the expansion of the educational processes and deepening of ideas and knowledge about the dynamism and diversity of the planetary system. The holistic approach implies the interaction of various nonlinear features that have been used in the paper to build a mental model and a causal relationship schema. The authors propose a systemic dynamic model of sustainability, which can open up an understanding of some of the reasons for changes in the potential of the industrial sector. In the article, the authors reveal the relationship between nature, society and human from the point of view of promising and methodological approaches of the "new" and "old" world.

The paper, *A More Sustainable Approach to Evaluating Teacher's Work*, by Liene Briede and Elga Dreilinga (Latvia) is aimed at analyzing ways for incorporating a more sustainable framework in the assessment of a teacher's daily work. Qualitative data served as a valuable tool for gaining in-depth insights into the context of the classroom problems and the direction toward possible solutions. The main findings of the study are manifested as prioritizing student learning and promoting their sustainable development, with an emphasis on independent learning, developing meta-cognitive skills, being a significant issue of the authors' proposed approach to a teacher's work evaluation, as well as taking into consideration teachers' beliefs, experience and attitudes in line with the observers' subjectivity.

The final paper, *Attractiveness of the Workplace Environment of Educational Institutions in the Context of Sustainable Development*, by the team of authors from Daugavpils University (Latvia) presents the results of the research on the factors of attractiveness of workplace environment and organizational culture of educational institutions from the point of view of teachers and heads of educational institutions, evaluating them in the context of sustainable development of education. The gained data indicate that the most important factors for the attractiveness of the workplace environment are relationships, work fit and security, but responsibility and location are indicated as the least important factors in making the workplace environment attractive. The results of the study show that both heads of educational institutions and teachers value an innovative culture in the organization, characterized by the statements willing to take risks, a result-oriented, creative, stimulating, challenging and supportive culture in the organization, characterized by the statements willing to cooperate, encouraging and sociable, recognizing personal freedom.

We are very thankful to all the authors and reviewers who contributed to the development of the Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability – Volume 25, Issue 2, 2023.