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Editorial: Kaleidoscope of Sustainable Practices: Developing Minds and Shifting Patterns

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Dear readers and members of Daugavpils University UNESCO Chair Open Network of the Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability (JTES), we are delighted to present you Volume 26, Issue 1 (2024) of the JTES.

In this issue of JTES, the authors of the articles have managed to create colorful and meaningful designs of sustainable teaching and learning practices, mirroring the essential values of the society, such as respect, integrity, equity, responsibility and sustainability. By sharing their diverse experiences, the authors are united in their philosophy of life that is manifested in their research through such ‘beads’ as mindfulness, self-awareness, and a deep sense of presence or reflection that constitute the backbone of purposeful action.

Research papers included in Volume 26, Issue 1 (2024) are available at <https://sciendo.com/journal/jtes>, while the summaries of 11 research papers by 33 authors representing ten countries – Portugal, Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and Latvia – are provided below.

In the first paper, *Climate Change Perceptions: A Study With Portuguese University Social Education Students*, by **Ricardo Ramos, Paula Vaz, Maria José Rodrigues** and **Isilda Rodrigues**, the authors declare that climate change (CC) is one of the most critical problems to solve in this century, and its effects cover a wide range of disciplines that go beyond the environmental component, becoming a social and economic problem as well. Recognizing the importance of the social educator in the context of contemporary societies, the authors intended to find out the university students’ perceptions on the social education course. The results showed that a majority of students were concerned about climate change. They also stated that they would like their course to deal more with climate change, as 74 % acknowledged that they did not have the skills to deal with climate change as a future professional. The results showed that the students were incapable of correctly listing a consequence of climate change. The data collected and analyzed in this study allowed concluding that Environmental Education played a fundamental role in the academic training of social educators, suggesting the need for its reinforcement and inclusion in their training plans.

In the second paper, *High-Impact Educational Practices (HIEPs) in Educational Media: Towards a Proposed Vision for the Sustainability of Egyptian Specific Education*, by **Hisham Saad Zaghloul**, the author states that sustainable education and teaching excellence in Egypt remain significant challenges due to the persistent reliance on conventional and theoretical curricula, highlighting the dire importance of innovative practices for educators. Specific education should be encouraged at higher education levels, particularly in educational media. However, its adoption remains challenging due to unclear objectives and ineffective practices. High-impact educational practices (HIEPs) would provide an incentive for improved learning among the students. The study focuses on the high impact of educational practices in exploring the importance of HIEPs in higher education in general and the educational media for specific education at Mansoura University in particular. The study identifies the government's focus on quantity over quality, poor teaching standards, and social inequalities as critical factors necessitating the implementation of HIEPs. The study concludes that it is important for the Department of Educational Media and its sub-specialties, including Drama, Educational Theatre, Radio, Television, and Educational Journalism, to integrate HIEPs and foster innovative practices in theatre education, in light of the 21st-century skills, skills gaps, ICT implementation, and support of teachers to increase the sustainability, particularly in educational media.

In the third paper, *Opinions of Pre-Service Preschool Teachers About Purposefulness: Sustainability Aspect*, by **Inese Jurgena, Dagnija Cēdere, Ingrida Keviša**, the authors emphasize that the contradictions of human development nowadays are related to the educational environment, which is characterized by changes induced by globalization and modern technologies; therefore, the activation of the potential of personality is becoming increasingly important, which is impossible without the training of purposeful and motivated teachers at the institutions of higher education. The authors analyze the opinions of students, pre-service preschool teachers, about teacher purposefulness in the context of sustainability. The results of the study show that future preschool teachers' understanding of purposefulness is related to their life experiences and is formed in relation to the development of personal goals.

In the fourth paper, *A Teachers' Coaching Approach to Sustainable Professional Development*, by **Raoui Manal, Droui Mohamed, Guerss Fatima-Zahra**, the authors justify that the value of coaching teachers by professional coaches in their school context is recognized to provide them with sustainable professional development (SPD). Three objectives were pursued: 1) to describe the quality of the coaching process; 2) to determine the characteristics of the coach, and 3) to identify the characteristics of the school context that can explain quality to promote SPD. Results describe that the quality of the coaching process was clear in its orientation to precise goals, its complexity, and its dynamism. The coaches' characteristics that can explain the quality of the coaching process to promote SPD are their perceptions of the context and their conceptions. The most important characteristic of the context that can reveal the quality of coaching enacted is the leadership of the school principal and the teachers' culture of collaboration.

In their study, *Sustainable Contemplative Practices in Pre-Service Teacher Education for Sustainability*, **Maria Magdalena Trenaman** and **Loh Sau Cheong** assume that over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in research studies that introduce contemplative practices – such as mindfulness, compassion, and lovingkindness – into the educational setting. While these programs have shown promising results for both students and teachers, there remains a gap in understanding how to integrate contemplative practices into the curriculum of teacher training education for sustainability. The paper aims to present a conceptual framework of Contemplative Practices (CP) that focuses on lovingkindness-compassion, which has the potential to revolutionize teaching practices towards sustainability. By advocating for the urgent integration of CP within the curriculum of teacher training education for sustainability, this paper asserts that nurturing the

lovingkindness-compassion competency can pave the way for a sustainable curriculum and a curriculum for sustainability.

The sixth paper, *Blended Learning as a Strategy to Improve Sustainability and Equity for Professional Development of Rural Teachers*, by **Yanfen Huang, Sharifah Intan Sharina Syed-Abdullah, Nurul Nadwa Zulkiflie** and **Norliza Ghazali** pays attention to teachers' equal support and professional development training in rural areas. The study takes the learning experience and teaching practice experience of rural teachers who participated in the Rural Teacher Replacement Training Program (RTRTP) in Guangdong Province, China, as a case. Seventeen rural teachers who participated in the blended training program were chosen as a research sample. The effect of blended training was evaluated at four levels: participants' reaction, participants' learning, behavior, and learning results. The results showed that rural teachers' overall satisfaction with the blended training program was relatively high. Teachers reported a greater increase in knowledge skills, but the translation into practical knowledge and the impact on the organization was not as high as expected. This study provides a reference for improving the efficiency of rural teacher blended training, especially for promoting the teaching practice after teacher training.

In the seventh paper, *Education for Sustainability Through Field Activities and Game-Based Tasks*, by **Elisa Saraiva, Fábio Faria, Célio Ferreira, Maria Manuel Azevedo**, the authors confirm that the content of education for sustainability should be integrated into the curriculum, engaging students in activities that promote awareness and practice of sustainability. To achieve this goal, it is essential to adopt a student-centered approach that involves creative, stimulating, and challenging activities. The research reports a case study in which 8th grade students had the opportunity to engage in these types of activities. The results confirmed that fieldwork and game-based tasks, which could be scaffolded through feedback, rewards and flow states, played an important role in the development of scientific thinking skills. This study provides a more holistic perception of local river ecosystems, their role in improving environmental attitudes, and promoting a more sustainable science education.

In the eighth paper, *Insights Into a New Format of Education for Sustainable Nutrition in Teacher Education*, **Valentina Conty** asserts that education for sustainable nutrition will only succeed if society is given direct access and experience to the obvious benefits of a sustainable lifestyle. An earlier personal and positive association to a sustainable lifestyle makes a dietary shift most likely. Here, the training of future teachers plays a central role as a multiplier. The study aims to fill this gap by leading students to experience edible plant diversity in urban environments via action-oriented learning and out-of-school learning places. The study outlines the methodological and didactic process and the practical implementation of an innovative sustainable approach of Project-Based Learning for education for sustainable nutrition in the curriculum of teacher education. Measured by the outcome of the course, the new concept applied here has a personal impact by that having the potential to facilitate a more sustainable approach of nutrition in our society.

In the ninth paper, *Teachers' Perspectives on the Education Process: Identifying Challenges and Promoting Sustainable Solutions*, by **Liene Briede, Inna Samuilik** and **Elga Drelinga**, the researchers analyze how teachers, with varying levels of experience and backgrounds, adapt to changes in education and perceive opportunities for further development. The aim of the article is to study Latvian teachers' perspectives on education in Latvia and identify areas for improvement. To reach the aim, focus group discussion was conducted involving six teachers from diverse backgrounds. Through content analysis, the study identified the primary challenges facing the current education process in Latvia: 1) prolonged, ineffective educational reforms; 2) challenges in rural education; 3) inappropriate teacher training; 4) the need for adaptive teaching methods; 5) the importance of cooperation among teachers and with parents. Addressing these areas could lead to significant improvements in the Latvian education system. The analysis sheds light

on several issues within education, including the dynamics of teacher–pupil roles, the quality of educational outcomes, and pupil attitudes.

The tenth paper, *Education for Sustainable Development – Securitization in International, National and Local Settings? A Critical Study of Environmental Security in Policies, Education Reforms and Teaching Practices in Sweden*, by **Helen Dwyer** focuses on environmental security in relation to international and national aims of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to explore if ESD can be understood as being part of a globally implemented securitization process with national empirical studies in Sweden. The perception of environmental threats was first set with regard to international environmental agreements and, mainly, UNESCO's policy aims of ESD. Expressions, statements and undertakings related to environmental threats were examined through a content analysis of education reform policies. Results demonstrated that the implementation of ESD varied depending on the usage of educational programs and individual understanding of ESD at different societal levels. Individual initiatives among teachers played a significant role in this process. It was also shown that securitization took place both horizontally and vertically and that securitization could be re-activated at the existing societal level although the previous one had ignored the impact of environmental threats to society.

The final paper, *Global Competence and Sustainable Development in Teacher Training: Preparing for a Changing World*, by the team of authors from Lithuania, Latvia and Poland (**Renata Bilbokaitė, Ieva Bilbokaitė-Skiauterienė, Ilona Fjodorova, Mārite Kravale-Pauliņa, Eridiana Ojehnoviča, Agnieszka Szplit and Zuzanna Zbróg**) examines the inclusion of global competences (GCs) in the curriculum of teacher education programs across three Baltic Sea countries: Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. Using Van den Akker's (2003) substantive approach to curriculum analysis, the researchers analyzed official documents and course descriptions of Daugavpils University (Latvia), Vilnius University Šiauliai Academy (Lithuania), and Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce (Poland). Employing Rapley's (2007) document analysis method, the study focused on both explicit content and implicit gaps to assess how well GCs are integrated into teacher training programs for primary and preschool education. The research involved a detailed examination of 262 syllabi, comprising 63 from Latvia, 61 from Lithuania, and 138 from Poland. The researchers used a template based on the PISA 2018 Global Competence Framework to identify which competences and sub-competences were included in the syllabi. The study aimed to answer the question: *How are all the dimensions of global competences included in the syllabi of courses taught at the primary and preschool education levels in three Baltic Sea countries?* The results indicate a significant variation in how GCs are integrated across the three countries, with Lithuania demonstrating the most comprehensive incorporation. The study highlights the need for a more sustainable, systematic and consistent inclusion of global competences in teacher education to better prepare educators for a globalized world.

We are very thankful to all the authors and reviewers who contributed to the development of the *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability* – Volume 26, Issue 1, 2024.