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Editorial: What Values Will Foster a More Sustainable Human and Educational Future?

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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 with Volume 27, Issue 1 (2025) of the JTES.

Educational researchers continue to offer and will continue to provide different answers to this fundamental question for the human species and society. The diversity of views is sustained by researchers' interest in the goal of their research and their professional understanding of and attitude to holism that is personally meaningful. Through this, each article in this issue reveals a differently nuanced use of holism ideas. In each study, the specific characteristics or qualities of sustainability or education for sustainable development are articulated through the research approaches and key concepts used.

The strength of the holistic approach is now beginning to be undermined by the increased use of the systematic approach habit, which continues the limiting perspectives of the "piecemeal approach" most commonly used in literature reviews. Then, the author's specific interest in a problem at a particular time, sometimes without cultural or ecological roots being considered, dominates. The systems approach is currently used less frequently and more narrowly in the Anthropocene age, especially in cases of its dynamic development. Ecocentrism is beginning to wane, and instead, the use of variously nuanced anthropocentric frameworks is increasing. The theme of human alienation from nature and the need for an inseparable link between nature and

humans in education is becoming more visible and is beginning to be revived.

We thank the authors for their proposals on the relationship between certain concepts and ideas of sustainability, their research approach, and their interest in the issues of sustainable education and the future of humanity. There are many issues in which you have engaged and propose to continue to address the most complex issue of our time. Much work must be done to clarify further the ideas you are exploring. We can learn from you to overcome the anthropogenic challenges.

This issue of JTES contains 13 research papers by 39 authors representing 13 countries: Brazil, Portugal, Croatia, Vietnam, China, Latvia, Argentina, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, the USA, Greece, and Poland. The summaries of the 13 research papers are provided below.

In the first paper, *Enhancing Teacher Competences in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): A Value-Oriented Framework*, the authors from Brazil and Portugal present a value-based framework aimed at developing teacher competences aligned with the principles of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Drawing on a systematic literature review, the study integrates existing models – notably the CSCT (Curriculum, Sustainable Development, Competences, Teacher Training) framework – into a newly developed proposal. Key findings highlight essential value-related competences for ESD and underscore the importance of acknowledging cultural and contextual diversity in sustainability practices. The framework supports a more holistic approach to sustainability in education, equipping teachers to drive meaningful change in their communities in response to the challenges of the Anthropocene.

The second paper, *Predicting Student Teachers' ESD Implementation Intention: The Role of Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Self-Efficacy*, by the authors from Croatia, explores the factors influencing student teachers' intention to implement Education for Sustainable Development. It introduces and tests a conceptual model that identifies four key predictors: (I) teacher self-efficacy, (II) beliefs about teaching and learning, (III) perceived value of ESD, and (IV) attitudes toward sustainable development (SD). Drawing on data from 706 student teachers and employing structural equation modeling, the analysis reveals that both teacher self-efficacy and the perceived value of ESD have a direct positive impact on the intention to implement ESD. The findings suggest that student teachers who feel capable of implementing ESD, hold constructivist views on education, and value ESD as a means of fostering societal transformation are more likely to intend to apply ESD principles in their future practice.

In the third paper, *Lecturers' Job Satisfaction as a Driver for Sustaining English Medium Instruction Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education*, the author declares that job satisfaction is a key determinant of employee motivation, performance, and retention, including in academic settings. This study investigates the factors influencing job satisfaction among 16 English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) lecturers at a Vietnamese university, applying Herzberg et al.'s Two-Factor Theory as an analytical framework. The study identifies key motivators – student progress, recognition from colleagues and institutions, and opportunities for professional development – that enhance lecturers' engagement and satisfaction. In contrast, hygiene factors such as excessive workload, limited training and mentorship, low compensation, insufficient collegial collaboration, and poor working conditions have been found to undermine satisfaction. The findings emphasize the dual impact of motivators and hygiene factors on EMI lecturers' professional well-being and retention. The study calls for institutional and policy-level efforts to reduce structural barriers

and enhance support systems, particularly in Vietnam and similar non-native English-speaking contexts. Implications are offered for policymakers, university leaders, and EMI practitioners to strengthen the sustainability and quality of EMI programs.

The fourth paper, *Happiness and Education for Sustainable Development: A Perspective From China*, representing the authors from China and Latvia, examines the relationship between happiness, Chinese traditional philosophy, and Education for Sustainable Development through the lens of metamodernism. It explores how happiness is understood in social sciences and Chinese culture and connects with education and sustainability. The paper argues that integrating Eastern and Western perspectives can enrich ESD by framing happiness not only as an educational outcome but also as a guiding principle. In the metamodern era, such a holistic approach – balancing material, spiritual, and communal well-being – can support more sustainable and student-centered educational practices.

In the fifth paper, *Teachers' Psychological Well-Being for Sustainable Professional Practice*, the authors investigate teachers' psychological well-being as a critical component of sustainable professional practice in today's evolving educational landscape. Using a quantitative design, data were collected from 100 Latvian teachers using the Teachers' Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire (Renshaw, 2020). The research has assessed overall well-being levels and examined variations across socio-demographic factors. Results show that teachers report strong self-efficacy and a high sense of school belonging – conditions that foster professional growth and enhance student learning. Notably, slightly higher well-being levels have been observed among teachers with greater life and work experience, as well as those working in regional or rural areas. The findings underscore the role of psychological well-being in supporting teacher resilience and long-term effectiveness. The study concludes that sustainable professional practice is closely linked to personal sustainability, rooted in teachers' values, experiences, and self-efficacy, which together enhance their adaptability and longevity in the profession.

The sixth paper, *Evolution of Latin American Higher Education Institutions' Commitment to the 2030 Agenda*, by the authors from Argentina and Spain, explores how Latin American higher education institutions (HEIs) have advanced their commitment to the 2030 Agenda, using participation in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings (THE-IR) as a key indicator. Covering the period from 2019 to 2024, it examines changes in the number of participating HEIs and their performance across multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The research aims to identify participation trends and assess the extent of SDG integration in institutional practices. Employing a quantitative, descriptive approach, the analysis draws on six years of data from THE-IR's official database. Results reveal a consistent rise in HEI engagement, with Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico leading in performance. The most commonly addressed SDGs are Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), and Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7). Although the commitment of Latin American HEIs to the 2030 Agenda is expanding, it remains in a formative stage, underscoring the need for stronger institutional leadership and robust monitoring and evaluation systems to transform commitments into measurable, long-term impacts.

The seventh paper, *Permaculture as a System for Sustainable Life: Attitudes of Prospective Science Teachers from Eastern Anatolia (Turkey)*, examines attitudes toward permaculture among 164 prospective science teachers at a state university. Using the 40-item Permaculture Attitude Scale, the mean score (3.83) indicates generally positive views. Females and participants raised in districts

score significantly higher than males and those from villages, while income and residence type show no effect. Results highlight the potential of integrating permaculture into teacher education and the need for broader research on influencing factors.

The authors of the eighth paper, *The Hidden Figures: Exploring Manifestations of Unsaid in Human(IT)ies Training,* declare that understanding implicature is crucial for effective communication, enabling interpretation of tone, relevance, and acceptability across intra- and interlingual contexts. This study introduces a training approach for content creators and mediators, designed for heterogeneous learner groups and hypermedia environments. Grounded in dynamic, interactive learning and edutainment principles, the method employs a six-word memoir framework to develop implicature processing skills, both in class and through self-paced online learning. Implemented at Riga Technical University from 2018 to 2022, it involved 62 undergraduate students from four cohorts in content creation courses. Since 2023, the methodology has been integrated into MOOCs within the "Language Technology Initiative" project. Results indicate its effectiveness in enhancing cognitive flexibility and communicative competence in multicultural, multilingual settings, offering a scalable model for sustainable interdisciplinary education.

The ninth paper, *Sustainable Development Goals in Elementary School Education: Implications for Curriculum Integration and Teacher Education*, examines the integration of sustainability concepts, as defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, into Arabic-medium elementary school textbooks (Kindergarten–Grade 4) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A content analysis of 33 textbooks has been conducted, systematically coding and categorizing sustainability-related content. Results reveal uneven representation of SDG dimensions, underscoring the need for a more balanced approach and enhanced teacher education to support effective sustainability instruction. As the first study to analyze SDG integration in UAE elementary education, it offers practical recommendations for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers to strengthen curricular alignment with SDG targets and promote comprehensive sustainability education.

The tenth paper, *The Application of Coaching in Education: The Bibliometric Analysis of the Emerging Trend*, investigates trends in the application of coaching in education through bibliometric analysis. Using the Scopus database and VOSviewer software, it examines the evolution of research on coaching in educational contexts, the distribution of related keywords, and patterns of scholarly collaboration. The analysis highlights the relevance of coaching to SDG 4 "Quality Education" and the broader sustainability of education. Annual publication growth is assessed in relation to key events during peak years, while leading journals and highly cited papers are identified and their content reviewed. VOSviewer co-authorship mapping is performed at the country level, and keyword co-occurrence analysis is conducted to reveal thematic linkages. Findings provide insights into research trends, influential contributions, and collaborative networks, offering a foundation for further exploration of coaching as a tool for educational development and sustainability.

The eleventh paper, *Windmills of the Young Mind: Towards a Sustainable Model for Analyzing Preschool Children's Perception of the World*, addresses preschool curriculum (re)design within the framework of education for sustainable development, emphasizing links between innate cognitive processes and acquired cognitive flexibility in children aged 5–7. It examines how increasing volumes of multimodal information affect children's perception, contextual understanding, and communication. Within a one-year project, Sustainable Model Design for Conceptual System and Lexical Framework Pliancy Analysis, three Latvian preschools participated in the study (March–

April 2025). Using storytelling with drawings, five concepts – dream, future, freedom, homeland, and security – have been explored. The analysis focuses on visual and emotional perception, spatial logic, social context, and vocabulary to assess children's perceptual development and propose a sustainable conceptual and lexical pliancy analysis model.

The twelfth paper, *Learning Beyond Walls: Teachers' Insights on 'Outdoor Play'as a Path to Sustainable Development of Children in Turkey and Greece*, explores Greek and Turkish teachers' perspectives on outdoor play as a means to promote children's sustainable development. Outdoor play supports holistic growth and fosters environmental stewardship, yet is often undervalued in early childhood education. Using a qualitative case study design, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 20 teachers in each country. Thematic analysis has revealed contributions to physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development, alongside values such as environmental awareness and cooperation. However, safety concerns, limited resources, curriculum demands, and public fears frequently restrict outdoor activities. The findings underscore the need for policy reform and teacher training to position outdoor play as a central strategy for nurturing environmentally conscious and socially responsible individuals.

The final paper, *Exploring the Educational Potential of Green Grounds in Primary Schools and Kindergartens: A Pilot Study From the Selected Polish Cities*, focuses on children's growing disconnection from nature, which challenges sustainability education and child development. School and kindergarten green grounds can help reverse this trend by creating more opportunities for outdoor learning. The pilot study aims (1) to analyze the natural and infrastructural characteristics of municipal school and kindergarten grounds and their association with teachers' outdoor practices, and (2) to assess the reliability of the applied survey instruments. Findings show that outdoor learning is most common in kindergartens and early primary grades, particularly among teachers of nature-related subjects, and least common among humanities and social sciences teachers. The results emphasize that beyond physical grounds, teacher competences are crucial, stressing the importance of coupling investments in green grounds with professional development and integrating outdoor education into teacher training programs.

We are very thankful to all the authors who contributed to the development of the J*ournal of Teacher Education for Sustainability* – Volume 27, Issue 1, 2025. We express our profound appreciation to the reviewers for their constructive comments and valuable suggestions, which have significantly contributed to improving the quality of the papers. The research papers of this issue are available at https://sciendo.com/journal/jtes.