

Education and Knowledge in a Sustainable Environment, Through Digital Literacy for Transformation

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Introduction

Education (as a term derived from the Latin: education - upbringing, nurture), as a concept and process, is an organized activity that contributes to the development of positive human qualities by harmonizing social and individual relationships.

In the Electronic Dictionary of the Albanian Language, Education/Upbringing is Defined as follows:

The totality of spiritual, mental, and physical traits, cultural habits, etc. (worldview, moral qualities, character and willpower traits, customs, tastes, etc.) that a person acquires under the systematic influence of school, family, and society, and through learning and working; the general and specialized formation of an individual. Sound education. Moral (political, military) education. Family education. School education. Aesthetic (musical, health) education. Instilling a work ethic in children.

In the Dictionary of Pedagogy by Author Shefik Osmani, Education is Defined as: "one of the main categories of pedagogy; a conscious and organized activity through which society and the learners themselves influence the development of the individual's physical and spiritual strengths to shape them in a well-rounded manner."

There is a curriculum based on the fulfillment of competencies, such as writing, speaking, IA, and entrepreneurship, which we use to practice and develop in our work to educate our students. This is an important challenge we have to face in our ever-changing work.

In the Albanian reality, the distance of the political system from a consolidated democratic model is often forgotten. Political power is gained through regular elections based on the principle of one person, one vote, one value. It is characterized by a clear separation between the state and civil society. Governance tends to be neutral in the competition among interest groups and accountable to the voters. According to Dahl, the essence of liberal constitutional doctrine is based on accountability-representation-choice, meaning one person: one vote - one value. Our primary value is the youth. But our youth do not believe in the political system reforms. They want to go abroad to build their sustainable future.

Regarding the educational process, the idea of controlling environments has drawn the attention of psychology as psychological control. Parents exert pressure on children to engage in specific behaviors, controllingly interfering with their emotions and psychological world. The concepts of autonomy, external control, and internal control share similarities (Hoffman's 1970 analysis) regarding parental discipline, children's values, and techniques. Let us not forget that children can be influenced in different ways depending on the role of a disciplined parent. Maintaining family relationships is crucial for both parent and child. According to Hoffman (1970), the distinction lies in:

- Assertion of Authority through physical punishment, denial of privileges, and material objects.
- Expressions of Love through the direct and indirect manifestation of anger and disapproval.
- Induction/Stimulation, by providing explanations so that the child understands the impact of their behavior on another child.

The concepts of external control, internal control, and autonomy support are defined through the assertion of authority and the internalization of discipline. Motivation in itself represents the first step toward action goal-oriented, desired behaviors that are essential for fulfilling needs. These achieve the disciplined motivation of the individual to actively participate in activities, accompanied by their individual characteristics. Teachers and parents to be for our students' future is our most important challenge. We have to raise intellectuals to be not go abroad and invest their knowledge and competencies as migrants in other countries. But we have to let them go if they need freedom and let them act with wisdom, not force them for the sake of love.

Bacon states: Knowledge is power. Education requires knowledge to become a competence, and this requires motivation, self-control, assessment, and self-assessment to achieve the self-actualization of individuals educated with knowledge, enabling them to become intellectual professionals for sustainable development. This, in my opinion have to be our priority. Their knowledge is educated in the right methodology and direction for a good, civilized life.

Methodology

This paper primarily utilizes qualitative methods, such as literature review, reflection on the literature, discussions, and practical experiences, and work with pupils, students, teachers, and professors. This paper aims to reflect, for a broader study, the challenges of education and teachers' needs for professional and personal development and qualification within the framework of reforms and new social policies.

Data collection for this project utilized qualitative methods, primarily focus groups, alongside literature reviews and open discussions with school staff and community members. This approach aimed to identify specific needs related to educational challenges, teacher and student motivation, bullying, and resource rooms, and to address the needs of specific students, including didactic and musical tools, to create a more inclusive and functional, sustainable environment for intelligent students or those with disabilities.

The Focus Group Method

It is directly linked to the needs of students with disabilities, the functioning of the resource room, and how teachers, parents, and school specialists perceive the improvement of this space. The focus group helped identify the real needs of the resource room...

Purpose of the Focus Group

The purpose of the focus group was to collect qualitative data from participants to ensure that the resource room intervention was grounded in concrete needs rather than general observations. Through guided discussion, the session aimed to:

- Gather insights and ideas about education challenges through digital competence and more.

Focus Group Participants

To foster partnership, various stakeholders from the school community participated in the partnership.

The focus group was organized systematically to ensure the discussion was clear, guided, and oriented toward concrete results. Its structure included the following stages:

The purpose of the focus group, the importance of this paperwork, and the need to gather feedback from all participants are presented in the following lines.

Guided Discussion on the Current Situation. Participants shared their experiences regarding the current use of the smart labs, interactive tables, etc...

Brainstorming and Mini-workshop about education challenges in Albania.

Ideas were gathered regarding the materials and tools teacher, parents, and students think are more important for the good of taking the right knowledge, referring to our children's preferences, life, and work priorities.

Finally, the collected ideas were grouped by importance...

During the focus group session, direct notes were taken to document the thoughts.

Findings/Discussion

Study Hypothesis

Education, schooling, textbooks, teaching tools, the methodology

of the teacher/educator, teacher training and qualifications, and reformative social policies are factors and challenges that are clearly manifesting in the life of the Albanian family. Directly or indirectly, they affect not only the intellectual development of young people but also that of Albanian society as a whole, aiming for sustainable development and comprehensive integration toward the EU by 2030.

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the challenges faced by education and educators for sustainable development in Albania. This is demonstrated in the use of the new digital competence in our curriculum to transform and bring innovation to the teaching format, methodology, and strategies in Albania.

Structure of the Paper

The paper is organized according to the following structure: introduction, three chapters, conclusions, recommendations, and bibliography.

- **The Problem:** Education and schooling are losing their value; student enrollment numbers in lower secondary and upper secondary education are declining.

The Main Objectives are:

- Identifying factors influencing the educational process of children and students.
- Challenges faced by educators in improving the teaching situation.
- The educator's contribution to providing integrated digital teaching methods.

Core Questions

- How do motivation and discipline affect the education of generations for sustainable development?
- What are the dominant challenges regarding professional development and inclusion in education?
- What interventions can be effective for social and economic improvement in education?

The human mind is like a mirror and must reflect the nature in which humans live in relation to it and others, because we are social beings. However, to do this effectively, the mirror must be unscratched so that it does not distort reality. Knowledge is also expanded by ordinary people following logical arguments. Therefore, both we and the children/students are a "tabula rasa"; let us not write incorrectly on the slate of knowledge, because knowledge is power.

Motivation as an Influence in Education and the Acquisition of Knowledge

Motivation is defined as creating the right conditions for people to work effectively. This aligns with work morale, which relates to satisfaction and attitudes toward work. The teacher, who is also the leader of the classroom the manager at work motivates their individuals when performing actions, they believe will satisfy needs, desires, and demands, prompting them to act in a desirable manner. Therefore, it is believed that motivational factors in school activities or work are intertwined with the policies followed by the management staff, targeted objectives, strategic action plans, human resource management skills, and monitoring.

Motivators induce individuals to act in a certain way, whereas motivation reflects their needs. A motivator influences individual behavior, while motivation refers to the drive and effort exerted to satisfy goals. In his book "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us" (1995/2009), Daniel Pink states that motivation

stems from three elements:

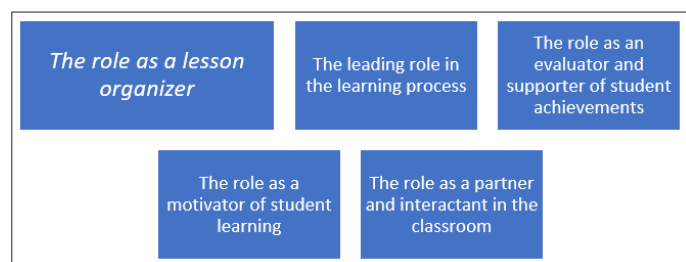
- **Autonomy:** The desire to direct our own lives.
- **Mastery:** The desire to continually improve at something that matters.
- **Purpose:** The yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

Work motivation is linked to setting clear goals, as every job and activity must be intentional. The content and type of goals (intrinsic, extrinsic) are driven by the social context and can vary based on how they develop. Social contexts can foster the achievement of intrinsic and extrinsic goals to varying degrees through structural factors or interpersonal interactions. The fit perspective encompasses the idea that optimal functioning and effectiveness in work relationships occur when individual goals align with the types of goals promoted in the immediate work environment (e.g., when an employee's values differ from those promoted within the organization).

All of us constantly strive to move forward, to achieve something, to earn money, and to invest driven by the need for success and to reach established standards. The achievement motive refers to internalized efforts for perfection and is characterized by a high level of task performance. In life, we utilize our skills to achieve goals. Since childhood, we have wanted to use our abilities to perform tasks that are valued by society; thus, we orient ourselves toward various activities to exercise our intellectual capacities. This is one of the functions of the school: education through theoretical knowledge and practical professional skills.

The Challenge of the Educator and the Teacher

We value teaching as a difficult but beautiful and noble profession. It is rooted in reality. The subject of a teacher's work is human beings, who are complex and delicate. The figure of the teacher and their role become more prominent and complex within school environments. Under the influence of changing circumstances and a student-centered curriculum, combined with the prolonged transition of society, a significant portion of teachers are not motivated in their work. This profession is not preferred by young people. In daily teaching practice, various roles of the teacher intertwine:



The teacher's motivational skills according to Stipek (1988), which influence student motivation to impact academic achievement, are classified as intrinsic and extrinsic (Zeneli, Orhan "Motivacioni"):

Intrinsic Influences	Extrinsic Influences
Explains why learning about entrepreneurship matters	Provides clear expectations
Sparks interest and keeps curiosity active	Gives concrete feedback
Provides a variety of activities	Provides valuable rewards
Sets goals for learning	Offers achievable rewards
Connects learning with students' needs	
Helps students develop action plans	

Teachers must feel the need to constantly intervene in intrinsic motivations, as not all students are equally motivated during a lesson. The teacher must interrupt or avoid undesirable behaviors and aim to reinforce and internalize desirable behaviors, coordinating their actions with internal standards.

Teacher performance evaluation involves a multifaceted process of observations and evidence, where the teacher is engaged in professional development—always showing a readiness to change and improve practices for the sake of children's education. Teachers must keep professional standards in their perspective and implement them, aiming to establish and respect criteria for quality and professionalism in teaching. This is crucial because a teacher's mistake impacts society, damages it, and walks among us. Teachers must systematically engage in instructional and reflective activities for their continuous professional development, viewed as a process to improve teaching practice and learning.

Weber states that the products of social action are multi-causal, pointing to the need to establish an explanatory context for the origins and transformations of institutions throughout the history of society. Bourdieu mentions that every field, as a historical product, generates interests which are prerequisites for its functioning. These are not merely products of the state of the economy, but of economic, social, spiritual, moral, and emotional values, inseparable from interest groups. Periodic trainings have been conducted; for instance, between January and May 2014, in cooperation with the "Nolimits" association and the Department of Communication Sciences at the Faculty of Journalism, University of Tirana (UT), 823 employees of all levels were trained.

Another characteristic and challenge of education today is the academic achievement of children with syndromes that make them "different," such as ID (Intellectual Disability), ADHD, Sluggish Cognitive Tempo (SCT), etc. A large study of primary school students revealed that children with SCT (Sluggish Cognitive Tempo) the impulsive type with a sluggish cognitive tempo are evaluated below average compared to those with ADHD (Hyperactive-Impulsive type). I believe that training for teachers and parents is necessary to intervene in behavior using positive and valuable reinforcements to reduce the symptoms of these disorders.

Continuous efforts have been made toward creating an integrated mental health service system, including primary care, community-based mental health services, and public services offered at Community Mental Health Centers in Tirana or through school psychologists. Studies have confirmed that despite reform achievements in the healthcare system regarding mental health care, the range of issues and difficulties accompanying this process in the reality of our pre-university schools remains extensive. The roles that professionals must cover in these services focused on training for professional development, prevention, rehabilitation, university and postgraduate qualifications for psychologists and social workers, professional supervision, and motivation are absolutely necessary.

The use of SMART laboratories introduced in 2025–2026, and digital classrooms where projects are carried out on various platforms (Kahoot, PowerPoint, Google Forms, etc.) by students and teachers, as well as the SMIP system since 2020 as a duty for teachers, indicates that the new competence Digital Technology in schools and teaching reflects the introduction of a new branch on Artificial Intelligence and the real-time online digital reporting of children's progress to parents. Teachers and students have adapted through training, which has often been undertaken individually

and privately a professional development necessary to adapt and move forward according to European standards.

• **The Educator's Contribution to Providing Integrated Digital Teaching Methods:**

Relationships based on cooperation, communication, dialogue, and consensus are a major social obligation for a democratic society, where the school plays an irreplaceable role in the civic and professional education of individuals, alongside the educational values they carry. However, we increasingly see in the media that social, economic, and cultural life is dominated by division, vengeance, and irresponsibility, while domestic and school violence is rising, leaving a traumatic impact on children today and society tomorrow.

Key Term Enhancements & Notes for Your Paper

- **CVH / ADHD:** In Albanian, CVH corresponds to Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder. In English academic texts, this is standardized as ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) or SCT (Sluggish Cognitive Tempo) based on the context of the Bamgaertel (1995) citation.
- **SMIP:** Kept as SMIP (Pre-university Information Management System), as it is a specific local system name.

In February 2010, 2013, and 2020, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MASH) issued guidelines and directives regarding school organization, defining the new workload for teachers, and the use of online platforms was heralded as efficient for school work. The role of parents is highly necessary as active participants and important actors of education within the school-family-community triangle. They are the group most interested in the quality of their children's textbooks, yet we notice negligence. The broad, heterogeneous migratory movement has turned

Tirana is a dense mosaic of subcultures trying to coexist, which also brings challenges to the school, especially in the context of ethical participation alongside educators. Under these conditions, the effort should focus on parents helping school administrators, with the school remaining open to train, guide, and orient them toward social and community centers for their children's specific issues, rather than overburdening teachers whose primary focus remains the teaching hour.

Institutions have always been at the center of social sciences, but they have not been addressed with the same emphasis in every historical approach or wave of reform. Before and after the 20th century, several scholars wrote about them without developing a unified theory of institutions. Most approaches relied on the study of formal institutions, treating them as formal rules of behavior and law. Thus, institutions could and did take the form of a formal bureaucratic structure. Institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience (Scott, Richard W., 2004, p. 408). Today, they are equipped with the SMIP platform, electronic registers for entering grades, data for every pupil and student, and Smart labs rather than just video projectors. However, are teachers and parents sufficiently trained by the school to obtain the necessary information regarding them?

The PISA program assesses 15-year-old students on their ability to use knowledge and skills acquired in school when faced with new situations outside the classroom context. TALIS does the same for teachers. It does not ask "HOW MUCH do you know by heart?", but rather: "Do you know how to use what you have learned to think, reason, and make informed decisions?" The

Albanian National Core Curriculum (KBK) is based on the exact same principle: competence is not something learned or completed within a lesson, but a continuous process of building and utilizing knowledge. The student constructs meaning through action, reflection, and critical thinking in concrete situations. Subject-specific competences serve as developmental bridges to key competences, one of which constantly highlighted and focused on during project-based work and lesson explanations is digital competence and digital intelligence, which represents one of the preferred fields for high school graduates and university students.

- **Building the Components of Subject-Specific Competences**, through the activation of critical thinking elements, represents a direct contribution to the development of the components of key competences.
- **The Components of Subject-Specific Competences** are not confined within a single field; their impact extends beyond it, into interdisciplinary situations in citizenship, sociology, philosophy, public health care, rationalism and empiricism, and subcultures.

In the 20th century, Piaget explained that:

- The student does not just receive knowledge; they construct it.
- Meaning arises through interaction with others.
- Thinking is unique to each student, shaped by the environment in which they live.

Teachers and Students in Their Student-Centered Roles

- The teacher is not a mere transmitter of knowledge, but an architect of situations that activate critical thinking an individual who knows how to select content.
- The student is not a passive recipient, but the center of the process an individual who connects what they know with what they experience and turns it into action through the competent use of ICT.

The traditional curricular approach, based on planning with objectives and standardized exams, has been replaced by the goal of having students build knowledge that they understand, apply, and transfer to real-life situations. This shifts the focus from instructional content as an end in itself to integrated competence, which represents the application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in life. The European Union (2006, 2008) identified eight and today there are nine, including digital competence key competences that a student must build to live and work in a democratic, dynamic society characterized by consumption, savings, free enterprise, and competition.

Critical thinking is a core, conscious, and intentional mental process developed by integrating mental operations such as observation, analysis, comparison, and generalization, as well as mental processes like judgment, reasoning, argumentation, and reflection. It helps individuals, pupils, and students not to accept everything they hear or read without reflection, but to question it as generators of knowledge and reflective processors through questions such as:

- Is this true? What are the facts that support it?
- Why do I think this way? Is there any other way to look at this?

When this process is beautifully reflected in ICT platforms, it shows that the potential of the content, mediated by the teacher through stimulating questions and guided discussion, materializes in the student's actions. Here, the student constructs meaning,

judges with evidence, and reflects civic values for sustainable development, with inclusive education as the primary objective [1-15].

Conclusions

The integration process is creating new structures within education as well (such as ASCAP, ASCAL, IZHA, AKKSHI, QSHA, etc.). Community law directly creates a large number of obligations and rights for the citizens of every member state. The future of the Western Balkans, and our own, lies in EU membership. This was announced in the May 1999 platform when the European Commission launched the Stabilization and Association Process, followed by the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, which has borne fruit in our country as well. This process faced difficulties and slowdowns in 2000 in countries like Albania and North Macedonia. We aim by 2030 to become part of this integration, aligning with SDG 4: "Quality, Inclusive Education."

The lack of connections between interactive, integrated teaching programs in secondary schools widens the gap between the school and today's youth culture. It does not exert enough attraction for young people to invest in their own country because it does not respond to their needs. Real reforms must not turn students and teachers into victims. In the educational market, models are in circulation that include a conceptual shift from the notion of competence to the concepts of objectives, alongside educational programs based on both objectives and competences. Consequently, teachers were moved from one school to another without clear criteria, and educational hours were removed and reinstated in schedules without properly consulting those upon whom the action falls the students, the teachers, and the community. The workload and burden on teachers have increased for the sake of numerous documents they are required to complete.

A study revealed that most bullying activities occur away from adults' sight: corners of classrooms with cell phones in hand, hallways, stairs, restrooms, and locker rooms. When adults supervise specific areas and enforce the removal of cell phones in schools, intervening quickly, bullying will be prevented more effectively. School personnel must understand what cyberbullying is and its impact on students to ensure a safe and sustainable educational environment. According to reports from psychosocial staff and families, a mismatch is observed between the services provided and the roles of psychologists, social workers, and security officers. Observations during the instructional process indicate a lack of active presence and specialized spaces (resource rooms) for meetings and sessions that could occur without compromising privacy, according to the objectives of community services defined in the Regulation of Mental Health Services. The teacher is the leader of the classroom and the lesson hour, but not of specific problems where the roles of the principal, police officer, and psychologist should be more active.

Digital technology is one of the objectives for sustainable development as it eases the burden on students by allowing them to complete many tasks, projects, and high-quality activities in real time; however, it requires more frequent teacher training from schools regarding new innovations. Cyberbullying has become a prominent problem in educational settings, where the recently enacted law on removing cell phones during instructional hours must be respected. Although the academic curriculum is inclusive, the number of students with behavioral instability has increased, and there are parents who refuse to acknowledge their child's

problems, which disrupt the classroom learning process with their behavior. Intentional self-harm is common in adolescence today, especially due to the effect of social networks; therefore, interventions are needed to raise awareness and establish criteria for technology use in schools.

In school and instructional activities, motivational elements that stimulate learning are linked to fostering a circle of interests in specific fields where the pupil or student seeks to professionalize themselves. They are also linked to creating positive attitudes toward knowledge, all school subjects, and school environments; achievement efforts; highlighting personal abilities; and ways of exercising them without harming the student or causing them to skip classes. Experiencing emotional satisfaction during learning should be valued, and appreciation should be encouraged, especially if the student is particularly talented in the field of ICT. These components of motivation have positive psychological effects on students and are reflected in their efforts. The teacher's level of demands, expectations, competition during work to increase quality, communication methods, continuous grading, encouragement and rewards, praise and punishment, and confidential relations in teacher-student interactions are incentives that the teacher uses to successfully organize the learning activity. Two large groups of motivational indicators are:

- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Occurs within the person, fulfilling biological, cognitive, affective, and conative needs.
- **Extrinsic Motivation:** Occurs outside the person, linked to the operant conditioning of the organism in the surrounding environment and the influence of the social circle upon them.

Contradictory drives develop parallelly within an individual: the need for success and the fear of failure. Working with a human being, a child, means positioning oneself within the social status to which they belong.

Notes & Acronyms

- **ASCAP / IZHA / QSHA:** Albanian Educational Institutions: Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education, Institute for Educational Development, Center for Educational Services.
- **OZHQ 4:** SDG 4 (Sustainable Development Goal 4).
- **TIK:** ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Recommendations

New approaches aiming to raise awareness and educate secondary school students regarding mental health issues, and to identify risk cases together with them through the use of laboratories and projects on digital platforms, specifically implemented in the SMART school context.

Short-term capital gains and losses are combined to obtain net capital gains or losses. Long-term capital gains and losses are combined to determine the net long-term capital gain or loss. If the net short-term gain exceeds the net long-term loss, that excess constitutes ordinary income. We can be sure that our high school graduates already understand this.

Adolescents, who are better informed than us through social networks and the heavy presence of technology in their lives, are prone to self-harming behaviors. This ranges from casual thoughts of self-harm and suicide to the most serious ones involving severe violence or homicide, often caused by the absence and pressure of parents within the family.

Therefore, an involvement of the school-family-community triangle is required, bringing them closer to the school through meetings rather than solely through WhatsApp groups with a single parent on the School Board. Individuals, groups, and the community should be involved in research and evaluations for school and quality improvement, informing them about activities involving their children in every detail, so we can ensure their active presence. They are the taxpayers and the citizens.

The utilization of SMART laboratories and teacher training for professional development have seen changes with the issuance of the 2025 and 2026 guidelines. Ensuring that schools effectively and realistically implement digital classrooms even through a structured schedule must be as genuine as possible, rather than being just a facade and endlessly filled paperwork that parents do not understand. Parents must be trained by the school as an important part of its community. The development of programs by specialists, psychologists, and social workers is needed for lower secondary education (AML) specialists and parents, either individually or in groups, depending on children's issues, which have increased in recent years with specific special needs (AK) characteristics.

In conclusion, I believe that we must strive toward a safe society by building programs that guide the behavior of both educators and students, improve educational work habits, and create a comprehensive service infrastructure equipped with laboratories, because ultimately everyone deserves another chance as the social state we claim to be. The effects of public sector reforms are based on the opinions of public officials; however, there is a need to utilize civic perception and opinion as a direct evaluator of public service performance in education, leaning more heavily on personal experience. In the general objectives of the EU, its Treaty promotes economic and social progress, as well as employment. The creation of areas of cooperation without borders and the community's competencies in establishing the European Social Fund serve to:

- Strengthen socio-economic cohesion
- Enable free labor movement.
- Foster digital professional development.

Academic Translation Notes

- **AML / AL:** Upper Secondary Education/ Upper Education (University)
- **Financial Paragraph Notice:** The second paragraph under the recommendations section contains specific accounting terms (short-term/long-term capital gains and losses). It has been translated exactly as provided to maintain your textual structure.

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