DIGITAL LEARNING MATERIALS AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES IN SCHOOLS OF LATVIA. OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

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## Authors

Daniela L.;Rubene Z.;Goba L.

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# Abstract

As technology is increasingly integrated into the learning process, it is also important to consider all aspects of the Technology Enhanced Learning process. Both those that promote the student's learning achievements and those that lead to different types of risks: student safety, physical and sensory development, metacognitive development, etc. Technology and digital solutions can be a powerful tool to transform learning and to improve the learning environment. In order to develop innovative competences, the learning environment needs to develop accordingly, new knowledge should be sought after and educators should constantly be learning new skills together with their students. To achieve this, the opportunities and benefits of technology and digital solutions need to be utilized in the education process, and the use of technologies, DMLs (Digital Learning Materials) and teaching aids in the educational environment, while at the same time enhancing the digital competence of educators, so that the DML is used not only for entertainment purposes, or applied only to strengthen certain skills. It is essential to use DMLs in a pedagogically substantiated manner and to promote both the development of specific skills and the construction of new knowledge, as well as to promote pupils' creativity and creative actions, critical thinking, ability to develop new and innovative solutions in a technology-rich learning process.
To develop a broader use of DML in Latvia in the education process, thus promoting access to education, The Operational Program for the 2007-2013 programming period of the EU funds 2014-2020 "Growth and Jobs" has set a priority - develop a competency-based content of general education, where one of the actions is planned 8.3.1.2. "Development of Digital Learning and Methodical Resources" (hereinafter – action 8.3.1.2). It aims to develop digital teaching and methodological tools for implementing change in the introduction and realization of general education content.
To achieve the objectives, a study was conducted on the situation in general education institutions in Latvia, raising the following issues of the study:
1. What DMLs are used in general education institutions in Latvia and what is the purpose of their use.
2. What are the more pressing issues regarding the use of DMLs in general education institutions?
To answer the raised research questions, two research methods were used: a survey of general education institutions (230 answers) and expert interviews (6 experts working in the DML development business).

# Outcome

There are no DMLs available in pre-school educational institutions in Latvia. In general education schools, DMLs are mostly used in STEM subjects at the 5th-9th grade stage and have low interactivity. Educators are keen on using the DML more widely in their work, but they believe their pedagogical preparedness is inadequate for their use. Often, there are situations where DMLs are used to fill up students' free time, not exploring the educational potential of DMLs.
The obtained results shall be used to develop a strategy for the digitalization of general education in Latvia.