

## **Tool-HLCA: An intervention to promote the health literacy of school-aged children**

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### **Background:**

School-aged children are often exposed to health-related information from digital sources. However, there are no interventions in schools to help them deal with these appropriately. Installing health literacy in schools succeeds more easily if it can be linked to existing curricular requirements. This study aims to implement a toolbox to address (digital) health literacy of school-aged children (grades 7 and 8) in German secondary schools by combining existing media frameworks with health literacy.

### **Methods:**

Based on analysing a mandatory curriculum on media literacy in the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia in Germany and elaborating its commonalities with health literacy, we developed the toolbox for strengthening (digital) health literacy in school-aged children. Currently, the toolbox is being piloted in the school-setting in order to gain feedback from children and teachers.

### **Results:**

The mandatory media literacy framework for classroom teaching in German schools addresses the health literacy core competencies find, understand, appraise and use information. By using that framework and integrating health as a topic, this toolbox fits to the German core curriculum and will ensure that the toolbox is familiar and can be used with low thresholds by schoolteachers. The toolbox addresses digital health literacy including exercises to evaluate health-related information on different online platforms. It provides topic-

specific tasks (e.g. coronavirus, vaccination, nutrition) and evaluation criteria for identifying mis- and disinformation.

**Conclusions:**

The toolbox is an opportunity to enhancing (digital) health literacy in school-aged children by highlighting the intersections of the mandatory curriculum on media literacy and the core competencies of health literacy. In the long term, this kind of curriculum analysis serves as a methodological blueprint for educationalists to integrate health literacy into schools in many ways.