

New MITA project aims to bridge the gap between digital competencies and early school-leavers

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A newly launched MITA project aims to bridge the gap between digital competencies and early school-leavers, Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Growth Jose Herrera said.

"Educators in schools around Europe face a lot of challenges, amongst which are early school-leaving and lack of student engagement. This collaborative project (Erasmus+) aims at challenging traditional teaching methodologies and opening up to more innovative game-based learning (GBL). The Erasmus+ Project was launched today for educators and related organisations. This project aims to create a guide book and an online interactive toolkit which will serve as a first stepping stone to encourage students to continue their studies, by embedding English and Maths with ICT.

By bridging the gap, he explained, it would increase the interest and motivate those considering leaving school early. "It complements existing programmes in Malta and Europe targeting early school-leavers, adding the GBL approach - a new approach which still needs to be piloted on a larger scale across Europe".

The Parliamentary Secretary said that education is considered as a key sector where technology could be valuable and fruitful. "In fact, during the Digital Malta workshop organised some weeks ago, one of the areas of discussion was digital education which could give Malta the opportunity to continue growing as a digitally-enabled nation. He emphasised that the aims of this project are twofold: that early school-leavers are given the opportunity to explore new ways of learning, whilst also offering opportunities for educators to embrace technology, learn new teaching methods, and explore cross-disciplinary approaches".

"Through this project we will give the opportunity to potential early school-leavers to discover different ways of learning. It is also an opportunity for educators to explore cross-disciplinary approaches, embrace technology and to learn more innovative methods of teaching and learning. The use of serious games as a learning tool, can get the students more engaged in the particular subject and as a consequence of playing the game learn specific skills. With proper training, the use of games in schools as a learning tool can contribute towards enhanced learning and to instil more creativity in classrooms," said Herrera.

This project will come to an end in September 2017, where results will be analysed and recommendations and best practices will be evaluated for future projects. It is hoped that this approach to learning will be disseminated and incorporated into the school curricula of other European countries to sustain future initiatives and projects. "This partnership strives to achieve a dynamic competence-building within the teaching community and serve as a catalyst for change, both for educators and students in Europe as well as internationally," Dr Herrera said.

This Erasmus+ Partnership brings together the following entities: MITA, St Margaret's College, University of Malta, Donau University in Austria, and Nystromska School in Sweden.