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The comprehension of elements of combinatorics in real-life situations for primary school students

Competence in mathematics has been identified at EU level as one of the key competences which should be developed in primary school. One of the latest topics in the primary school mathematics curriculum in Latvia is related to elements of combinatorics and the probability theory. Teaching this topic is expected to result in developing the students' problem-solving abilities and practical application skills. The integrated approach helps to better understand the need to use mathematics in real life.

In the article, we will analyze mathematics curriculums and problems associated with the understanding of the use of combinatorial elements in different life situations of primary school children through the results of students' tests and a survey. In the article, we will give proposals for improvement of the mathematics curriculum in basic education (1st grade - 6th grade) and methodical recommendations for teachers for delivering different solving strategies in school, for example, guessing and checking, practical and graphical models, tables, graphs, games with dice. The national diagnostic tests of third, sixth and ninth grade (2012-2014) and the students' survey results will be used in this research.

Keywords: competence, elements of combinatorics in primary school, real-life situations, solving strategies