

**CREATIVE PAUSE AND MIND PROMPT AS STRATEGIES FOR  
MANAGING MEDIA DIET AMONG ADOLESCENTS: IMPLICATIONS  
FOR PRODUCTIVE THINKING**

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**Abstract**

This study explored the effectiveness of Creative Pause and Mind Prompt interventions in the management of media diet among adolescents for productive thinking in Mayflower School, Ikenne, Ogun State. Using a quasi-experimental design with a Nonequivalent Control Group, 100 secondary school students (50 males and 50 females) participated in the study. The Adolescents Media Diet Assessment Scale (AMAS) was used as the primary instrument. Data were analysed using chi-square statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicate that: (i) there is a significant difference between participants treated with Mind Prompt and Creative Pause interventions and the control group; (ii) there is a significant difference in productive thinking between male and female adolescents; (iii) parental socio-economic status significantly influences adolescents' creative potential; (iv) cognitive ability significantly differentiates adolescents' productive thinking; and (v) the types of media diet consumed by adolescents vary significantly. The study concludes that creativity-based interventions can effectively support adolescents in managing their media diet and enhancing productive thinking. Recommendations are made for counsellors, parents, schools, policymakers, and social workers.

**Keywords:** Creative pause; Mind prompt; Media diet; Adolescents; Productive thinking; Creativity interventions

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

A mass media explosion occurred in the 20th century and revolutionized the way people gain information about their world (Bushman and Anderson, 2001). The media plays a central part in the lives of adolescents, as they interact with it on a daily basis in the form of music, television, the Internet, or video games. Media is used for entertainment, information, and communication. Although people do not necessarily seek out violent content, violence is an integral part of the media landscape. Its influence is often subtle and always inescapable. As one researcher noted: we don't drive down the freeway in order to see billboards, but we see them and we acquire information from them anyway (Strasburger and Wilson, 2002, p. 281).

The effects of violent media have been of public concern for over 50 years (Levine, 2000). During this time, hundreds of studies have been performed examining the effects. As children become youth, they increasingly turn to the media for information rather than their parents, and their ideas, values and beliefs are profoundly influenced by the forum. Thus, the media plays a profound role in the socialization process, influencing youth's ideas, values and beliefs.

Adolescence is a time of extensive cognitive, emotional, physical, and moral development. These biological and psychosocial changes have a double affect on adolescents' relationship with mass media. They affect how adolescents approach the media, as well as how they are affected by the media. The ideals and principles learned from social institutions influence not only their media choices but also their interpretation of the media they consume (Arnett, 2000).

During adolescence more complex forms of thinking emerge. Three main features characterize the intellectual development of youth: (1) the ability to think about possible occurrences rather than actual ones, (2) systematic problem solving, and (3) the development of hypothetical-deductive reasoning (Bee, 2000). Although adolescents have the capacity to evaluate the media environment critically, when persons become habituated to looking at a medium that is as anti-intellectual as television largely is, they develop a non-critical attitude and a disposition to 'look without seeing'.

Moral development during adolescence is characterized by a concentration on fundamental moral principles such as altruism and respect. Adolescents become more socially conscious; and, their moral principles can transcend conventional notions of right and wrong (Potter, 2003). The inescapable presence of the media makes it a source for social norms and a reference for moral standards. Because media presents a world consumed with

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violence, we must face the disturbing reality that our youth are consuming and internalizing violent moral standards.

A primary feature of adolescent emotional development is identity formation. The emerging sense of self is fragile, impressionable, and remarkably susceptible to the effects of the media. Another feature of adolescent emotional development is risk-taking behaviour. Violence in the media is often presented without consequence, and youth exposed to large amounts of media violence may not have an appreciation for the true physical and emotional consequences of violence.

Effects of the mass media have been found to be far-reaching and potentially harmful in influencing the health-related behaviours of children and adolescents, many of whom are not yet mature enough to distinguish fantasy from reality. The accumulation of evidence across multiple health-risk behaviours suggests that media influence on youth is worthy of careful research.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Parents, teachers, health professionals, and other adults have been concerned about the influence of the media on children and adolescents for many decades. Exposure to media is inescapable. Interactive media create new degrees of violent or sexual content and create a new dimension of potential harm as users participate and become emotionally involved in activities that are violent, erotic, or even both. The mass media have been shown to affect a broad range of adolescent health-related attitudes and behaviours including violence, eating disorders, and tobacco and alcohol use. One largely unexplored factor that may contribute to adolescents' sexual activity is their exposure to mass media. This is the reason research must be carried out on how creativity mind-prompt can be used to foster positive media diets among the adolescence so that we can have a society that is full of positive thinkers.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of Creative Pause in the management of media diet of the adolescence for productive thinking in Mayflower School, Ikenne, Ogun State. Other objectives include:

- To understand the prevalence of media among the adolescents.
- To highlight the effects of media on the adolescents.
- To state the theories of creativity that can help in productive thinking.
- To examine how effective creativity is in managing media diet among the adolescents.
- To determine the age and gender of the adolescents in the involvement of media.

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

H01: There is no significant difference between the participants/subjects treated with Mind Prompt (MP) and Creative Pause interventions and the control group.

H02: There is no significant difference between productive thinking of male adolescents and their female counterparts.

H03: There is no significant difference between the participants of high socio-economic status and their low parental socio-economic status counterparts.

H04: There is no significant difference between the participants with low cognitive ability and their high cognitive ability counterparts.

H05: There is no significant difference in the types of media diet of the adolescents.

### **1.4 Definition of Terms**

Mind prompt: This is what triggers someone to do a particular thing. It is the reason why adolescents prefer one thing to another; what comes to the mind of an individual before reaction takes place.

Productive thinking: It is an idea that has a positive result.

Media diet: This is the intake of sources of information and news such as internet, newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

Creativity: It involves the use of skill and the imagination to produce something new with what the adolescents are exposed to through the media.

Creative pause: This is an interruption in the smooth flow routine in order to pay deliberate attention at some points. It is the ability to make the best use of the thinking gap.

Adolescent: This is a young person that is in a period of transition from childhood to adulthood.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Concept of Creativity**

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Creativity is not an innate quality of only a few selected people. Creativity is present in everyone. It can be learned, practised and developed by the use of proven techniques which, enhancing and stimulating the creative abilities, ideas and creative results, help people to move out of their normal problem-solving mode, to enable them to consider a wide range of alternatives and to improve productivity and quality of work. 'Creativity is thus constructed as a learned ability that enables us to define new relationships between concepts or events, which seemed apparently unconnected before, and which results in a new entity of knowledge' (European Commission, 2000).

The concept of creativity has traditionally proved an elusive one to pin down. Most of the dominant writers on creativity acknowledge a broad spectrum of activity which can be described as creative; even studies focusing on so-called creative people, such as Spiel and von Korff's (1999) study of politicians, scientists, artists and school teachers, produce a wide variety of descriptions. More recent and commonly used definitions include high creativity and ordinary, democratic creativity.

High creativity is described as the achievement of something remarkable and new, something which transforms and changes a field of endeavour in a significant way, including exceptional human capacity for thought and creation (Rhyammer and Brodin, 1999). Democratic creativity, coined in the NACCCE Report (1999), refers to imaginative activity fashioned so as to yield an outcome that is of value as well as original. At the core of creative activity is the engine of possibility thinking, which guides choices and route-finding in everyday life or what Craft (2000) terms 'little c creativity'.

## **2.2 Theories of Creativity**

Several theories have been proposed to explain the nature and development of creativity. Developmental theories suggest that particular developmental experiences correlate with creativity. Parents of creative children seemed to expose their children to diverse experiences and most were themselves creative. Research on family structure has proven useful, with evidence suggesting that middle children are often rebellious and revolutionary, finding alternative ways to gain attention through finding a unique niche (Gaynor and Runco, 2000). Longitudinal studies have reinforced theories that take cognitive processes, motivation, affect, and personality into account (Albert, 1999; Helson, 2001).

Psychometric theories focus on measurement and the reliability and validity of creative assessment. They are concerned with divergent thinking, which occurs when ideas and associations move in varied directions enabling new and original ideas to be found (Torrance, 1999). Economic theories draw from economics and illustrate macro-level processes involving the allocation of resources for creative behaviour (Rubenson and Runco, 2000; Florida, 2002; Sternberg and Lubart, 2000). Cognitive theories emphasize that creativity has a basis in cognition, including processes of divergent and convergent thinking, metacognition, and conceptual combination (Estes and Ward, 2002). Evolutionary or Darwinian theories, particularly Simonton's model (2003, 2004), cover the person, process, product and place aspects of creativity, arguing that creative potential is expended and partially recouped through learning over a lifetime.

## **2.3 Creative Pause and Mind Prompt**

Creativity mind prompt offers a variety of puzzles that stimulate the left brain, the right brain and generate a whole brain entrainment. Different puzzles exercise different portions of the brain. According to Akinboye (In press), nurturing and exercising our capacity for insight will open up the potentials for genius to emerge. Creativity mind-prompt can help an individual to be creative, solve problems and improve on their performances; thereby making him effective and innovative in the least amount of time.

Edward de Bono (2000) in his book 'Serious Creativity' drew global attention to the imperatives of the creative pause. To de Bono, who is a globally recognised lateral thinking teacher, there is no problem and no hold-up, but you pause in your thinking because you want to. The pause is in reaction to attention. All those that cannot make creative-pause may be exposed to Attention Deficiency Disorder (ADD).

## **2.4 Gender and Socio-Economic Factors in Creativity**

Dudek and Cote (2004) reported a difference in the mean score of creativity between males and females. They found that the mean score of creativity was different between boys and girls and that creative potential improved with age. Naderi et al. (2009) found similar results, showing that the females' mean score (33.21) was greater than the males' mean score (31.90) for creativity. Trivedi and Bhargava (2010) found that in high achiever groups gender impact on creativity was observed. However, in contrast, over 20 years of research, Javid (2000) illustrated no significant different mean score of creativity between males and females.

Dudek and Cote (2004) also explored differences in creative thinking skills among children representing different socio-economic levels and found a statistically positive significance between the potential creativity in

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children and socio-economic status, demonstrating that high quality material environments increase the potential creativity. Heinla (2006) supported these findings, reporting that in 16-17 year-old adolescents, creative thinking is higher when one or both parents have worked as top executives or specialists or have a high level of university education.

### **2.5 Effects of Media on Adolescents**

Media affects youth not only by displacing time they spend doing homework or sleeping but also by influencing beliefs and behaviours. According to social learning theory, children and adolescents learn by observing and imitating what they see on the screen. The Kaiser Family Foundation (2002) found that 99% of children live in a home with a TV set and 48% have used a computer. The Teen Media Study indicated that adolescents' media diets are governed primarily by the teen's developing sense of self and that their media diets differ greatly by gender and race (Brown and Steele, 2002; Brown and Pardun, 2004).

By the age of 18, the average adolescent will have seen an estimated 200,000 acts of violence on television alone (Strasburger, 2007). Research has linked heavy exposure to sexual content in mainstream media with more rapid progression of sexual activity and greater risk for unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease. Heavy television-viewing has been associated with attention-deficit disorder (ADD), language delays, depression, and obesity, among other health consequences (Acevedo-Polakovich et al., 2006; Strasburger, 2009). Despite the negative effects, media can also be powerfully prosocial, enabling children and teenagers to learn antiviolence attitudes, empathy, and tolerance toward people of other races and ethnicities (Strasburger, Wilson and Jordan, 2009).

### **2.6 Cognitive Ability and Media Use**

From a conceptual standpoint, it is reasonable to postulate that cognitive delays (low IQ), which involve deficits in knowledge and reasoning skills, might interfere primarily with the acquisition of positive social skills, contributing to deficits in communication and prosocial play skills (Pope and Bierman, 1999). Research that takes into account relevant characteristics of the children under study, such as their IQ and socioeconomic status, typically finds no significant link between hours of TV viewing and achievement. IQ, in particular, plays a large role in the association between TV watching and achievement; students with lower IQ scores, for example, watch more television on average (Potter, 2003).

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The Nonequivalent Control Group Design was specifically used. This is the study in which the investigator is compelled to modify the classical laboratory experiment conditions to adapt and approximate a true experimental design.

### **3.2 Population, Sample, and Sampling Techniques**

The population for this study consists of in-school adolescents and Mayflower Secondary School adolescents in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. Multistage random sampling technique was used. One hundred (100) secondary school students (50 males and 50 females) of Mayflower School, Ikenne were used.

### **3.3 Research Instrumentation**

The major tool for this research is a questionnaire titled 'Adolescents Media Diet Assessment Scale' (AMAS) with Achievement Test. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A elicits demographic information ranging from age and gender, and parents' marital status, while Section B consists of items relating to media diet and creativity mind-prompt. An achievement test was also carried out to test the cognitive ability of students. The reliability coefficient used for this research is 0.82.

### **3.4 Data Collection and Analysis**

During the process of administration, the researcher visited the selected secondary school and sought permission from the school management. Training was conducted for the students on the effectiveness of mind prompt and creative pause on the management of media diet for productive thinking. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents after the training and collected immediately after completion the same day. Simple percentage was used for demographic information while chi-square was used to test the hypotheses formulated.

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**IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

**4.1 Demographic Data**

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Sex	Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	50	50
Female	50	50
Total	100	100

In terms of sex, 50 out of 100 respondents representing 50% were males and 50 (50%) were females. The spread is in line with the researcher's reason to avoid bias in terms of gender circulation.

**Table 2: Parents' Highest Qualification**

Qualification	Responses	Percentage (%)
GCE/WASCE	10	10
OND/NCE	15	15
HND/B.Sc	45	45
M.Sc/MBA	20	20
Others	10	10
Total	100	100

As regards qualification, 10 (10%) possessed GCE/WASCE qualification, OND/NCE representing 15 (15%), HND/B.Sc. representing 45 (45%), M.Sc/MBA representing 20 (20%), and others representing 10 (10%) respectively.

**Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age Range	Responses	Percentage (%)
10-11 years	30	30
12-13 years	60	60
14-15 years	10	10
Total	100	100

Age wise, 10-11 years have 30 representing 30%, 12-13 years have 60 with 60%, and 14-15 years have a frequency of 10 representing 10% respectively. The age brackets coupled with the academic qualification is expected to make for a matured and logical response from the respondents.

**Table 4: Family Economic Status**

Economic Status	Responses	Percentage (%)
Wealthy (above average)	34	34
Comfortable	62	62
Getting-by	2	2
Financially Strained	2	2
Total	100	100

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**4.2 Test of Hypotheses**

The test of hypothesis was carried out using the chi-square formula:

$$X^2 = (O - E)^2 / E$$

Theoretical value for degree of freedom of 4 using 95% level of significance = 9.488.

**Hypothesis I**

H01: There is no significant difference between the participants/subjects treated with Mind Prompt (MP) and Creative Pause interventions and the control group.

**Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis I**

Views	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	Residual (O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
SA	45	20	25.0	625	31.25
A	30	20	10.0	100	5.00
D	15	20	-5.0	25	1.25
SD	10	20	-10.0	100	5.00
Total	100				42.5

Since the theoretical value (9.488) is less than the calculated chi-square value (42.5), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between the participants/subjects treated with Mind Prompt (MP) and Creative Pause interventions and the control group.

**Hypothesis II**

H02: There is no significant difference between productive thinking of male adolescents and their female counterparts.

**Table 6: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis II**

Views	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	Residual (O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
SA	55	20.0	35.0	1225	61.25
A	30	20.0	10.0	100	5.00
D	10	20.0	-10.0	100	5.00
SD	5	20.0	-15.0	225	11.25
Total	100				82.5

Since the calculated chi-square value (82.5) is greater than the theoretical value (9.488), the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference between productive thinking of male adolescents and their female counterparts.

**Hypothesis III**

H03: There is no significant difference between the participants of high socio-economic status and their low parental socio-economic status counterparts.

**Table 7: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis III**

Views	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	Residual (O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
SA	70	20.0	50.0	2500	125.00
A	10	20.0	-10.0	100	5.00
D	10	20.0	-10.0	100	5.00
SD	10	20.0	-10.0	100	5.00
Total	100				140.00

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Since the calculated chi-square value (140.00) is greater than the theoretical value (9.488), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between the participants of high socio-economic status and their low parental socio-economic status counterparts.

**Hypothesis IV**

H04: There is no significant difference between the participants with low cognitive ability and their high cognitive ability counterparts.

**Table 8: Cognitive Ability Distribution**

Subject	Responses	Percentage (%)
Mathematics	40	40
English Language	60	60
Total	100	100

**Table 9: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis IV**

Views	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	Residual (O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
Mathematics	40	20.0	20.0	400	20.00
English	60	20.0	40.0	1600	80.00
Total	100				100.00

Since the calculated chi-square value (100) is greater than the theoretical value (9.488), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference between the participants with low cognitive ability and their high cognitive ability counterparts.

**Hypothesis V**

H05: There is no significant difference in the types of media diet of the adolescents.

**Table 10: Chi-Square Analysis for Hypothesis V**

Views	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	Residual (O-E)	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	X <sup>2</sup> =(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
SA	50	20.0	30.0	900	45.00
A	20	20.0	0	0	0
D	25	20.0	5.0	25	1.25
SD	5	20.0	-15.0	225	11.25
Total	100				57.5

Since the calculated chi-square value (57.5) is greater than the theoretical value (9.488), the alternative hypothesis is accepted. There is a significant difference in the types of media diet of the adolescents.

**V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1 Discussion of Findings**

The study rejects the first null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the participants/subjects treated with Mind Prompt (MP) and creative pause interventions and the control group. The findings show there is a marked difference between the participants treated with Mind Prompt interventions and the control group. This is supported by Edward De Bono (2000) that you pause in your thinking because you want to, and the pause is in reaction to attention. De Bono explained further that all those that cannot make creative pause may be exposed to Attention Deficiency Disorder (ADD). Creativity mind prompt can help an individual to be creative, solve problems and improve on their performances; thereby making him effective and innovative in the least amount of time. It can be concluded that adolescence treated with creativity mind prompt will be quite different from the adolescence who are not (control group).

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The second null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant difference between productive thinking of male adolescents and their female counterparts, was equally rejected because the findings indicated that there is a difference between the productive thinking of male adolescents and their female counterparts. Dudek and Cote (2004) reported a difference in the mean score of creativity between males and females adolescents. Naderi et al. (2009) findings also show that the females' mean score (33.21) is greater than the males' mean score (31.90) for creativity. The result of this hypothesis is however in contrast with the findings of Javid (2000) that showed that there is no difference in creativity between males and females.

The third null hypothesis, which states that there is no significance difference between the participants of high parental socio-economic status and their low parental socio-economic status counterparts, was rejected as well. The findings agree with Dudek and Cote (2004), who found a statistically positive significance difference between the potential creativity in children and socio-economic status. In other words, they demonstrated that high quality material environments increase the potential creativity. The findings also agree with Kfayt's findings, which showed that there is a statistical difference between the three socio-economic levels (welfare, average and low social status) and creativity. Heinla (2006) findings also showed that when the mother or fathers have a higher education for the 9-12 year-old children, the creative thinking is higher.

The fourth null hypothesis, that stated that there is no significance difference between the participants with low cognitive ability and their high cognitive ability counterparts, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This is supported by Pope and Bierman (1999), who argued that cognitive delays (low IQ) might interfere primarily with the acquisition of positive social skills, contributing to deficits in communication and prosocial skills. It can be concluded therefore that there is a significant difference between the participants with low cognitive ability and their high cognitive ability counterparts.

The fifth null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in the types of media diet of the adolescents, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. 60% of the respondents prefer television to radio and 49% prefer electronic media to print media. This finding agrees with the Kaiser Family Foundation (2004) study and with Brown and Pardun (2004), who indicated that adolescents' media diets are governed primarily by the teen's developing sense of self and that their media diets differ greatly by gender and race.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that mind prompt and creative pause can be effective for the management of media diets of the adolescents. If adolescents are creative, they will be able to make the best use of what they are exposed to through the media. The study also indicates that socio-economic background of the parents contributes to adolescents' level of creativity, as those with high socio-economic background may have access to techniques and materials that will improve the creativity level of the adolescents. The cognitive ability of the adolescence has a great impact on their creativity level, and media diets of the adolescents vary, with reasons for choosing a particular media diet governed primarily by the teen's developing sense of self.

## **5.3 Implications for Counselling**

The fallen moral standard among youth today started gradually from the adolescence stage, implying that the family and society in general have failed in the discharge of their responsibility. Moral decadence among adolescents should not be seen as a permanent state; this calls for the organisation of more guidance and counselling programmes which will include managing media diets with creativity covering all aspects of human life at various educational levels. Counsellors at the various educational levels should discharge their duties with a purpose to impact lives and influence decisions. Counsellors at primary and secondary school levels should organise guidance and counselling programmes that will address both the negative and positive influence of the media and how the adolescents can manage these influences with creativity. Counsellors should also set up adolescence clubs where life-threatening issues through the media will be discussed.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

What parents can do:

- Limit and balance the amount of time kids use media. Monitor their use, set clear limits, and explain to them why too much time in front of a screen is harmful.
  - Talk with kids about media. Discuss positive and negative media messages and images.
  - Choose appropriate media. Check ratings and reviews to make sure the media they use is appropriate for their age and level of development.
  - Make the necessary materials that will help in creativity level of their children available to them.
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What policymakers can do:

- Develop and fund a major national media literacy and education effort, available to every school in Nigeria.
- Fund more research and development on media and kids, especially on digital media like the Internet, video games, and cell phones.
- Establish clear limits on advertising to kids, especially for younger children who cannot tell the difference between advertising and entertainment.
- Fund public service advertising campaigns that encourage healthy habits and targeted campaigns that promote safe behaviour on the Internet.

What schools can do:

- Adopt a media literacy curriculum. Every school in Nigeria should have a curriculum to teach the basics of media literacy.
- Teach kids and families to be smart and safe media users.
- Promote digital citizenship and educate all students about the basics of digital citizenship and Internet safety.
- Establish adolescence clubs in schools where adolescents will be able to discuss freely.

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