Media Literacy and Social Emotional Learning for the Net Generation

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The paper explores the opportunities and challenges of combining media literacy and social-emotional literacy to promote mental health and wellbeing in school curricula. It describes the implementation of an experimental module within the program Crescere Insieme What's Up (Growing up together What's Up). This upstream prevention and health promotion program, from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region (north-eastern Italy) is designed to harness the protective effects of developing and strengthening life skills to move beyond risk factors to prevent youth suicide, fostering connections and support between school and mental health institutions, peers and adults. The program activities involved role plays and reflection activities, collaborating in project group work, consulting and producing media (such as articles, Youtube videos and Powerpoint presentations) for peer-to-peer education. It adopted an experiential approach enabling active engagement of high school students, their parents and teachers, and 'learning by doing' with agency and responsibility. Qualitative feedback from students and teachers, study limitations and further implications are discussed.

Keywords: technology, life-skills, health promotion, upstream prevention, adolescence