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Running Head: (CONSTRUCTIVE INTERNAL REFLECTION AND THE BRAIN)

“REST IS NOT IDLENESS”[†]: IMPLICATIONS OF THE BRAIN’S DEFAULT MODE FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

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[†]John Lubbock, *The Use of Life* (1894), ch. IV: Recreation

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ABSTRACT

The term “default mode” describes consistently high levels of neural activity and functional connectivity (coordination) among particular brain regions during awake but non-attentive “rest” states. Activity in DM brain regions in adults has been associated with introspective imagining, memory and prospection, especially related to abstract and self-referential, socio-emotional and moral content. Here we call for research exploring the possibility that ostensibly non-attentive states may support important aspects of development. Because DM activity is relatively suppressed when attention is focused on external stimuli or tasks, we hypothesize that high environmental attention demands may bias children and adolescents to focus on the concrete, physical and immediate aspects of situations and self; helping students build skills for constructive internal reflection could be beneficial.