

Social Networks are Getting Older AND Younger

<http://www.mpdailyfix.com/2006/10/clubpenguin.html>

An interesting article about the changing nature of online social networking.

Social networks online were in the past predominantly the domain of teens or '20 somethings'. Now not only is the number of older participants increasing, but much younger children are entering the arena.

Club Penguin

<http://www.miniclip.com/games/club-penguin/en/>

The above article mentions Club Penguin, which is a social-networking site geared to kids ages 8-12. It's a snowy virtual town, complete with shops, restaurants, and clubs, where kids assume the shape of a penguin and interact with each other and their surroundings via moderated chat.

This gaming environment for children is probably one of the most stringent around, in terms of online safety for children. Read the Parents' Guide for further information. For example:

With a long history of creating tools and content for Fortune 500 clients, the founders of New Horizon Interactive were

growing concerned about the safety of children online and wanted to build a place that their kids and others could enjoy safely and without all the 'in-your-face' marketing that is on so many other sites.

The Club Penguin team got to work, consulting with educators, law enforcement representatives and other parents, doing extensive research into online safety, and conducting widespread testing. Finally, in October 2005, Club Penguin opened to the public.

Word quickly spread, thanks to great reviews from users and parents who were impressed by the quality of the games, activities and security functions.

In March 2006, Club Penguin was showcased on Miniclip,

Miniclip

<http://www.miniclip.com/games/en/>

The 'home' of Club Penguin is Miniclip, one of the largest collections of online games for young people on the net.

We have not examined other

games in terms of online safety or suitability for children and teens. We also didn't count the total – but it would appear there are almost 300 listed!

Why not check them out for your own children, or those



the world's largest online game site. Since then, Club Penguin has become the number one game on the site!

Despite Club Penguin's popularity, its founders continue to focus on the three key areas: fun, safety and service. The Club Penguin world is updated every week and most of the company's resources go into making Club Penguin safer than ever. Eighty per cent of Club Penguin's staff is made up of safety personnel and moderators, many of whom are also parents.

Club Penguin is completely funded by subscriptions. There is no advertising revenue of any kind, a further testament to Club Penguin's ongoing commitment to protecting its young users.

with whom you work?

And while you're there, why not try a few games, and bring out the child in yourself again!

We all need to do that from time to time. Oh ... not while at work though, of course! ☺

Promoting Family Strengths

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor/hesguide/humanrel/gh6640.htm>

A brief but interesting and useful article, available on the web and as a downloadable PDF file.

Though from the US, it is also applicable for an Australian context.

It covers:

- Family diversity
- Family resilience
- Characteristics of strong families
- Strategies for strengthening families
- Building and maintaining healthy family relationships



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To read more about the Care 2 story, visit this page: <http://www.care2.com/aboutus/story.html>

From this page, in the words of Randy Paynter, founder, President and CEO:

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together to create such a special place.

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And it's catching on. More than a million new members joined Care2 this past year. Young and old, rich and poor, meeting, discussing, getting involved, making a difference. No matter what your passion (or even if you're trying to figure out what your passion is!) I think you'll find Care2 is a welcoming place with countless ways to make a difference.



School Based Mental Health An Empirical Guide for Decision Makers

<http://rtckids.fmhi.usf.edu/rtcpubs/study04/default.cfm>

by Krista Kutash, Albert J. Duchnowski, and Nancy Lynn

This guide may be downloaded in pdf format from the above website. The guide provides practical information and advice for those engaged in developing and implementing effective evidence-based services in the school setting.

This resource:

- *describes the principle models and approaches identified in the literature from mental health and education*
- *critiques the empirical support for the approaches described, and*
- *suggests how science, policy, and practice can be integrated to achieve effective school-based mental health service systems through the adoption of the public health model.*

Real Change begins with the simple act of people talking about what they care about.

(Margaret J Wheatley)

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/>

The US based National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) works to reduce morbidity, disability, mortality, and costs associated with injuries.

Starlink readers may be interested in the following publication:

Measuring violence-related attitudes, behavior, and influences among youths: A compendium of assessment tools (second edition). National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/measure.htm>



A youth becomes a man when the marks he wants to leave on the world have nothing to do with tyres. (Author Unkown)

The Writing IQ Program



The following post was sent to the PCC mailing list recently. A quick read of the Writing IQ program shows that there are universal truths about the teaching of writing in any education system or country. ☺

It is a very useful resource to download and read. It affirms a number of the “best

practice” approaches being used in Australian schools (and Universities) and also provides further food for thought!

The guide contains background information, as well as a number of practical applications – both for use with students and as professional development activities for teachers. Well worth downloading and reading!

Some of you may have noticed in the media recently that writing scores of our students are not good. This is especially true of the middle school grades. There is free help now for teachers who want to improve their teaching of writing by collaboratively developing a strengths-based program.

The free help is an AI type process jour-

nal/guide called the Writing I.Q. Program (I=Impact of Content and Q=Quality of Language). Teachers, administrators, or anyone else may download it for free at www.jamesevers.com

The process journal was initially tested at a writing institute for teachers at Dominican College, New York. Would you be willing to help spread the word to help build effective strengths based writing programs?

Good thoughts to all,

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CERES Community Environment Park

<http://www.ceres.org.au/>

The Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) is based in Brunswick, Melbourne.

A number of Starlink readers may already be familiar with their work, for example through the Sustainability Education initiative:

<http://sustainability.ceres.org.au/>

Their website is well worth visiting and adding to your bookmarks! It contains a wealth of information about all aspects of sustainability.

For Starlink readers in Melbourne, a visit to the Community Environment Park would also be a great idea. ☺

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Brunswick East, Victoria,
Australia 3057
Melways map reference 30 B7
Phone: (03) 9387 2609
Fax: (03) 9387 4472
Email: ceres@ceres.org.au



You can increase your brain power three to fivefold simply by laughing and having fun before working on a problem.

(Doug Hall, Author)

Education Leadership Action Foundation

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/WF/ELAN/>

This US website, hosted by the Wallace Foundation, is a resource for professionals dedicated to strengthening the performance of education leaders to improve achievement for all students, especially those in ... low-performing schools.

Take a look at their Tools and Resources section for *the latest research, tools, policy briefs, stories and commentaries, both commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and from other sources, which are organized by topic.*



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Out of the Mouths ...

A group of children were asked "What is Love?" Here are some of their answers. They may surprise you - and perhaps they also remind us all we need to listen to the voices of children.!

When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth. (Billy- age 7)

If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate. (Nikka - age 6)

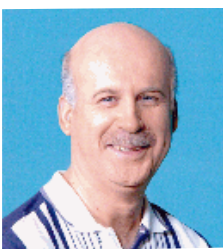
Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day. (Mary Ann - age 4)

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired. (Terri - age 4)

When you love somebody, your eye-lashes go up and down and little stars come out of you. (Karen - age 7)

You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget. (Jessica - age 8)

Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen. (Bobby - age 7)



Improv

Recently Sue and I joined an Improvisation Comedy group here in Melbourne Australia.

Sue is pretty good at it, but it's way out of my comfort zone because I can't act or sing.

So why put myself through the ordeal of dying on stage on a weekly basis?

Well, it's a challenge and it is fun.

It also puts me in the mindset of a beginner, which is absolutely essential for any one who delivers presentations or teaches a group of people.

This beginner 'feeling' is something I try to tap into when I work with people, because it reinforces the need to use empathy and encouragement when it comes to trying new activities.

For example, in my case, it's encouraging groups such as students, teachers and executives, etc. to have a go at Tai Chi. An activity that is usually new and therefore a challenge for many people.

Another delight of doing improv has been discovering how similar the skills are to those that presenters, trainers, speakers and teachers use to be effective in their work.

Those skills include:

- Being flexible

- Thinking on your feet
- Accepting what others have to offer
- Helping others to become involved
- Going with the flow
- Being creative
- Having fun

So, why not have a go at improv or any other activity that challenges you and puts you in the 'beginner mindset'?

If you do, then as a 'beginner' you will become more professional and effective in your own presentations.

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