



Will the Real Social Network Please Stand Up?

Prior to his upcoming February 5 talk, titled "Will the Real Social Network Please Stand Up?," Dr. Clark McKown, Executive Director of RNBC, discussed the online assessment tool SELweb™ and the concept of a 'real social network.'

Q: Explain the concept of a "real social network."

Clark McKown: I'm making a distinction between an online social network (i.e. Facebook) and a physical, face-to-face social network that children have inside a classroom. In their own ways, they're both types of relationships, however I believe that no matter how far online interactions progress, being able to interact with others in person effectively will always be important.

Q: What is SELweb?

CM: SELweb is a web-based assessment tool used to measure various dimensions of children's social and emotional competencies, including social acceptance, emotion recognition, perspective taking, social problem solving, and self-regulation. These competencies are correlated with social emotional learning skills and can help schools identify and work with kids who need extra help getting along with others.

Q: How can SELweb improve real social networks?

CM: By determining connections within a class, teachers and school support personnel can meaningfully help children build face-to-face relationships.

Q: How does SELweb differ from existing assessment tools?

CM: There are other tools to measure social emotional learning, but ours is a real breakthrough in terms of ease of use, cost efficiency, and the fact that it is a performance assessment, whereas other tools rely on

teacher and parent reports. Any school with an internet connection can use SELweb, the training required is minimal, and the program is designed so that students require minimal administrator involvement. Kindergarteners can use SELweb because no reading skills are required.

Q: What is the ultimate goal for SELweb?

CM: To raise the stature of social-emotional learning in schools to something more equivalent to academic achievement. I believe we can accurately measure children's social-emotional learning in schools and present that data to teachers and administrators in a way that will change the ways schools promote social-emotional development. This in turn would help a lot of kids! We also want to get this tool into every school that is concerned and determined to improve the lives of children.

For more information about Dr. McKown, the SELweb assessment tool, or other exciting research happening at RNBC, please contact us at 847-933-9339 or info@rnbc.org.