

The Naturalist Intelligence

Read description then characteristics

Plant seeds

Look at aquaponics

Deep breathing in the garden

- sit spot notice changes in environment
- drawing journal or flower
- drying flower

The Naturalist intelligence has to do with how we relate to our surroundings and where we fit into it. People with Naturalist intelligence have a sensitivity to and appreciation for nature. They are gifted at nurturing and growing things as well as the ability to care for and interact with animals. They can easily distinguish patterns in nature.

Common Characteristics

- Bothered by pollution
- Enjoys having pets
- Likes to learn about nature
- Enjoys gardening
- Appreciates scenic places
- Feels alive when in contact with nature
- Likes to camp, hike, walk and climb
- Notices nature above all other things
- Conscious of changes in weather

Career Matches

- Conservationist
- Gardener
- Farmer
- Animal Trainer
- Park Ranger
- Scientist
- Botanist
- Zookeeper
- Geologist
- Marine Biologist
- Ecologist
- Veterinarian

<http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/strategies/topics/mi/campbell.htm>

Students demonstrate naturalist intelligence when they

- are very comfortable outdoors
- are aware of their natural surroundings
- feel a definite sense of connection to the rest of nature
- have an affinity for natural habitats such as forests, deserts, oceans/lakes or streams, wetlands
- feel renewed by visiting these natural settings
- discriminate different flora and fauna
- recognize patterns and colours
- are good at sorting and classifying
- have keen observational skills and observe patiently
- feel satisfaction in learning names of flowers, trees, rocks and minerals, dinosaurs, birds, volcanoes, cloud formations, etc.
- enjoy exploring and touching outdoors, including "yucky things"
- understand and can explain natural phenomena
- show a sense for detail, noticing and delighting in the smallest of nature's gifts
- nurture living things, through gardening or taking care of pets or bringing home stray animals
- set up bird feeders and other feeding stations for animals
- choose to read books and watch programs about animals and ecosystems
- seek music related to nature
- make crafts and projects out of natural materials (using shells, driftwood, plant presses)
- like using equipment to find out more about the natural environment (butterfly nets, water and soil quality testing kits)
- readily follow cyclic patterns in nature such as tides, seasons, moon phases, and climate
- enjoy collections of rocks, leaves, flowers, shells, feathers, etc.
- name zoos, farms, wildlife parks, aquariums and pet stores as "special places" for them
- enjoy recreational activities in the outdoors, such as hiking, rock climbing, cross country skiing, camping, sailing, scuba diving, etc.

(adapted from Discovering the Naturalist Intelligence: Science in the School Yard, with thanks to Jenna Glock, Susan Wertz and Maggie Meyer)

Students show they are nature smart when they have a keen awareness of the natural world and phenomena, discriminate natural items like animals, insects, birds, fish, rocks, minerals, plants, trees, flowers, stars, [or] planets.... They often learn best when the content may be sorted and classified or is related to the natural world.

– Kagan Publishing, [Multiple Intelligences Smart Card](#)

Strategies for Teaching to the Naturalist Intelligence

Naturalist learning is experienced through

- relating
- discovering
- uncovering
- observing
- digging (literally and metaphorically)
- planting
- collecting
- sorting
- comparing
- displaying

Teachers can help their students develop or enhance their naturalist intelligence by providing learning experiences that encourage:

OBSERVING

- using the senses
- watching animal behaviour (squirrels or birds in the schoolyard?)
- using a microscope, telescope, binoculars or hand lens
- discerning changes outdoors over the course of the school year (weekly walkabouts are wonderful for these students)
- keeping an eye on nests or dens
- watching the weather (to learn weather forecasting)
- noticing ecological principles in action (for example, the decomposition of plant or animal material over time)

RECORDING OBSERVATIONS

- keeping a Nature Journal
- imitating a biologist or ecologist doing field studies
- listing data about characteristics (size, colour, form, function, habitat, etc.)
- keeping data in a log, blog or diary
- drawing, sketching, photographing, videotaping natural phenomena

- modelling, measuring or drawing to scale plants, animals or outdoor settings
- documenting changes, stages, phases, metamorphoses, transformations

CLASSIFYING AND CATEGORIZING

- collecting (literally or ticking off on a list) and identifying plants, leaves, berries, birds, feathers, nests, and so on
- pointing out similarities and differences
- grouping, ranking, separating, adding up natural objects according to observed characteristics
- identifying sounds in the natural world (for example, bird calls)

WORKING AND LEARNING IN OR WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

- growing things (plants, gardens)
- establishing nature trails, viewing platforms, outdoor classrooms
- going on hikes and field trips
- performing role plays or skits about cycles in nature, animal behaviour, plants growth, etc.
- reading stories or articles about the natural world or the fields of biology and ecology
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