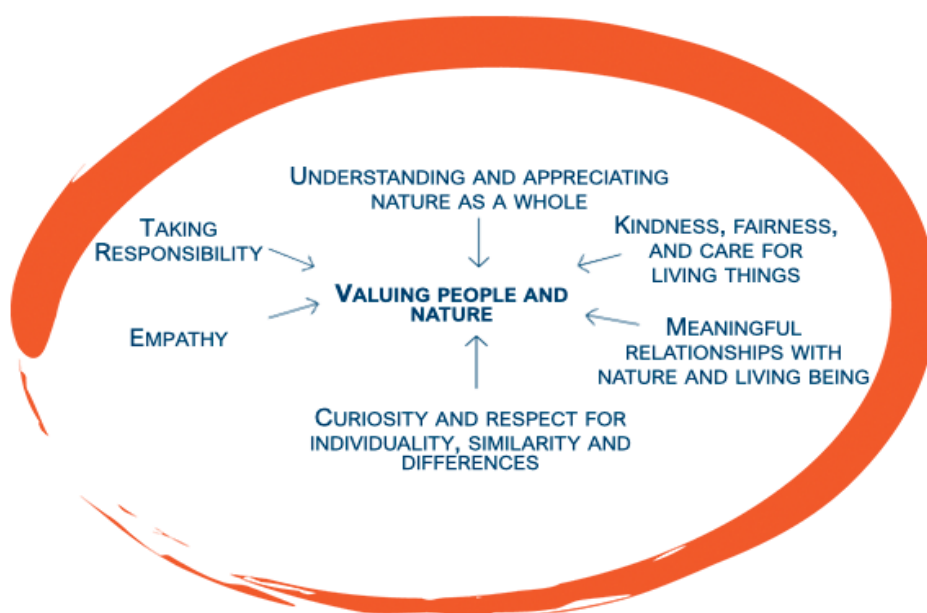


2.9 Valuing people and nature

Definition of the skill

Valuing People and Nature is the skill of recognising the intrinsic worth of both human beings and the natural environment. This involves understanding the interconnectedness between human well-being and the health of the planet. It includes a conceptual and procedural grasp of sustainable development as essential for a thriving future. This skill promotes respect for ecosystems, responsible resource use, and a balanced relationship between people and nature, which are crucial for long-term sustainability and societal well-being. Beyond awareness, valuing people and nature requires taking responsibility and transforming values into concrete actions that nurture and protect both humanity and the planet, ensuring a sustainable legacy for future generations.

Complexity of the skill



- **Understanding and appreciating nature as a whole:** The feeling that all living beings belong together and that *humans are part of nature* and they form a wholeness.
- **Empathy:** This is a critical element of children's relationship with nature and other people, which can be developed through interactions with the natural world and other people.
- **Meaningful relationships with nature and living being:** Cultivating a healthy relationship with the natural environment, the community and individual to awaken in children a feeling of connectedness.
- **Curiosity and respect for Individuality, similarity and differences:** Children are naturally curious. This natural curiosity and respect can easily be extended to the needs and rights of *other Living Beings and Nature* through interactions with the natural world and other people. *This respect is often expressed in actions such as sharing and helping.*
- **Kindness, fairness, and care for living things:** Showing compassion and consideration for others, and a willingness to act individually or/and in collaborating in teams for the benefit of others (including nature).

- **Taking Responsibility:** Children practice responsibility in small ways, such as recycling or caring for pets or plants. These actions nurture a sense of duty toward their community and the environment.

Importance of the skill for lifelong well-being

Valuing people and nature is a foundational 21st-century skill essential for fostering a sustainable and equitable future. This skill prepares adults to navigate a rapidly evolving, interconnected world by aligning personal well-being with environmental health.

In Environmental Contexts:

- Promotes sustainable living and resilience in response to challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss.
- Encourages eco-friendly habits and supports policies that protect natural resources.

In Social Contexts:

- Strengthens empathy, respect, and meaningful relationships, fostering community cohesion and individual emotional well-being.
- Cultivates responsible citizenship and ethical leadership, inspiring others to make sustainable and ethical choices.

In Broader Life Contexts:

- Enhances adaptability and innovation, enabling individuals to address complex problems creatively and collaboratively.
- Provides a sense of purpose, aligning personal actions with values for meaningful contributions to a better world.

By teaching this skill, adults are empowered to act as proactive stewards of both communities and the environment, essential for building a sustainable and resilient future.

Manifestation and development of this skill in ages 6-10

Children aged 6–10 are at an ideal developmental stage for cultivating the skill of valuing people and nature. Through guided learning and activities, they can progress through the LifeComp stages: Awareness, Understanding, and Action.

Awareness and Curiosity:

- Children begin to notice differences and similarities among people and the natural world.
- Concepts like kindness, fairness, and care for living things resonate strongly.

Understanding and Respect:

- Stories, outdoor exploration, and role-playing help children grasp the importance of respecting others and nature.
- They start to internalise the value of compassion toward others and the environment.

Action and Responsibility:

- Practical activities such as recycling, gardening, or caring for animals teach sustainability and responsibility.
- Children begin to see the impact of their behaviour on the world, fostering a proactive mindset.

Observation parameters for establishing class level

Educators can use these parameters to assess how children demonstrate the skill, categorised into three levels of development:

Level 1: Awareness and Curiosity: Shows interest in discussions about people and nature but may need reminders to respect peers and the environment. Understanding and Respect: Demonstrates occasional kindness and requires guidance to recognise the value of natural resources. Action and Responsibility: Needs encouragement to engage in pro-environmental actions and rarely initiates them independently.

Level 2: Awareness and Curiosity: Actively participates in discussions, showing a growing understanding of the interconnectedness between actions and their impacts. Understanding and Respect: Exhibits increased empathy and respect for classmates and nature, often expressing concern for others. Action and Responsibility: Begins to take initiative in simple sustainable actions, though still requiring occasional reminders.

Level 3: Awareness and Curiosity: Articulates the importance of valuing people and nature, offering thoughtful insights. Understanding and Respect: Consistently shows empathy and respect, inclusivity, and concern for the environment. Action and Responsibility: Independently initiates and leads pro-environmental actions, encouraging peers to participate.

Interconnections with other skills

- **Teamwork & Collaboration:** Working effectively with others, fostering support networks and shared efforts to achieve common goals.
- **Communication Skills:** Expressing ideas clearly and listening actively, enhancing teamwork and understanding in group settings.
- **Empathy & Compassion:** Understanding and sharing others' feelings, offering emotional support and building trust in relationships.
- **Sociability & Collegiality:** Engaging with others in a friendly and professional manner, contributing to a positive and supportive work environment.
- **Reasoned Decision-Making:** Using logic and careful consideration to make choices, ensuring decisions are well-thought-out and beneficial.
- **Reflective Thinking:** Looking back on experiences to learn from them, improving future decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- **Creativity:** Thinking outside the box and generating innovative solutions, helping to address challenges with new perspectives.
- **Resourcefulness:** Utilizing available resources effectively, adapting to constraints and overcoming obstacles through creative solutions.

Didactical tips for teachers

- **Engage Curiosity:** Use storytelling and nature walks to foster interest in people and the environment.
- **Promote Responsibility:** Assign tasks like recycling or caring for classroom plants to develop accountability.
- **Encourage Reflection:** Facilitate discussions on how actions impact others and the planet.
- **Model Behaviour:** Demonstrate sustainable habits and empathy in daily interactions.
- **Create Collaborative Projects:** Encourage group activities like tree planting or clean-up drives to build teamwork and empathy.
- **Celebrate Efforts:** Acknowledge and reward pro-environmental actions to reinforce positive behaviour.

