

More Productive ELA Classes Using “Kid Smarts”

In this last issue, we’ll examine the remaining MIs (multiple intelligences) or what we’ve been calling “**kid smarts**”. These smarts are: interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. There will also be an *attention getter* (AT) or two with each MI.

Interpersonal: These are the children who work well in groups. They participate and are usually vocal; however, don’t allow them to monopolize the group work. They possess a depth of understanding of people’s thinking and feeling. Most often there’s a sense of empathy. They make excellent team members, and often become leaders e.g. Student Council members. One *caveat* though: since they are vocal, they sometimes act as lawyers in their own defense. They feel they can talk



their way into or out of anything!

In ELA class students could:

- interview a person who has read the text, using the questions and answers to write an article.
- plan a pamphlet to promote reading of the story or book. Use examples from the text to justify their opinion.
- write a short biography of one of the characters. Mention personal qualities achievements, challenges etc.
- participate in a jigsaw: divide a topic or segment of text into a number of parts. Each child studies a part and teaches that part to the rest of the group. (This technique works well for Social Studies or Science chapters as well.)

AT: Whisper to one child “It’s time to refocus. Pass it on.” The child passes it on to the group, who passes it to the next group and so on. Because these tend to be the talkative students, you could also use: T: Zip it, lock it: Ss: Put it in my pocket. *Management tip:* When taking little children to or from a special class,

have them put a finger on their lips, and the other hand on their hip. Both hands are occupied so there's no touching, talking, pushing or shoving!

Intrapersonal: These children can usually control emotions and use them to understand others and themselves. They observe, listen, and like to work alone. In this era of group work, we have to respect their need for time alone. Since emotions make learning stick and these students relate to emotion, try to connect an emotion to learning the content. Then they'll remember it.



In ELA class students could:

- use a diary format to explain how the text made them feel.
- list positive information or interactions among characters in story.
- write first person accounts of events.

ATs: Since these students are usually the quiet ones, use something short and simple.

T: Hakuna Ss: Matata

T: And the bear... Ss: Snores on

T: Get it? Got it? Ss: Good!

Naturalist: These students like to be outdoors, are attuned to protecting nature, usually have pets, and maybe collect plants. Their sensory skills are better than most other students.



In ELA (or Science) class, students could:

- draw a landscape/animal/plant described in text.
- create a short “owner’s manual” explaining how to care for or live with one of the plants/animals in text.
- write a “green” essay and submit it to the local or school newspaper.
- write a persuasive paragraph from the point of view of an endangered species, or a plant or animal in nature.

These students might be more attuned to learning grammar if sentences were related to nature e.g. *The wind is howling in my ears.* (Now find a different verb that is equally powerful.) *Robins fly swiftly through the sky.* (Now substitute different adverbs about how the birds fly.) *People should not throw trash from their cars.* (Change the prepositional phrase to something equally abusive of nature.)

ATs:

T: Water, water everywhere... Ss: Don't you waste it, don't you dare.

T: For the beauty of the earth...Ss: Thanks be to God!

T: Meanwhile... Ss: Back at the ranch...

If I find more ideas for you to use, I'll write about them next year. Have a restful summer. ***God bless your hard work. Relax. Have fun. You deserve it!***