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Exploring the Role of Nature Journaling in Enhancing Environmental Awareness and Connection to Natural Landscapes: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Abstract

Nature journaling fosters environmental awareness by encouraging structured observation and documentation of natural landscapes. This study examines its role in enhancing environmental sensitivity and spatial awareness among 86 participants, including university students from design backgrounds, school students and youth workers from non-design backgrounds. A mixed-method approach was employed, with surveys conducted among university students and youth workers (46 responses), capturing changes in environmental awareness and their connection to natural landscapes. For all participants, including school students, engagement was assessed through observation and analysis of their journaling pages. Findings indicate that the workshop improved spatial observation skills and ecological literacy, equipping participants with an improved

understanding of natural elements and their integration into the built environment. Participants reported heightened mindfulness, appreciation for environmental details, and a calming and engaging learning experience that fostered creative exploration. Statistical analyses revealed a significant increase in participants' confidence in documenting nature ($p=.00007$) and their sense of connectedness to the natural environment ($p=.005$) following the workshop. These insights highlight the potential of nature journaling as an accessible tool for integrating environmental awareness into design and sustainability education. While the study is exploratory, it underscores the need for creative, community-based approaches in built environment education. Future research should explore its application in built environment and sustainable design education to bridge the gap between nature engagement and the built environment. © 2025, National University of Malaysia. All rights reserved.

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built environment education; design and sustainability education; environmental education; Nature journaling; spatial observation skills

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