

# Bringing the Outside In

Middle School

High school

Elementary Education



## Intervention Overview

Setting up houseplants in your classroom can improve students' sense of comfort and safety.

## Intervention Guide

Grade Level:	All
Materials:	Houseplants, pots, potting soil
Duration:	Set-up and care time
Implementation:	Set up a few houseplants around your classroom. Your students can even help care for them!

## Does it work?

In a review of three studies it was found that increasing students' exposure to nature, even without going outside, can greatly improve students' sense of wellbeing at school and in the classroom (Han, 2009). One of the studies reviewed an 8th grade class and the impact of having plants at the back of the classroom. Surprisingly, students in the classroom not only reported a greater sense of comfort and friendliness, but after two months, students were also sick less often and had fewer behavioral issues (Han, 2009). The other two studies found that students who lived near greenspaces, or had greater exposure to nature in their surroundings, had higher levels of self-worth and self-discipline (Han, 2009).

Similar research on nature and classroom design has been done in high schools and universities. It has also been found that having indoor plants in a classroom can improve the air quality and relative humidity of a classroom, contributing to a safe, healthy and comfortable environment for students (Bogerd et al., 2020). The addition of flowers and houseplants were both found to improve student wellbeing, tiredness, and attention. Flowers were considered less practical, as they have to be replaced more often than houseplants. It was also found that simply painting a wall of the classroom green improved positive emotions connected with nature and greenspace exposure (Bogerd et al., 2020).

## References:

- Han, K.-T. (2009). Influence of limitedly visible leafy indoor plants on the psychology, behavior, and health of students at a junior high school in Taiwan. *Environment and Behavior*, 41, 658–692. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916508314476>
- Van den Bogerd, N., Dijkstra, S. C., Tanja-Dijkstra, K., de Boer, M. R., Seidell, J. C., Koole, S. L., & Maas, J. (2020). Greening the classroom: Three field experiments on the effects of indoor nature on students' attention, well-being, and perceived environmental quality. *Building and Environment*, 171, 106675. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2020.106675>
- Taylor, A. F., Kuo, F. E., & Sullivan, W. C. (2002). Views of nature and self-discipline: Evidence from inner city children. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 49–63. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jevp.2001.0241>
- Wells, N. M., & Evans, G. W. (2003). Nearby nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. *Environment and Behavior*, 35, 311–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916503035003001>





This content is provided to you freely by EdTech Books.

Access it online or download it at

[https://edtechbooks.org/addressing\\_wellbeing/bringing\\_the\\_outside](https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing/bringing_the_outside).

