



2025

Wellbeing in Nature:

Outdoor Activities for Physical and Mental Health

Kayleigh Cioffi
Ma rija Ha m m e tt



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This session is a taste
of what our
experience was like,
focused on simple,
powerful ways to
support student
wellbeing and
learning outdoors.



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Ecopsychology

Ecopsychology is the study of the psychology connection between humans and the natural world, emphasising that disconnection from nature can contribute to individual and societal distress, while reconnection can promote healing and personal growth.



How to apply Ecopsychology WITHOUT losing time!



Micro-Moments with Nature

- 2- 3 minute 'nature pause' during transitions or before tests (looking out a window, going outside if possible)
- Add a plant to the classroom or nature - based imagery on screens.

Curriculum Integration

- Tie nature topics into science, geography, literature or even math problems.
- Use examples from nature when explaining difficult concepts.

Reflective Practice

- Short journaling prompts: "How did nature impact how you felt today?"
- Mindfulness or breathing exercises outdoors before exams.

How to apply Ecopsychology WITHOUT losing time!




Outdoor Learning

- Hold quick discussions, reading or revision outdoors when possible (even once a week or for 10 minutes).
- If outdoor time is impossible, use nature videos or sounds during study periods.

Eco-Action Projects (Linked to Curriculum)

- Quick projects (ex. Calculate the carob footprint of the school, study local biodiversity) that also meet academic goals.

The image features a lush tropical border with various green leaves, including large monstera leaves and delicate fern fronds, framing the central text. In the top right corner, there are three small, pink, fluffy flowers. In the bottom right corner, there is a single pink bird-of-paradise flower.

Even if you're aiming for top marks and your schedule is packed, small moments of connection with nature can help you feel better and perform better and it doesn't take extra time. Think of it as recharging your brain's battery.

“When we help children reconnect with nature, we nurture their minds, calm their hearts, and grow their sense of care for the world around them.”



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Activity 1:

How to carry out a sensory grounding activity

Setting:

Bring students outdoors – any green space, garden, yard or quiet corner

Ask students to sit comfortably and close their eyes.





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Activity 1:

How to carry out a sensory grounding activity

Introduction : “We will take a few quiet minutes to notice the world around us, one sense at a time, to help calm the mind and refresh attention.”

Sound : “With eyes closed, focus on sounds — nearby and far away. How many different sounds can you notice?”

Smell : “Now focus on any scents in the air. Can you detect flowers, grass, soil or the breeze?”

Touch : “Notice the feeling of the air on your skin, the temperature, any textures around you, or the ground beneath you.”

Sight : “Become aware of light and shadow behind your eyelids. Notice any shifts in brightness?”





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Activity 1:

How to carry out a sensory grounding activity

Reflection :

- After the activity students slowly open their eyes.
- Invite brief sharing: “What did you notice? How do you feel now compared to before?”

Benefits :

- Quick way to calm attention and reset nervous system.
- Helps students feel grounded and present.
- Works well with teenagers.





Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



SEL is about understanding and managing emotions, building positive relationships and making responsible decisions.

Something which is developed through self-awareness, empathy and collaboration.



Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Understanding and managing emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Feel and show empathy
- Establish and maintain healthy relationships
- Make responsible decisions

Emotional Intelligence...

... isn't just a 'soft skill'.

It affects academic success,
well-being, relationships and life
outcomes.



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Why Emotional Intelligence Matters

“People with well - developed emotional skills are more likely to be **content** and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that foster **productivity** . They can **understand and manage their own emotions** , as well as the **emotions of others** , leading to **stronger relationships** and more **effective leadership** . They are also better equipped to **handle stress** , build **healthy relationships** and **achieve their goals** .”

These are life long,
transferable skills!

- Daniel Goleman



How Social-Emotional Learning Benefits Everyone





Bringing SEL Outdoors



01

Nature promotes calm,
focus and emotional
regulation

02

Outdoor settings enhance
empathy and reflection

03

Active sensory learning
boosts engagement



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Activity 2: Emotions in Nature



1. Find a natural object that reflects how you feel right now.



2. Why this object?
What does it represent?

Activity 2: Emotions in Nature



3. How did this help you express emotion?



4. Could students benefit from this type of reflection?



Reflect

A SHIFT IN MINDSET

What could SEL look like in
our school's setting?

- Role-Plays – Look for objects that represent Macbeth's emotions in this part of the play – Outdoor journalling to express what they've learnt and what they're struggling with...



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Thank you!