

Natural Light Gives You Smartypants



Let there be light, indeed: Glendale Middle School's new \$16 million building will be harnessing the power of the sun to supercharge its students' neurons.

Instead of a "windowless tomb" in all its artificially lit glory, as a *Salt Lake City Tribune*^[1] reporter put it, the classrooms will be soaking in the sun's natural rays. One 1999 study showed that students in classrooms with a large amount of sunlight scored as much as 18 percent higher on tests, compared with students exposed to a low-light environment.

At Glendale, a school with mostly low-income minority pupils, Principal Ernie Nix hopes the new positive learning environment will propel his kids toward higher education. Natural light streams through the high windows along the hallways, while light "shelves" outside classroom windows bounce daylight into the room and shade the classroom from direct sun. The *Daily Green*^[2] did our homework for us by digging up more stats on the benefits of catching some rays, if you're still not convinced:

- Test scores increased as much as 26 percent among students who learned in classrooms filled with natural light, according to a study by Heschong Mahone Group of Sacramento, Calif. that looked at 20,000 California, Colorado and Massachusetts in

1998 and 2002.

- Sales were boosted 40 percent in a Kansas Wal-Mart at registers situated under skylights, according to a 1995 study by the same firm.
- Companies that have invested in new natural lighting retrofits to existing facilities have seen worker productivity jump between 13 to 16 percent, according to "Greening The Building And The Bottom Line"^[3] (PDF), a report it produced with the Rocky Mountain Institute^[4].

::*Salt Lake Tribune*^[5] and ::*The Daily Green*^[6]

[Via ::*The Daily Green*^[7]]

Links

1. http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_6737705
2. <http://www.thedailygreen.com/2007/08/28/natural-light-boosts-test-scores/5946/?src=nl&mag=tdg&list=dgr>
3. http://www.rmi.org/images/PDFs/BuildingsLand/D94-27_GBBL.pdf
4. <http://www.rmi.org/>
5. http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_6737705
6. <http://www.thedailygreen.com/2007/08/28/natural-light-boosts-test-scores/5946/?src=nl&mag=tdg&list=dgr>
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