

## **Managing Expectations for Aquaponics in the Classroom: Enhancing Academic Learning and Teaching an Appreciation for Aquatic Resources**

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**ABSTRACT:** Exposing the next generation to nature can foster a stronger appreciation for aquatic resources, yet it may not always be possible to allow students to experience natural aquatic environments. Aquaponics, the combination of aquaculture with hydroponics, can be an effective tool in schools and classrooms to reunite students with plants and animals, promote systems thinking, and encourage hands-on learning. In this article, we bring awareness to aquaponics in education, its potential as a novel platform for learning, and the realities of aquaponics in order to guide educators in managing their expectations for an aquaponics system. Specifically, running an aquaponics system requires diverse knowledge and skills, which makes it appealing as a teaching tool but may also present day-to-day technical challenges. Additionally, educational settings may affect long-term care, available space, and funding. We present strategies for addressing these realities of aquaponics in education and highlight two educational aquaponics programs.

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