

# High-ability students in pull-out programs and regular classes: A longitudinal study on perceived social relationships in two settings

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## Abstract

Although there is wide support for the academic benefits of pull-out programs aimed at high-ability students, it remains unclear how attending these programs is associated with social outcomes. This one-year, three-wave longitudinal study examined the perceived social relationships with teachers and peers of 245 high-ability students in both their pull-out programs and regular classes and included 429 regular students as a reference group. Results of latent growth curve analyses revealed that high-ability students perceived their relationships with regular peers and teachers as equally positive as regular students. Furthermore, high-ability students initially perceived their relationships in their regular class and pull-out program as equally positive, but as the school year progressed, perceived relationships with peers developed slightly more negatively in their regular class. Overall, the findings raise the question whether or not high-ability students actually have a commonly shared need for interaction with like-minded peers and specialized teachers in a special program to experience positive social relationships. Furthermore, the findings suggest that it is important to consider not only the academic benefits, but also the potential social effects in both the regular class and the pull-out program, when selecting students for pull-out programs.

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