

Socioeconomic Desegregation Alone Is Not Effective in Improving Classroom Performance

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Although past research has linked academic achievement gains to socioeconomic desegregation in schools, a new analysis reveals some hidden academic and psychological risks of integrating low-income students in schools with predominantly middle- and upper-class student populations that might undercut such achievement gains.

Sociologist Robert Crosnoe of the University of Texas at Austin finds that low-income [students](#) were more likely to be enrolled in lower-level math and science courses when they attended schools with mostly middle- and upper-class students, versus schools with low-income student bodies. Likewise, low-income students who attended schools with wealthier student populations were more likely to feel isolated and have [negative feelings](#) about themselves. These results were even more pronounced for black and Hispanic students.

Using a sample of low-income public high [school](#) students from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Crosnoe finds support for the theory that students' academic success is a function of how they view themselves and how others evaluate them relative to the academic skills and performance of their peers.

Crosnoe argues that achieving statistical representation in schools is not sufficient. He asserts that "desegregation efforts must attend to the social integration of students with lower socioeconomic status, as well as their

distribution across courses."

More information: "Low-Income Students and the Socioeconomic Composition of Public High Schools," by Robert Crosnoe, University of Texas at Austin, in the *American Sociological Review*, October 2009

Source: American Sociological Association ([news](#) : [web](#))

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