

Geeks, jocks and shocks: Student perceptions of high-achieving classmates

12 November 2013

Imagine a new student is to join your class. The only thing you know about them is that they were the best in their previous class for the following subject...

Over 100 secondary school students were asked what they thought a hypothetical new student would be like if they excelled in different subjects at school.

The results of this new research, published in High Ability Studies, suggest that [student perceptions](#) of high-achieving classmates are subject specific. High academic achievements in particular school subjects lead to negative reactions in the [peer group](#) whereas high achievements in other school subjects result in positive ones. For example, high-achieving peers in the sciences and mathematics were considered more intelligent, more conscientious and less socially-minded than high-achieving peers in languages or sports subjects.

Such perceptions are important because of the central role that peer groups play in the formation of students' subject-specific interests. Schooling occurs in social contexts and gifted [students](#) regularly report experiencing trouble among their peers for excelling academically.

More information: Marion Händel, Wilma Vialle & Albert Ziegler, Student perceptions of high-achieving classmates, High Ability Studies Volume 24, Issue 2, 2013, [DOI: 10.1080/13598139.2013.843139](#)

Provided by Taylor & Francis

APA citation: Geeks, jocks and shocks: Student perceptions of high-achieving classmates (2013, November 12) retrieved 24 June 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-11-geeks-jocks-student-perceptions-high-achieving.html>

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