Social Influences on the Learning and Development of Gifted and Talented Students

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Research supports the premise that social factors play an important role in the development and success within all talent domains (Subotnik, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Worrell, 2011). For example, good social skills enable gifted students to find and develop mentoring relationships, to network with other professionals in their fields, to develop social capital, and to sell their ideas to others.

Social factors encompass a wide range of variables including social identity and self-concept, school and cultural context, and interactions with teachers, peers, family, mentors, and other community members (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Subotnik et al., 2011; Worrell, 2009). Contrary to popular beliefs, gifted students are at least as well adjusted socially (Assouline & Colangelo, 2006; Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002) and have slightly higher social self-concepts when compared with children of average ability (Dauber & Benbow, 1990). However, the degree

of social difficulties increase with the level of giftedness, the presence of a disability, the diversity of the individual's background, and characteristics of gifted students that make them more vulnerable than other children to their learning experiences such as sensitivity, perfectionism, extreme self-criticism, and self-destructive behaviors (Peterson, 2009). Therefore, it is important to study those influences that contribute to the social learning and development of gifted and talented students to help them acquire social skills and interpret their social experiences.

To study these influences, we examined articles from the past 10 years (2007–present) in the following five journals: *Gifted Child Today*, *Gifted Child Quarterly*, *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, *Journal of Advanced Academics*, and *Roeper Review*. The search resulted in more than 200 articles. Articles were then excluded if they were not empirical (i.e., book reviews, literature reviews, opinion pieces) or if the studies focused on validating a specific instrument. Studies with parents as the primary sample, samples outside of the U.S., or those that did not focus on the traditional pre-K through 12th-grade school setting also were excluded. Further exclusion criteria removed

studies that addressed mainly academic outcomes or whose principal question did not focus on social influences. In addition, any studies mentioned in an earlier *TEMPO* article on the emotional development of gifted and talented students were excluded (see Parker, Hodge, & Johnsen, 2012). After removing studies that focused on nonsocial individual characteristics, we reviewed 5 qualitative studies, 10 quantitative studies, and 3 mixed-methods studies for this summary on social influences. Six studies included elementary-age students (Beisser, Gillespie, & Thacker, 2013; Jen, Wu, & Gentry, 2016; Lee, Olszewski-Kubilius, & Thomson, 2012; Olszewski-Kubilius, Lee, & Thomson, 2014; Pelchar & Bain, 2014; Rinn, Reynolds, & McQueen, 2011); the remaining studies focused on secondary school students only. These 18 articles are organized in terms of different variables influencing the social learning and development of gifted students: social self-concept, bullying and suicide, social experiences within coursework, and social relationships with the culture, peers, parents, and other adults.

SOCIAL SELF-CONCEPT

Gifted students often have a pos-

itive social self-concept. In one study, students didn't see gifted as negative. Although they had higher academic self-concepts than social self-concepts, these students did not have negative experiences with maintaining friendships (Lee et al., 2012). Similarly, in a study comparing highly gifted students to moderately gifted students, highly gifted students had more positive perceptions of making friends and did not believe self-confidence or making parents proud were as important (Berlin, 2009). Furthermore, the source of social support (parents, friends, classmates, teachers) did not affect students' self-concept (Rinn et al., 2011). However, in an earlier study, researchers found that students do care about how others perceive the information about them (Cross, Coleman, & Terhaar-Yonkers, 2014). Students were fine with others knowing about their academic strengths but used five coping strategies (telling the truth, "copping out," lying, covering up, and placating) to control information so they were not stigmatized. Cross et al. (2014) suggested the stigma of giftedness can create negative environments that lead to issues such as bullying and suicide.

BULLYING AND SUICIDE

Recent research has examined differences between gifted and nongifted peers on the topic of bullying. For elementary students, Pelchar and Bain (2014) found that gifted and nongifted students did not differ in terms of bullying or victimization rates, but that rates differed between grades. Fourth-grade students were more likely to exhibit bullying behaviors and fall victim to these bullies than fifth graders who had transitioned to middle school. At the middle school level, highly engaged students were more likely to find membership in the academic crowd important, but no student group (including the "brains") was more likely to be bullied than another (Cross et al., 2014).

Similarly, Peters and Bain (2011) found no differences in either bullying or victimization rates between high school students with and without a gifted label. Even though gifted students may not be bullied at higher rates than nongifted peers, Hyatt (2010) identified factors that may have influenced the suicide of one gifted female. For this student, being bullied, feeling misunderstood by her peers, and not being able to trust or connect with adults appeared to influence her decision to commit suicide. This student also had peers collaborate in the planning of her suicide. For gifted students, peer relations can impact school engagement and even suicidal actions.

SOCIAL EXPERIENCES WITHIN COURSEWORK

Coursework can impact the social experiences of students with gifts and talents both negatively and positively. For elementary students, they perceive play within the curriculum as time to learn from their peers, with females tending to prefer social play (Beisser et al., 2013). For older students, advanced coursework appears to impact mostly their larger social lives. Contrary to popular belief, students in Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) classes do not feel like they have to choose between academics or socializing (Foust, Hertberg-Davis, & Callahan, 2008); instead, they report they have the best of both worlds. These courses bring them together with like-minded peers, although these students often feel the need to sacrifice sleep in order to maintain both good grades and peer relations. Similarly, students in these classes believe their peers motivate them to continue in rigorous coursework (Shiu, Kettler, & Johnsen, 2008). Overall, students in advanced courses tend to have larger, less diverse friendship networks (Barber & Wasson, 2015).

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

CULTURE

As culture is socially constructed and socially mediated, the relationships within an ethnic culture often influence academic decisions. For Latino students in the AP classroom, one study found that students in these classes were positively affected by relationships formed within the program; outside social influences tended to negatively impact student enrollment in these types of courses (Walker & Pearsall, 2012). Shiu et al. (2008) found that fewer middle school Hispanic males enrolled in a Spanish AP course than females. Females who opted to enroll in AP indicated that they were more likely to be influenced by close friends who cared about factors such as good grades, a steady job, and community involvement compared to the males. For African American males, Irving and Hudley (2008) reported that those with higher levels of mistrust of the dominant culture were more likely to have greater oppositional cultural attitudes, lower academic outcome expectations, and lower grade point averages. They concluded that educational practices supporting the development of a cul-

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tural identity that incorporates academic achievement might be especially helpful for Black youth.

PEERS

Similar to their classmates, peers are important to gifted students. In addition to their academic achievement, gifted high school graduates considered the social and personal benefits of extracurricular activities such as teamwork, friendship, and a sense of belonging as some of their most sat-

isfying experiences in life (Peterson, Canady, & Duncan, 2012). Although alcohol use was similar between middle school gifted and nongifted students, peer relationships between the groups differed (Peairs, Eichen, Putallaz, Costanzo, & Grimes, 2011). Nongifted students who had tried alcohol had more friends who used alcohol and who exhibited deviant behaviors than their gifted peers who tried alcohol.

PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS

Relationships with supportive adults are important for gifted students. Gifted students want to discuss issues of development (such as puberty) and their futures with caring adults, although this varies by gender and ethnicity (Jen et al., 2016). Most gifted high school graduates reported that relationships with parents, teachers, coaches, directors, and/or church staff were positively influential and contributed to their success (Peterson et al., 2012). Furthermore, given that highly socially competent gifted students and their parents were more likely to report more positive family functioning than gifted students with

low social competence and their parents, researchers suggested that affectionate and respectful parenting was critical in developing interpersonal competencies (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2014).

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Dauber, S. L., & Benbow, C. P. (1990). Aspects of personality and peer relations of extremely talented adolescents. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 34,* 10–14. doi:10.1177/001698629003400103

Ford, D. Y., Grantham, T. C., & Whiting, G. W. (2008). Culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted education: Recruitment and retention issues. *Exceptional Children, 74,* 289–306.

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Peterson, J. S. (2009). Myth 17: Gifted and talented individuals do not have unique social and emotional needs. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 53,* 280–282.

Subotnik, R. F., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Worrell, F. C. (2011). Rethinking giftedness and gifted education: A proposed direction forward based on psychological science. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12,* 3–54. doi:10.1177/1529100611418056

Worrell, F. C. (2009). What does gifted mean? Personal and social identity perspectives on giftedness in adolescence. In F. D. Horowitz, R. F. Subotnik, & D. J. Matthews (Eds.), *The development of giftedness and talent across the lifespan* (pp. 131–152). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/11867-008

ANNOTATED REFERENCES

Barber, C., & Wasson, J. W. (2015). A comparison of adolescents' friendship networks by advanced coursework participation status. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 59,* 23–37. doi:10.1177/0016986214559639

This study examined differences in friendship networks between students in high-level math or English courses (i.e., honors classes, Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses) and students who do not participate in advanced coursework. The researchers used longitudinal data for students in grades 7–12 from two previous studies. Model results indicated that students in advanced math or English classes had larger friendship networks and were more engaged in school. Students in advanced English classes had more specific benefits; those in advanced English were more likely to have a female best friend and have that relationship reciprocated. However, results indicated that students in advanced classes had little racial or ethnic diversity within those friendship networks. The authors also included gender and social issues related to these findings.

Beisser, S. R., Gillespie, C. W., & Thacker, V. M. (2013). An investigation of play: From the voices of fifth- and sixth-grade talented and gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 57,* 25–38. doi:10.1177/0016986212450070

Researchers examined the perceptions of play and experiences of students in upper elementary gifted and talented programs through the use of focus group interviews (*n* = 18) and a survey (*n* = 162). In terms of social play, respondents ranked "being with a few friends" as the most desired. Females reported higher satisfaction with social play. Students also reported that they learned in social interactions. The authors included recommendations for teachers, such as incorporating social play into the curriculum through dramatizations or teaching exercises.

Berlin, J. E. (2009). It's all a matter of perspective: Student perceptions on the impact of being labeled gifted and talented. *Roeper Review, 31,* 217–223. doi:10.1080/02783190903177580

This study investigated how sixth- through eighth-grade students viewed being labeled gifted and how they perceived others as viewing their giftedness. Sixty-six middle school students were divided into moderately and highly gifted groups based on test scores. The survey consisted of 14 positive and 14 negative attributes created from participant responses; participants were asked to rank them based on the least positive/negative and most positive/negative. Both groups ranked academic attributes as the most positive. The largest differences occurred between groups based on social attributes. The highly gifted ranked "making friends" as a higher positive trait than the moderately gifted group. The moderately gifted group ranked "increase in self-confidence" and "making parents proud" as highly positive whereas the highly gifted ranked these attributes in the lower half. The differences between the two groups suggest different social and emotional needs. Both groups indicated "more schoolwork," "teacher assumptions about giftedness," and "pressures from parents and teachers" as negative. Differing from previous research, "stereotyping" was ranked low by both groups. The authors speculated that programs that are fully integrated in a school may be the key to ending negative stereotyping.

Cross, J. R., Bugaj, S. J., & Mammadov, S. (2016). Accepting a scholarly identity. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 39,* 23–48. doi:10.1177/0162353215624162

The study examined the relationship between peers and gifted students' identification with school. The researchers surveyed students from grades 6–8 (*n* = 122) on measures of crowd affiliation, school climate, and bully victimization. Participants were grouped according to membership

within academic crowds and participation in a gifted program. Researchers asked the participants to identify the crowd status in the school. The students identified this hierarchy in the school from highest to lowest status: preps, jocks, normal, hicks, brains, druggies, and then skaters. Group membership did not have a relationship with victimization or bullying rates. Results indicated that students who participate in gifted programs and who identify as being part of the academic crowd were academically engaged despite the low status of this crowd. Gifted students who did not identify as being a part of the academic crowd often agreed with their nongifted peers about the lack of importance of academics for reasons such as school climate or peer pressure. Due to the sample characteristics, the authors suggested that the study's conclusion might not be generalizable to other settings.

Cross, T. L., Coleman, L. J., & Terhaar-Yonkers, M. (2014). The social cognition of gifted adolescents in schools: Managing the stigma of giftedness. *Journal for the Edu-cation of the Gifted, 37*, 30–39. doi:10.1177/0162353214521492

This republished study investigated how students managed the information that others have about them to avoid being stigmatized. From phenomenological interviews with participants from a month-long residential summer program for gifted students, a Student Attitude Questionnaire was developed and used during the summers from 1986 to 1988. Categories that emerged during the interviews represented coping strategies that gifted students use to avoid being stigmatized. The five categories on the *continuum of visibility* included telling the truth, placating, "copping out," covering up, and lying. The scenarios aimed to ascertain how the student would control the information that others had about them. If participants did not try to control the information, they simply would tell the truth in that situation. The "placate" response was chosen more often than the other responses. In more stigmatizing situations, the "lie" response was used most often. The students told the truth 10 times as much as lying except for the question dealing with how well the student performed on a test. The authors maintained that gifted students do not mind that others know about their academic strengths but do not want to call attention to themselves in a way that may isolate them from peers. Gifted students tend to want to maintain control of the information that others have about them in order to preserve social relations with others.

Foust, R. C., Hertberg-Davis, H., & Callahan, C. M. (2008). "Having it all" at sleep's expense: The forced choice of participants in Advanced Placement courses and International Baccalaureate programs. *Roeper Review, 30*, 121–129. doi:10.1080/02783190801955293

This qualitative study aimed to understand the conflict between academic achievement and social acceptance that Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) students face. Using purposive sampling, the researchers identified 23 schools from a range of geographic, community, and school characteristics. The researchers interviewed 84 students from AP or IB programs. Results indi-

cated that students did not feel like they had to sacrifice either academic achievement or social acceptance but they had to sacrifice something in order to balance both: sleep. IB participants did indicate a difference between them and their non-IB peers.

Hyatt, L. (2010). A case study of the suicide of a gifted female adolescent: Implications for prediction and prevention. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 33,* 514–535.

This qualitative study focused on the personal, environmental, and cultural variables that may have influenced the suicide of an 18-year-old gifted female. Through the examination of personal artifacts, documents, and interviews with family members, Hyatt detailed four factors that contributed to the student's suicide: her experience being bullied, peer collaboration in the planning of the suicide, her perfectionism, and a lack of trust to communicate with adults. The author listed suggested actions for adult readers, including teaching empathy to reduce bullying, connecting with adolescents, educating others on the social and emotional needs of gifted students, and emphasizing uniqueness rather than perfectionism.

Irving, M. A., & Hudley, C. (2008). Cultural identification and academic achievement among African American males. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 19,* 676–698. doi:10.4219/jaa-2008-833

Using a sample of 115 twelfth-grade African American students, researchers examined the relationship between academic achievement and resistant racial identity. The results from the survey research suggested a positive relationship between the amount of dominant cultural mistrust and the amount of opposition to cultural attitudes characteristically associated with White Americans, meaning both constructs (dominant cultural mistrust

and opposition to dominant cultural attitudes) either increase or decrease together. Furthermore, increasing levels of cultural mistrust as well as greater oppositional attitudes were both associated with lower socioeconomic status (SES), lower grade point average (GPA), and decreased academic outcome expectations. Results from a statistical regression analysis indicated students' higher academic outcome expectations were predicted by greater value placed on academic outcomes, lower levels of cultural mistrust, and less resistance to the dominant culture. Ethnic identity and SES, however, did not predict participants' academic expectations. With respect to factors predicting actual academic achievement (GPA), cultural mistrust negatively impacted GPA for students in upper SES levels but not for low-SES students. These findings suggest that Black males' educational outcomes may be undermined by the presence of cultural mistrust and oppositional attitudes toward the dominant culture. The researchers, therefore, concluded that expressions of oppositional attitudes and cultural mistrust may be early indicators of academic underachievement. Educational practices that support the development of a cultural identity that incorporates academic achievement may be especially helpful for Black youth.

Jen, E., Wu, J., & Gentry, M. (2016). Social and affective concerns high-ability adolescents indicate they would like to discuss with a caring adult: Implications for educators. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 27,* 39–59. doi:10.1177/1932202X15621904

This qualitative exploratory study investigated social and affective issues among 280 high-ability students across gender, age, and cultural backgrounds. Students in grades 5–12 participating in a summer residential program were asked what affective concerns they wanted to discuss with

a caring adult. Answers were clustered, categorized, and reported by frequency. Results indicated that early adolescents wanted to discuss feelings and late adolescents wanted to discuss future ambitions. Native Americans in the group had similar concerns, but the Diné population chose to discuss personal issues and bullying more than the other subgroups. When comparing gender, boys and girls differed in "growing up issues." More boys than girls wanted to discuss puberty and maturity changes with a caring adult. Regardless of age, gender, or cultural background, all of the high-ability students were concerned with developmental issues. Educators can create positive support systems and encourage high-ability students to participate in activities and experiences that promote a general well-being.

Lee, S.-Y., Olszewski-Kubilius, P., & Thomson, D. T. (2012). Academically gifted students' perceived interpersonal competence and peer relationships. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 56,* 90–104. doi:10.1177/0016986212442568

This study investigated perceptions of interpersonal competence, interpersonal skills, and relationships with peers among participants from a summer program for talent development. Using items from the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire-Revised (ICQ-R), the Socioemotional Survey (SS), the Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA), and the Self Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA), the authors created an online survey; 1,526 gifted participants in grades 5–12 responded. Students in the sample appeared to be happy and satisfied with peer competence. The results indicated the participants had positive perceptions of making and keeping friends and did not see being gifted as a negative; however, they rated academic self-concept higher than social self-concept. Students with strong verbal skills were more likely

to face social problems among peers. Students who accelerated by subject reported higher interpersonal competence than those who did not accelerate by subject. Moreover, students who accelerated a full grade level had interpersonal ability comparable to those who had not experienced whole grade-level acceleration. Overall, girls rated higher in interpersonal ability than boys. Many factors that contribute to differences in gifted students may put them at risk for being excluded.

Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Lee, S.-Y., & Thomson, D. (2014). Family environment and social development in gifted students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 58*, 199–216. doi:10.1177/0016986214526430

Researchers examined the relationship between gifted students' perceived social competence and their family environment. More than 1,500 students in grades 5–12 and either their mother or father completed an online survey that measured family environment. Students additionally answered questions regarding their perceived social competency. Although parents tended to perceive family functioning more positively than students, both parents and students on average reported their families were connected, flexible, supportive of one another, and able to balance independence and autonomy. Family members also indicated feelings of family satisfaction as well as a high quantity and quality of communication. Compared to students with low social competence, students with high social competence rated their families more positively on all measures of family functioning. Similarly, parents of highly socially competent students rated their family functioning higher than parents of students with low social competence. Students with low social competence indicated greater levels of family chaos, enmeshment, and disengagement. The findings from this study suggested that a perceived positive family environment predicts strong social skills and highlight the importance of warm, affirming, and respectful family relationships in developing strong interpersonal skills among gifted students. Limitations of this study included a 5% survey response rate and an overrepresentation of Caucasian students.

Peairs, K. F., Eichen, D., Putallaz, M., Costanzo, P. R., & Grimes, C. L. (2011). Academic giftedness and alcohol use in early adolescence. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 55*, 95–110. doi:10.1177/0016986210392220

This study examined the extent to which academically gifted adolescents use alcohol relative to their nongifted peers. A battery of questionnaires was administered to all participating students in one 100-minute class period during a regular school day in the late fall. The researchers reported that approximately 37% of a sample of 327 seventh-grade students reported having tried alcohol. The rates of the gifted and nongifted student groups that had tried alcohol did not differ, but significantly fewer gifted students had used alcohol in the last 30 days compared to nongifted students. Behavioral, psychological, and social profiles of student groups were also examined. Compared to students who had not tried alcohol, students who tried alcohol reported more frequent aggression, more deviant behavior, and were more likely to be nominated by peers and teachers as leaders. Gifted students compared to nongifted students, however, were less likely to exhibit aggression and were more likely to be recognized as a leader. Both gifted students and students who had tried alcohol displayed more positive social adjustment than their nongifted and nondrinking peers, respectively. Interestingly, gifted students who used alcohol had fewer friends who used alcohol and were less likely to be friends with deviant students than nongifted peers who had tried alco-hol. Although an early trial of alcohol is associated with maladjustment in nongifted students, it is not associated for maladjustment in this sample of gifted students. Consequently, the researchers suggested that gifted students may try alcohol for different reasons such as for social acceptance, gaining peer status, or possibly reducing perceived differences between themselves and their nongifted peers. The researchers caution, however, that gifted students who experiment with alcohol at younger ages may become part of a peer culture that could lead to a greater risk of maladjustment in the future.

Pelchar, T. K., & Bain, S. K. (2014). Bullying and victimization among gifted children in school-level transitions. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 37*, 319–336. doi:10.1177/0162353214552566

This study examined the rates of bullying, victimization, and associated distress for fourth and fifth graders identified as gifted (*n* = 47). The researchers compared mean scores differences using the Reynolds Bully Victimization Scale and the Reynolds Bully Victimization Distress Scale. There was a strong, positive correlation between victimization and distress. Gender did not have a significant difference in scores for bullying or victimization, but grade level was significant in terms of bullying behaviors. Fourth graders had more bullying behaviors than the fifth graders but no significant difference in victimization scores. The authors also included information regarding the externalizing and internalizing behavior results for this population. They emphasized a need for bullying prevention and intervention in elementary school settings.

Peters, M. P., & Bain, S. K. (2011). Bullying and victimization rates among gifted and high-achieving students. *Journal for the Educa-

tion of the Gifted, 34, 624–643. doi:10.1177/016235321103400405

The aim of this study was to compare gifted and high-achieving (but not labeled as gifted) students on rates of bullying and victimization (*n* = 90). All students were enrolled in Advanced Placement classes in grades 9–12 at two public high schools. All students were administered the Reynolds Bully Victimization Scale for Schools and the Children's Social Desirability Questionnaire. No significant differences in bullying or victimization scores were reported for students of different genders or for students in different gifted placements. Although participant scores indicated that verbal aggression was more common than physical aggression, there were no differences between grades or groups. However, there were differences in rates of bullying and victimization scores between schools, highlighting the need for further research in this area.

Peterson, J. S., Canady, K., & Duncan, N. (2012). Positive life experiences: A qualitative, cross-sectional, longitudinal study of gifted graduates. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 35*, 81–99. doi:10.1177/0162353211432042

This 11-year cross-sectional study examined the sources of support and perceived positive life events of 48 gifted students. Data were collected from the students in an open-ended retrospective questionnaire after high school graduation and from parents' annual life events checklists. For most students, positive events were related to their academic achievement and the social and personal benefits of extracurricular activities. Athletic teams provided friends and developed teamwork. Participation in choir or band resulted in social benefits such as a sense of belonging, friendship, and peers who were a positive influence. Leadership and service were fostered through employment, Boy Scouts, and serving as teachers for younger students. Participants recalled positive experiences resulting from family and peer relationships such as family trips, beneficial changes within the family, and feelings of support from family and friends. Finally, service outside of school such as mission trips, creating a tutoring program, volunteering, and local activism were the most positive memories for several other participants. With respect to who or what contributed to success, most comments centered on internal characteristics. More than 40 comments, however, indicated support from parents, and 45 mentioned a teacher, coach, or director. Peers, siblings, extended family, and church employees were also cited numerous times as individuals who provided support. This research demonstrates the value that traditionally high achievers place on social connection through service to others, teamwork, family vacations, participation in extracurricular activities, and church activities.

Rinn, A. N., Reynolds, M. J., & McQueen, K. S. (2011). Perceived social support and the self-concepts of gifted adolescents. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 34*, 367–396. doi:10.1177/016235321103400302

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between social support and self-concept of 217 gifted 11- to 16-year-olds from two summer enrichment programs. The Self-Description Questionnaire II (SDQ II) was used to measure self-concept and the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS) measured social support. The results identified three cluster groups depending upon the level of social support including High Parent/Friend, Low Teacher/Classmate group (perceived support from parents or friends, but not teachers or classmates), High Parent/Teacher, Low Classmate/Friend group (perceived support from parents or teachers, but not peers), and High Friend, Low Parent group (perceived more support from friends rather than parents). Participants in this study did not regard classmates as being supportive. The authors' findings suggest that the source of support had little effect on gifted students' self-concepts and that there may be no relationship or an error in sampling may have occurred. Because this group of participants self-selected to participate in a summer academic program, they may have already had high academic and social self-concepts.

Shiu, A., Kettler, T., & Johnsen, S. K. (2009). Social effects of Hispanic students enrolled in an AP class in middle school. *Journal of Advanced Academics, 21*, 58–82. doi:10.1177/1932202X0902100104

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in social factors for Spanish-speaking middle schoolers enrolled and not enrolled in an Advanced Placement Spanish course. Students participants included eighth-grade students who spoke native Spanish and who came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These participants completed a survey assessing social differences. Results indicated that students in the AP class, particularly females, believed it was important to have close friends who value grades, have a steady job, have a happy family life, and give back to the community (as compared to the contrast group). For the students who were not enrolled in the course, gender also affected responses. Males were more likely to be influenced by social and external influences. There were also gender and group differences in parental involvement and time.

Walker, S. A., & Pearsall, L. D. (2012). Barriers to Advanced Placement for Latino students at the high-school level. *Roeper Review, 34*, 12–25. doi:10.1080/02783193.2012.627549

This study employed a qualitative

design to better understand the policy, academic, and sociocultural factors that influence Latino students' enrollment in high school Advanced Placement (AP) courses. From a one-time focus-group interview with Latino students and their parents, sociocultural factors such as racial labeling and lack of support for non-English-speaking parents appeared to contribute the most to underrepresentation in AP coursework. However, social support, whether through friends, family, or mentors, positively impacted Latino student enrollment. The authors concluded with recommendations for schools, such as building community and peer relations, increasing communication, and engaging students to decrease Latino underrepresentation.

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