

STUDENT REFLECTIONS ON A 'LIKEMINDS' EXPERIENCE

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This study involves a group of Year 12 students reflecting on their educational experience at a rural secondary college, where for the first 3 years they were grouped in two different settings – ability based and mainstream. As year 7s these students had participated in an initial study examining differences in perceptions relating to the academic and social aspects of their first year in a disadvantaged school which had introduced a 'like minds' class to motivate and engage high ability students. This research represents part of a longitudinal follow up study aimed at determining whether the different settings impacted over time on student perceptions of their experience. Initial findings had suggested that the ability grouped students had more positive perceptions relating to their experience, both academically and socially and the present study supports a sustained positive impact. An interesting finding was that students in the high ability setting perceived the experience of being grouped with likeminded peers as valuable for providing a solid framework for assisting with the pressures and expectations of their final years at secondary school.