

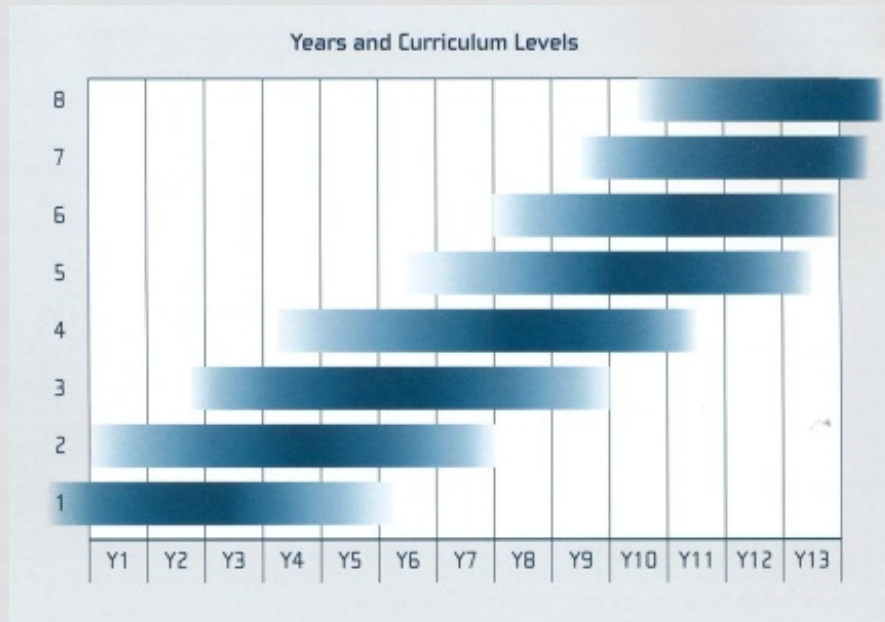
COMPOSITE CLASSES EXPLANATION & EVIDENCE

NORTH COTTESLOE PRIMARY SCHOOL



COMPOSITE CLASSES

EXPLANATION & EVIDENCE



Although a child may be chronologically older or younger than their maturity, social and learning needs are uniquely their own. This is the case across all classes, whether they be a composite or not.

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What does the research say?

In a nutshell.....

- There is no empirical evidence for any assumption that student learning is hindered in composite classes.
- Education Experts agree that composite classes are not educationally detrimental for the acceleration of gifted students.
- Composite classes actually encourage more of a family or community atmosphere.

COMPOSITE CLASSES

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- Anderson & Parvon (1993) analysed 64 research studies in the US and Canada and found that schools with composite classes were **most likely to benefit children** from all circumstances and all ability ranges.
- A major review of international research into multi-age classes was undertaken by Veenman (1995 & 1996). He investigated 56 different studies from 12 countries (including Australia) and found that the academic performance of pupils in composite classes was **no worse or no better** than that of pupils in single-age classes.
- Whilst research into academic aspects of composites shows it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight year group or in a multi-age class – it's the teacher who makes the difference – there is evidence to suggest that **composites enhance self-esteem, decrease behavioural problems, reduce the impact of labelling, encourage the formation of positive communities and lead to social growth.**

http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/programs/classsize/multiage/multi_age.pdf

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The most important variable determining student academic and social success is the quality of the teacher.

John Hattie (2003), *Teachers Make a Difference*

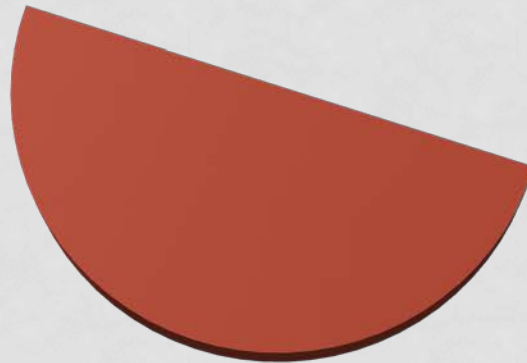
Hattie reviewed and synthesised over 500 000 different studies to determine the influence of different effects on overall student achievement.

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The Child

The biggest impact on overall student achievement was the child – what does the individual child bring to the table. Of note, is that the teacher can impact on building on what the child does bring in terms of ability and potential.



■ Child

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Peers

'It does not matter too much who you go to school with.' Researchers were surprised that peers had little or no impact on overall student achievement.



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Home

'Considering that the major effects of the home are already accounted for by the attributes of the student. The home effects are more related to the levels of expectation and encouragement, and certainly not a function of the involvement of the parents or caregivers in the management of schools.'



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The School

Surprisingly.....' Schools barely make a difference to achievement. The discussion on the attributes of schools – the finances, the school size, the class size, the buildings are important as they must be there in some form for a school to exist, but that is about it.'



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The Principal

Principals who create a school with high student responsiveness rather than bureaucratic control, who create a climate of psychological safety to learn, who create a focus of discussion on student learning have the influence.



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The Teacher

It is what teachers know, do, and care about which is very powerful in overall student achievement.

