Composite (Multi-age) Classes
Composite classes provide opportunities for children to:

• Work together and learn from different people
• Work at their own developmental level and rate
• Accept, value and care for others as individuals
• Benefit from shared expertise, enthusiasm and involvement of collaborative teaching teams who plan, evaluate and provide opportunities to support and extend learning for students through flexible groupings
Composite classes assist schools in meeting student needs by:

- Providing more options for matching student, staff and school needs
- Providing flexibility in class structures to meet needs of individual children and identified groups
- Enabling even sized classes and an even distribution of gender, special needs, staff expertise and resources
In a composite class there is an encompassing view of curriculum:

- It is dynamic and often the experiences from which children learn are more diverse with more variety of input from children of different ages
- It is flexible and open and can be responsive to children’s needs
- The developmental learning approach is supported as students construct new knowledge and understandings and make links
- Collaborative processes are encouraged as students work together
In a class with a range of ages, social considerations are met:

- In families, people of all ages interact
- In the workplace, a variety of ages work together
- Children from smaller families gain a supportive family in their class
- Children learn from one another and a variety of needs are supported (learning through teaching)
Research and Testimonies:

• “The most important factor in composites classes is the quality of the teacher”
• *Linley Lloyd, University of New England*
• “Tests of academic achievement consistently show either the same of slightly improved scores from children in multi age classes”
• *Linley Lloyd, University of New England*
• “Social benefits include a wider choice of friends, earlier opportunities for leadership roles, mentoring of younger students by older ones and less competition and aggression”
• *Linley Lloyd, University of New England*
Research and Testimonies:

• “Academic development is enhanced in a multi-age class as each child works at his/her own level of ability. Students are organised into groups of similar abilities, regardless of age. As a result, success is the norm, while failure is reduced because the work is at the appropriate developmental level for the child”
  
  *Dr. Nita Lester, Australian Association of Multi-Age Education*

• “There were no consistent differences found in respect to mathematics, reading, language or composite scores”

• “In the affective areas of attitudes towards school, self concept and social adjustment, students are sometimes advantaged in multi-grade classes as against single-grade classes”

• *Veenman (56 studies in 12 countries)*

• When compared to children in single age classes, children in multi age classes are superior in study habits, social interaction, self-motivation, cooperation, and attitudes toward school. Academically, children perform just as well or even better than those in single grade classes.

• *Gajadharsingh, Joel. "CEA Research Study on the Multi-grade Classroom*
Research and Testimonies:

• Gutierrez and Slavin (1992), Pavan (1992) and Miller, (1990) found that children in non-graded classrooms fare as well or better than children in single-graded classrooms on standardized measures of achievement. Pavan's review (1992) found that students in multi-graded settings did as well as, or outperformed, students in single-graded classrooms. This is noteworthy because many have challenged the view that students in multi-grade settings could achieve at a par with students in traditionally graded classes.

• Non-graded arrangements lend themselves to integrated curriculum, cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring and learning in a more naturalistic setting. Cotton (1993)