"South Grafton High School has developed a concept and strategies that have brought about major changes to student learning through its 'self selected' classes.

As governments spend millions of dollars developing programs that will improve learning outcomes, the South Grafton self selected concept was implemented with the minimum of expenditure."

The Australian Educational Leader
March 2005

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Students select to join the class by written application. The students:

- are self-motivated and enthusiastic
- have a passion for learning
- demonstrate the ability to work independently and co-operatively, in small and large groups.
- complete mandatory syllabus in shorter time
- demonstrate greater achievement of outcomes
- engage in more homework and classwork than other students.

Implementing the Program

Discuss the overall concept with the whole staff and gauge the willingness of staff to teach these classes.

- Define where to start:
  - subject specific approach
  - a whole year, or
  - a school approach.
- Advertise self-selected class information through an evening with parents of current and future students.
- Gather data about the applicants and set up an application process that is fair for all students.
- Visit (feeder) partner primary schools to discuss the program with teachers and parents of potential students.
- Define the curriculum that will be taught and the extra workload that students will be required to carry.
- Select the volunteer teachers who wish to teach the self-selected classes.
- Develop an open-ended quality teaching method that allows all students to expand the horizons of the concepts studied.

Self Select Classes

Teachers and students work in partnership. The program is implemented using the elements of Quality Teaching:

- high expectation
- substantive communication
- student self-regulation through commitment

Self Select Classes can be subject specific
may involve students who stay together for all subjects
include both gifted and slower learners.

Outstanding Academic Achievement

School Certificate Results

- 13% marks above the other classes.

Higher School Certificate Results

- 63.82% more students achieved University Admission Index’s (UAI) over 90 than before self select classes.

Self select classes are not just for elite students but, rather for students who have a passion for learning.

The rate of learning is so fast that students can finish the mandatory requirements of the syllabus at least one term ahead of the usual time.

"The impact of self selected classes at South Grafton High has been significant in increasing the enthusiasm of students for learning."

Teacher Education Magazine
March 2005

"Increasing student engagement in learning is a complex challenge faced by many schools. What's the best and fairest way to do this? Here's one school's solution to a global problem."

Principal Mates
Spring 2005

For more information, contact