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Welcome to **ATTACK!** a two-page occasional publication. Most of **ATTACK!** will be concerned with the holistic curriculum which, if acted on, is a fundamental way to undermine the present undemocratic education system. Don't be discouraged if opportunities to teach holistically are limited, do your best, be a guardian, and act as a witness to this culturally significant and inspiring way of teaching and learning. **ATTACK!** is a partner to <https://networkkonnet.wordpress.com>

But what has changed?

This education satire in *Developmental Network Magazine 1990* was received in the primary school staffrooms of New Zealand with cries of delight – but what has changed?

Tomorrow's Walking: News flash from Edmonton, Canada.

'A provincial government commission has declared that children need specific lessons at school on how to walk.'

The response in New Zealand was immediate. To a question in the house, the government said it was setting up its own commission, comprising a butcher, a baker, two academics, and a pre-school person.

When asked why there was no-one from schools the minister of education retorted: 'What would they know about it? After all if they did know something about it, we wouldn't have needed a commission in the first place.'

When reminded that a research report had shown that New Zealand children had no difficulty with walking, the minister of education said, 'Well, there you are – that's education for you'.

'Anyway – just because New Zealand children have no problems in walking, doesn't mean they couldn't do it better.'

'The fact is, parents believe there is a problem, and they ought to know because they're the voters.'

The opposition spokesman on education (National) said that while he supported the overall aims of the commission, he was concerned at the hasty way the change was being implemented. He then went on to say he believed that the commission's terms of reference did not go far enough. It was his proposal that to ensure excellence in walking there should be national tests to be administered on children's fifth, sixth, and seventh birthdays, and on entry to secondary schools.

To counter opposition criticisms that matters were being undertaken with undue haste, the minister said there would be wide-ranging consultation; to that end, people should write to *Paper Shredders Ltd*, Private Bag, Wellington. The minister went on to say that nothing untoward should be read into the fact that while the commission's report was due on 23 July, 1990, the final date for public submissions was somewhat later.

NZEI quickly joined the fray with an official statement saying that teachers were generally in favour of whatever it was the commission was likely to come up with, though what that was, still remained something of a mystery. A more definite statement could be expected as soon as the government had 'made up its mind on whatever it was going to do'.

'Meanwhile,' the NZEI spokeswoman said, 'we can assure our members we will be watching the situation very closely indeed.'

'In the interim, we must say we are delighted that the government has promised to put two NZEI representatives on the proposed implementation committee.' [OK – I agree, this has changed.]

Editorialists throughout the country spoke with nearly one voice. Typical was a *Christchurch Press* editorial (22 May) which said that the shambling gait of



Confident stride...

82% of our prison population proved it was a lack of attention to the basics, walking obviously being one of them, that had led to the wave of crime engulfing the country. 'Once again,' the *Press* said, 'our education system has let us down. First, the cost of electricity, next falling butter prices, now this.'

A Canterbury education lecturer said that the main problem in the matter of children's walking was teachers' lack of understanding of human physiology – especially muscle structure and functioning. To that end, he has already gone some way to setting up a walking recovery programme. Running walking records, he said, would be the cornerstone of this programme. To undertake these records the children would be required to walk around a football field with the teacher one pace (87 cm) behind and to the left. Teachers would record what they saw using a complex system of notation. He denied that the procedures would, in any way, make the children self-conscious. Children below a certain level of ability would be put through the walking recovery programme. However, elements of this special programme were also recommended for general classroom programmes.

'After all,' said the lecturer, 'there may be children out there quite oblivious to their walking problem.'

He went on to say: 'No wonder children are having difficulty with walking if teachers don't know about such things as the biochemical reactions that occur when muscles contract, and about the way striped muscle is built up of minute fibrils embedded in semi-fluid substances and surrounded by sheaths.'

Meanwhile, a Te Tiriti Te Tiriti Te Tiriti Ae Te Tiriti spokesman said certain forms of Maori movement were taonga and therefore an explicit part of the Treaty of Waitangi. 'For instance,' he said, 'if New Zealand is to be a truly bicultural country, then the measured manuhiri walk for coming on to a marae should be a regular part of the curriculum.'

The Coalition for Women was equally adamant. A spokeswoman said that the walk children learnt should be a firm, strong stride. The rotating, swaying walk exhibited by some women should be seen for what it is: 'A carryover from our patriarchal past'.

An enthusiastic primary principal, inspired by the walking recovery programme, devised the following checklist:

Walking checklist to be administered at 9.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. daily

- Has the child reached the pre-perambulatory stage? Does the child walk, run, jump, hop and skip indiscriminately?
- Can the child define the various movements referred to immediately above?
- Does the child push down with one foot, lean forward, do a slight hopping movement, lift the other foot, increase arm movement, and then proceed, when walking?
- Can the child lie on his or her back beating the air with his or her feet?
- Does the child look forward when moving forward?
- Does the child look left or right when about to turn left or right?
- Does the child move the left arm forward when the right foot is raised and moving forward, and similarly the right arm for the left foot?
- Does the child have a good walk attack?
- Can the child walk sideways from left to right, right to left, backwards?
- Does the child walk avidly for pleasure?
- Does the child just walk around aimlessly?
- Can the child walk purposefully using the conventions of walking?
- Does the child need to spend more time on the official walking worksheets? Does the child need to become a participant in the walking recovery programme?

The latest news to hand is that secondary schools weren't interested in teaching walking unless it became a school certificate subject.

A spokesman for primary principals said his members were unyieldingly opposed to extra tasks being imposed on schools – however, if it did come in they would expect remuneration.

And, as far as universities and polytechnics were concerned, they said they weren't willing to run courses on walking for New Zealanders, but if there was some Asian interest, and the government gave some extra money for a chair in walking, then they'd give the matter careful thought.

Network promises to keep readers informed on developments as they occur.



Crash.... an overconfident walker.

