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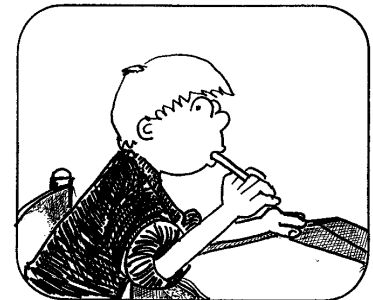
Welcome to **ATTACK!** a two-page occasional publication. Most of **ATTACK!** will be concerned with the holistic curriculum which, if acted on, is a fundamental way to undermine the present undemocratic education system. Don't be discouraged if opportunities to teach holistically are limited, do your 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>

Attack! 48 Albert and the discovery thieves Part 1

The control curriculum is making discovery thieves of teachers.

A key word in teachers becoming discovery thieves is 'inquiry' as in inquiry learning. The term 'inquiry' with its formal connotations of technicality, computer-focused, and apartness (*looking into, investigating*) – is a perfect fit for the control curriculum. This sense of technicality, computer-focused, and apartness is associated with abstract, inert aims, a myriad of jargon-laden objectives, and the use of framing techniques like WALTs (We Are Learning To ...) and Success Criteria that serve to restrict learning to the obvious, immediately observable, and measurable.

Please note: whatever the name of the process, in a topic in which genuine discovery has occurred – distinguished always by a series of open-ended activities (including science experiments) – children at the conclusion should be sufficiently prepared to express their understandings in a variety of ways, including writing, drama, poetry, music, dance, art, maps, diagrams, charts, talks, and presentations.



Advocates of open space schools, in discussing how that architecture should be used, rarely talk about the curriculum – the real curriculum. It is as though the curriculum is a given, or a detail to be added later, a footnote. And paradoxically to the name, open space schools mainly function in a closed way, behind the flashy façade of computers is a heavy resort to behaviourism – as such, open space schools should be seen as complicit with the control curriculum. What I am reading in course presentation after presentation is the organisation for the curriculum, but nothing about the curriculum for which the organisation is intended. And the organisation for this phantom curriculum is expressed in alienating jargonish ideas floating stifflingly above whatever it is that children are doing, unrooted in reality. In other words, I'm reading warmed-up Hattie, distractions like mindset, 1970s open plan organisational practices imported from the USA, and nauseating terms like effective pedagogy, key components, transitioning, needs-based groups, neuroscience imaginings, education positioning, core values and beliefs (for goodness sake, just get the curriculum right, and get on with it), teacher at the centre – meant admonishingly (but I don't care where the teacher is placed as long as he or she really knows the curriculum), diversity of teaching strategies, and so on. Attack! 10 speaks directly to this phenomenon, beginning with how schools should be structured:

'A crucial element of curriculum-driven leadership is establishing the essence of particular parts of the curriculum – the task for principals and teachers having discerned these is to believe in them and pursue their logic through to the implications for the organisational structures of schools. Leadership would, to a great extent, be the sum of those implications. For a broad-based curriculum, principals are central to the provision of contexts in which teachers will feel sufficiently free of constraints, and understood and supported enough, to teach in an imaginative and creative manner. Principals, however, in being drawn away from the curriculum, are increasingly vulnerable to challenging teachers organisationally rather than where it matters, through the real curriculum. In curriculum-driven leadership, the challenge should come through an inspired view of the curriculum, not an unbalanced view of school organisation.'

Holistic teachers talk of discovery, problem solving, imagination, and flexible thinking in relation to curricula driven by dynamic value-based main aims. They use those value-based main aims

(built on knowledge and skills) to make teaching and learning coherent as against the any-which-way characteristics of objectives. The value main aims are, of course, expressed in affective terms, for instance, children gaining a 'feeling for' how scientists, artists, writers, people think, act, and feel. A useful stem for introducing an holistic main is: *Children's willingness and ability to ... (willingness expressing children's attitude to the learning and ability the means to accomplish it), for instance: Children's willingness and ability to be independent readers.*

Being a holistic teacher is a state of mind – once that state of mind takes hold, teaching holistically becomes a very natural response. However, because discovery learning can only function in a democratic education system, to act on the holistic today is to be educationally and politically subversive.



There follows an integrated unit based on social studies. The unit is artificially constructed to provide the opportunity to comment on how the control curriculum is making discovery thieves of teachers. As a result, the unit is something of a caricature – unfortunately, though, not as much as many might think.

The topic is Travel and Communications.

The main aim for such topics is usually so abstract as to give nothing away except the surface expression – the main aim might say: *To get the children to study the importance of Travel and Communications.* Accompanying such a main aim is usually a host of jargon-laden objectives which, in the absence of a dynamic main aim, will very likely take a topic in contradictory directions.

A simple example from expressive writing: The main aim of expressive writing is to write with sincerity (*Children's willingness and ability to write with sincerity*); but an objective nearly always chosen by teachers is one referring to children using 'interesting' words – a euphemism for the copious use of adjectives and adverbs. Writing with sincerity is about making strenuous efforts to find just the right word to say what it is that is wanted to be said. Loading nouns and verbs on to adjectives and adverbs is contrary to writing with sincerity. But a central national standards test allocates points to the number of adjectives, adverbs, and metaphors children can force on to their writing. In this way teachers and the system take away discovery (of truth in writing) from children as well miseducate them.

I'm not going to make a list of the kind of jargon-laden objectives that abound in topic units. Jargon-laden aims, goals, and objectives are a symptom of what happens when classrooms are taken over by bureaucrats and their contracted experts. Anyone can write jargon-laden expressions; only someone who really knows children and their learning can write the meaning of such expressions in accessible prose. The range and nature of these kinds of jargon listings are willingly copied by schools as an attempt to meet the bureaucratic demand of coverage and the desired style of technocratic teaching.

Lesson 1: WALT – To list a number of kinds of travel and communications

Teacher asks the children to write the WALT and the Success Criteria into their computer.

What kinds of travel and communications can you think of?

Lists on the whiteboard.

Albert: Time travel.

T: (As the children laugh) We just want sensible ideas.

T: Have you seen time travel?

Albert: Just in my imagination.

T: List those ideas in your computer and then search for some more.

Apply Success Criteria.



[Large, sprawling, abstract topics, distant from real people, are really designed for cutting and pasting. Often the teaching units are downloaded with little attempt at modification. They allow, principals and teachers, however, to tick off a number of boxes.]

Continued in Part 2

