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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! 49 Albert and the discovery thieves Part 2

Lesson 2: WALT – To identify which picture is the odd one out

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

Selects three pictures and displays them together.

Identify the picture that is the odd one out?

Write it in your computer and explain why.

Which one did you identify?

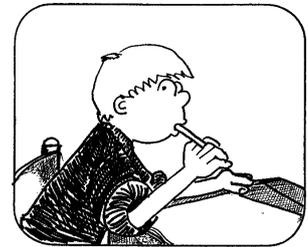
Yes – the one in which there are no planes or cars.

T: What have you got there Albert?

Albert: The one of the clouds and the trees because radio waves would have been travelling through the air.

T: When will you stop trying to be clever?

Apply Success Criteria.



[The teacher purposely selected the odd one out thereby depriving the children of a discovery opportunity. To provide a discovery opportunity, the teacher needed to have chosen the pictures at random and then made it clear to the children that that was the basis for how the pictures were selected. This would have made the children search deeply into the pictures with some sense of excitement and a greater likelihood of picking up a wide range of information.]

Pressures on teachers are leading them to be discovery thieves not providers. WALTs and Success Criteria tell the children in advance and subsequently what they are to learn or have learned. Not only do the children have stolen the possibility of discovering ideas but also have closed off tangential, imaginative, and creative ideas that might occur to them. WALTs and Success Criteria have the characteristics of needing to be (immediately) observable and measurable. This means that anything that isn't observable and measurable is signalled as not being valued by the school or system.

The most important outcomes in education are rarely immediately or incontestably observable, or able to be measured. A philosophy of education based on learning that is measurable and immediately observable undermines creativity; originality of voice or outlook; imagination; depth of interest; a feeling for people, situations, and the tenets of a curriculum area; and open-mindedness and tolerance.

I believe in the efficacy of teaching as an art, an art not unmindful of academic ideas, but confident in its own expression, based on successful and proven experience.

An academic metaphor is being imposed on classroom teaching – the metaphor of exact next-step teaching. It implies that academic theory can guide teachers to know exactly what to do next – all this in a class of pulsating cognitive and affective thoughts, feelings, and inclinations. Apparently academics can tell exactly what is going on in children's minds in a way they would never claim to be able to do in other situations. It is, of course, an absurdity, but it is an absurdity politicians and education bureaucrats find convenient to believe in because it gives them the chance to say 'they know', that they have special knowledge superior to that of teachers and, in the interests of children, it is their duty to impose such knowledge on teachers.

This leads to the following points:

The metaphor of exact next step teaching is inappropriate, children's cognitive and affective structures are infinitely complex – children's leaning does not occur as a progression of exact next steps (the mind is not a pair of feet), it happens in magnificent complexity. In response, though, to this complexity, teaching is often best undertaken in a straightforward, open-ended way organised by a dynamic main aim. Academics in their conceit and office-based dreams, recommend teaching based on micro-objectives, being a case of matching complexity with complexity.

Teaching as an art is based on the idea that to try to bring order to the turbulence of children's learning by resorting to complexity is to limit the imaginative possibilities of children's learning.

Ideas in children's minds, as well, are often immanent and best left in that state until they come together for a child. And ideas are not necessarily derived from words or adequately expressed by them. Ideas can be communicated and contributed to by art, drama, and dance, as well as speaking and writing – and all in various combinations and interactions with each other.

The so-called exact 'next step' is a foolishness, it is rather 'a' next step decided by the teacher; the implication that it is the only step which is the best or logical one, is an exercise in self-serving deception; children's learning is usually best done in a holistic learning setting, for instance, problem solving, in which children might all be doing the same activity but gaining different learnings from it, taking different steps if you like (though I don't).

Even if a teacher can see a way to stimulate a child, provide a revelation, or unlock a learning difficulty – the teacher should always be ready to take stock to determine whether a discovery opportunity is being unnecessarily taken away from the child. Giving time for the child to discover a way forward is often the more powerful and educative way to proceed (both cognitively and affectively). Making wise decisions about intervention in learning lies at the heart of the art of teaching. For this, Elwyn Richardson should be our guide. In *In the Early World* he agonises over whether he should make an intervention as simple as saying to a child, 'Was the flax bush only green?']

Lesson 3: WALT – To find out why various kinds of travel and communications are important

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

Why are various kinds of travel and communication important?

The teacher comments on the worthiness of the children's answers as they are given. The approved ones are listed on the whiteboard.

Albert: Being able to travel back in time.

T: Try and be sensible Albert.

T: List those ideas in your computer.

Apply Success Criteria.



[In relation to the holistic and to better learning, open-ended questions are often suggested as the key, but they are not in themselves, that outcome is entirely dependent on the reception – a question only becomes open-ended when the reception is.]

Continued in Part 3

