



67

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://networkonnet.wordpress.com>

### Attack! 67 Touching the clouds: Visual arts at a mythical Kiwi Primary School Part 5



As part of a current study of the social context of a war memorial pou (flag pole) sited in the school grounds, several children have begun a web search to investigate 'Memorials and Monuments' in other communities and the various forms they take. Preliminary questions and statements are listed on a chart. Aspects discussed include the placement and structure of community memorials, the part songs or stories play, what 'memory' means, the reasons for memorials, and the materials used in their construction. They have studied photographs of other local memorials and produced annotated drawings and plans for an imagined memorial for past pupils. A marquette (model) has been made from clay with a plan to place a glaze-fired version on a school waharoa (gateway).



In every instance at Kiwi Primary School, children's voices are strongly heard in comprehensive and balanced arts, oral language... and writing programmes. Teachers use relevant motivational devices, with children's ideas often being developed from concurrent studies in other curriculum areas. A positive classroom environment is in evidence as teachers:

- Encourage best efforts
- Solve problems by talking things through
- Allow children to develop their own solutions often following exploration and experimentation
- Teach specific techniques and skills
- Value original aesthetic responses
- Exhibit children's art work throughout the school community
- Involve interested parents and artists in the community as appropriate.

Kiwi Primary School helps children to develop an appreciation of their own and other artists' works by identifying and discussing:

- Ideas being developed
- The media used and specific techniques applied
- Any elements and principles children are familiar with or are being introduced to.

Active collegial professional development takes place with teachers supporting one another, sharing ideas, and celebrating successes. Consistent organisational procedures encouraging continuity and coherence are established throughout the school. A practical focus on a balance of core 2D, 3D, and time-based visual art processes are undertaken each year, enabling children to build on previous learning and prepare for future instruction. Specific skills are introduced, emphasised, and reinforced in formal teaching sessions. The activities within the core processes are never static but dynamic and always changing. Teachers constantly refine their delivery of the programme taking account of children's changing interests and growth. There is always room for children to explore, experiment, make imaginative departures, and take risks. Ernst Gombrich's statement: 'There really is no such thing as art ... only artists' encapsulates the Kiwi Primary School philosophy.



Thanks to the children and teachers I have had the pleasure of working with and whose vibrant, organic classrooms are represented in the amalgam above.

#### **An important recommendation**

Chris Graham was part of the writing team involved in writing two important art publications: *He Papahuia Toi Maori (Maori Visual Culture in Visual Arts Education Years 1-6)* and *He Wakahuia Toi Maori (Maori Visual Culture in Visual Arts Education Years 7-10)*. These books and the posters ... encourage students to develop visual literacy in representing and understanding Maori visual culture. They are a wonderful expression of the principles and ideas set out by Chris, and particularly valuable for setting up a comprehensive visual arts programme overall.

