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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://networkonnet.wordpress.com>

Attack! 73 Developmental in action: a new entrant room (1989) – the holistic before the fall Part 3

The musicians go to their individual reading boxes for reading material.

Except for one child in the art and craft area, the two children in the play house, and two children at the writing table, all the children are now doing reading. They have settled to it gradually, without fuss, and without direction.

Stuart comes over with his reading box and reads *All Join In* to me.

The teacher is introducing books to a group of eight children.

They glance over to the play-house and express concern that the boy is not with them. The teacher reassures them.

'We'll leave him. He's done pretty well today.'

The children understand.

The boy is now pushing the pram around the classroom.

Three informal groupings have developed. There is a group being introduced to some books, a group preferring to read on their own, and three children who have not fully settled to any particular reading task.

Stuart reads to me.

'As tall as a ...'

He looks at the illustration for a clue.

'As tall as a ...'

He looks to and fro. 'House.'

Josh comes over to help.

'I've read this book.'

In anticipation of some support, Stuart looks grateful.

The children's involvement in the reading programme is now far more dispersed.

Everywhere there are children reading on their own, in pairs, to the teacher, or around the room.

A number of children are reading their homework books. In these books there are various bits and pieces for children to read at home. Included in these bits and pieces are songs, poems, and jingles the children have written. They seem to know most of them off-by-heart.

The play-house boy is looking at the taniwha.

Josh says, 'Stuart.'

Stuart moves along the settee so Josh can sit beside me and have a turn at reading his book.

There is a buzz of children reading.

The play-house boy is now working with dough.

Stuart carefully follows the words as Josh reads.

The teacher is hearing various children read.

Greer is practising the spelling of a word she found difficult in her reading. She goes through the routine she has learnt for learning words.

I ask her if the teacher gave her the correct spelling of the word.

'No,' she says. 'She made me think of where I had come across the word before. It was in *On a Chair*. I got it from there.'

A child holds a Maori text towards me.

'Can you read Maori?'

I shake my head.

'I can,' she says.

She then proceeds to do a 'translation' by reading the pictures.

Children are reading everywhere: in the class library, on the settee, on the floor, on desks, under desks, around corners, in the play house.

The children are intent and purposeful. There is a quietness to proceedings. Movement from activity to activity has been relaxed and unhurried. The programme has unfolded impressively. A shift to fitness occurs as the children see the teacher take some equipment outside.

The lesson begins with children choosing some task-cards and doing what is suggested individually or in pairs. They then go to teachers stationed around the playground for group activity. The teachers are available because a number of classes have joined in.

After lunch the children come in and settle down with books.

Josh asks me to read the story of the taniwha again.

The teacher encourages the children to take a careful look at the books in the library.

She starts to read *Where the Wild Things Are*. A number of children settle around her.

The teacher then takes an enlarged printed book and turns over the pages to a taped story. As the story of *Mrs Wishy Washy* proceeds, the children mime parts of it.

The children drift to various places to read. They are mainly reading their wider choice books now.

They read to anyone they can collar.

There is movement to mathematics. Two groups of children continue to work with activities from their previous day's work, while one group works with the teacher.

The groups away from the teacher show absorption in their tasks.

A teaching group is working with the number 5.

Another group has jig-saw cards.

Various materials are used for counting.

After children have their turn at group teaching, they continue with that activity for a while, then they go to a collection of materials and activities designated for their group.

The children select some materials and then find somewhere to use them.

A relaxed atmosphere is evident.

The quality of the conversation amongst the children is purposeful. 'If you move these 2 and put them with those 3, you have 5.'

All the children are now working independently.



A child with special mathematics needs is given individual help by the teacher.

Three children recite a number chanting song.

As part of evaluation, the teacher has a cardboard checklist on hand. From time-to-time she ticks a section or writes a comment.

The teacher introduces new activities to children as the programme proceeds.

A child says to me, 'Our activities are over there. I just put my hand in and got one.'

The teacher moves fairly quickly around the class. She is making sure the children know what to do for the beginning of the next day's mathematics.

Towards the end of the lesson, a number of children become involved in group game activities.

Some children decide they are finished with mathematics and move away to do other things.

'I'm good at maths too,' says Stuart.

The teacher sits on a chair near the social studies display – the children around her on the mat.

The day before, the children had been asked what things grandma and grandpa had, and did, at school.

As they said them the teacher had written the children's ideas in pencil on small strips of newsprint.

The children then printed over the top of the pencil script with thin stemmed felt-tips. Some children, though, printed their ideas without this support.

For to-day's work the children sit on the mat looking at their ideas blu-tacked to the display board. Beside the display board is a Venn diagram with a main label of *At school*, and three sub-labels of *Our school*, *At both schools*, and *Grandma and grandpa's school*.

The teacher goes over the list of children's ideas — responding to questions, or skilfully encouraging the children to respond to them themselves.

'Did they write on paper?'

'What do you think?' asks the teacher. There is a chorus of replies from the children.

'What about felt-tips?' asks a child. A pause by the teacher encourages responses. They quickly resolve matters to their satisfaction.

'Did they have radios?' This one takes longer to discuss, and is not conclusively resolved.

The teacher says, 'Now what things are only at our school, or only happen at our school?'

The children look through the list, or just remember. When they think they have an answer, they stand up and blu-tack the label in the appropriate space.

The children are asked not to comment on the correctness of the placements.

'We'll discuss that tomorrow.'

Next: 'What things were only at grandma and grandpa's school, or only happened at their school?'

And, finally: 'What things were at both schools, or happened at both schools?'

By this stage of the topic, the children have developed a feeling for grandma and grandpa's life at school. There is considerable interest by nearly all the children in the activity. One child, however, near the end, drifts off to the play-house. This is accepted matter-of-factly by the teacher and children.

At the end of the lesson the teacher reads a story of school in olden days.

To finish the day, the children have music. They sing a song to a tape, accompany it with some instruments, and then respond with movement and dance.

The children go to their reading boxes for their 'bedtime' readers, and they collect their homework books.

Most of them say goodbye to the teacher individually. They are kind enough not to forget me.

Another day is over in Sue Bradly's new entrant room.

Continued in Part 4

