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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! 89 A threshold timetable Part 3

Choice time

It is suggested a highly individualised time follow reading:

This time could be called *choice time*, *extension time*, *contract time*, *challenge time*:

Choice time might appeal as a label to children

Extension time to parents.

There are three main purposes for choice time –

1. Choice time provides an opportunity for various contracts to be carried out:

The use of individualised contracts helps to avoid timetable fragmentation

Contracts to meet skill needs

For instance, those arising from printing or handwriting, grammar, punctuation, tables, and so on.

2. Choice time provides an opportunity for extension work in all curriculum areas:

Particularly in mathematics, science, social studies, language, arts, drama, music, and physical education

The timetable might have been blocked to go deeply into social studies, or an art topic, say, printmaking

Then, following the blocking, the children could complete activities or explore ideas of their own in the topic

Or the teacher might have planned a topic on snails in science on the basis of, say, three days of individualised exploratory activities with the children doing more or less the same things, but at a pace, and in order, that suits them individually

Extensions could occur in choice time by having children select an aspect of the topic to investigate, for instance: How long does it take a broken or damaged shell to regrow?

Choice time provides teachers and children with the opportunity to try things out:

To break the bounds of what is considered usual for children at a particular class level

It also provides an opportunity for children to explore various technologies and resources – computers, libraries, sports equipment, videos, music equipment, and so on.

3. Choice time provides an opportunity for children to continue and complete work begun earlier in various curriculum areas:

The blocking of the timetable is undertaken to get a topic going in a continuous and insightful manner and to set up productive choices

Science can sometimes be a relaxed investigation of the life, say, of a piwakawaka, at other times a structured science investigation

Mathematics should be unstreamed and based on problem-solving – with a learning entry provided for children of all abilities

Social studies should be the 'feeling for' approach because of the affective and cognitive challenge it poses, the way it works as well for new entrant children as it does for older children, and the way it avoids undue pressure on reading ability in the gathering of information

Physical education should break away from children standing around waiting their turn and be based on individualised task cards

Arts and crafts should be blocked to introduce teaching points and to set up activities that lay the basis for communication, expression, and problem-solving. Children should concentrate on their own local environment which should lead to an intensive use of Maori stories, culture and values.

In choice time:

- There would be children doing contracts to meet particular needs, often using task cards prepared in discussion with the teacher
- There would be children doing extension work in response to teacher-prepared wall charts, task-cards, displays, carded displays, carded pages from books, child-prepared charts, and so on
- There would be children doing activities following the blocking of the timetable
- There would be children working at challenges they had decided for themselves
- Finally, there would be children completing work from a number of curriculum areas.

Suggested for the threshold timetable so far have been written language, then reading, and choice time.

What follows next could be a number of curriculum activities, for instance, Maori language and culture, fitness, physical education, and music – all these could be blocked from time-to-time and, as with everything in the programme from then on, able to be undertaken individually throughout the day.

Continued in Part 4

