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## Falsifying (Music) Education: Surrealism and Curriculum

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### Abstract

*This article looks at what we would be unlikely to achieve in schooling—a vision of curriculum that is unreasonable, disreputable, and possibly infeasible. I will talk about a surrealist approach to curriculum and the contribution of this system of thought and action to democratic education. My purpose is not the deliberate engagement with futility—rather, it is to identify the limits of educational ambition, perhaps to understand something of what schooling is by seeing what it is rarely allowed to be (though might be). Schooling, that is, as the context for music education. Having said that, I hold out a glimmer of hope that what I will present may, in some ‘hole-in-the-wall-gangs’ of unlawful arts educators and music teachers, still be possible as a tendency in thought, a leaning, if not a full-blown practice. The basic premise of this paper is that, in the context of schooling, order is a deceit and that its exposure requires an iconoclasm that is embraced by curriculum.*



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*Falsification: the interruption of a sequenced pattern by a discrepant event. Falsification rescues us from the deceptions of repetition, from the belief that sequence is the same thing as order. It returns us from pre-emptive judgement to continuing enquiry.*

### **The Incoherence of Order: (1) Claims Against Fortune**

Social beings, ever-needy of predictability, search for order and seek out sequences that predict its presence. We no longer entertain anxieties that the sun may rise in the West, interrupting that most fundamental repetition of proof—but we do still worry about another month's employment, about the stability of the environment, about our capacity to restrain pandemic disease—and we do still seek to resolve musical tensions. To encounter a D Flat in a scale of C is a discrepant variant, it threatens order. We either live with it as an atonal event, reconcile ourselves to momentary chaos—or we reassert order by 'diminishing' it.

To believe in each of these proofs-by-repeated-sequence is to stake a claim against fortune—that the caprice of history will not deny us these predictions so essential to our existential stability. There is a sense in which the persistence of our institutions—again a repetitive proof of order—is another kind of claim against fortune, a claim to be able to harness natural social forces and to stamp our values on the future. We await with trepidation a discrepant event, a moment when our institutions fail, when Hobbesian realities break out and when the hypothesis that is society is falsified. Widespread evidence of systematic child abuse is just such a feared falsification. If the absence of self-restraint is as widespread as is alleged, then fundamental clauses in the social contract are nullified and the hypothesis—that we can live together protected by mutual self-restraint—fails. The order of our institutions is not a truth, it is a bid for a truth, and it is not tantamount to ownership. Schooling, itself, is still a fragile innovation.

Schooling driven by 'official knowledge' (Apple, 1993)—a National Curriculum or a curriculum defined by extrinsic criteria—is just such a bid. To fund a school system which promotes a stable and decontextualised knowledge base is an assertion of self-determination by society underpinned by an expectation—a prediction—of the reproduction of its values. It is a claim to confidence, to the power of tribal elders to sustain cultural traditions. Each day and year that schools survive and in doing so reproduce values of achievement, is an extension of the sequence, of the pattern of order that turns anxiety into expectation. Such schools are always on the edge of chaos (failure) but their institutional cladding continuously rescues them. Schools are living proof of the survival of our cultural patterns.

This need not be so. There are other models of schooling in which curriculum encourages pupils (and teachers) to deliberate over alternative futures, to consider the interruption of cultural patterns of belief and action. Such schools as these are currently little in evidence, though we once actively bred them in the days of school-based curriculum (knowledge) development. One prominent such school, Summerhill, survives, but was recently threatened with closure by government inspectors amid suspicions that it was its iconic status as a democratic school that brought such unwelcome and hostile

attention from the Chief Inspector of Schools. Summerhill, where lessons are voluntary and attended on only an occasional basis by largely peer-educated pupils who nevertheless score at average level in national examinations, stands as a challenge to conventional, pedagogy-obsessed state schooling. Summerhill School has historically been little concerned with teaching and with educational achievement, much less with the propagation of adult values, more preoccupied with creating the conditions for pupils to discover their own futures and to actively challenge the authority of school. It represents a discrepant event, an interruption to the comfortable sequence of state schooling—a falsification of the theory of knowledge propounded by the English National Curriculum, that knowledge can be held stable and underpin the reproduction of culture, that it is to be transferred rather than generated out of experience, that knowledge can be divorced from experience.

As a ‘falsification’ Summerhill offers no truths, but denies unwarranted truths to state schooling. Summerhill reminds us that while we may pause along the way to take breath, we cannot assume that schooling is able to discover end states in an educational journey. Falsifiers have no obligation to assert alternative truths, their task is to remind us that, to use the term offered by Cronbach (1975) all educational generalisations “decay” (i.e. are unstable over time and space) and that continuing hypothesis testing is the best a curriculum could aspire to. Summerhill is an ongoing experiment in schooling, one of the few.

We might think of Summerhill as a *grande falsification*, a challenge to order at the institutional level. They are the Summerhills, which demonstrate how schools might create conditions conducive to transformative experience. Music education does not happen in an institutional vacuum, and the possibilities we might explore for *petits falsifications*—i.e. for transformative experience at the individual or pedagogical level—are proscribed by the limits of tolerance of schools. Summerhill places no particular value on lessons in the creative arts including music, because that is not where creativity is to be sought—and, in any event, A. S. Neill was pretty dismissive of teaching. Creativity at that place is not associated with subject disciplines or pedagogy, but with ways of being and with ways of associating. It is the school itself that is the creative curriculum, and this is unusual in relation to state schools.

But they are the ‘petit falsifications’ I want to focus on. What does music education look like seen through this lens—the possibilities that may exist for music education to challenge official knowledge, to promote, in classrooms, what may be transformative for students, surprising and disreputable. Where is the curriculum equivalent of a D Flat in a C chord, or of the sun rising one morning in the West?

### **The Incoherence of Order: (2) Ostinatos and Variants**

Winnie, a student of mine, wrote a case study at the heart of her Masters dissertation—it was a personal record of interactions with a group of performance artists (Goat Island). At the start of her case she employed a fragmented narrative, a series of reflections and observations alive with chaos, one event after another. She spoke, in presenting this to our small group, of the need to open your mind to the disorder of successive ‘variants’—that, somehow, creativity and tolerance of this chaos were

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connected, that the appreciation of chaos was itself evidence of learning. Nonetheless, our nature as cognitive beings makes us notice—seek out—patterns. Each variant offers yet another discrepant possibility—but also brings the possibility of repetition. Eventually we notice—or make—a pattern out of a sequence of variants. In music this becomes an ostinato, a repeated figure whose role is to provide a stable background, an underpinning. We move it, in fact, to a cognitive background—we give it our second-order attention, reserving our keenest eye for a new set of variants in the foreground. Variants are serial discrepant events—potential falsifications—which persuade us to look again at patterns, to reevaluate them and to verify or adapt them. Variants, as I understand Winnie, as discrepant events are stepping-stones of learning.

Musically, they are the variants which provide the tension while the ostinato provides the tonal mis-en-scene. For example, modern jazz players work from a harmonic base—a key ‘centre’—and the challenge of improvisation is to deny compliance with the harmonic sequence, to travel as far from the centre as possible while not losing connectedness with it—to set up a play between ostinato and variant, between ‘head’ and heart. The improviser seeks out variants, discrepant harmonic events which bring the original patterns constantly into question, demand an alertness from the audience as to the shifting nature of harmonic ‘home’. But there is a tension between the daring of the jazz improviser who may travel dangerous distances from ‘home’ and their compulsion always to return there. Jazz improvisation, in the end, is an expressive but essentially conservative musical force—‘conservative’ in that it protects its basic assumptions and underlying structures—it resolves through rational processes. It provides the classic example of ‘freedom within form’. Resolutions are the end-points of learning, essential for aesthetic satisfaction, crucial for maintaining good audience relations and for demonstrating the skills of the performer—but they signal closure of issues. Resolutions are ostinatos relegated to second-order attention.

The necessity for closure is not a stricture which is inevitably applied to curriculum—though it is demanded by contemporary National Curriculum arrangements and by parents who want to see their child perform at the end of a project. Learning sites such as classrooms are not performance venues, though under high-stakes testing regimes and parental demand they are treated as such. In England, children in primary school are subjected to the harshest of skills-tests foreclosing on their putative ‘abilities’; and I’ve lost count of the number of music performances I have observed with children standing in embarrassed compliance, heads bowed, while public audiences thrill to their private accomplishments. The real object of these tests is the performance of the teacher, which is somehow aggregated into the performance of a school that is, itself, aggregated into ‘performance league tables’ comparing one school with many thousands of others. There is a community of sorts implied here as individualised teachers and schools relate to colleagues on the other end of a league-table—something akin to the choral tradition of Victorian England wherein each village would have its own choir which would be aggregated through national conventions into vast choral groups singing the glory of the kingdom. Classrooms in this scheme are like village choirs whose meaning derives from the possibility of their aggregation. But there is, in this, a denial of what is local and intimate for this interrupts the national aesthetic, the pattern of behaviour and outcome which satisfies our existential longing for order.

But quixotic ventures merely distract us from what should be the educational purpose that infuses music education, which is not to augment the common wealth of achievement, nor to create these fictional national communities of professionals, but to support young people in constructing independent identities and to form and deploy autonomous, independent judgement. When do we achieve closure on self-identity? If we are to connect music education with young people and their experience we need to start local, commence with intimacy, begin with what geographically counts as a community and what, locally, makes for coherence. We need, for this, another approach to classrooms, not as engines of outcome and achievement, but, in Stenhouse's (1975) terms, as laboratories for the testing of knowledge-hypotheses. In classrooms we need fewer demonstrations and closures; more experiments and apertures—fewer ostinatos and more variants.

### **The Incoherence of Order: (3) Deceptive Patterns**

Winnie asks what relevance the ostinato-variant analysis has for schools, whether schools can cope with the discrepant. Variants, she feels, are the learning nodes. But schools carrying the burden of official knowledge are committed to foregrounding the ostinato and marginalizing the variant—demanding compliance with the sequence, valuing the predictability of succeeding knowledge-events over leaps into uncertain futures, ever-seeking a succession of resolutions and closures. Preordained tests and prescribed performances are the closure points; marks of achievement the index of lost learning; the pages of the National Curriculum define the frontier between schooling and education.

The problem relating to Winnie's concerns is that ordered classroom interactions are difficult venues to address variants. The logic prescribed by the music national curriculum asserts an artificial order. Ostinato is foregrounded and imposes an extrinsic logic to pedagogical interactions, prioritises certain forms of experience over others. For example, the twin pillars of the music national curriculum in England are: (a) the movement from simple to complex; and (b) the iteration of experiences at ever-deepening levels of conceptual challenge—the so-called 'spiral curriculum'. Hence, for example, under (a) pupils learn music by accumulating experience of its building blocks—pitch, rhythm, sequence. This may or may not be appropriate to some pupils and teachers in some situations—but it does not easily admit of alternatives such as moving from the complex to the simple—i.e. taking a holistic piece of knowledge like an opera and seeking its elements. Interestingly, this approach (constructivism through deconstruction) is indeed, typically favoured by musicians who visit schools on outreach projects (Kushner, 1988). Principally, however, this adult preoccupation with building blocks is almost certainly out of kilter with young people who have a less differentiated view of the world, and so imposes an inauthentic rationality on young people's deliberations, co-opts them into a false pattern.

Under condition (b), pupils revisit to those building blocks but in the context of higher conceptual challenges, reinforcing and protecting the ostinato and an inauthentic rationality. Through this means the national curriculum imposes a historical legacy on all pedagogical interactions. The logic of a particular moment in a particular place is denied in favour of the necessity to continue to extend the logic asserted long before in the

context of other tasks. Of course, we make choices, we buy into certain curriculum logics which deny us others. This one, in particular—the spiral curriculum—denies us surprise and reduces the independence of the moment. Once again, it foregrounds pattern and is intolerant of unrestrained variation—it is not possible to ‘falsify’ the logic of the moment without bringing into question the whole structure. It is little surprising that, in the context of music education in England, the few music specialists left in schools (music long-since virtually disappeared from teacher education programmes) are disenfranchised from curriculum exploration which is largely left to the cottage industry of music outreachers and community music projects—and, for young people themselves, to ‘hip-hoppers’ and rappers, who are busy constructing repertoires of street identity for youth.

How, then, might we proliferate discrepant variants in the context of music education—and how do we then handle them? What makes for coherence, if not order?

### **The Incoherence of Order: (4) Automatic Expression**

Falsification was the mission that lay behind the Surrealist movement, declared by Breton (1948), its founder and leader, to be an attempt to free youth from the constraints of their elders—“*surrealism was born from a limitless affirmation of faith in the genius of youth... will youth permit its bold solutions to be treated once again as child play and deferred?*” In the first surrealist manifesto (Breton, 1971—original, 1924) Breton had written, “*perhaps childhood is the nearest state to true life*”. Central to the Surrealist mission was an iconoclastic stance towards the assumptions of the older generation, a historical interruption to the patterns of thought that produced (and continue to produce) the reproduction of culture.

It is necessary to feel by all means and make known at all costs the artificial character of the old antinomies hypocritically intended to forestall any unprecedented agitation on the part of man, if only by giving him a derisory idea of his means, or by defying him to escape in a worthwhile way from the universal constraint...the opposition of madness and of pretended reason...the opposition of dream and of ‘action’...an uncrossable barrier between the external and the internal world.

The principal means for this ‘escape from the universal constraint’ was to be a technique designed specifically as an interruption of logical thought, of sequenced rational discourse, and an undermining of rationalist expertise—‘automatic’ action (composing, writing, painting). Here, the attempt was to free the subconscious into an authentic expression of what it is possible to think, and the freedom was achieved by dislocating expression from cognitive processing—to engineer chance. This was the means to resolving the traps of rational thought which persistently presented obstacles to insight—the ‘antinomies’ spoken of above. In that manifesto (op. cit.) Surrealism was defined as:

Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express either verbally or in writing, the true working of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason, and outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations.

Surrealism was, too, a search for more authentic worlds than those which presented themselves in a short epoch sandwiched between two world wars. The distaste for immediate reality forced the flight into more meaningful perceptions. What was it that the world of surface realities concealed? How might the sources of its devastating distortions be properly perceived and ameliorated? The Surrealist programme was an enquiry into subterranean worlds of formation and transformation—not feasible without the resource of a Freudian perspective; surely fuelled by the existential need to collapse histories and futures into the personal ‘here-and-now’ to intensify the search for meaning. Out of chaos grows the desire for coherence. Long after the founding and the heydays of Surrealism, Andre Breton reviewed its major propositions. They were—crudely paraphrased—these:

- Through ‘automatic expression’, the exploration of the unconscious life in order to appreciate motive.
- The use of the dialectic for a reintegration of common bipolarities such as ‘madness’/reason; dream/action; conceptual/physical—all of which I will conflate here into the underlying bipolarity of knowledge/action.
- A challenge to the assumed tension between nature and man, their “two necessities presenting themselves as being in grave disaccord”—whereas they are better reunited through an appreciation and exploration of ‘objective chance’.
- A commitment to “dramatic humour”, a relaxation of the need to take seriously “the moments when the springs of life are stretched to the breaking point”.
- An elevation of the status of myth and a re-entering of the mythical realms of the id.

### **The Coherence of Disorder: (5) Iconoclasm and Curriculum**

I want to offer these as the basis of a curriculum for music education—one that thrives on informed iconoclasm and which properly respects the experience of youth. From them we may derive practical guides to action for teachers and students. The challenge to rationalism, the seeking to drive knowledge interactions directly from the resonances of experience, from the immediate sources of identity struggles, the transfer of intent from what is planned teaching to what is to be discovered internally—these define an approach to pedagogy. If a goal of curriculum is to support the construction of meaningful identities in young people then authentic pedagogy must be at least as much a site of conflict between adult and young person as it is a knowledge interface. What makes this complicated, of course, is that there no avoiding the pupil’s obligation to join the school in its struggle to discover social meaning. These struggles can be conflated—they are different, not inconsistent.

The striking of a proper balance between the two, protecting the rights of the child to autonomous meaning, is not possible under contemporary conditions of state-sponsored chaos. The primacy of test-based accountability and forcing schools into market competition in England, with similar movement in the United States; the state-sponsored warfare against dissent involving sacking teachers who do not accept official targets; empowering head teachers to levy fines on parents; sending to prison parents of truanting youngsters; imposing curfew orders on young children forcing them into the

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homes from which they are often in flight; dedicating primary education to basic literacies and losing, wholesale, the creative arts; explicit government intentions to deprofessionalize teaching—all of these combine to suppress creative, essential contests for meaning and truth between student and teacher, to launder pedagogy of risk and experiment. My curriculum specification reflects that same flight from unreason, from the ruins of failed social policies in the search for more authentic curriculum experience that is coherent in the lives of young people—and is more humanistic. A prerequisite is the emancipation of youth from “*aesthetic or moral preoccupations*” designed by adults. This, too, substitutes compliance with ‘the canon’ with exploration of inner worlds, it allows a fascination with ‘objective chance’ and a renewed taste for automatic expression and unpredictability—a proper rehearsal of the immediate rather than of the past. They speak to an enhanced role for the following dimensions of music experience:

- Improvisation.
- Critical deconstruction of complex musical experiences through examining the structures of their iconography (the fame of a composer, the aesthetic completeness of an octave, central concepts such as resolution and recapitulation).
- A Reggio Emilia-type approach (child-centred pedagogy) where music projects are emergent upon the unpredictable and cumulative understanding of the students.
- A Summerhill-type approach to collective theorizing in which goals and standards are based upon situated agreement not determined by people ‘elsewhere’.
- A safe environment in which inner feelings and judgements can be expressed with no fear of retribution.
- Music ‘utterances’ are explored, rehearsed and refined not as elements of performance but as expression of personality and personal struggle.
- The divorce, *decree nisi*, of music judgement and music appreciation, freeing students from the requirement to admire the accomplishments of their elders.
- The reintegration of music knowledge and music action such that legitimate knowledge and music theory is that which is generated and held in the same context in which music is being made—i.e. students theorise about music by making it—a re-valuing of the immediate.
- A ‘coherentist’ approach to curriculum order (Everitt & Fisher 1995) in which coherence is determined by criteria intrinsic to the music education experience rather than ‘elsewhere’

Music education is an appropriate area for such explorations for these reasons:

- It is marginal to the achievement agenda and so more easily freed from political constraint.
- My own experience over more than 15 years of researching music education is that music is a *pretext*, and that the *post-text* to which it ultimately relates is life. In my work, interviews with students, teachers and musicians invariably start with



music but are rarely sustained as such and rapidly yield to conversation about life and its preoccupations.

- Music is a prominent feature in the struggle adolescents, in particular, have to discover appropriate identities.
- Music-making as an enquiry site is both rich and transparent with key issues in the struggle for independence such as ownership, authority, chance-versus-order, judgement and control.

In practical terms, automatism finds its expression in many areas of classroom and school life but is suppressed. Contemporary approaches to music curriculum in Britain proscribe pedagogical creativity by demanding narrow curriculum logics such as movement from simple to complex, spiral approaches to curriculum, and a suppression of the student voice in music through restrictions on performance. But variants are suppressed, not extirpated. There are more creative challenges available for music teachers to use pedagogy to explore cultural dissonances between adult and youngster, provoking musical expression which precedes understanding by both child and teacher and which turns the pedagogical act into one of research and experimentation, seeking meaning on the young person's terms. Automatic expression happens before and after lessons, in private cellars and lofts, in day-dreaming minds of present-but-truanting youngsters, and, of course, in playgrounds. More formal discussion-based classrooms are contexts for conceptual experimentation by students once license is granted by the teacher, and once the teacher submits to the logic of discussion driven by spontaneous expression. There is a pedagogical case to be made for 'talk before you think'—not to allow the convention, the courtesy or the fear to censor authentic expression. Much of the logic of Stenhouse's work was illuminated by the realisation that any expression of preference or favour by the teacher is received by the pupil as an expression of authority—and that this makes it impossible to distinguish any pupil response as between compliance and choice. The only clearly authentic pupil voice, in these terms, is that of denial and challenge. Stenhouse's answer to the conundrum was to leech away that form of authority in the teacher by defining their role as 'neutral chair'—responsible for the quality and range of pupil views but not for where those views would lead the pupil. Learning outcomes featured little for Stenhouse other than as warranted uncertainties. Once the teacher is emancipated from learning outcomes they are free to engage with observation and understanding.

Assessment, too, is a building site for authenticity, the instrument the teacher uses to come to terms with the automatic expression of the student. 'Authentic assessment' is spoken of as that form of teacher judgement which most closely relates to the nature of the learning task, supports and extends it and is structured by its assumptions. But this will often merely restate a pedagogical effectiveness argument and retain control over meaning in the hands of the teacher. Assessment, of course, is the key instrument for sustaining and warranting truth claims of schooling and so becomes a target for informed iconoclasm. An authentic form of assessment in the light of experiments with automatism is a process in which the teacher struggles to understand the expression of the student—perhaps by emitting judgements as hypotheses and self-testing instruments—'what do you mean...?', 'could that be...?', 'how might we go about...?', 'if that for you, then what for me...?'. The teacher is an anthropologist at home.

The need is to see pedagogy not as a communicative device and as an instrument of ethical agreement between child and teacher, but as a site of creative tension derived from the inevitable cultural conflict between them. The implication of this conflict is that the pedagogical challenge comes not from curriculum advocates who must be appeased (educational administrators, political communities, parent groups) but from children who must be understood. I see no curriculum area which would not benefit from automatism, though there are some—the arts and the humanities—where they are most apposite. The study of the human condition is where learning must be founded upon self-revelation. It is in the study of the human condition and the self that the child is most at risk from the interventive authority of the pedagogue and, hence, where the teacher needs liberating from appeasement expectations.

Cox et al. (1999) pursue the exploration of a surrealist approach to the art curriculum through an iconoclastic denial of the rational. Their starting point is the event staged by Robert Rauschenberg in 1953 when he appropriated a drawing of de Kooning by erasing it—the dismissal of the image being at the same time an independent declaration of ownership of it. The curriculum message here was that the reasoned rejection by the pupil of the work of their elders was the only unequivocal sign of independent thought. Take away the presupposition of the image and the ground is cleared for the free expression of the child.

What lies in common between surrealist automatism as a pedagogical technique, and Stenhouse's neutral chair, is a transfer of authority over knowledge from teacher to pupil, an essential exposure of the teacher to the autonomous purpose of the child—and a consequent intensification of the complexity of teaching. With that transfer of authority comes an immediate challenge to 'the canon', to warranted ways of going about things.

For all but a few, there is a tension between the musical canon and music improvisation. Learn to master 'playing by the dots' and all but those few are virtually incapacitated in constructing music as they go along—they have been inducted into a relationship of dependency. I take this to be a general case of a frailty which arises from a relationship between cognition and emotion—this business of how discipline displaces volition. But it is surely there in the defensive armoury of older generations against the younger. *'Learn the canon! Earn your right to dissent!'* But apart from the concealed emasculation of autonomous judgement, we might be circumspect rather than assuming about our injunction to youth to 'know that which you seek to overthrow'. The 'knowing' will not always be the neutral, honorific process implicit in our moral vocabulary, knowing has a backwash effect—sometimes we may substitute 'co-option' for 'knowledge'. Blind but purposeful iconoclasm is an alternative curriculum strategy. First know yourself, then confront the canon—that way, at least, you might have developed some armour of your own. That, too, is an educational application of automatism and a practical approach to falsification.

Fanciful, perhaps. Too demanding, maybe, of a profession and a system that so stolidly defends itself against radical experiment and anti-authoritarianism. Perhaps automatism stands only as what one reviewer of a draft of this paper worried it might remain—'a dreamy surprise island', too distant, too exotic for hope of a landing.

But a question remains. Where is the pedagogy of resistance?

Where is the educational response to the chaos that has become schooling, to a chaos that is no longer solely attributable to those hardy old enemies, class and injustice, but which emanates from a politically unassailable technocracy which unites the right and the left?

By resistance I don't mean countervailing ideology, using the classroom as a site of class struggle or as a site for the denunciation of social inequality. These, in my terms, pre-empt the expression and the analysis of the student who, as a student, has the right even to become a troublesome technocrat. It is not the business of the teacher to be concerned with learning outcomes, these are properly the concerns of the students, their peers and families. The pedagogy of resistance is pedagogy which protects classrooms as laboratories, denies the imposition of learning goals, which admits into judgement only criteria derived from existential realities in the classroom, and which creates the conditions for the unfettered exploration and expression of the student's inner view. To resist, it is sufficient not to engage.

I see little of this resistance, though I see many teachers overwhelmed with struggle — often to justify what it is they are required to do and which is sometimes a dry fruit from which to squeeze professional meaning. Classroom experimentation is at low ebb and is mostly confined to fine-tuning the engine of 'curriculum delivery' and the grinding machine of student achievement and classroom control — 'what works' is what rules. The change agenda is dominated by what Schön (1971) characterized as "*dynamic conservatism*"—e.g. school 'improvement' rather than curriculum innovation. But then, the forces of control are strong.

Control is the technocrat's response to the threat of creativity. Automatism is a way of bringing adult authority into question for its shortcomings in offering identity models to young people. Automatism moves beyond what is known and prescribed to explore, not just the student's obligation to enter into the struggle the school wages to disseminate meaning, but the school's obligation to enter into the student's struggle for identity.

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