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**Risking Heuristics: Towards a classification of
key features of Mantle of the Expert through
the metaphor of the korowai**

Viv Aitken

National Drama Publications
www.dramaresearch.co.uk
publications@nationaldrama.org.uk
www.nationaldrama.org.uk

Risking Heuristics: Towards a classification of key features of Mantle of the Expert through the metaphor of the korowai

Viv Aitken

Abstract

This paper was originally presented at National Drama's *Heathcote Reconsidered* conference, Greenwich, 2013. It is an attempt to contribute to the understanding of Heathcote's cross curricula system, Mantle of the Expert, using a metaphor emerging from the cultural traditions of Aotearoa New Zealand. The paper begins with a brief outline of Heathcote's influence in New Zealand and a justification of heuristics, or 'rules of thumb' as means to understand complex phenomena such as teaching in Mantle of the Expert. Next the paper goes on to offer one such heuristic in the form of a weaving metaphor. Specifically, the author suggests that the teacher weaving a Mantle of the Expert experience can be viewed as akin to the weaver who sets about to create a korowai, or ceremonial cloak in the Māori tradition. The *korowai* is an item of ceremonial dress from the Māori culture, traditionally gifted to leaders: 'the korowai is regarded as a *taonga tuku iko* – a treasure handed down from generation to generation' (Ministry of Education: Tu Rangatira, p,12). Woven over many hours, from flax or other natural materials and using feathers and fur patterning, the korowai represents the wearer's cultural identity and their sense of *mana* (pride, knowledge and status) within it. Drawing on the language and values of korowai weaving, the author presents Mantle of the Expert as having underlying philosophies (*tikanga*), core elements (*whenu*) and a whole set of interwoven signature pedagogies (*aho*). The question of patterning, hemming and originality of design are all considered using the same metaphor. The limitations and constraints of the metaphor are discussed. Finally, the paper concludes by defending the cultural specificity of this heuristic metaphor as a means to situate Heathcote's work in a bicultural New Zealand context.

Introduction



The photograph above was taken at a graduation ceremony on the *Marae* (ceremonial meeting house) of my University. The image shows just a few of the wide variety of beautiful and varied *korowai* worn by students on that occasion along with their more traditional academic robes. In this article, I want to consider the process that is used in weaving a *korowai* and suggest that it serves as a metaphor for understanding the ‘weaving’ that the teacher carries out in working with the Mantle of the Expert approach. The metaphor is not chosen to imply that the teacher is creator of a ‘mantle’ gifted to another. Heathcote was very clear that this was not the way in which she intended the term ‘mantle’ to be understood.

Mantle is not a cloak by which a person is recognised. This is not a garment to cover. I use it as a quality: of leadership, carrying standards of behaviour, morality, responsibility, ethics and the spiritual basis of all action (Heathcote 2009: 1-2).

In choosing the *korowai* metaphor, my aim is to suggest that the planning process used by a teacher can be seen as akin to the weaving process that goes into a *korowai*, in that both require skills, understandings and certain key elements. My aim is to offer a tentative classification of key features of Mantle of the Expert that might resonate for all who use the system. To begin with, however, I recognise that the metaphor I have chosen to work with is very firmly situated within a New Zealand context, so some context may be needed.

Heathcote and Mantle of the Expert in New Zealand

As Battye (2010), Greenwood (2009) and others have pointed out, Heathcote has had a significant influence on the development of education in New Zealand, both within drama and more widely. Heathcote’s visits to the country in 1984 and 1987 involved workshops and classes up and down the country and scores of teachers were influenced by the experience. The subject society for drama educators, Drama New Zealand (formally NZADIE) was formed as a direct result of Heathcote’s visits

and she remained patron for the rest of her life. In 2000 drama became a recognised curriculum subject, as part of the learning area The Arts. The influence of Heathcote's practice can be seen within the 2000 New Zealand Curriculum document *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education 2000), which makes specific reference to process drama and conceptualises drama in terms of 'elements', 'techniques' and 'conventions', emerging from Heathcote's practice. In 2007 when the New Zealand curriculum was revised, the status of drama was confirmed (Ministry of Education 2007). This means among other things, that all generalist student teachers now receive some pre-service education in drama. At the University of Waikato, for example, students receive a minimum of twelve hours in process drama (over one hundred hours if they opt to take further papers in drama) and every student is expected to teach a process drama lesson, involving teacher-in-role in their first year.

Teachers in New Zealand have been connected with the Mantle of the Expert approach since its inception (Battye 2010). Indeed, Heathcote describes how important features of the early form of the system emerged during her work with teachers in New Zealand (Heathcote 2008). Several senior teachers travelled to the UK to study with Heathcote and shared their learning through workshops, courses and videos back in New Zealand. The two key drama resources *Playing our Stories* (2006) and *Telling our Stories* (2004) produced by the Ministry of Education and sent to every school in the country, include examples of dramas with Mantle of the Expert characteristics. In 2009, the *Weaving our stories* International Mantle of the Expert conference was held in Hamilton, attended by around 100 delegates. Since then, cluster groups of teachers interested in Mantle of the Expert have continued to meet once a term in Hamilton, Bay of Plenty and occasionally more widely. Several schools have adopted the approach and the Ministry of Education has included information about Mantle of the Expert on its teacher's resource website under the heading 'effective pedagogies' (Ministry of Education 2011). The University of Waikato offers undergraduate and postgraduate papers in Mantle of the Expert, and research into the approach has also begun. Between 2010 and 2012, Mantle of the Expert was a key focus for a research project into Arts-based integration conducted by a group of researchers from the University of Waikato working with five regional primary schools. (Fraser et al 2012) (Fraser et al 2013). This is the current context in New Zealand, and it is from and for this context that the heuristic metaphor of Mantle of the Expert planning as korowai weaving was developed.

The case for heuristics

Heuristics can be defined as rules of thumb, or hands-on strategies that help people get to grip with complex information. In computing terms, heuristics are ways of "proceeding to a solution ... by rules that are only loosely defined" (oxforddictionaries.com). Heuristics do not claim to provide optimum, or full answers but rather help the user get started and make some sort of initial inroads into the territory. Another argument in favour of heuristics, according to Littlejohn (1999), is that they help people *speculate* about concepts, which in turn guides research and helps to generate new theory (Littlejohn 1990: 30-31). So it is with the korowai

metaphor offered here. Mantle of the Expert is a highly complex system, one which Heathcote herself considered she was still learning about until the end of her life (Heathcote 2009). For those who are learning the system, or helping others learn, it can be challenging to conceptualise the many inter-related aspects of the system without either oversimplifying it or making it seem overly complex and therefore daunting. However, by risking heuristics – and making it clear they are oversimplifications, we may be able to open up fruitful discussion about how the system can be taught and understood.

The heuristic offered here is not, of course, the first attempt to classify and describe the system. Indeed, one of the issues facing the student of Mantle of the Expert is the wealth of complex and sometimes contradictory classifications offered within the literature. Heathcote herself provided a wide range of notes and guidelines in an attempt to give heuristic, praxis-based insights into the Mantle of the Expert system. One of her final pieces of writing, *Mantle of the Expert, my current understanding* is accompanied with fourteen pages of appendices showing charts, explanations and categorisations of aspects of Mantle of the Expert (Heathcote 2009). Other versions can be found in *Drama for Learning* (Heathcote & Bolton 1994) on the UK website devoted to Mantle of the Expert (www.mantleoftheexpert.com) and in the Heathcote archive (Heston 1993). Heathcote's own charts, tables and sketches have been added to by a range of practitioners and researchers, for example Edmiston's work on the levels of reality in a Mantle of the Expert classroom (Edmiston *n d*), Abbott's explanatory articles (e.g. Abbott 2012) and Howell and Heap's work on the spiral of creative exchange between teacher and student that takes place in a drama exploration (Howell & Heap 2005).

Existing classifications of Mantle of the Expert

As a starting point for my own attempts to classify Mantle of the Expert, I wanted to gain a sense of the existing designations and classifications used within literature on Mantle of the Expert. To this end, I analysed three key documents: Heathcote and Bolton's *Drama for Learning* (1994), Heathcote's *Mantle of the Expert: My current understanding* (2009) and Heston's thesis (1993).

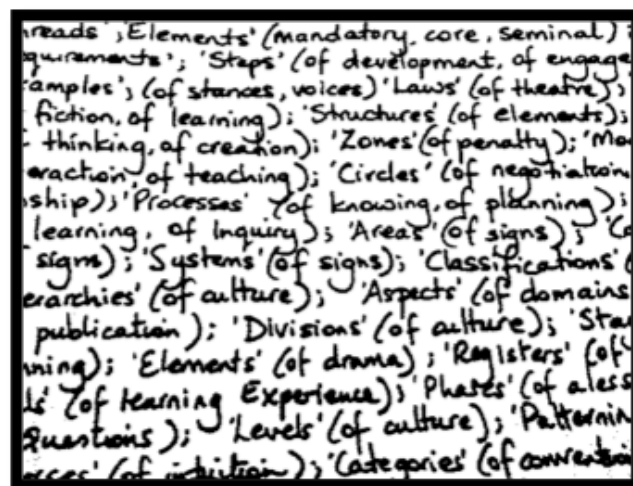


Figure 1: List of classifications from literature on Mantle of the Expert

Reviewing these, I located over fifty different ways in which the components of Mantle of the Expert have been classified. These were listed in the form of collective nouns or key words (a selection are shown in Fig.1).

After I had drawn up this list, the main thing that became apparent, apart from the length of the list and the occasional contradictions within it, was the fact that it consisted of a fairly 'flat' taxonomy. Heathcote and the other writers had provided thorough lists of the *bits* of Mantle of the Expert but little insight into how these bits interacted with each other. There was also very little sense of the respective criticality of the various bits in relation to the whole. The system was thoroughly 'described' but little 'explanation' was offered. Littlejohn (1999) argues that making a shift from description to explanation is critical if we are to advance theory:

The goal of theory is to produce useful concepts. However, theories that stop at concept level without explaining how these concepts relate are 'taxonomies' – lists of parts. Explanation goes further and starts to explore the causal and practical relationships between the parts. (Littlejohn 1999: 23).

As part of this process of explanation, suggests Littlejohn, heuristics can be produced to guide research and be tested by it. As someone who is interested in theorising Mantle of the Expert and explaining it to myself, other teachers and students, I wondered whether it might be possible to advance these classifications and move beyond description to explanation.

The dangers of heuristics

The arguments in favour of heuristics are compelling. However, one must also acknowledge the disadvantages. There is always the concern that in simplifying that which is complex, one inevitably closes in and limits one's definitions. Drama has already experienced some of this reductionism in New Zealand as a result of being categorised within a Learning Area of 'The Arts' (Ministry of Education 2000 & 2007). Mansfield (2007) claims, with some justification that the effort to produce shared curriculum language has resulted in a genericising of the Arts which emphasises their similarity with each other rather than their disciplinary uniqueness. More than this, she argues that, 'the generic notion of the Arts militates against a critical education in the Arts. A critical education in the Arts is one that exhibits 'self-consciousness about the hegemonic agenda of discursive practices.' (Mansfield 2007). O'Connor similarly cautions against the over-simplification of drama into elements, conventions, techniques and strategies, arguing that as soon as taxonomies or classifications emerge, there is a danger they become 'another thing that poor teachers can teach poorly' (O'Connor 2009). It cannot be denied that any attempt to simplify or make accessible a complex system like Mantle of the Expert will also, inevitably, result in the same kind of over-simplification that has already occurred for drama. Nonetheless, one must start somewhere and weighing up the pros and cons, I would suggest it does seem ultimately beneficial to pursue heuristics, particularly if one can be found that fits in with existing ways of thinking.

Existing heuristics in drama in New Zealand

Significantly, the New Zealand Curriculum's already presents heuristics for drama and these resonate with my own metaphor of the korowai. The New Zealand curriculum conceptualises the Arts in terms of four common 'strands' – attributes, or ways of working that are common to the four Arts disciplines. The strands are: PK (Practical knowledge), DI (Developing Ideas), CI (Communicating and Interpreting) and UC (Understanding in Context). The notion is that Drama, Music, Visual Arts and Dance are constructed or woven out of these strands and that these aspects interweave and depend upon each other. This relationship between the strands is shown in the figure below.

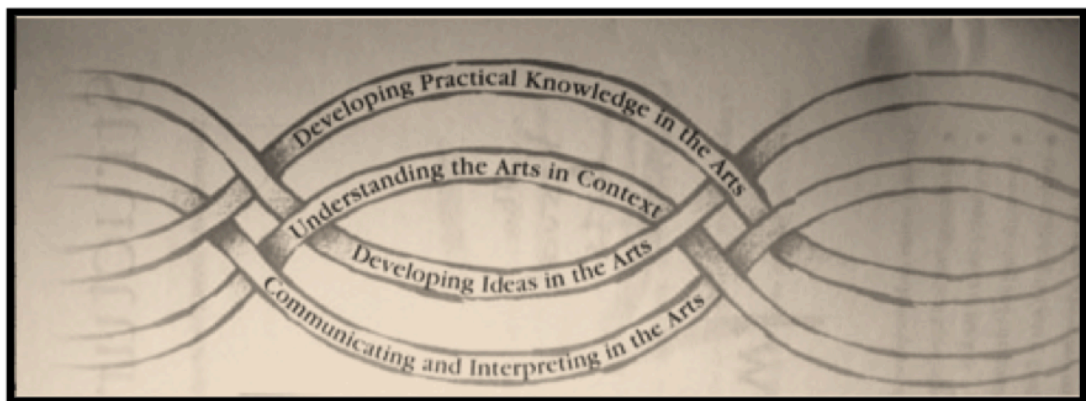


Figure 2: The strands of the NZ curriculum from *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* Ministry of Education 2000

So, drama along with the other Arts, is already conceptualised within the New Zealand Curriculum as something that is 'woven' from strands. This image is culturally familiar in New Zealand, where *rāranga*, or flax weaving is a traditional Art form in its own right. Since drama is already discursively constructed within the NZ curriculum using the language of weaving, then the use of the korowai metaphor as a way to understand Mantle of the Expert gains even more resonance. It locates Mantle of the Expert as a particular, complex, developed form of drama creation: something created through the skilful use of drama to serve a particular purpose.

The development of the korowai metaphor

So, to return to the metaphor of choice: the weaving of a Korowai. Over the past few years I have been struggling to find heuristics to explain Mantle of the Expert in an accessible way to New Zealand teachers. As I did so, I found the image of the korowai kept insistently reappearing in my thinking. Initially I felt some reluctance to draw on it. One reason was cultural: I am not Māori and I am not a weaver. Another resistance was due to the fact that the korowai is a physical artefact, woven by one person and gifted to another. As mentioned at the start of this article, Heathcote always insisted that the mantle in Mantle of the Expert is NOT a garment and not

something gifted to the learner (Heathcote, 2009). Also, I was uncertain whether the metaphor gave sufficient status to the role of the child. It is very clear that the mantle that develops around a student's shoulders in a Mantle of the Expert experience is something that develops as a result of their own weaving as much as that of the teacher. However, I kept finding myself being drawn back to the notion of teacher as skilful weaver – someone who needs to understand their craft and work with the materials. Also, of course, Heathcote was herself a weaver – perhaps this is why the metaphor appealed so much. And the more I read about the process of weaving, the more the usefulness of the metaphor asserted itself. So, the heuristic of teacher as weaver / Mantle of the Expert as Korowai, emerged. And so, the rest of this paper is devoted to a tentative classification of Mantle of the Expert using this metaphor. The writing will be punctuated with insights from weavers talking about the weaving process. Some of these writings are taken from other documents that have used the korowai metaphor in rich ways, including *Tu Rangatira* (2010), a Ministry of Education resource for Māori Medium educational leaders and *Ta Tatau Mahere Korowai* (2010), a production of Te Rau Matatini designed to offer guidance to advisory groups in mental health services. I would also like to acknowledge my Māori colleagues and mentors Pare Kana and Cheri Waititi for giving their insights into the cultural practices around korowai weaving.

Tikanga – beliefs and practices

Every korowai has a *whakapapa*, a story of where it came from and who the people were who brought it into being (Te Rau Matatini 2010: 24).

For anyone to even begin weaving a korowai they need to be aware of the *tikanga* – cultural beliefs and practices that underlie the weaving process. They need to learn, and not just know but accept and manifest certain philosophical 'givens' that sit within a Māori worldview. These include respect for ancestors and tradition, use of certain materials, recognition of rituals and practices traditionally associated with weaving. Similarly, for the teacher of Mantle of the Expert, there are certain philosophical beliefs or paradigms that must be acknowledged before one can begin. When I began trying to 'code' or organise my list of classifications drawn from the literature on Mantle of the Expert, I could see that one category of classifications seemed to relate to beliefs and practices that underlie the whole Mantle of the Expert system, including but not limited to ideas about:

- Collective responsibility
- Affective – cognitive learning
- Embracing complexity
- Multiple perspectives
- Protection into feeling
- Clear signalling – consent
-

The list here is not intended to be comprehensive. But it is illustrative of the idea that one category of the published information about Mantle of the Expert relates to

the fundamental underlying beliefs and practices. If we accept that Mantle of the Expert planning, like weaving a korowai, depends on certain tikanga, or paradigms of practice we begin the process described by Littlejohn of explaining our classifications and giving them a value.

Whenu – key threads

Once operating within the tikanga, any korowai begins with preparation. An experienced weaver, like the experienced teacher, knows that this takes time and is not always predictable:

Te Kanawa said that it generally took her eight months to complete a Korowai, the first three months being taken up in preparation ... (Te Rau Matatini 2010: xx)

For the weaver, the process is one of gathering and preparing feathers, sorting and preparing the flax or other materials and planning the design.

Sometimes it is like a vision or a dream that comes to you, other times it comes together piece by piece until you have a picture of what it will look like ... What materials do I have at the moment? What do I need? Are any other people going to be involved? You will find when you start making a korowai that feathers will come to you, people will tell other people what you are doing and they will bring things to contribute to it. Other people will come along who will show you what to do. It's amazing how these things seem to happen at just the right time. (Te Rau Matatini 2010: 42)

For the Mantle of the Expert teacher, the planning process will also involve gathering and researching, networking and brainstorming in a combination of the predictable and the serendipitous. Planning tools such as the 'possible enterprises' list or the 'generic tasks grid' (see www.mantleoftheexpert.com) or strategies from books such as *Bowell and Heap's Planning Process Drama* (Bowell & Heap 2013) will help focus the planning, while other discoveries often have that serendipitous quality, such as when a chance conversation, a picture or news item feeds into the thinking.

Once preparations are complete, the process of weaving the korowai begins by laying out of the key vertical threads, or *whenu*. No matter what the final design of the korowai will be, it always needs *whenu* to provide the fundamental integrity and structure. This is a useful metaphor for the core elements that Mantle of the Expert 'must always have' to make it work. Heathcote identified seven of these core elements. I've expanded the list to ten. The list may be negotiable; it is certainly a heuristic. But it is perhaps useful to the trainee weaver to bear in mind that certain aspects of planning could be seen as fundamental or 'necessary' to the integrity of a Mantle of the Expert experience.

FICTIONAL CONTEXT COMPANY / ENTERPRISE or RESPONSIBLE TEAM FRAME COMMISSION CLIENT (Fictional) CURRICULUM TASKS = PROFESSIONAL TASKS POWERFUL RE- POSITIONING DRAMA FOR LEARNING- CONVENTIONS & STRATEGIES TENSIONS REFLECTION ON PROCESS

Figure: 3 Whenu – or Core Elements of Mantle of the Expert

The list is displayed here running vertically to echo the whenu of the korowai, which also run vertically through the weaving. This suggested list of whenu, or core elements is reproduced from *Connecting Curriculum, Linking Learning* (2013) where I expand on the list by defining each element and explain the part each seems to play in the learning. (Fraser et al 2013: 40-41)

Aho - Interweavings

Having laid down the whenu or core threads, the korowai weaver will start to work with the *aho* – the threads that run horizontally across the design and form the fabric of the korowai. The bindings are careful and precise and the weaver will include the materials she has gathered and prepared to generate a pattern. Every weaver works their own way with these threads but also builds on the some knowledge handed down from past weavers. In the same way, there are certain ways of working that hold Mantle of the Expert together. Lee Shulman offers the useful term ‘signature pedagogies’ (Shulman 2005) to define the recognisable ways of working that identify a pedagogical approach. It seems to me that a person passing by a classroom in which Mantle of the Expert was being used, might be able to discern what was going on by spotting some of the characteristic strategies, attitudes or ways of working in use. These, perhaps could be seen as the ‘aho’ threads holding the mantle together. Certainly, when I returned to my list of classifications from the literature, I could see that many of these fitted the category of ‘signature pedagogies’. A list of these is given below, tentatively sorted into ‘like’ strands.

Co-construction
Keying in
Use of visual image / signing
Incremental learning
Parsimony
Segmenting
Classifications
Conscious use of language register
The I/ We voice
Use of real and depicted time
Episodic progression
Rituals of theatre (semiotics, proxemics, contrasts in light / dark, sound / silence, stillness / movement)
Framing and frame distance
Productive and key tensions
Rituals of teaching (genuine questions, echoing, wait time)
Affective – cognitive progression of activity
Non-childish materials
Handwritten / drawn materials
Dropping to the universals
Evoking brotherhoods
Strategic use of digital worlds and online materials / internet / Information Technology

Figure 4: Aho - Signature pedagogies of Mantle of the Expert

Two of the signature pedagogies shown above are my own additions to the list emerging from the literature. The first is 'handwritten / hand drawn materials'. This was never declared in the literature as a conscious strategy but it was a feature of Heathcote's practice that she tended to favour handwritten or hand drawn resources over typed or word processed documents – perhaps because she preferred the personal 'look' of handwriting and drawing – or perhaps because she wanted to present the resources as self-consciously tentative and unfinished. This is certainly a feature of the work that I have come to value and echo in my own practice so I have added it to the signature pedagogies list. The other signature pedagogy added here (which may seem contradictory to the previous one, but need not be), is the strategic use of digital worlds, online materials and IT. Mantle of the Expert teaching can be very much enhanced by the use of IT including internet research, google documents, use of ipads, cellphones, imagined and real skype calls and so on. Indeed, one wonders how teachers used to manage without these possibilities. So I have added this to the weave. The reader may take issue with my selections of aho – or have others to suggest, but perhaps the important thing in this

heuristic is not what exactly is included on the list, but the *concept* of the list – the idea that certain characteristic features of Mantle of the Expert can be regarded as aho – signature pedagogies weaving through the whenu – core elements.

Mahi Rāranga – working the weave

Once the korowai is underway, the weaver will work the horizontal threads (aho) through the vertical threads (whenu) to create the fabric. Naturally, this binding is done not blindly but with a keen awareness of how to organise the threads so that certain patterns might emerge. Creating ‘pattern’ may sound like a superficial thing, associated with mere surface decoration, but here we are talking about knowledge of what to put deep in the weave so that the very structure of the korowai emerges as you go.

Sometimes the korowai ends up different from what you had imagined at the beginning. Sometimes you start the journey then realise you need to go in a different direction. Sometimes other things in your life change or you end up with other materials, and your korowai reflects this. (Te Rau Matatini 2010: 42)

This experience of discovery and co-construction is very familiar to the Mantle of the Expert teacher. The teacher will make discoveries and change direction but she will also be aware of the way the fabric of the experience can be worked to create patterns and sustain the whole. In the case of the korowai weaver, the *mahi rāranga* is tangible – certain visual patterns will emerge. For the Mantle of the Expert teacher, it may be helpful to think of the ‘patterns in the weave’ as akin to moving between the three different teaching modes of the approach: drama for learning (the use of process drama conventions and strategies such as teacher in role), inquiry learning (where students develop and explore their own ‘big questions’) and expert framing (where students are positioned as competent co-creators of meaning within the ‘as is’ world of the classroom, and as experts within the ‘as if’, fictional world of the drama). These three modes are depicted below.

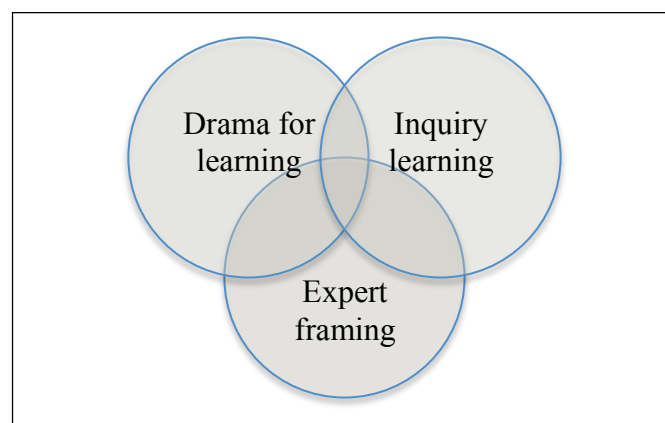


Figure 5: Three modes of teaching in Mantle of the Expert
(adapted from Abbott, see Fraser et al 2013)

Abbott has argued that the Mantle of the Expert teacher needs to be constantly developing skills and awareness of all three of these teaching modes. Certainly my students have found this idea helpful in getting to grips with the different positionings, strategies and relationships that seem to be required in a Mantle of the Expert classroom. My suggestion here, then, is that when introducing or explaining these teaching modes, it may be useful to conceive of them as akin to ‘patterns in the weave’ of the experience. They are, after all made up of skilfully worked core elements (whenu), pedagogies (aho) used together and overlaid in certain ways.

Ua – hems and edges

When weaving a korowai, the mantle is built from the bottom up. Weaving begins with the bottom hem and the final product emerges from there. The decorative top hem is the last thing produced. This is a familiar phenomenon to the teacher, too, in that Mantle of the Expert planning often starts with decisions about what the company, client and commission will be. Links to curriculum, including learning areas, levels, and learning intentions emerge organically from that process. As Heathcote put it, ‘you can trust any good Mantle to take you to curriculum’, and teachers become adept at suiting the planning to the level and curriculum needs of their learners but there is no doubt this approach to planning can feel ‘upside down’ to teachers used to starting with curriculum and objectives. In sense, then, the Mantle of the Expert weaver works from ‘the bottom up’ just like the korowai weaver. Often the very last thing the teacher plans is the opening ‘hook’ that will grab students’ attention and engage them into the drama.

Models and patterns

It is important for teachers and weavers alike to understand that they are on a journey into deeper understanding of a complex craft. A beginner weaver is ill advised to respond to a single workshop on weaving by deciding to embark on a korowai the following Monday morning! They would be wise to begin by trying a number of smaller projects to practice their skills. Likewise, for the teacher eager to try Mantle of the Expert it can be helpful to suggest some initial experimentation with teacher in role and process drama conventions (such as freeze frames, spoken thought or hotseating) before embarking on a full experience of Mantle of the Expert. A range of useful process drama plans and resources exist for the teacher to utilise in practising the crucial drama aspects of Mantle teaching (see, for example O’Toole & Dunn 2002 and Saxton & Miller 2004). As for expert positioning and inquiry this can be as similar challenge to teachers. Again, it can be useful to take small steps – perhaps asking a single genuine question to the class, such as “how would you go about building an underground city?” or, “I wonder how people go about capturing poisonous snakes?” and seeing what potential inquiry directions emerge from student responses.

When the teacher is ready to plan implement their first ‘full blown’ Mantle of the Expert experience, they are likely to require support, and they will benefit from

models to work from. Of course the ultimate art of Mantle of the Expert teaching, like weaving, is to work spontaneously, allowing the learning patterns to emerge freely through co-construction and genuine inquiry. At the same time, it is reasonable for beginners to build their confidence by working with tried and tested patterns first. A first korowai might look very much like that of a mentor. Similarly, a student teacher might produce a plan that echoes the forms and flavour of model lessons they have seen or experienced. I even provide teachers with a suggested structure, or 'possible map for a Mantle of the Expert journey' (shown below). I will not expand on it here, but this model is based on an expanded version of the three-phase model of process drama planning offered by O'Toole and Dunn (O'Toole & Dunn 2002).

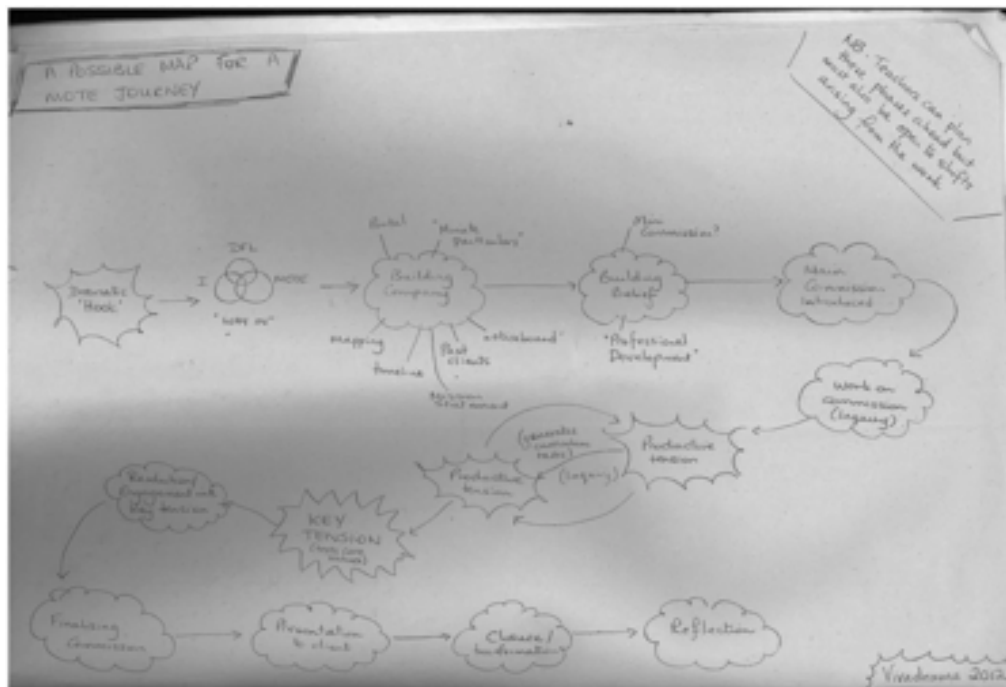


Figure 6: Planning Model of 'possible map' for Mantle of the Expert

Note that the document is deliberately hand written, to denote that this is a working document, to be amended, rewritten and eventually discarded. It is another heuristic and is always presented as such.

Summary, critique of metaphor, closing comments and whakatauki

This article has presented a suggested heuristic for explaining key aspects of Mantle of the Expert through the metaphor of weaving a korowai. The intention has been to present a way of thinking about the approach that builds on the taxonomies offered by Heathcote and others and makes a small step towards explanation and definition. It is important to acknowledge that this metaphor, like most extended metaphors, has its limitations. Critically in this case, if we focus on the notion of teacher-as-

weaver, we are in danger of diminishing the role of the student in the learning process. The proposed metaphor does not sufficiently take account of the degree to which students may have ownership and responsibility for their own learning within Mantle of the Expert. Neither does it acknowledge the way that teachers may be learners too, in their exchanges with students and with the materials explored. Indeed, in many cases, the lived experience of Mantle of the Expert results in the dichotomy between teacher and 'learner' breaking down as both become co-creators or co-weavers of the experience. Like every heuristic, this metaphor helpfully illuminates some aspects of Mantle of the Expert, but falls down in others. This is the 'risk' in heuristics.

If the metaphor can be forgiven for being partial, it might be seen nonetheless as providing a useful image to illuminate the planning process and how the components and pedagogies of Mantle of the Expert work together. To return to the korowai symbol one more time, weavers know that not all korowai are the same size, shape, colour or structure. They can be made of many materials and each will tell its own story. But if the weaver – or co-weavers - construct a garment with attention to tikinga, the whenu, the aho, the mahi and the ua, and if a garment emerges of a certain basic structure and for a particular purpose, then we call it korowai. Likewise no two Mantle of the Expert experiences will ever be the same. But if a teacher plans with the underlying principles, the core elements, signature pedagogies, an awareness of the inquiry, expert and drama-for-learning modes of teaching, and a structure that takes into account the requirements of time and effective exploration then we can call this Mantle of the Expert. This tentative 'explanation' is offered as a starting point for others to use, challenge, explore and test through their own praxis and research.

While it is hoped that the korowai weaving metaphor might be accessible and useful to teachers around the world, it is also – quite unapologetically – a culturally specific one. The selected metaphor offers an image that is culturally familiar to New Zealanders. This is not simply a matter of a pleasing or satisfying fit, or an attempt to build upon the weaving-related classifications of drama already extant in the New Zealand curriculum. The metaphor also signals a challenge for New Zealand scholars to engage in an urgent and ongoing quest for culturally situated theory around this teaching approach. As a European New Zealander (originally an immigrant from England) I am acutely aware of my cultural position in advocating for the Mantle of the Expert system (also imported from the UK). Colleagues from New Zealand, including Māori educators have embraced the approach and readily point out the synergies between Mantle of the Expert and indigenous educational priorities as described in documents like *Tātaiako* (Ministry of Education & NZ Teachers' Council 2011) but there is more to do. Those of us working in bicultural contexts must be prepared to identify, unpack and critique the Euro-centric assumptions that will be necessarily implicit in the approach – not by design but simply by virtue of its origins. For me, it is critical that future fostering of the Mantle of the Expert system and development of theory takes place in a way that is situated within, relevant to, and emerging from the discourses and world-views of this place and its people. My hope, therefore, is that in offering the metaphor of the korowai, we might open up new

possibilities for characterising Mantle of the Expert that are specific to the practice within Aotearoa New Zealand.

To close I would like to share a *whakatauki* or traditional Māori saying (source unknown) related to weaving. Its message is an important one for weavers and teachers alike, as it reminds us of the importance of collaboration and of the need to stand back at the end of the creative journey and reflect on the process. The *whakatauki* might also be interpreted as an argument in favour of heuristics, in that it suggests that flaws and imperfections may be just as important as those parts that are perfect.

*E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi
 Ki te rāranga I te whāriki
 Kia mōhio tātou ki ā tātou.
 Mā te mahi tahi ō ngā whenu,
 Mā te mahi tahi ō ngā kairāranga
 Ka oti tēnei whāriki.
 I te otinga
 Me titoro tātou ngā mea pai ta puta mai
 Ā tana wā,
 Me titiro hoki
 Ki ngā rāranga I makere
 Nā te mea, korero ano kei reira.*

The tapestry of understanding cannot be woven by one strand alone.
 Only by the working together of strands
 And the working together of weavers
 Will such a tapestry be completed.
 With its completion let us look at the good that comes from it.
 And in time we should also look at those stitches that were dropped
 Because they also have a message.

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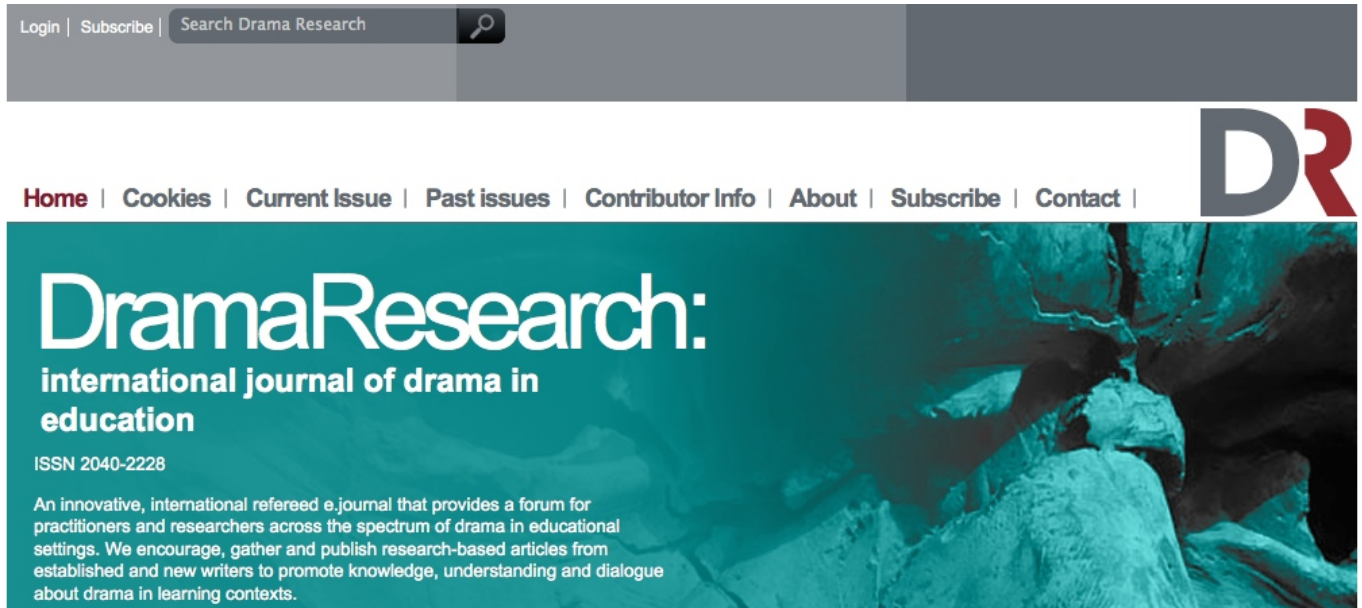


Viv Aitken is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Waikato, Hamilton New Zealand, where she contributes to pre-service programmes for primary and secondary teachers and supervises postgraduate research. Viv also works with teachers in schools across New Zealand providing professional development in drama and Mantle of the Expert. Over the last ten years, Viv has researched, presented and published in the fields of curriculum integration, arts education, drama in inclusive settings and relational pedagogy. She has also convened several conferences, including *Weaving Our Stories* (2009) at which Dorothy Heathcote gave one of her final keynote addresses.

Viv Aitken
Dept Arts and Language Education
University of Waikato
Hamilton
New Zealand

viva@waikato.ac.nz

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