



Who do we want our class to be?

CLASS ACTIVITY – ALL LEVELS

This activity helps students explore their understanding of hauora (wellbeing), and especially their spirituality as it relates to self-identity (taha wairua).

Our class korowai-cloak

The goal of this activity is to construct a class korowai-cloak which will display what we value in our class. The process will be one of working cooperatively to create the cloak. Negotiating a caring classroom environment in this way reinforces the Māori concept of ako, “the promotion of effective and reciprocal teaching and learning relationships where everyone is a learner and a teacher”.

The korowai “is a particular type of kākahu (cloak). It is usually decorated with feathers and/or tassels and has a border along the bottom, although this can vary according to tribal custom.” The korowai-cloak has been chosen because of its significance within Māori culture and the symbolic relevance of a cloak in many rituals and for cultures all over the world.

The definition of ‘korowai’ comes from *The Curriculum in Action – Everybody belongs*, Health and Physical Education Years 4-6, p 11.

Steps

- Discuss with the class what might contribute to taha whānau (social wellbeing), and taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing). For example:
Ask ‘What sort of people do we enjoy having in Room X?’
- List on the whiteboard their responses. For example:
Kind, caring, generous, shows tika, pono, aroha, unselfish, fair, thoughtful, loving, compassionate, happy, looks out for others, responsible, reliable, honest, trustworthy, warm-hearted, watchful, a trier, wise. . .
- Children are given a cut-out feather shape. (See template on the next page.)
- They write on their ‘feather’ a quality they hope to demonstrate to their classmates that will enhance their class environment.
- Construct the korowai-cloak by glueing the ‘feathers’ in place onto a large woven cloak shape made from cardboard and display on the wall. The collar of the korowai-cloak might have the words written in bold:
Whaia te iti kahurangi – seek the great heights
- Children could decorate the korowai-cloak with other materials as well, such as natural objects, symbols, pictures of themselves or others, and names.
- Use the korowai-cloak as a reminder for the children at different times – prayer time, reflection time, behavioural management occasions. For instance, when a child forgets to be kind, ask them to stand by the korowai and to silently read the feathers and think about the wishes of the class and consider how they might need to change their behaviour.

For more information and ideas for a similar exercise see *The Curriculum in Action – Everybody belongs*, Health and Physical Education Years 4-6.

