Factors that Encourage Retention of Students in Senior Te Reo Māori Programmes in English Medium Schools in Waitaha, Aoteaorā (Canterbury, New Zealand)

What is Taitaiko?
Taitaiko Cultural Competence for Teachers of Māori learners is about teachers’ relationships and engagement with Māori learners and their whānau and rat. Each component describes relationships between teachers at different stages of their teaching career and what the results could be like for learners and their whānau. Teachers need to ensure they have the competencies of all stages up to their current level. The behavioural indicators listed are not exhaustive and can be developed further by schools. RCE services together with rat will include expectations relevant to local context.

The components are:
Whanaungatanga: actively engaging in respectful working relationships with Māori learners, parents and whānau, hapū, and the Māori community
Mānakitanga: showing integrity, sincerity and respect towards Māori beliefs, language and culture.
Mātaiwhakaunui: affirming Māori learners as Māori. Providing context for learning where the language, identity and culture of Māori learners and their whānau are affirmed.
Ako: taking responsibility for their own learning and that of Māori learners.

Rationale
In its introduction to the Waitangi report, the Waitangi Tribunal has stated that “Te reo Māori is a living language. It is, therefore, the one New Zealand language that has disappeared and is being rediscovered and re-created by new generations.” The report goes on to say that “Te reo Māori has continued to grow and to develop in the face of and despite the impact of colonisation.”

Tangata Whenuatanga: Place-based socio-cultural awareness and knowledge
All students need a sense of identity. Ako creates an exciting learning environment. It provides students with the opportunity to learn about who they are and where they come from. It is fundamentally what makes language important and also an essential part of learning (Zepke and Spolsky 2004). Identity is primary for Māori students especially when they are students at a secondary level. The programme they were in provided students with the opportunity to learn about who they are and where they come from. It also taught them about their negative experiences and how to be successful in this new learning environment. This research was designed to explore the reasons why the identity of a secondary school student chooses to study te reo Māori in Years 11, 12, and 13. It also looks at the factors that encourage retention in senior te reo Māori programmes.

Whanaungatanga: Relationships (students, school-wide, community) with high expectations
The focus was on the relationships that the teacher formed with the students. The teacher would need to be able to build a relationship with each student that encouraged them to learn and succeed. The teacher would need to be able to build a relationship with the students that encouraged them to learn and succeed.

Te Horuina
Te Horuina is a licenced in the School Teacher Educator at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. She has been involved in the development of a number of projects including the Tikanga Pounamu Post Graduate Diploma, Tikanga Teacher and Younger Te Reo Māori, and the first Licensed Diploma in Māori and English. Her areas of research interest are Māori student academic success in English medium secondary schools and the retention of reo Māori.

Ako: Practice in the classroom and beyond
The focus group agreed unanimously that teacher effectiveness was a critical factor influencing student retention in senior te reo Māori programmes. According to the ākonga, teachers’ effectiveness has three components and the first of these is the ability to forge good student-teacher relationships. The second is that the teacher must possess competent teaching skills. Thirdly, the teacher must have sound subject knowledge. Ākonga stated that the effective teacher has a complete relationship with their ākonga. They describe a competent teacher as one who is passionate about their subject and who is able to engage their students completely. They also believe that a good teacher is one who can relate to the whole person of their ākonga. They believe that a good teacher is one who can relate to the whole person of their ākonga.

Māori learners achieving academic success as a result of: teacher experiences, school experiences, and whānau experiences.