

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Staying on at school

Professor Margaret Helen Vickers and Dr Katrina Barker from School of Education together with the NSW Department of Education & Training have been awarded a UWS Research Partnership Program grant to examine what schools can do to encourage young people to stay on, rather than leave school early.

'Through individual's stories and responses to surveys, our research will generate insights into teenagers' decision-making, identifying trigger-points that precipitate early leaving', says Professor Vickers. 'We will examine the growing role of student part-time employment, and the effects of the blurring of boundaries between school and work. In partnership with NSW-DET, the investigation will proceed in three regions of NSW where retention rates to year 12 are generally low. We are particularly interested in schools in these regions that are performing above expectations. In addition to student surveys, qualitative study will track self-identified early leavers, exploring the dynamics and consequences of their decisions.'

The NSW-DET has identified nine schools for the study; six of these are performing above expectations. Case studies of these six schools will be developed: interviews will be conducted with teachers, principals, and parents connected with these schools to identify features of these school practices that contribute to their success. The study will generate insights into teenagers' views of school, the influences on their educational decision-making, and the implications of their perspectives and experiences for the structure, policy and practices of secondary government schools, TAFE, and labour market entry.



Professor Vickers and Dr Barker, together with Professors Perry and Dockett from CSU, have already gained an ARC-Linkage grant, with NSW-DET. The Staying On project will, given this support, be extended for another three years.

Project Title: Staying on at school: Learning from and for success

Funding has been set at: \$44,058

Contact Details: mhv@uws.edu.au,
<http://www.uws.edu.au/education>

February 2009

For more information on UWS Research Partnership Program, check:

http://www.uws.edu.au/research/ors/funding_opportunities/internal_research_grants