

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

Positive Behaviour for Learning

Dr Mary Mooney, Dr Alexander Yeung, Ms Brenda Dobia and Ms Katrina Barker, School of Education, together with NSW Department of Education and Training Western Sydney Region (WSR) have been awarded a UWS Research Partnership Program grant to investigate the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) approach to improve student learning and behaviour.



‘Student behaviour and its implications for learning are a frequent concern of teachers, parents and policy makers in Australia and elsewhere’ says Dr Mooney. ‘Disruptive student behaviour not only impedes learning outcomes for students but also impacts negatively on teacher efficacy and wellbeing. Often teachers manage classroom by resorting to coercive and ineffective forms of discipline when they are challenged with difficult situations. Teachers who feel overwhelmed and undermined by poor student behaviour, low student engagement and motivation are more likely to resign their positions, leading to a worsening of poor educational outcomes and associated behavioural problems and contributing to the problem of “hard-to-staff” schools.’

The PBL program adopts a behaviourist approach to managing behaviours that equip schools with a proactive discipline approach within a social/cultural context. Teaching students what is expected of them and rewarding students for meeting those expectations is a much more positive approach for dealing productively with student behaviour issues. The purpose of a school-wide PBL approach which involves students, school staff and the parent community is to establish a collective positive learning culture.

Researchers will use both surveys and ethnographic research design which will enhance the capacity of NSW Department of Education and Training WSR to develop and deliver a “best practice” model for improving student behaviour and learning.

The findings of the research will be important to NSW Department of Education and Training. The research will be promoted to key stakeholder groups through NSW Department of Education and Training media releases.

Project Title: *Positive Behaviour for Learning: investigating the transfer of a US system into DET Western Sydney Region schools*

Funding has been set at: \$25,055.
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Contact Details:

m.mooney@uws.edu.au

<http://www.uws.edu.au/school/education>

For more information on UWS Research Partnership Program, check:
<http://www.uws.edu.au/about/adminorg/devint/ors/fundingopps/internalgrants>