

A MINUTE WITH Rod Towney

Rod Towney is an Aboriginal Australian, a very proud Wiradjuri man from Central NSW. He has in excess of 30 years working experience within various Federal and State Government Departments. He has held positions of trust at senior levels and his focus has always been on improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal Australians. Rod has various University degrees including a Master of Indigenous Language Education. He believes that Education is the key which can open up many doors for his people. Currently Rod is the Manager of the Aboriginal Education and Training Unit within TAFE Western NSW and is based in Dubbo.

I first got interested in research: "For a number of years I have held an interest in various education research topics. I was so excited that my application for a 2011 Community of Practice research scholarship was successful and hopefully my findings will influence policy within TAFE Western in attracting and retaining Aboriginal students within the education sector."

People who inspired me to do research: "I am blessed to work under the leadership of my current Institute Director, Kate Baxter. She is very keen to assist where ever possible and enhance the reputation of TAFE Western among the many Aboriginal peoples within Western NSW. Members of my own family have always encouraged me to study and in doing so assist those who may not be as fortunate as I."

Area of Research:

- What are the reasons why TAFE Western Aboriginal students are not completing their courses?
- What best practice teaching, learning and administrative strategies could be introduced by TAFE Western in order to increase the possibility of course completions amongst currently enrolled Aboriginal students?

Methodologies I will use: "An action research project approach where I will be working with Aboriginal students, TAFE staff and community people. Results will be shared as my research progresses."

Currently I am researching: "My research topic has created much interest among those with whom I work and comments such as "I can't wait to read your final document - I hope that people will take note and act on what you record".

Source: A-NEWS, The Newsletter of the Australian Vocational Education and Training, Research Association, June 2011, pp. 5-6,
<http://avetra.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/AVETRA-A-NEWS-NEWSLETTER-JUNE-2011.pdf>