

A photograph of a beach with sand dunes and a starfish. The sand is light-colored and has distinct ripples. In the foreground, a starfish is visible on the sand. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean.

Dimensions of Student Transition

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The STAR project

- Documenting and dissemination good practice associated with student transition.
 - Guidelines
 - STAR Studies
 - Active dissemination

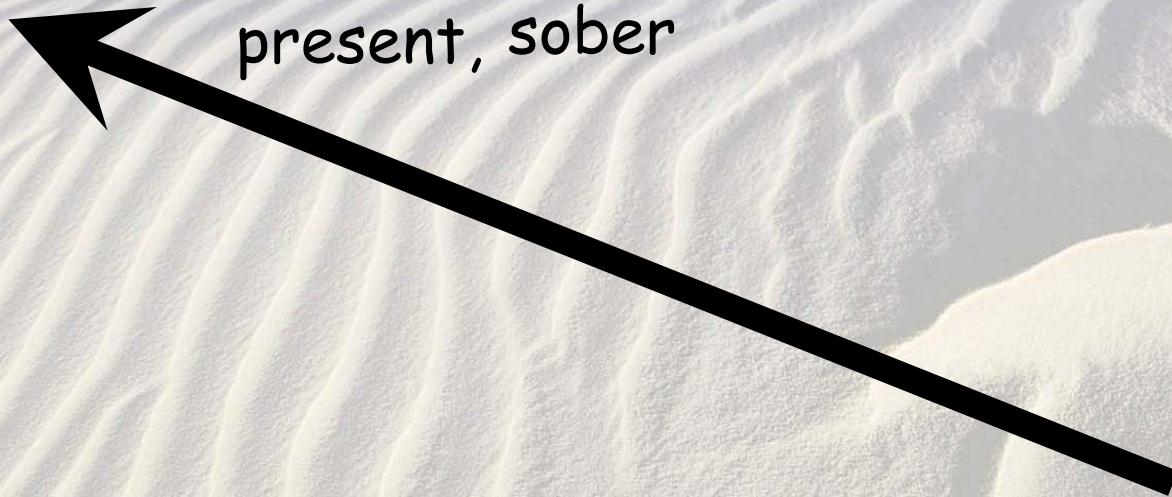
Take home messages

- Students have to change quickly and in many different ways
- Some of the problems are of our making
- Solutions can be applied before and after entry
- Solutions are short term (changed practice) and long term (systematic changes)

Managing transition

End point

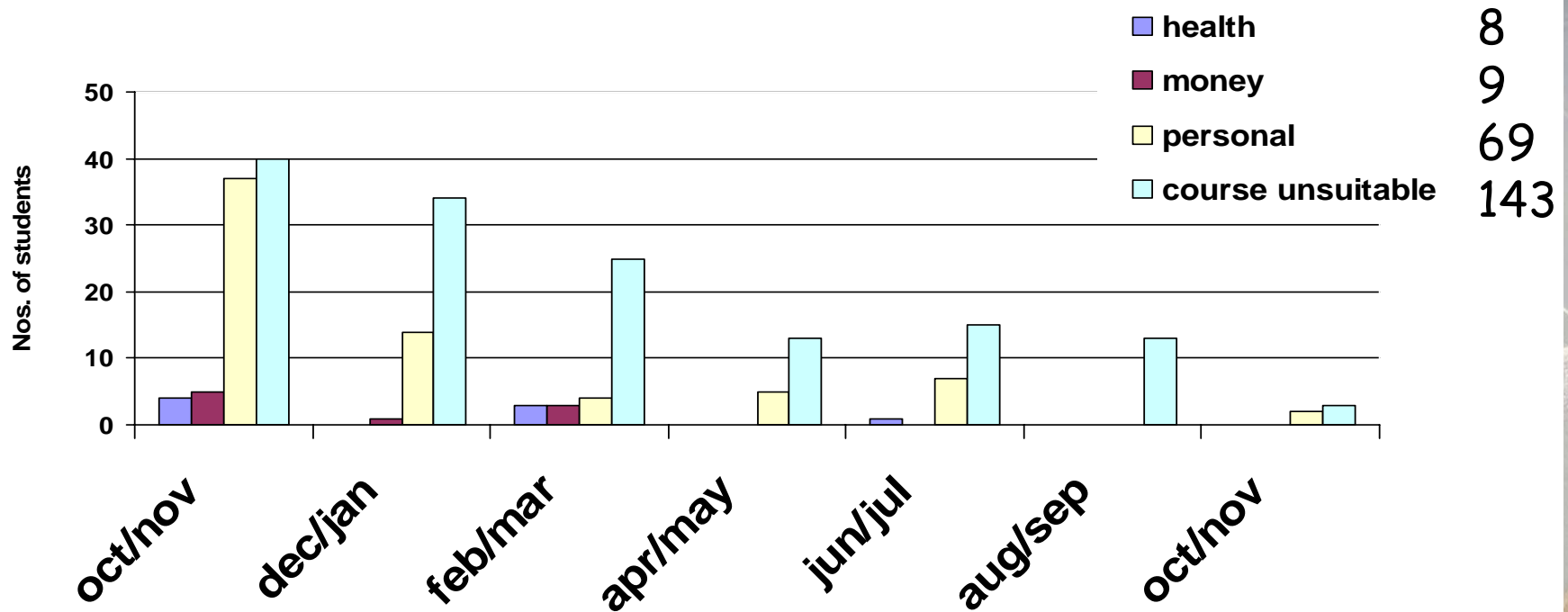
Independent, enthusiastic,
involved, communicative,
present, sober



?

Start point

Why do students leave early?



Data from University of Ulster 2001/2 (institutional data)

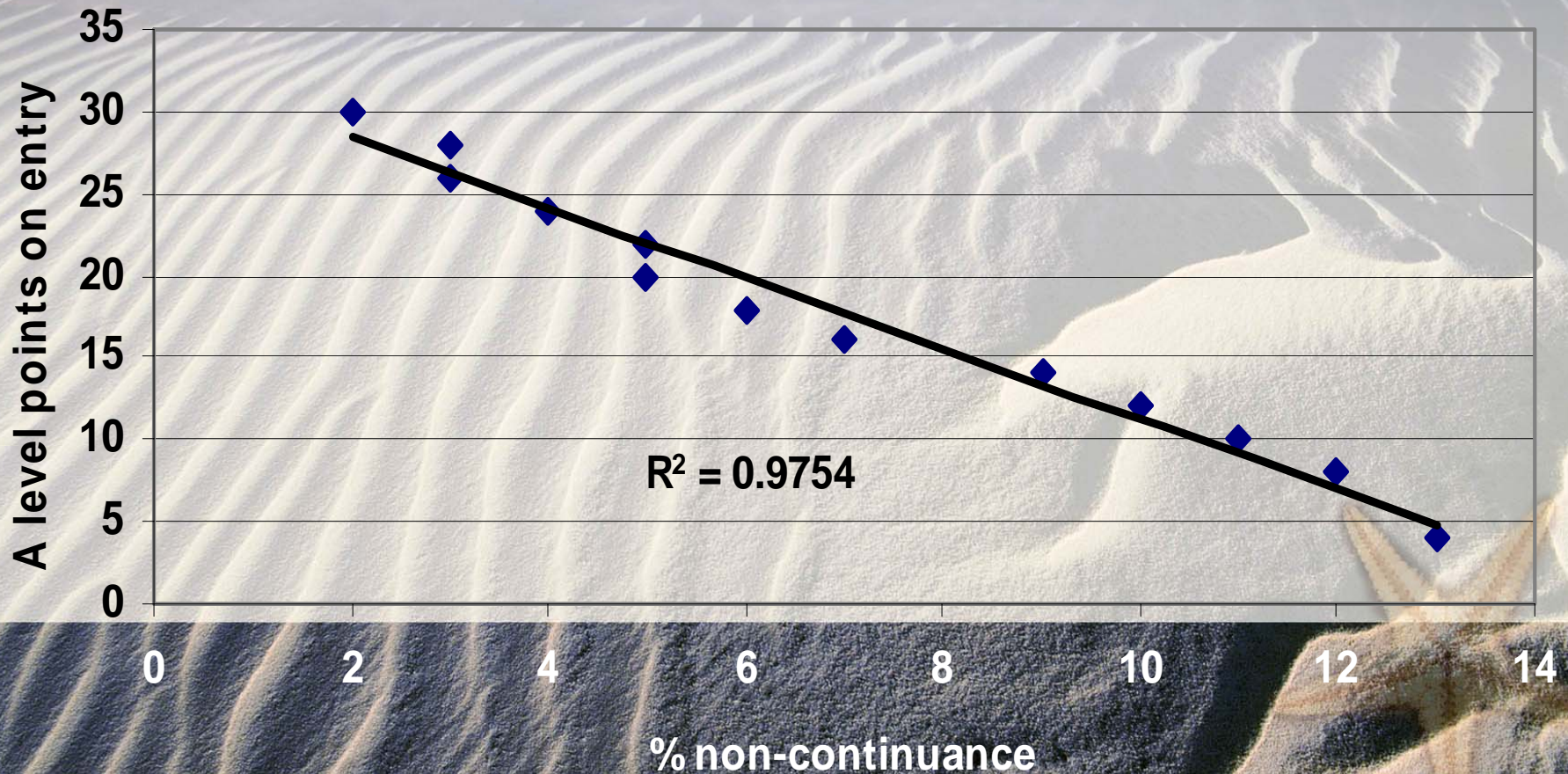
Why do students fail?

- *'I went into the exam blind'*
- *'The first year doesn't count towards your degree'*
- *'Failing was my wake up call'*
- *'I just didn't like that module'*

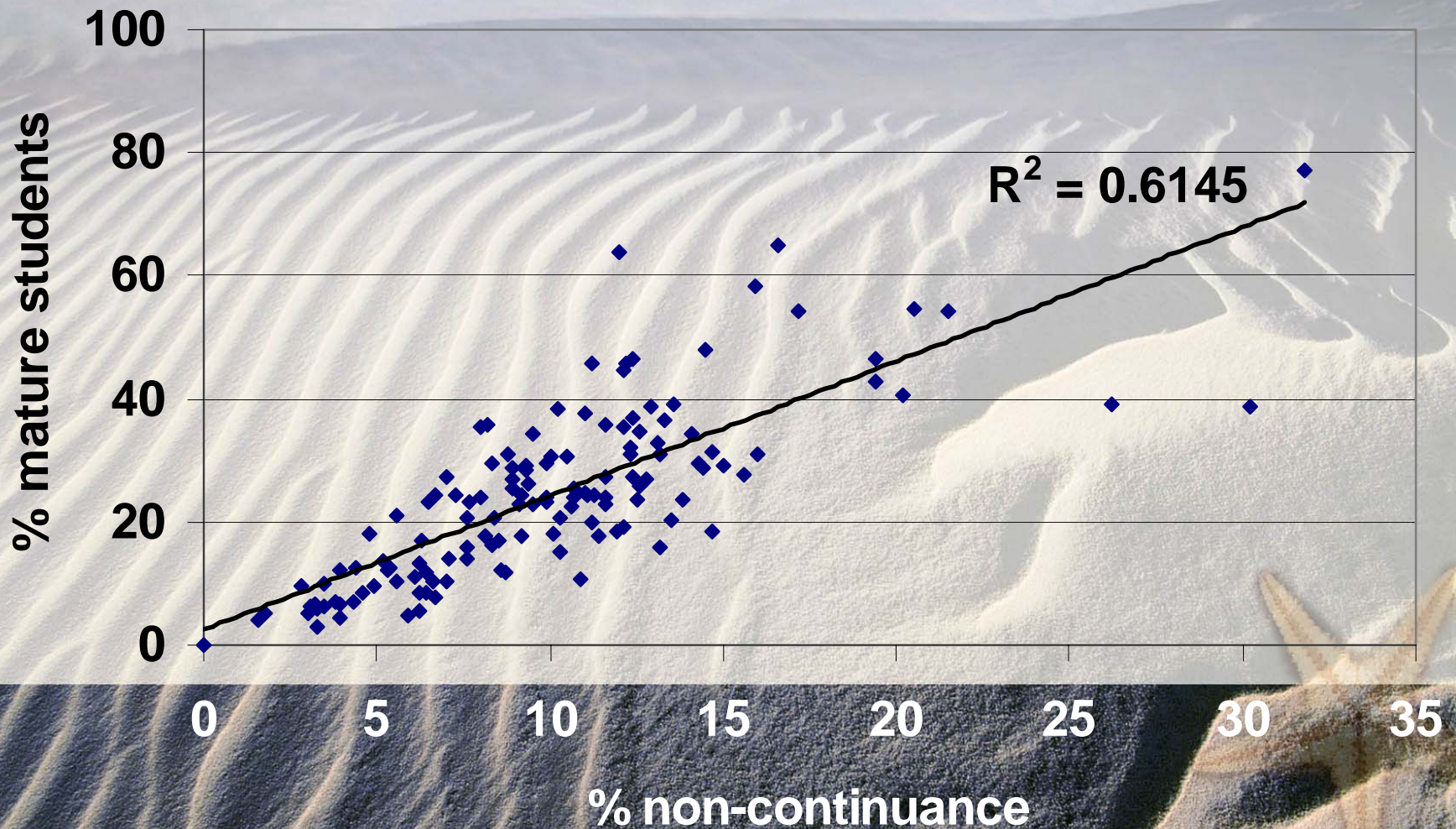
What characteristics predispose students to leave/ fail?

- Pre-entry qualifications
- Age
- Socio-economic background
- Gender
- Full-time/ part time

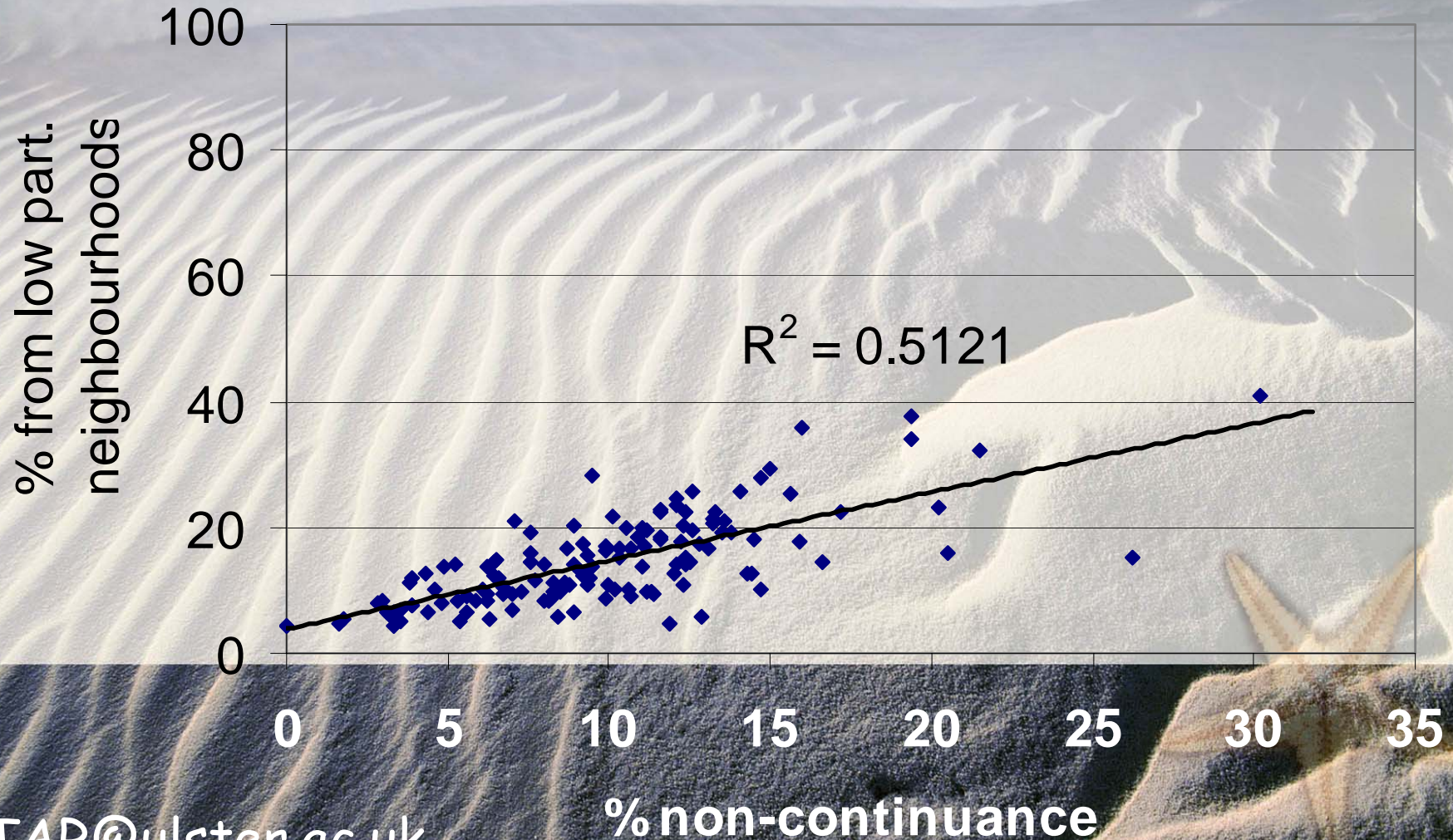
The effect of A level score



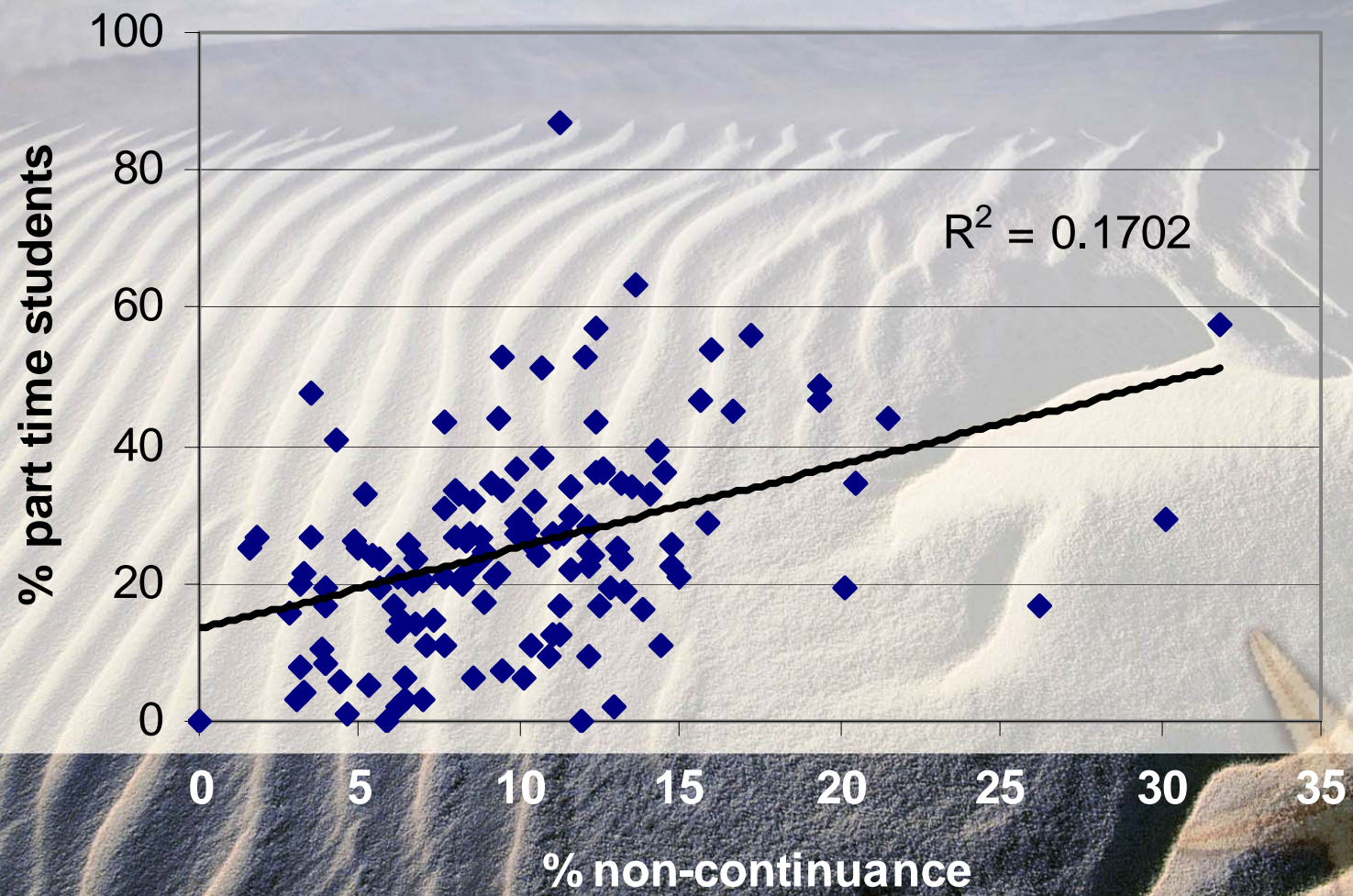
Retention of mature students



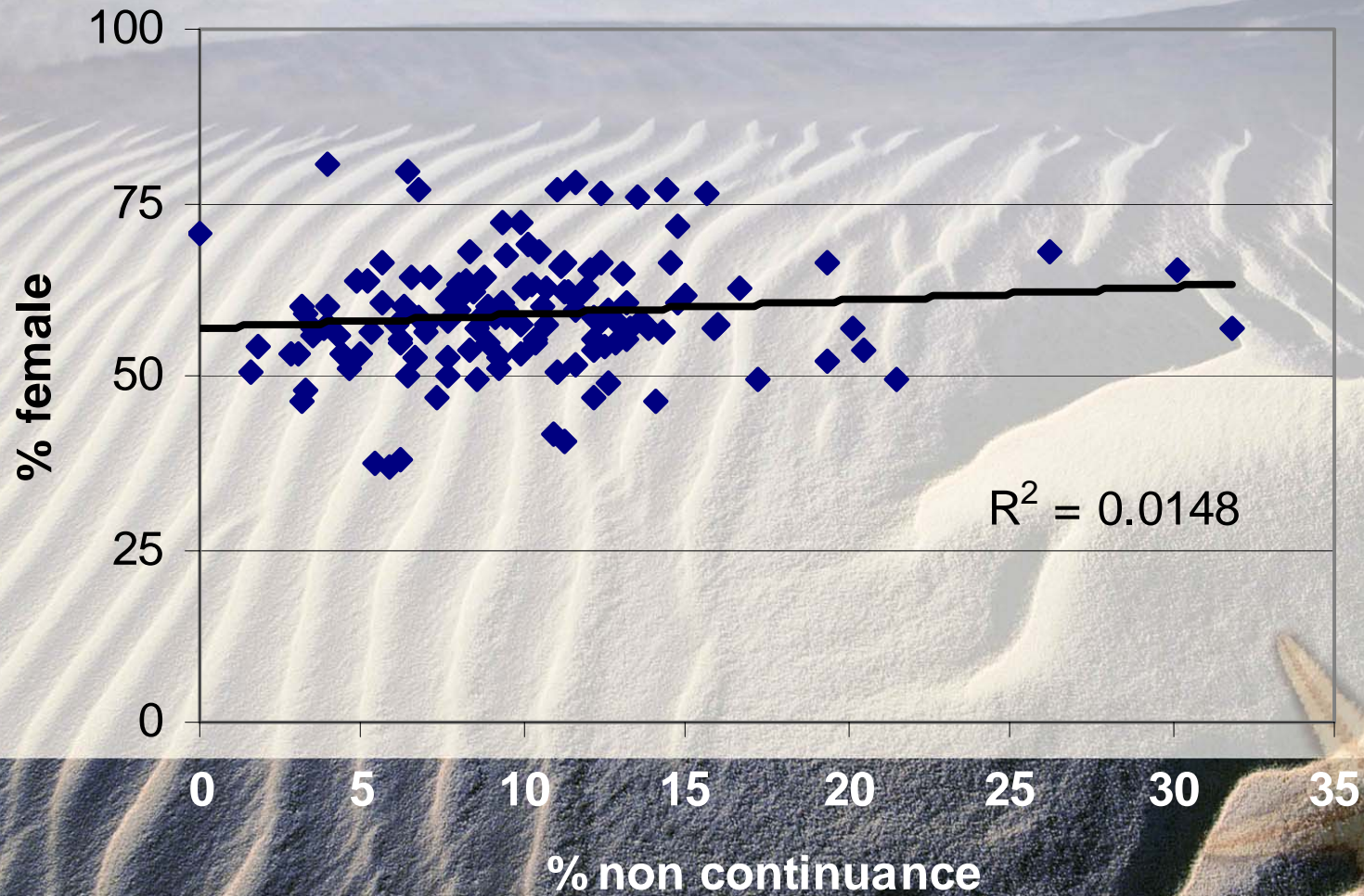
Retention from low participation neighbourhoods



The Effect of Part time students



Effect of sex



Putting it together

Non continuance has two components

- Early leaving- characterised by poor decisions prior to entry.
- Academic failure- characterised by poor preparations/ false expectations.

At risk groups

- Poorly qualified students
- Mature students
- Students from non-traditional backgrounds
- Students who do not understand the expected standards

Dimensions of Transition

- What changes do we expect of our first year students?
 - Social adjustment to independence
 - Work/study/student lifestyle balance
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Curriculum changes
 - Assessment changes
 - Cope with staff relationship changes

Short term solutions

- Better information to applicants
- Courses should deliver what is advertised
- Developmental teaching of literacy and numeracy
- Better communication of standards through formative assessment.
- Facilitate and encourage students to return.

Longer term solutions

- Merge full-time and part-time students
- Accounting at the module level
 - Funding
 - Student success
- Post Qualification Application
 - Start at Christmas?
- Design a course to suit those who attend it
- Develop transitional entry qualifications

And finally

- Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's troublesome."

- Isaac Asimov

- Of course there's a lot of knowledge in Universities: the freshmen bring a little in; the graduates don't take much away, so knowledge sort of accumulates

- Lawrence Lowell