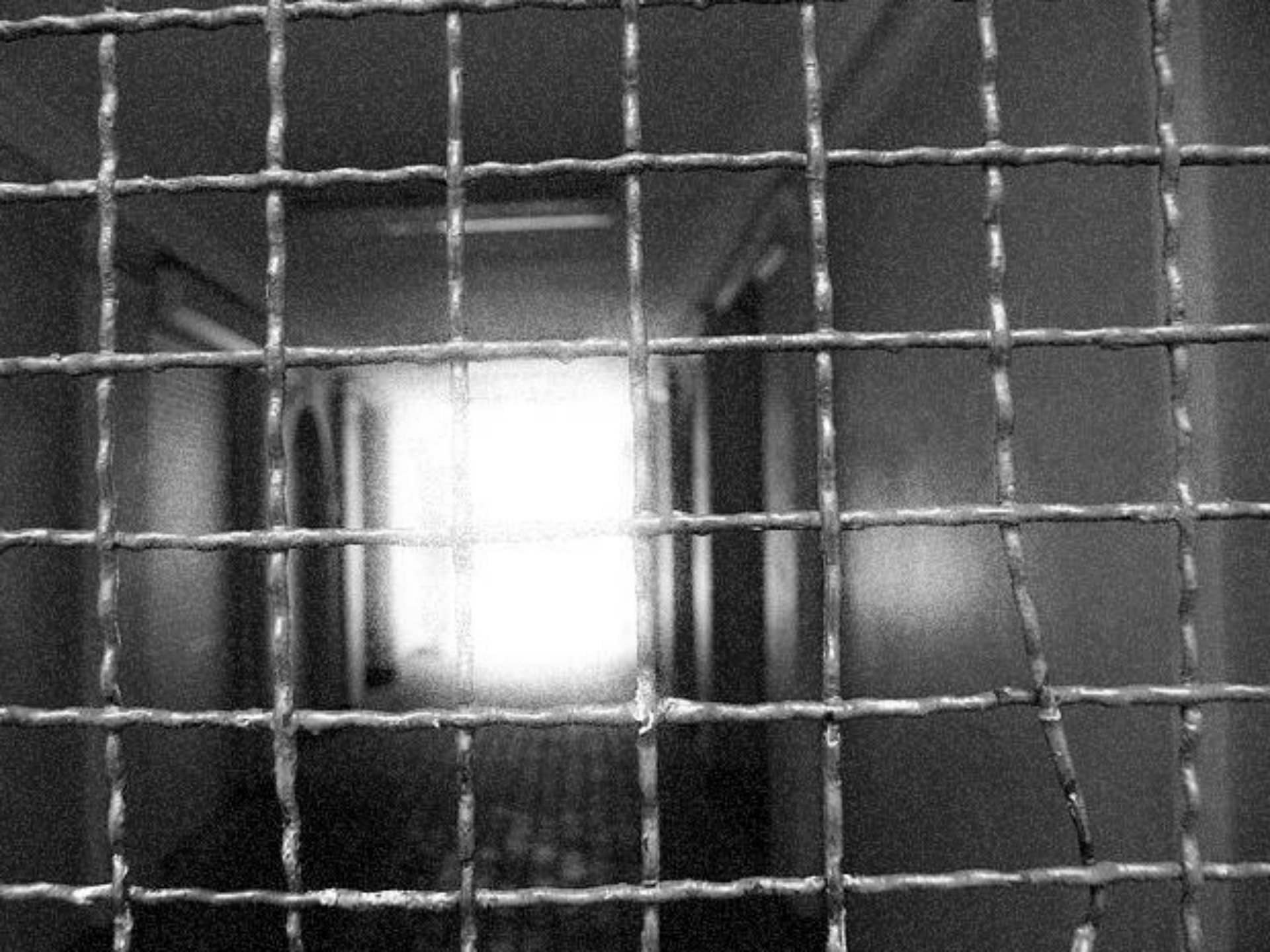


Technological Innovations in Prison Education



A work in progress
presentation

Angela Murphy
Australian Digital Futures Institute

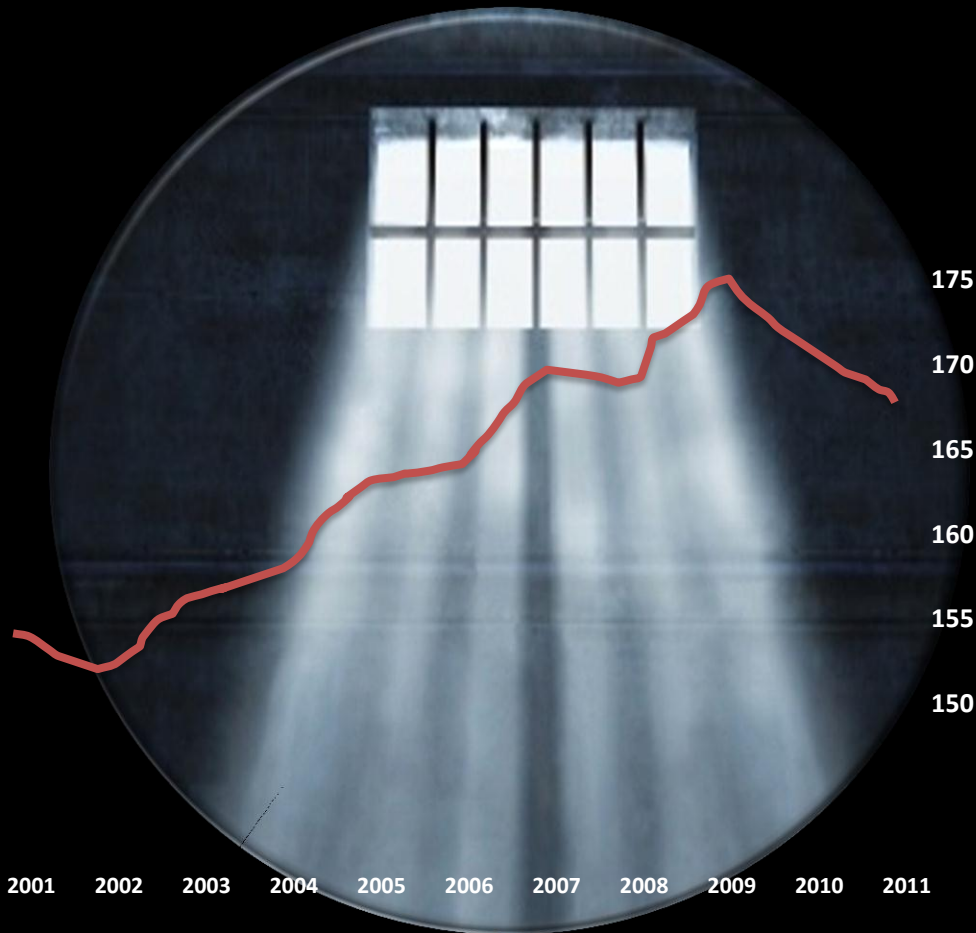


<29000 people across Australia
are spending tonight in prison

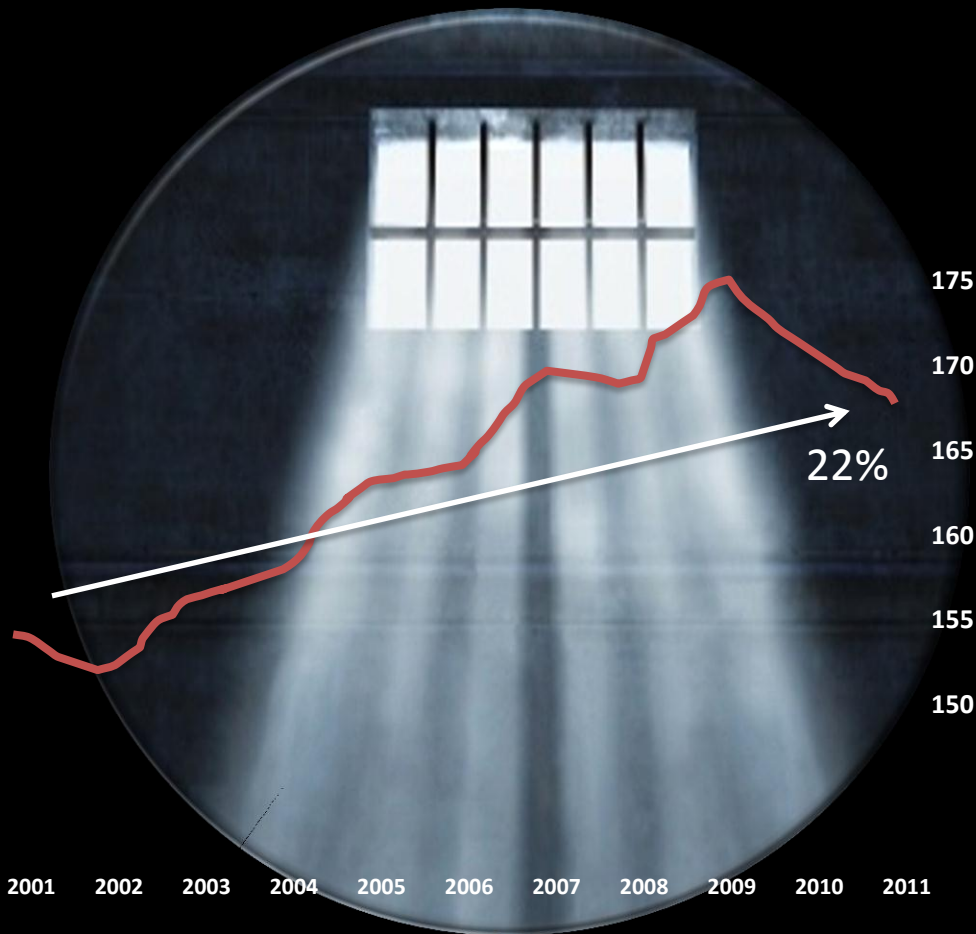


<29000 people across Australia are spending tonight in prison

Increase from 137 per 100,000 in 1997 to 167 in 2011



a) Rate per 100,000 adult population



a) Rate per 100,000 adult population

<29000 people across Australia are spending tonight in prison

Increase from 137 per 100,000 in 1997 to 167 in 2011

Growth proportionately faster than general population

In 2006-07 Australian prisons cost \$2.3 billion to run, an average cost per prisoner per day of \$245

Most prisoners are severely socially and economically disadvantaged

- Lower socioeconomic status
- Poor health
- High unemployment
- Low levels of education



Most prisoners are severely socially and economically disadvantaged

- Lower socioeconomic status
- Poor health
- High unemployment
- Low levels of education

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Increase in Prisoner Population (2002):

- 60% not functionally literate or numerate;
- 60% did not complete year 10;
- 64% have no stable family;
- 60% of males and 70% of females had a history of illicit drug use.





Recidivism and post-release data is difficult to measure

Researchers guess that 'yearly flow is around 50,000 as the majority are serving sentences of less than 12 months



Recidivism and post-release data is difficult to measure

Researchers guess that 'yearly flow is around 50,000 as the majority are serving sentences of less than 12 months

For every 100 released, 60 will return



Recidivism and post-release data is difficult to measure

Researchers guess that 'yearly flow is around 50,000 as the majority are serving sentences of less than 12 months

For every 100 released, 60 will return

32 will return in 2 years

14210



Recidivism and post-release data is difficult to measure

Researchers guess that 'yearly flow is around 50,000 as the majority are serving sentences of less than 12 months

For every 100 released, 60 will return

32 will return in 2 years

For prisoners participating in education, this drops to 23

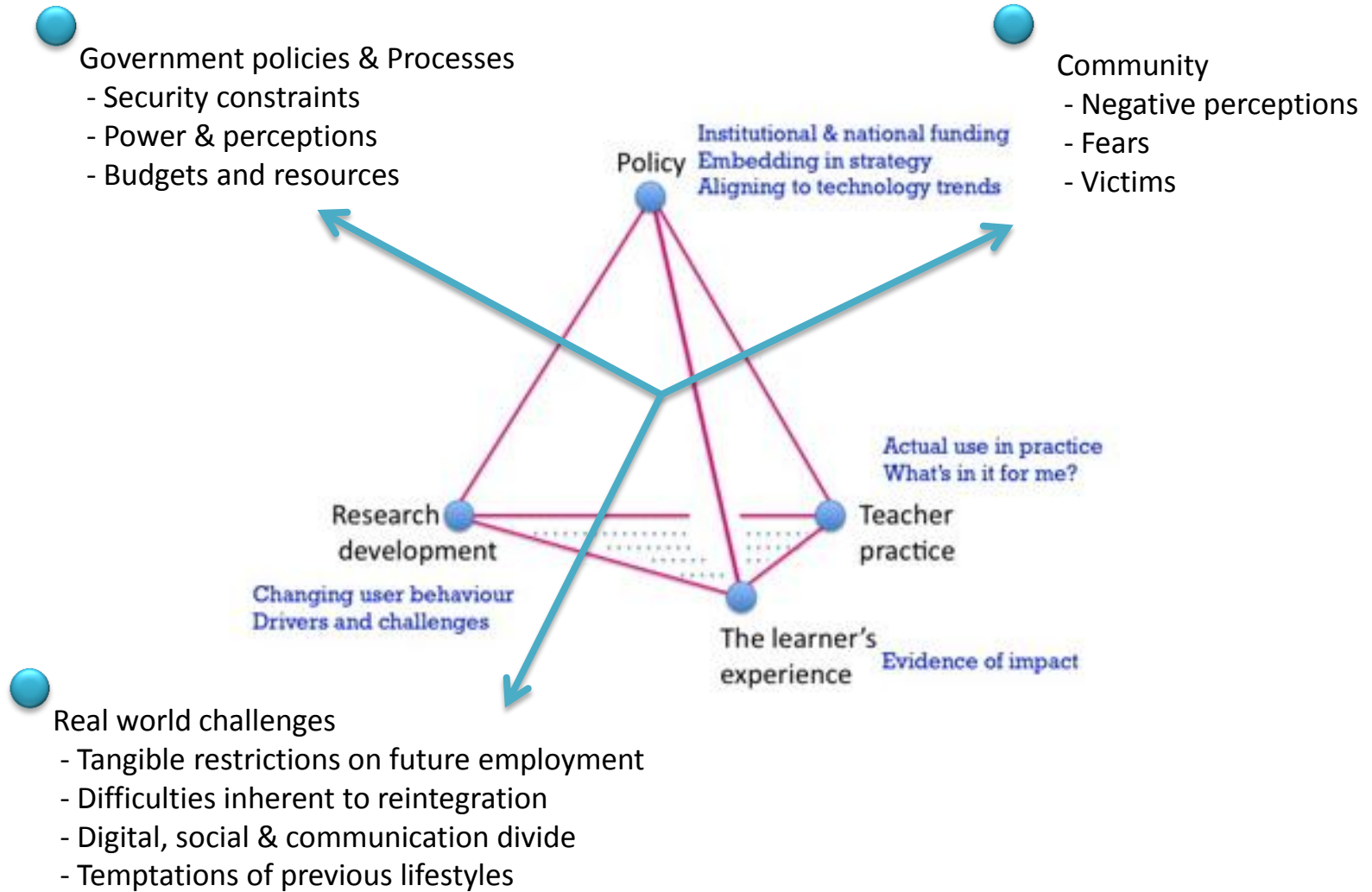
Barriers to Prison Education

- Views that prisons are primarily places of correction, not training
- Lack of funding, support and facilities within prisons
- High costs of textbooks, prisoners earn about \$20 a week
- Frequent and unexpected transfers between prisons
- Short sentences (under 3 years)
- Age and gender (older prisoners and re-offenders more inclined to study)
- Previous negative experiences with education

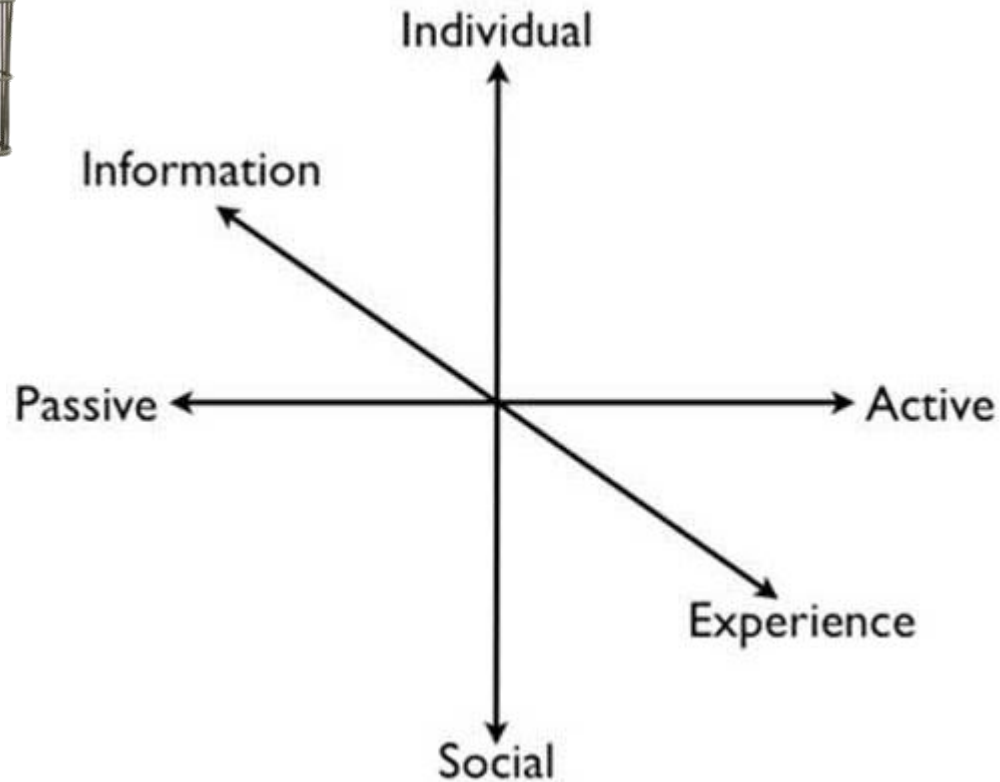
..... Policies of higher education institutions



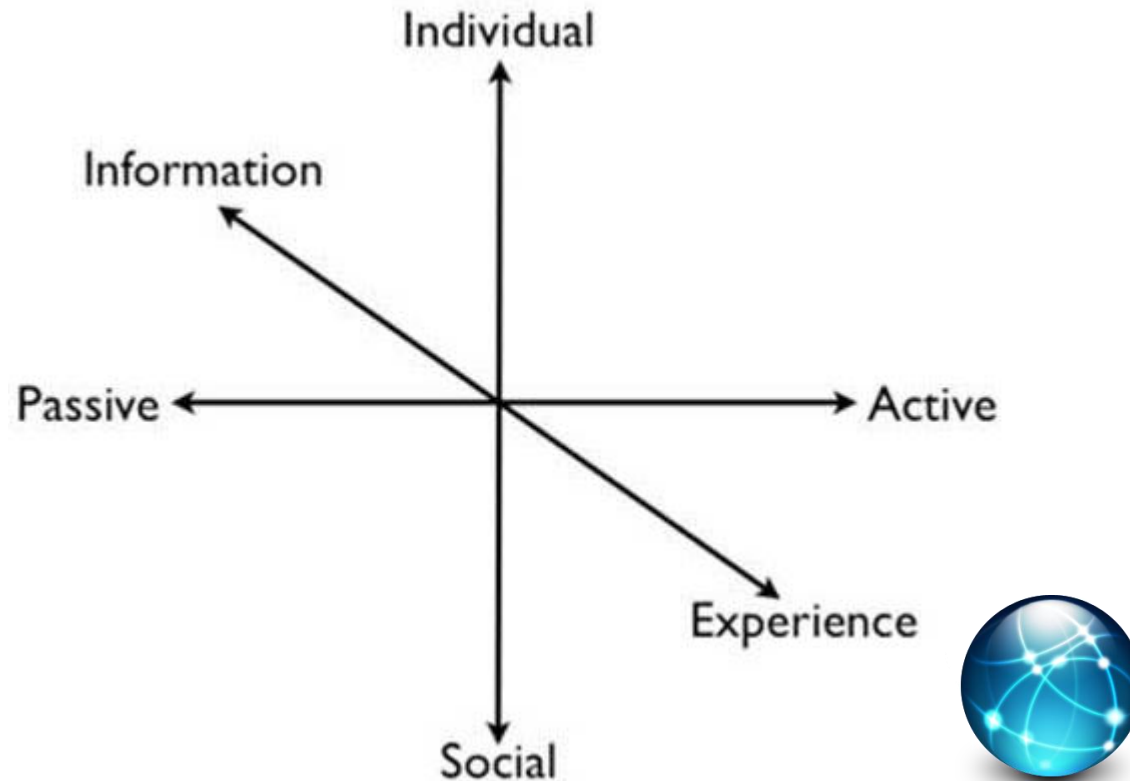
- Increased movement of higher education institutions towards online course provision
- Large number of institutions are withdrawing support for incarcerated students and eliminating exceptions handling processes
- Access to the internet in prison is prohibited
- Results in further exclusion of the already socially excluded
- Choice of courses increasingly influenced by extent to which course requires internet access



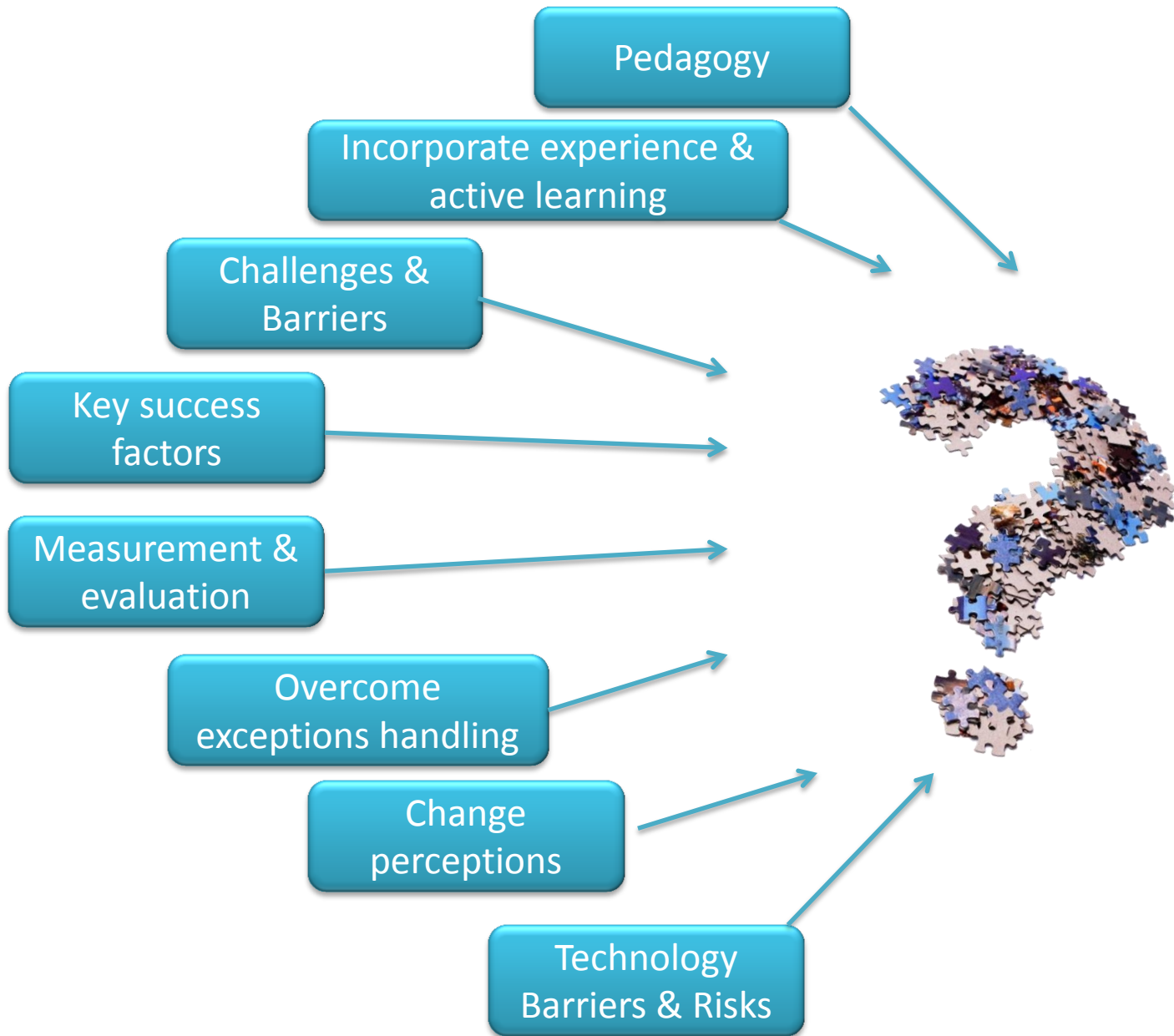
Prison education needs to move forwards to meet 21st Century learning



Prison education needs to move forwards to meet 21st Century learning

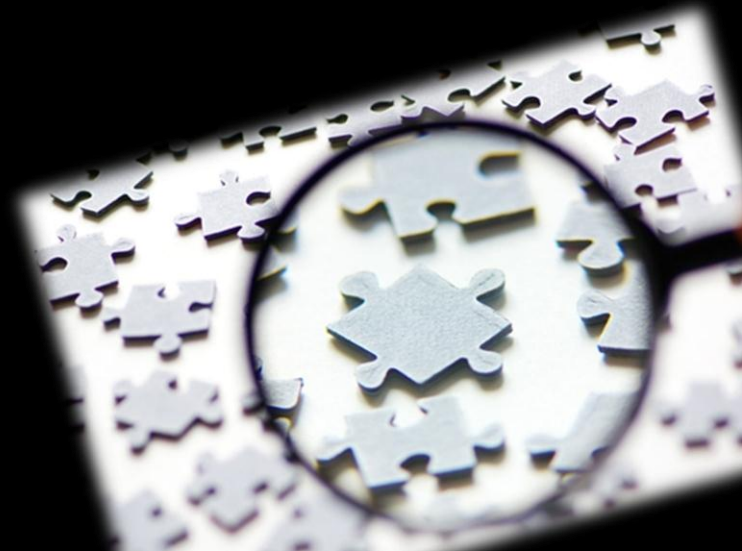


- **Thinking and reflection**
- **Conversation and interaction**
- **Experience and activity**
- **Evidence and demonstration**



Research Project Scope

- Literature review of current initiatives in Australia to improve access to online / electronic / interactive learning experiences and enhance access to tertiary education opportunities
- Compare local to international initiatives in countries such as the US , UK and Europe (where prisoners are permitted access to the internet)
- Classify initiatives according to focus, use of technology, underlying pedagogies and evaluation criteria



Examples of current initiatives



Tasmania & Moodle:

- Tasmania Prison Service & Tasmanian Polytechnic developed a highly secure terminal ICT network
- Using e-learning software, this network allows secure communication between teachers in the Polytechnic and students in the prison
- Although students are unable to access the Internet, the network enables the teachers to provide students with digital copies of approved sites



N.S.W. :

- Prisoners' permitted access to Internet sources from computer labs.
- Intranet system that puts appropriate limits on the information that can be accessed online. Prisoners will only be able to visit sites approved by prison management

Examples of current initiatives



TRULINCS:

- Initiative underway by Federal Bureau of Prisons in US to provide inmates with the capability to send and receive electronic messages without having access to the Internet



UK – Open University:

- Trial conducted with 9 students undertaking a computer sciences course using Moodle to deliver course content



Skien High Security Prison, Norway:

- Prisoners have access to computers in the classroom and individual computers in their cells.
- Addressed the issue of security by installing firewalls that maintain security protocols, while allowing limited access to the Internet and resources that promote educational aims.

Examples of current initiatives

Underway

Trial using contained Moodle and eBook readers with prisons at Southern Queensland Corrections centre studying TPP 7120

Proposed:

Development of a USQ Diploma and Degree Pathway using Portable Learning Environments for Incarcerated Adult Distance Education Students



“From a scholarly perspective, prison education reduces recidivism, enhances life skills, and is a cost-effective method of crime reduction...”

But from a humane and ethical perspective, prison education allows those who want to change their lifestyle the opportunity to do so.” Christopher Zoukis , former prisoner and contemporary author



References

- Brown, D. (1998). Prisoners. *Hot Topics: Legal Issues in Plain Language*, 67. 1-28. Retrieved from http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/hot_topics/pdf/prisoners_67.pdf
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2011). *Prisoners in Australia 2011*. ABS Canberra. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Products/4F70D521F641D21ECA25795F000DB1FA?opendocument>
- Australian Institute of Criminology. (2008). Reducing recidivism through vocational education and training programs. *AICrime reduction matters (65)*, 61-80. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/crm/61-80/crm065.aspx>
- Callan V. & Gardner, J. (2007). The role of VET in recidivism in Australia, in Dawe S (ed), *Vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia : research readings*. Adelaide: NCVER: 27-36.
- Giles, M., Le, A.T., Allan, M., Lees, C., Larsen A., & Bennett, L. (2004). *To train or not to train: The role of education and training in prison to work transitions*. NCVER. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1532.html>
- Koudstaal, D., Cianchi, J., Knott, M. & Koudstaal, M. (2009). *Creating Cooperatively with all Stakeholders an Advanced and Highly Secure ICT Learning Network for all Inmates within Existing Cultural Prison Practices*. Paper presented at the ACEA/Reintegration Puzzle, Perth WA Australia. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from <http://www.eurodl.org/?article=410>
- Kinner, S.A. (2006). The post-release experience of Prisoners in Queensland. Australian Institute of Criminology: Canberra. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from <http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/2/5/4/%7B25483C2E-ECFE-406D-AFC7-D234774A2B58%7Dtandi325.pdf>
- Lappin, H.G. (2009). *Trust Fund Limited Inmate Computer System (TRULINCS) - Electronic Messaging*. U.S. Department of Justice: Federal Bureau of Prisons. http://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/5265_013.pdf. Retrieved 18 April 2012 from http://www.acea.org.au/Content/2009%20Papers/Koudstaal_2009.pdf
- Salane, F. (2008). Distance education in prisons: an educational right or a privilege? The case of “student inmates”. *Distances et savoirs. Hors série*, 1-7. Retrieved 18 April 2012 <http://www.distanceandaccesstoeducation.org/contents/DS2008-Salane-English.pdf>
- Sanford, R. & Foster, J.E. (2006). Reading, writing, and prison education reform?: The tricky and political process of establishing college programs for prisoners: perspectives from program developers. *Equal Opportunities*, 25(7), 599 – 610.
- Watts, J. H. (2010). Teaching a distance higher education curriculum behind bars: Challenges and opportunities. *Open Learning*, 25(1), 57-64.