

DELIVERING DIGITAL HIGHER EDUCATION INTO PRISONS: The Cases of Four Universities In Australia, UK, Turkey and Nigeria

Helen FARLEY
Australian Digital Futures Institute,
University of Southern Queensland, AUSTRALIA

Anne PIKE
Institute of Educational Technology,
Open University, THE UNITED KINGDOM

Ugur DEMIRAY
School of Communication Sciences,
Anadolu University, TURKEY

Nebath TANGLANG
Learner Support Services,
National Open University of NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

Around the world, various correctional jurisdictions are struggling to enable the delivery of higher education into prisons. At a time when universities are moving increasingly online, very often access to the internet is restricted or disallowed in correctional environments. Four universities, all leading distance education providers in the countries in which they are based, are delivering higher education into prisons using technology to varying extents.

This paper reports on regional differences in the provision of distance education into prisons, particularly using technology, in Australia, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Nigeria. In these four jurisdictions, there are significant differences in prisoner access to computer hardware, personal devices and to the internet. How these differences impact on the delivery of distance education is explored with an examination of various learning initiatives and lessons learned.

Keywords: Correctional education; digital inclusion; digital divide; higher education; digital equity.

INTRODUCTION

Distance education has traditionally been viewed as ready way for prisoners to access education in correctional centres, delivering course content and resources to students who are unable to undertake traditional face-to-face education (Salane, 2008).

This paper looks at how four different distance learning universities provide access to higher education for prisoners in four very different parts of the world. The paper begins by looking at the characteristics of the prisoner populations in Australia, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Nigeria before looking at the characteristics of the four universities servicing these populations.

The latter part of the paper looks at how these universities deliver higher education into the prisons of the countries in which they are based, paying particular attention to the use of technology and the challenges associated with that.

Prisoners Around The World

Across the world, prison populations are relentlessly growing as conservative governments get 'tough on crime' and money is consistently diverted from educational and rehabilitate programs. Between 1998 and 2013, the world's population grew by some 20 per cent and yet the prison population grew by a staggering 25 per cent. This represents an increase in global imprisonment rates, over the same period, from 136 to 144 per 100,000 people. Globally, there are around 10.2 million prisoners (Walmsley, 2013). These global trends are reflected in the rates of imprisonment and prison populations in the four countries that form the focus of this article: Australia, United Kingdom, Turkey and Nigeria.

Australia

In 2015, for the first time the number of prisoners in Australia reached in excess of 36,000; this was an increase of 6 per cent from the previous year. The average daily imprisonment rate was 196 prisoners per 100,000 between April and June 2015. The Northern Territory had the highest average daily imprisonment rate (904 prisoners per 100,000 adult population) and was followed by Western Australia (277 prisoners per 100,000 adult population). Women made up just 7 per cent of the total prisoner population; a rate similar to that of other countries around the world (ABS, 2015). Though Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians make up just 2 per cent of the general population, they make up some 28 per cent of the prisoner population (ABS, 2015). Even more alarming is that nearly one third of female prisoners are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians (Hopkins, 2015). Intergenerational incarceration is a feature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration for a complex array of reasons including forced removal from traditional lands, fragmentation of the community, child removal by authorities, child neglect, discrimination and discriminatory policing, inadequate schooling, unemployment, chronic illness, alcohol and drug dependence and previous imprisonment (Hopkins, 2015). There are 112 prisons in Australia (World Prison Brief, 2016a), with an occupancy rate of 104 per cent (Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2015).

United Kingdom

England and Wales has the highest imprisonment rates across Europe, with a prison population of 84,372 (Ministry of Justice, 2015), that is 149 people per 100,000 of the population (International Centre for Prison Studies, 2015). Some 13.8 per cent of the prison population are remand prisoners, awaiting trial or sentence (World Prison Brief, 2016d). Almost 15% of the prison population (12,203) are currently serving indeterminate sentences (that is life sentences or indeterminate sentences for public protection) with no known release date. Only 4.6 per cent of the prison population are women (3889 in May 2015).

Women tend to have fewer previous convictions than men; for example more than half of the women offenders in 2000 had no previous convictions compared to 42 per cent of men (Home Office, 2001).

With the exception of a few unusual women offenders such as Myra Hindley, who attract enormous media attention, women tend to commit less serious offences (cf. Gelsthorpe and Morris, 2002; Hedderman and Gelsthorpe, 1997). As less than 5 per cent of the prison population is women, there are fewer women's prisons and hence women are less likely to be imprisoned close to home and family.

The number of women in prison increased by 12 per cent over the last decade (Berman, 2012), which is a lower rate than the men (30 per cent) but more than was hoped for, as the Corston report had highlighted that most women in prison posed no threat to society and recommended the reduction of custodial sentences for women (Home Office, 2007). There are 110 prisons in England and Wales with an occupancy rate of 110.7 per cent (World Prison Brief, 2016d).

Turkey

Republica and People Party (The Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) Ankara Branch Deputy and Human Rights Investigation Commission Member Sinan Aygün stated that: 'the number of prisoners held in prisons and penal institutions in Turkey has increased by 177.3 per cent since 2002.' He went on to say that in 2002, there were 55,929 people in custody and in March 2015 that number is a staggering 165,033. Over the same period, the population of Turkey has increased by just 16.5 per cent (Ministry of Justice, 2016). The rate of imprisonment per 100,000 people has risen from 101 to 224 in the ten years from 2006 until 2015. Women make up about 3.7 per cent of the prison population, which is about half the rate of female incarceration in most other parts of the world. Some 15 per cent of the prison population is on remand (World Prison Brief, 2016c). Prisons in Turkey are organised under a number of classifications: F-type, which are maximum-security; E-type and special type, which are medium-security; open prisons and juvenile reformatories, which are minimum-security; or detention centres (Dilek-Kayaoglu & Demir, 2014). The occupancy rate is 101.7 per cent (World Prison Brief, 2016c).

Nigeria

In Nigeria, there are some 240 prisons housing just over 57,000 prisoners. Of these, 98 per cent are male with just 2 per cent female. What is significant is that 69 per cent of the prisoner population is unconvicted. Of the convicted prisoners, some 8 per cent are on death row; 41 per cent are serving sentences less than 2 years and 48 per cent longer than two years (Nigerian Prisons Service, 2015). There are some 240 prisons in Nigeria with an occupancy rate of 113.9 per cent.

The rate of imprisonment is 31 per 100,000 people which represent a 5 per cent drop since 2000 (World Prison Brief, 2016b).

Our Four Universities

As the demands on student resources increase and the cohorts of most universities grows ever more diverse, many institutions are becoming more flexible in how they deliver their courses and programs (Ritzema, 2008). There is an increased emphasis on distance education with the student cohort remote from the bricks and mortar campuses of many universities.

There are many reasons for this shift including the cost of face-to-face delivery, demands for more student-centred and flexible approaches, providing students with more choices in learning; technology ubiquity, portability and their affordances, providing solutions to identified student needs (Fox, 2015); and the need to reach out to students who are geographically remote and unable to come to campus. The four universities in this article – the University of Southern Queensland, Australia; the Open University, UK; the Anadolu University, Turkey; and the National Open University of Nigeria, Nigeria – are significant providers of distance education in the countries in which they are located. It is because of these universities' ability to deliver higher education at a distance that they are frequently accessed by incarcerated students unable to access education any other way.

The University of Southern Queensland, Australia

The University of Southern Queensland (USQ) is located in Toowoomba in regional Queensland and has around 28,000 students. Around 80 per cent of these students study at a distance. There are three main campuses in Toowoomba, Springfield and Ipswich. Until this year, there was a fourth campus at Hervey Bay. USQ has been delivering higher education into prisons for around 25 years, primarily through the Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) which offers non-traditional entry into higher education. At any one time, USQ has around 450 incarcerated students, 300 of who study the TPP (across 56 prisons) and the rest studying a variety of undergraduate programs, making USQ Australia's largest provider of tertiary education to incarcerated students (Farley, Pike, & Hopkins, 2015).

The Open University, United Kingdom

The Open University, with its mission of being open to people, places, methods and ideas (Open University, 2011) is the UK's largest provider of distance learning higher education and is also the largest provider of higher education in prison. It provides higher education courses to approximately 1700 students across most prisons in the UK. In 2013-14 it awarded 4 postgraduate Masters Degrees, 54 undergraduate BA/BSc Degrees and over 100 higher education certificates and diplomas. (Open University, 2014).

Funding for initial Open University access courses is partially subsidized by the UK Government but most adult prisoners fund Higher Education through part-time study loans or apply for funding through charitable organisations such as The Prisoners Education Trust. There is now a prospectus especially designed for students in prison which has pathways to degree in almost every faculty (Open University, 2015).

The Anadolu University, Turkey

The Anadolu University Open and Distance Education System has 1.9 million active students and over 2 million graduates since 1987. The Open Education Faculty was established in the 1982-83 academic year with the Economics and Business Administration undergraduate programs.

The aim was to provide high quality higher education and ensure equity of opportunity in education. In the first year, 29,500 students enrolled in the Economics and Business Administration undergraduate programs. The Anadolu University Open and Distance Learning System offers a total of 12 licenses (university degrees), with 46 undergraduate (associate degrees and many certificate programs).

The average Anadolu University distance learning student is in his/her mid-twenties; 65 per cent of the students are metropolitan-based, 70 per cent have jobs, 40 per cent are married, 42 per cent are female and 1.5 per cent has some disability.

The Anadolu University also ensures that its courses and programs are accessible to prisoners in Turkey. Across the country, the university has enrolled around 2,200 prisoners in a wide range of disciplines including jurisprudence, theology, human resource management, business, public administration, social services and international relations. About 60 per cent of the incarcerated students are enrolled in degree programs with the remainder enrolled in associate degree programs (BAUM, 2015). In addition, Anadolu University also aims to use the latest technology to deliver its programs.

Nigeria National Open University of Nigeria

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) was established in 1983 and has around 57,000 (2011) enrolments making it Nigeria's largest university. It is a Federal Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution and the first of its kind in the West African sub-region. Popularly known as NOUN, the university's main campus is in Lagos with Study Centres throughout the country. It offers over 50 programmes and some 750 courses.

The university has made significant progress in fulfilling its vision and mandate by sensitizing and providing increased access and enhanced quality life-long education to all, including prisoners.

Through the establishment of the Special Study centers (SSC) concerted effort is being made to ensure that no person(s) or group of person(s) is left out. The efforts started with advocacy visits to chief executives of military, paramilitary bodies and agencies, and communities in difficult terrains or such that sought partnership in benefiting from the services being provided by the university in line with its 1983 Act and its 2002 mandate. By 2010, considerable impact had been made with the appointment of a Centre Manager (now Director) for the Nigerian prisons. Despite the constraints, NOUN has 6 flourishing National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) Study Centers in Nigerian prisons. With the appointment of Barrister Ladan Babakodong, as Centre Director, a guided development was put in place between the university and the Nigerian Prison Service (NPS) in the training of prison inmates in various prisons across the country towards the award of university degrees, certificates and diplomas in several disciplines.

A survey carried out by the Study Centre showed that there were over 3,000 young prison inmates that were eligible, qualified and willing to enrol in the NOUN programs. However, in spite of the zeal shown by prisoners, expansion has been slow-paced owing to lack of outside sponsors as most of them are indigent prisoners.

Presently, all the NOUN incarcerated students enjoy 50 per cent discount on all fees payable on registration. While the university may not be able to bear the burden of full sponsorship for all interested prisoners across the country, the prison authority is being encouraged to seek support from relevant government agencies such as the Education Trust Fund (ETF), a public trust fund established to provide infrastructure in public institutions of higher learning, to subsidies or sponsor well-behaved and interested prisoners.

USING TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING IN PRISONS

Most universities are increasingly reliant on the online delivery of courses and programs. Most are making use of web 2.0 tools such as blogs, discussion boards and social media. Almost all undergraduate courses compel students to complete assignments requiring internet research. In addition, the days of paper-based journals and books in libraries are rapidly disappearing (Farley & Doyle, 2014).

Higher Education institutions are increasingly leveraging mobile learning and other digital technology initiatives in order to remain competitive in the modern knowledge-based economy. The use of mobile technology has become essential in the delivery of distance education courses, largely in response to an emerging demand for flexibility in learning (West, 2012; Jeffrey et al, 2011).

Even so, the Learning Management System (LMS) has become the principle tool used by institutions to deliver electronic course materials or activities in both the face-to-face and external delivery modes. The use of the LMS has enabled students to engage with peers in collaborative and interactive learning experiences and benefit from the motivation and support provided synchronously or asynchronously by the facilitator. Unfortunately, this increasing reliance on the LMS and other digital technologies is based on the assumption that students have reliable access to the internet (Farley, Murphy, & Bedford, 2014).

This reliance on digital technologies for the provision of higher education is problematic for incarcerated students who generally have limited access to digital technologies and the internet. This section examines how the four universities are providing higher education into prisons and the extent to which they are using digital technologies.

Australia

Prisoners in most Australian jurisdictions are not permitted to access the internet and are therefore prohibited from using online learning technologies. Formal education and training delivery to prisoners is often provided in non-digital forms, usually in the form of blocks of printed text. Although this method enables access to course materials, it does not develop digital literacies in incarcerated students, and these skills are becoming more essential in the pursuit of formal learning outside of the correctional environment (Farley, Bedford, & Turley, 2011). Higher education is not seen as a priority in correctional education, with by far the greatest emphasis being on raising levels of numeracy and literacy, before moving incarcerated students on to various forms of vocational education. Even so, a post-secondary qualification has been shown to be one of the most effective ways to reduce recidivism and create positive and impactful changes in an individual post-release. Currently, there are few programs offered to incarcerated students that adequately prepare them for entry into higher education especially providing them with the opportunity to use modern ICTs (Farley & Doyle, 2014).

In the latter half of 2013, a team of researchers at the University of Southern Queensland were awarded \$4.39 million over three years by the Australian Government under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program for a project titled *Making the Connection: Improving Access to Higher Education for Low Socio-Economic Status Students with ICT Limitations*. Beginning in early 2014, the project built on three previous projects led by USQ which trialled various digital technologies for learning in prisons.

Most notable of these was *From Access to Success*, which developed a version of USQ's learning management system (often called a VLE or Virtual Learning Environment), a version of Moodle called USQ StudyDesk, which was installed onto the prison education lab server. This server had no capacity to access the internet and was physically isolated from the main prison network.

This new version of the LMS was called the USQ Offline StudyDesk and it was installed by education officers from self-loading DVDs produced at USQ. The USQ Offline StudyDesk allowed incarcerated students to access course materials including interactive multimedia and assessments via computers in the education lab, without needing to access the internet. The *From Access to Success* project ran at two prisons in Queensland using two courses from the Tertiary Preparation Program, an enabling program run by USQ's Open Access College. Students successfully completing this program are granted automatic entry into various USQ undergraduate programs.

At the beginning of the project, a detailed options analysis was undertaken to ensure that the USQ Offline StudyDesk installed onto a prison education lab server was still the preferred technological approach. Various alternative options were examined including 'Moodle-on-a-stick' and secure cloud solutions.

A team comprised of USQ ICT Services and *Making the Connection* personnel determined that the preferred solution remained installing the USQ Offline StudyDesk on a separate server linked to the education lab network via network switch. At the moment, the transfer of courses between USQ and the prisons occurs via DVD.

In the near future, education officers will be able to download courses through a kiosk, hosted at USQ and accessed via the administrative network (which is internet-enabled). The version of the USQ Offline StudyDesk is approximately one version of Moodle behind the mainstream version in use at USQ to allow for any glitches associated with new versions to be ironed out. The USQ Offline StudyDesk is currently installed in 12 sites in Queensland and one in Western Australia (1). By the end of February 2016, there will be an additional two sites in Queensland, another in Western Australia, one in Tasmania and one in New South Wales.

Because incarcerated students have limited access to the computer labs, it was decided that it would be desirable for students to have a personal device that they could take back to their cells. As with the modified LMS, these devices are not permitted to access the internet. Focus groups with incarcerated students participating in eBook reader trials in a previous project were critical of the small screen size and onscreen keyboard used in these devices. Taking this feedback onboard, the project team conducted a detailed options analysis of some 32 tablet computers, laptops and notebooks. It was decided that a Windows notebook would be most suitable as it had an almost full-size keyboard, adequate processing power and screen real estate was not compromised by an onscreen keyboard. In addition, students would be able to use Microsoft Office or Open Office to complete assessments. The project team is trialing the USQ Offline StudyDesk on the devices in preference to using a HTML presentation layer to display course materials. These options will be trialled during the next phase of the project and hope to have the notebooks deployed into prisons near the beginning of 2016.

The Making the Connection project team selected the following programs to be used with the USQ Offline StudyDesk and personal devices.

- Tertiary Preparation Program: Six courses from the Tertiary Preparation Program were selected for modification. These included general English and study skills courses, math courses and a humanities course. Successful completion of the Tertiary Preparation Program allows students automatic entry into selected USQ programs.
- Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program: Six courses will be adapted from this program as part of the *Making the Connection* project. It is expected that this program will prove popular given the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and that Indigenous students are half as likely to have completed year 12 as non-Indigenous students.
- Diploma of Arts (Social Sciences): Eight courses will be modified with an emphasis on community welfare and development.
- Diploma of Science: This program will emphasize sustainability and the environment. Eight courses from this program will be modified.
- Diploma of Business Administration: Historical data shows that most incarcerated students have enrolled in business programs. Again, eight courses from this program will be modified.
- Diploma programs were selected in acknowledgement of the typically short sentence length of most prisoners. Also, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to offer a selection of courses across a range of disciplines, rather than concentrate course modification efforts around one discipline as with a degree program.

To date, around 400 incarcerated students have enrolled in the suite of projects offered by USQ. In semester 3 2016, some 150 incarcerated students are enrolled in *Making the Connection* project sites and it is expected that this number will increase exponentially throughout the year.

The *Making the Connection* team will be rolling the technologies and programs to additional prisons across Australia before the end of the year. Jurisdictional owners have also expressed an interest in the availability of even shorter courses and programs to be offered to prisoners with very short sentences. To this end, the team are working with the Open University in the UK to make a selection of their [Open Learn](#) courses available in the offline environment.

The United Kingdom

Higher-level, post-compulsory (college) education in prisons in England and Wales is offered mostly through distance learning, which is outside the normal education provision. Research has highlighted significant and increasing barriers to distance learning in prison such as lack of digital technologies and the internet so access to distance learning materials and tutors is restricted (Champion and Edgar, 2013; Costelloe, 2003; Hopkins and Farley, 2014; Forster, 1996, Hughes, 2012; Pike and Adams, 2012; Reuss, 1999). Previous research (Adams and Pike, 2008a; Adams and Pike, 2008b; Pike and Adams, 2012) highlighted significant and increasing barriers to study, in particular a lack of access to technology which was not directly related to security concerns, but may be related to the ethos of individual prisons and the educational awareness of its management team.

Access to digital technologies has improved a little over recent years but is still far from the access offered to students who are not in prison. Although there are some newly built prisons with the latest technology, many of the original Victorian era prisons are also still in operation today.

In England and Wales new technology comes in the form of the Virtual Campus, which is not Internet access but can provide secure access to selected employment and education websites. It has been rolled out to most prisons and is intended to streamline and modernise the system of delivery for education, training and employment (Turley and Webster, 2010) as well as to 'support providers in offering stimulating and engaging material [for learning]' (Department of Business Innovation and Skills, 2011). It therefore has the potential to improve access for higher level study in prison. However, there have been problems and delays in the Virtual Campus deployment and it is not designed to fully simulate the Internet experience so does not adequately provide the digital literacy required for release into a digital world.

Students in their cells rarely have any technology, except perhaps DVDs and hence some assignments are still hand-written.

Additional facilities which ease the burden for distance learners in some prisons, includes dedicated induction where realistic individual learning pathways are provided (and linked to sentence plans), flexible opening of computer suites and libraries for those who work all day, occasional in-cell laptops, organised peer-support and dedicated post-release guidance.

The best practice is observed where a prison has a learning ethos which is shared by the staff, where higher-level learners are given dedicated space and time for learning and where learners are encouraged to take responsible peer-support positions which raise self-esteem and help to develop a community. The Virtual Campus is not always considered useful by distance learners. Lack of access to technologies for learning often disrupts learning and leads to a lack of digital skills. Lack of information about post-release accommodation and post-release continuation of studies, manifests itself as anxiety which also disrupts teach (Pike, 2014).

Turkey

For its non-incarcerated students, Anadolu University makes use of a diversity of technologies to enable access to higher education. Techniques employed include mobile learning, a wide array of eLearning strategies, programs broadcast via TV, state-of-the-art computer labs and a host of other strategies employing the latest digital technologies. The university is unable to fully utilise all of these strategies and technologies for incarcerated students. This is because there are some limitations imposed through prison regulations that are administered by the Ministry of Justice, technological limitations, and the nature and scheduling of prison life. For example, live TV panel sessions are typically broadcast one week before the mid-term and final exam or make-up exams. However, there is insufficient opportunity for incarcerated students to participate in this Live TV session in which student questions are answered by academics in real time.

Every prison is required to have a 'Prison Teacher' if they have incarcerated learners registered with the university. Students register for programs through the teacher who liaises with the Open Education Faculty Student Centre.

These incarcerated students obtain their books, lecture notes and other study materials or any documents that can be taken from the prison teacher through the open education faculty offices in the province. These prison teachers also help the student by accessing the internet, mobile phones or other technological equipment when required.

A number of projects have been undertaken with a view to increasing prisoner access to educational technologies. The Virtual European Prison School (VEPS) was a project run by the EPEA (European Prison Education Association) with partners in a number of European countries including Turkey. The project was funded through the Lifelong Learning Program Grundtvig Multilateral Program. The focus of the project was the exchange of prison teaching materials from different disciplines such as languages, arts and e-learning. A flexible and learner-centred approach was favoured, utilising existing distance learning methods. Using the Moodle LMS, a repository for educational programs was established which housed teaching materials, course syllabi, and so on, which prison educators could access to assist international students study in their native tongue while imprisoned abroad (EPEA, 2009).

Another Project study in which Anadolu University was a partner, focused on the role and function of distance education for alleviating the language problems of prisoners in other European Union countries' prisons. The idea behind the project was the initiation of communication between the staff and prisoners in the mother tongue of the prisoner to facilitate the rehabilitation of prisoners and increase their motivation to learn the language of the host country.

The project, titled Eliminating Language Barriers Online at European Prisons (ELBEP) created an e-learning environment to provide Russian, Polish, Spanish, Greek and Turkish language skills to the prisoners and staff in EU member countries.

The project was designed to produce a reliable and efficient ICT-based environment that can be certified and accredited in the future in many European countries without serious concerns around credibility (Ataizi et al., 2010).

Nigeria

Generally, access to digital technologies in Nigerian prisons is restricted. For instance, the use of phones is censored. It is only permissible at the discretion of the officer in charge and on the hearing of the official assigned. Internet access is absolutely banned. The only prisoners presently having access to computers are the incarcerated students undergoing programmes from the National Open University of Nigeria; however, that does not include access to the internet.

Admission into the National Open University is generally online. In the case of prisoners who don't have access to the internet, when their sponsors paid the application fees, they will notify the university authorities of the names and number of applications with their credentials.

The university through the Directorate of Learner Support Services will then apply for admission on behalf of the students. Once they are found qualified, they are admitted into the programmes of their choice. As soon as the sponsors of the inmates pay their registration fee the university registers on behalf of the students, the students may start their programme.

During exams, the National Open University of Nigeria deploys digital technology to prison inmates through a Local Area Network (LAN) within the examination halls (centres) for the students in the University Study Centre located within the prison yard for the purpose of writing Computer Based Examination (CBE) through a proxy server of the university. After the completion of the examinations, which runs for almost eight weeks, the computers and the proxy server are taken away from the halls back to the university.

Study materials are provided by the university both in hard and soft copies. The soft copies are on CD-Rom, while some are already uploaded on the computers that are kept in the Library provided by the university for the incarcerated students. The student inmates normally write their assignment on paper and thereafter, the University Student Counsellors collect the written assignment and later on upload them on behalf of the students to the university Computer Marked Assignment (CMA) portal. After the assignments are marked, the results are posted to the student's portal on the university website for collation by the university Examination and Assessment Directorate. The results of the assignment are printed and brought back to the incarcerated students.

CONCLUSION

Almost universally, correctional administrators from around the globe recognized the value of providing access to education for prisoners. In a recent survey in the United Kingdom (Taylor, 2014), some 81 per cent of prisoner respondents claimed that they participated in study to occupy their time and relieve monotony.

Some 69 per cent of respondents said that distance education helped them to cope with prison and some 40 per cent said that it helped a lot. This is particularly significant for those prisoners with long sentences or with mental health issues.

Though many prisons emphasize vocational education over distance education, particularly higher education, there are many benefits to be realized from engaging prisoners in higher education specifically. Higher education transforms prisoners, making them more risk averse. It gives them the skills to express themselves effectively and negotiate agreed outcomes without having to resort to violence (Pike, 2014). These benefits are in addition to increasing the chances of employment upon release from custody and the resultant decrease in recidivism rates of up to 40 per cent (Davis *et al*, 2013).

Though higher education has been shown to reduce recidivism and improve prison security, it is becoming increasingly difficult to facilitate the provision of distance learning in prisons as universities become increasingly dependent on the provision of online delivery of courses and programs.

At the same time, risk averse correctional systems often prohibit the use of the internet and of computers and other technologies for prisoners.

This paper briefly examines the delivery of education, particularly higher education, using educational technologies into prisons by four distance learning universities in four quite different countries: Australia, United Kingdom, Turkey and Nigeria. It has described the challenges faced and how these four universities seek to address the restrictions around access to technology and internet.

Though the most obvious issues are imposed through the lack of technology and internet, a range of other difficulties are commonly experienced in the provision of higher education to prisoners.

The prison learning environment must balance the competing need for security with that of rehabilitation through the provision of education, training and mandated behavioural programs (e.g. drug and alcohol programs). Typically, rates of prisoner engagement with education are low, particularly in the first years of a sentence or while awaiting sentencing. There are three possible explanations for low levels of prisoner participation in education and training:

- availability, attitude and perceptions of prison staff (i.e., those in authority);
- the prison environment; and 3) limited program availability (i.e. only basic literacy and numeracy programs) (Gillies et al., 2014).

Prison officers are in day-to-day contact with prisoners and their attitudes towards them affect how successfully prisoners complete education or training programs. Prison officers have the capacity to enhance or undermine the goals of the prison where they work (Kjelsberg, Skoglund, & Rustad, 2007).

Research shows that dosage is a significant factor influencing program effectiveness, and that continuous participation for a specified period is essential to success (Cho and Tyler 2008). Yet the needs of the prison frequently take precedence over the need for program continuity, even when the prisoner is willing to engage with education. The tough-on-crime policies of many governments contribute to overcrowding of facilities, making prisoner accommodation and movement difficult. Based on system-wide needs, prisoners may be transferred to another facility with little advance notice, and the new prison may or may not offer comparable educational programming (Brazzell et al., 2009).

Lack of learning support and cultural capital exacerbate poor enrolment and retention rates in education. Incarcerated students are very often first-in-family to participate in post-secondary education. They are frequently participating without any support from their families or communities, lacking the cultural capital that would normalize their participation.

In addition, the acquisition of digital literacy skills are key for post-release employment or education but impose new and often unmet demands on disadvantaged segments of the community including those in incarceration (Garrido, Sullivan, & Gordon, 2010; Lockard & Rankins-Robertson, 2011).

In the case of learning communities, the most effective educational programming contains intensive small-group interaction and offers a learning community as an alternative to the often anti-social communities within prisons (Adams et al., 1994; Batiuk et al., 2005).

Without enrichment and reinforcement that stem from being a member of a learning community, students taking education programs in prisons are socially and materially disadvantaged with outcomes for these learners heavily shaped by negative peer pressure and the highly unpredictable nature of prison life (Watts, 2010).

Victims' rights groups encourage a public attitude that favors punishment rather than rehabilitation through education (Drake & Henley, 2014). Consequently, there are few objections to massive cuts to education funding in prisons (Czerniawski, 2015). Reduction in funding of both corrections and of education has put pressure on prison education, leading to decreased offerings and shorter duration of programs.

One of the common and key learnings thus far however is that the issue of incarcerated students within the digital university is a complex and multifaceted problem which cannot be solved by technological interventions alone. For incarcerated students in particular, technology cannot replace good teaching; it can only support it.

Moreover the mere presence of the most innovative, mobile, user-friendly technology will not improve access and outcomes if the users on the ground do not have the time, space, resources, energy and motivation to engage it. The technology must also be contextualized or "humanized" which in part is what this article has attempted to do.

Moreover, it is important to raise awareness and understanding of the complex social, cultural and political barriers faced by incarcerated adult distance education students to ensure the long term success of e-learning initiatives aimed at non-traditional and isolated students. In our opinion, the way forward is to focus on sustaining and creating social systems which support a higher learning culture, with the technology being an important tool to facilitate this process (Hopkins & Farley, 2015).

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS

Prof. Dr. Ugur DEMIRAY, Anadolu University, TURKEY



DEMIRAY is Professor Faculty of Communication Sciences now and teaching in the School of Communication Sciences of Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey. He holds Undergraduate B.A. in 1981. And also Ph.D. degree completed at Anadolu University, in May 1986. His researches are dealt with distance education application of Anadolu University, Ministry of Education and by other universities in Turkey. His researches on Communicational gaps of distance education students with their institution, also interest also lies towards the profile of DE students, and relationship of graduates and job market in Turkey. He is also interested about changing of ethical behaviours around the world by inserting technological developments to the educational field especially Distance education applications on marketing of distance education programmes and e-learning. In addition, his studies are focused on Distance Education field and scholarly online journalism especially on DE. He has co-authored and individually contributed chapters in some Turkish and international books. Up to now he has around 15 imprint or eBooks dealt with distance education and many articles, which has been published national and international journals. He is now Editor-in-Chief of GLOKALde which is official eJournal of UDEEEWANA creation.

Prof. Dr. Ugur DEMIRAY
Anadolu University Yunusemre Campus 26470-Eskisehir TURKEY
Tel: +90 222 335 0581 ext. 5262
GSM: +90 542 232 21 167
Email(s): udemiray@anadolu.edu.tr or udemiray33@gmail.com
URL: <http://www.ugur-demiray.com>

Associate Professor Dr. Helen S.FARLEY, (Digital Futures) Australian Digital Futures Institute, University of Southern Queensland, AUSTRALIA



Dr. Helen FARLEY is through the RLDP Program, she hope to learn how to be a more effective research leader, but most importantly, to learn how to make those around her better researchers too. Research can't be done in isolation; it's about formulating ideas, talking about them, teasing them out and reformulating them with research colleagues within and outside of your own institution. She is currently leading one of the USQ-led Collaborative Research Network (CRN) projects with ANU and UNISA to develop a Mobile Learning Evaluation Framework. She is also the project lead of the OLT-funded from 'Access to Success' project which will develop Stand Alone Moodle that will enable electronic access to course materials and activities for those students without internet access. In 2013, Helen and her team were successful in USQ being awarded \$4.4 million in Federal government funding - Helen has many years' experience as an educator in Higher Education and as a researcher of educational technology. Her research interests are focused around the use of mobile technologies and virtual worlds in Higher Education

Associate Professor Dr. Helen FARLEY
(Digital Futures) at the Australian Digital Futures Institute
The University of Southern Queensland.
Phone: +61 7 4631 1738+61 7 4631 1738
Mobile: +61 401 878 880+61 401 878 880
Skype: helenf5300
Second Life: Helen Frak
Website(s):<http://www.usq.edu.au>
<http://www.usq.edu.au/research/research-at-usq/institutes-centres/adfi>
Email: helen.farley@usq.edu.au

**Dr. Anne PIKE Institute of Educational Technology,
Open University, THE UNITED KINGDOM**



Dr. PIKE has recently completed her doctoral research in the Open University's Institute of Educational Technology with a thesis entitled 'Prison-based transformative learning and its role in life after release'. She is a former OFSTED inspector of learning and skills in prisons and was the Offender Learning manager for the Open University from 2007-09 during which time she provided evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Penal Affairs Group, input to the Prison Service Instruction for Higher Education, and introduced the first Open University

prospectus for study in prison. She sits on the Advisory Boards of the Prisoners Education Trust 'Learning matters' project and the University of Southern Queensland's 'Access to Success' project. She is currently an Associate Lecturer in Mathematics at the Open University and a Visiting Lecturer in Criminology at Coventry University. Her qualifications are; PhD (2014) Open University, MRes Educational Research (2010) Open University, PGCE (PCET) (1995) University of Greenwich, MSc Continuum Mechanics (1984) University of Liverpool and BSc (Hons) Applied Mathematics and Physics (1983) University of Sheffield.

Her Research interests are on Transformative learning; Post-compulsory education for disadvantaged adult students (in particular prisoners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds). Dr PIKE's external collaborations are deal with advisory boards; panel invitations and keynotes, organized workshops. She has international links as On Advisory Board of 'From Access to Success' project at University of Southern Queensland which forms part of the \$4.4 million Making Connections Project, Prisoners Education Trust 'Learning matters and Prisons Video Trust.

Dr. Anne PIKE

Lecturer at The Open University
Centre for Research in Education and Educational Technology,
The Open University, Walton Hall
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK
Phone: +44 (0)300 303 5303
Email: anne.pike@open.ac.uk

Prof. Dr. Nebath TANGLANG, Learner Support Services,
National Open University of NIGERIA, Lagos, NIGERIA



Prof. TANGLANG holds a PhD in Sports Management obtained in 2003. His other qualifications are: M.Ed Sports Psychology 1988, B.Ed Physical & Health Education 1984. He is presently a Professor of Sports Management in the National Open University of Nigeria and has served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration). Prof. Tanglang is presently the Director, Learner Support Services National Open University of Nigeria. He has over 45 journal articles to his credit as well as five book chapters. Some of the most recent publications of Prof. Tanglang are on

"Decision-making skills and academic performance of Distance Education Learners: Implications for student counselors". "Proposed training model on goal setting and decision-making skills for distance learners", "Goal setting, decision-making skills and academic performance of undergraduate distance learners: Implications for retention and support services". Prof. Tanglang presented a poster at the 2015 International Council for Distance Education in South Africa on "The Counseling Needs of Prison Inmates in Nigeria". At the moment Prof. Tanglang is working on how to deploy digital technology for university education of prison inmates in Nigeria. Prof. Tanglang's research interest is on how to provide support to distant learners. He is an external examiner to many universities in Nigeria and a member of the International Council for Distance Education, African Council for Distance Education, North American Society for Sports Management and many others.

Prof.Nebath TANGLANG
Director, Learner Support Services
National Open University of NIGERIA
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way Victoria Island Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: +2347032122189
Email: ntanglang@noun.edu.ng

REFERENCES

- Adams, A. & Pike, A. (2008a)** *Evaluating empowerment and control of HE e-learning in a secure environment*, Presented at BERA conference. Edinburgh.
- Adams, A. & Pike, A. (2008b)** *Security Issues within Prison and Health ODL Programmes*, 5th Pan-Commonwealth Forum on open learning (PCF5). London: Commonwealth of Learning.
- Adams, K., Bennett, K. J., Flanagan, T. J., Marquart, J. W., Cuvelier, S. J., Fritsch, E., Burton, V. S. (1994)**. A Large-scale Multidimensional Test of the Effect of Prison Education Programs on Offenders' Behavior. *The Prison Journal*, 74(4), 433-449. doi: 10.1177/0032855594074004004
- Ataizi, M., Toprak, E., Kumtepe, A. T., Kumtepe, E. G., Pilanci, H., Mutlu, M. E., Kip, B. (2010)**. Eliminating Language Barriers in European Prisons through Open and Distance Education Technology. Paper presented at the *IODL&ICEM International Open and Distance Learning & ICEM 2010*, Eskisehir, Turkey.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2015)**. Prisoners in Australia, 2014. Canberra, Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- Australian Government Productivity Commission. (2015)**. Justice (P. Commission, Trans.). In P. Harris (Ed.), *Report on Government Services 2015* (Vol. C). Canberra, Australia: Productivity Commission.
- Batiuk, M. E., Lahm, K. F., McKeever, M., Wilcox, N., & Wilcox, P. (2005)**. Disentangling the effects of correctional education: Are current policies misguided? An event history analysis. *Criminal Justice*, 5(1), 55-74.
- BAUM. (2015)**. Anadolu University Computer Research and Application Center. Data obtained by BAUM on 23-24 October, Eskisehir Turkey.
- Berman, G. (2012)** *Prison population statistics*. London: House of Commons Libr.
- Brazzell, D., Crayton, A., Mukamal, D. A., Solomon, A. L., & Lindahl, N. (2009)**. From the Classroom to the Community: Exploring the Role of Education during Incarceration and Reentry (pp. 57). New York, USA: Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center; City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
- Champion, N. & Edgar, K. (2013)**. Through the gateway: How computers can transform rehabilitation, London, Prisoners Education Trust.
- Cho, R., & Tyler, J. (2008)**. *Prison-Based Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Post-Release Labor Market Outcomes*. Paper presented at the Reentry Roundtable on Education, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York.

Costelloe, A. (2003) *Third level education in Irish prisons: Who participates and why?* Unpublished doctoral thesis, The Open University.

Czerniawski, G. (2015). A race to the bottom – prison education and the English and Welsh policy context. *Journal of Education Policy*. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2015.1062146

Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. N. V. (2013). *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults* (pp. 113). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Department of Business Innovation and Skills (2011) *Making prisons work: Skills for rehabilitation, review of offender learning*. London: BIS.

Dilek-Kayaoglu, H., & Demir, G. (2014). Prison libraries in Turkey: The results of a national survey. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 46(2), 130-138. doi: 10.1177/0961000614523635

Drake, D. H., & Henley, A. J. (2014). 'Victims' Versus 'Offenders' in British Political Discourse: The Construction of a False Dichotomy. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 53(2), 141-157. doi: 10.1111/hojo.12057

EPEA. (2009). Virtual European Prison School (pp. 16). Brussels.

Farley, H., Bedford, T., & Turley, L. (2011). Using portable Moodle and eReaders to enhance learning at a distance for incarcerated offenders. Paper presented at the *Australasian Corrections Education Association Conference*, Gold Coast.

Farley, H., & Doyle, J. (2014). Using digital technologies to implement distance education for incarcerated students: a case study from an Australian regional university. *Open Praxis*, 6(4), 357-363.

Farley, H., Murphy, A., & Bedford, T. (2014). Providing simulated online and mobile learning experiences in a prison education setting: Lessons learned from the PLEIADES pilot project. *International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning*, 6(1).

Farley, H., Pike, A., & Hopkins, S. (2015). Bringing Digital Literacies to Students in Prison: Challenges and Opportunities. Paper presented at the *Unlocking Innovation in Education in Prison: EPEA 2015*, Antwerp, Belgium.

Forster, W. (1996) England and Wales: the state of prison education. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 37(2).

Fox, R. (2015). The rise of open and blended learning. Paper presented at the *Studies and Practices for Advancement in Open and Distance Education: 28th Annual Conference of Asian Association of Open Universities*, Hong Kong. <http://aaou2014.ouhk.edu.hk/Studies-and-Practices-for-Advancement-in-ODE.pdf#page=102>

Garrido, M., Sullivan, J., & Gordon, A. (2010). Understanding the Links Between ICT Skills Training and Employability: An Analytical Framework. *Information Technologies & International Development*, 8(2), 17-32.

Gelsthorpe, L. & Morris, A. (2002) Women's imprisonment in England and Wales: A penal paradox. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 2(3), 277-301.

Gillies, R., Carroll, A., Swabey, K., Pullen, D., Fluck, A., & Yu, J. (2014). *The role of post-secondary education among ex-inmates living crime-free*. Paper presented at the 2014 joint Australian Association for Research in Education and New Zealand Association for Research in Education Conference, Brisbane, Australia.

Hedderman, C. & Gelsthorpe, L. (1997) *Understanding the sentencing of women. Research Study 291*. London: Home Office.

Home Office (2001) *Statistics on women and the criminal justice system: A section 95 publication under the Criminal Justice Act 1991*. London: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Home Office (2007) *A report by Baroness Jean Corston of a review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system*. London: Home Office.

Hopkins, A. (2015). The National Crisis Of Indigenous Incarceration: Is Taking Indigenous Experience Into Account In Sentencing Part Of The Solution? *Legaldate*, 27(2), 4-7.

Hopkins, S. and Farley, H. (2014) A Prisoners' Island: Teaching Australian Incarcerated Students in the Digital Age, *Journal of Prison Education and Reentry*, 1 (1), 42-51.

Hughes, E. (2012) *Education in prison: Studying through distance learning*, Farnham: Ashgate.

International Centre for Prison Studies (2015) Website
http://www.prisonstudies.org/highest-to-lowest/prison_population_rate?field_region_taxonomy_tid=14

Jeffrey, L., Hegarty, B., Kelly, O., Penman, M., Coburn, D., & McDonald, J. (2011). Developing Digital Information Literacy in Higher Education: Obstacles and Supports. *Journal of Information Technology Education*, 10, 383-413.

Kjelsberg, E., Skoglund, T. H., & Rustad, A.-B. (2007). Attitudes towards prisoners, as reported by prison inmates, prison employees and college students. *BMC Public Health*, 7(71). doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-7-71

Lockard, J., & Rankins-Robertson, S. (2011). The Right to Education, Prison–University Partnerships, and Online Writing Pedagogy in the US. *Critical Survey*, 23(3), 23-39. doi: 10.3167/cs.2011.230303

Ministry of Justice (2015) Population and capacity briefing for Friday 15 may 2015, London, Ministry of Justice.

Ministry of Justice, Republic of Turkey (2016). T.C. Adalet Bakanlığı Ceza Ve Tevkifevleri Genel Müdürlüğü. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.cte.adalet.gov.tr/index.html>.

Nigerian Prison Service (2015). Nigerian Prison Service: Statistical Information. Retrieved November 4, 2015, from <http://www.prisons.gov.ng/about/statistical-info.php>

Open University. (2011) *Statement on equality and diversity* [Online]. Available: <http://www8.open.ac.uk/about/main/admin-and-governance/policies-and-statements/statement-equality-and-diversity>.

Open University. (2014) *Offender learner data and developments* [Online]. Available: <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/offender-learning/data-and-developments>.

Open University. (2015). Offender Learning: Courses and Qualifications. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.open.ac.uk/about/offender-learning/studying-ou/courses-and-qualifications>

Pike, A. (2014). Prison-based transformative learning and its role in life after release. (Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy), Open University, Milton Keynes, UK.

Pike, A and Adams, A. (2012) [Digital exclusion or learning exclusion? An ethnographic study of adult male distance learners in English prisons](#) *Research in Teaching and Learning*, 20 (4), pp 383-376.

Reuss, A. (1999) Prison(er) education. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(2), 113-127.

Ritzema, T., & Harris, B. (2008). The Use of Second Life for Distance Education. *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges*, 23(6), 110-116.

Salane, F. (2008). Distance education in prisons: an educational right or a privilege? The case of "student inmates". *Distances et savoirs*, pp. 1-17. Retrieved from <http://www.distanceandacesstoeducation.org/contents/DS2008-Salane-English.pdf>

Taylor, C. (2014). PET Brain Cells: Third Edition. London, UK: Prisoners' Education Trust.

Turley, C. & Webster, S. (2010) *Implementation and delivery of the testbeds virtual campus*. London: National Centre for Social Research.

Walmsley, R. (2013). World Prison Population List (Tenth edition ed., pp. 1-6). London: International Centre for Prison Studies.

Watts, J. H. (2010). Teaching a distance higher education curriculum behind bars: challenges and opportunities. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 25(1), 57-64. doi: 10.1080/02680510903482256

West, D. (2012). *Digital Schools: How Technology Can Transform Education*. Washington: Brookings.

World Prison Brief. (2016a). Australia. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/australia>

World Prison Brief. (2016b). Nigeria. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/nigeria>

World Prison Brief. (2016c). Turkey. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/turkey>

World Prison Brief. (2016d). United Kingdom & Wales. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from <http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/united-kingdom-england-wales>