

# The Role of Education in a Recidivism Reduction Strategy



**Assoc. Prof. Helen Farley**  
***Australian Digital Futures Institute***  
***University of Southern Queensland***



# What I'll cover ...

- Education and recidivism: what we know
- Planning for education in diverse prison populations
- Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners
- USQ's digital education projects in correctional centres

# About us ...

- USQ has a strong social justice agenda
- Providing education into correctional centres for 25 years
- Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP) was designed for correctional education
- Biggest provider of Higher Education into correctional centres
- 300 TPP students and 150 undergraduate students



UNIVERSITY  
OF SOUTHERN  
QUEENSLAND

**Unfunded  
PLEIADES**  
**Stand Alone Moodle  
eReaders**

**HEPPP-funded  
Paper to Pixels**  
**USQ Processes**

**HEPPP-funded  
Triple 'E' Project**  
**eReaders**  
**5 Correctional Centres**

**OLT-funded  
From Access to Success**  
**Stand Alone Moodle**

**HEPPP-funded (\$4.3 million)**  
**Making the Connection: Improving Access To Higher Education For Low  
Socio-Economic Status Students With ICT Limitations**  
**Stand Alone Moodle and Tablets**  
**13 Correctional Centres**



... Talking about recidivism ...

It should be easy but it's not ...



# Issues with 'recidivism'

No agreement on a definition

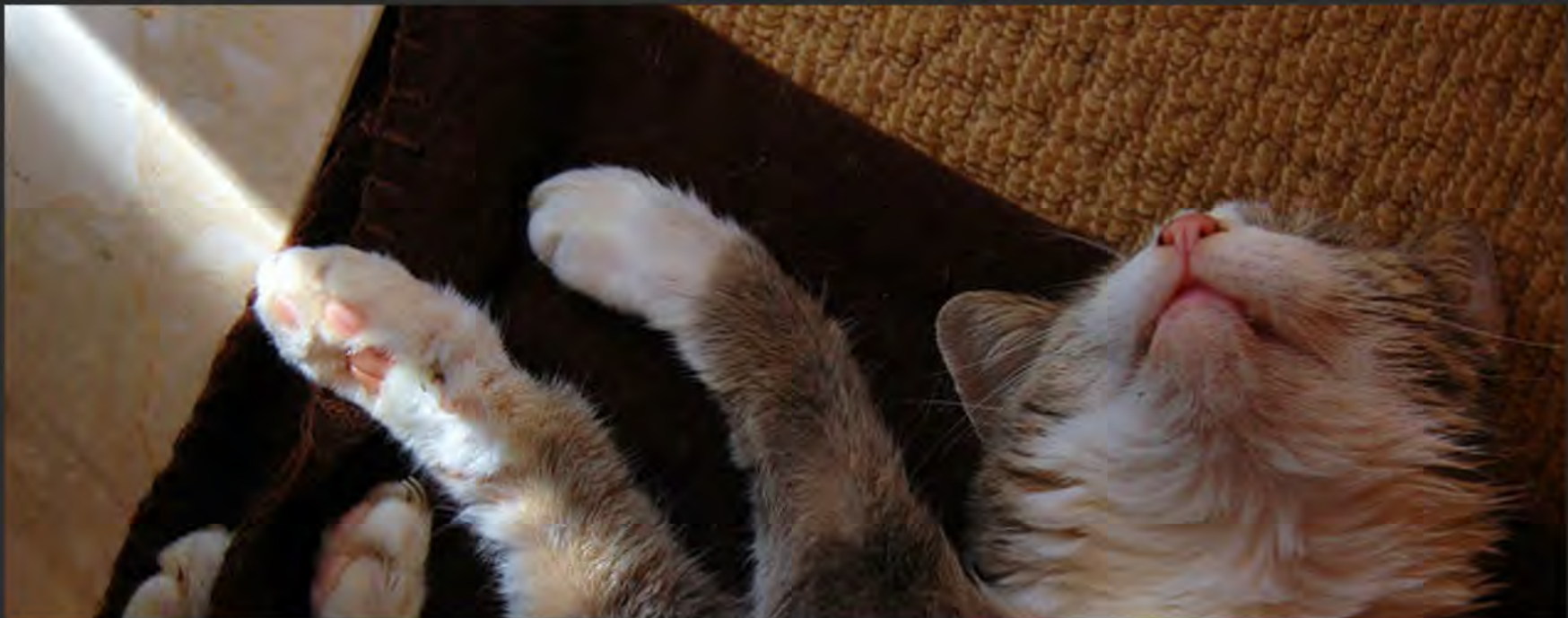
'Dead people don't reoffend'

Assumes no particular cohort is unfairly targeted

Noone knows what recidivism measures

Doesn't measure incremental improvements

And so on and so on and so on ...



# Vocational outcomes

- Prisoners are less likely to have finished high school, let alone year 12
- 2 to 5 times more likely to have mental illness
- Low literacy levels
- Stigma of a criminal record
- 6.3% unemployment (highest since 2002)
- 14.22% for 15 to 24 year-olds



Reducing recidivism is not  
just about getting a job





And back to recidivism ...





# Education and recidivism

13% reduction in  
recidivism rates  
when participating  
in education - any  
education

But here?



## In Western Australia ...



Cumulative results: Years of release:	All Prisoners	Aboriginal Prisoners (only)	Female Prisoners (only)	All Prisoners Voc. education (only)
2010, 2011 2012, 2013 2014	*All Subject Areas	*All Subject Areas	*All Subject Areas	
<b>5 year avg. reduced % of return to prison by prisoners with 5 or more unit completions vs. those with 0</b>	<b>13.21%</b>	<b>12.17%</b>	<b>12.23 %</b>	<b>14.28 %</b>

# Take a moment



# In any correctional centre



Why do we keep looking ...



# A particular challenge

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration rates
- 3% of the population and 27% of the incarcerated population
- Overrepresented at every level of the criminal justice system





A photograph of a wall with a yellow circle in the center. The wall is divided into two horizontal sections: the top section is black and the bottom section is red. The yellow circle is centered on the boundary between the two sections. The text 'REMEMBER' is written in black, bold, capital letters across the top half of the circle, and 'ME' is written in black, bold, capital letters across the bottom half of the circle. The wall is made of concrete blocks. To the left, a white wall is partially visible. To the right, a wooden fence is visible. The background shows green trees and a blue sky.

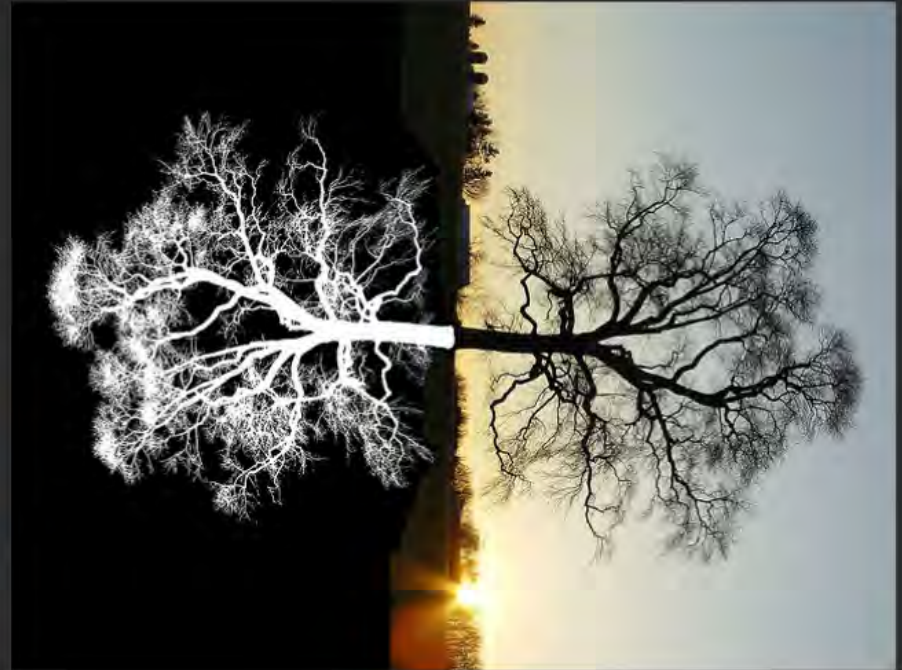
**REMEMBER**

**ME**



## They're not all alike ...

Numerous language groups  
Urban versus rural  
Time since colonization  
Spiritual connection to the land  
Multiple layers of disadvantage  
Significant cultural differences



# Engaging with learning ...






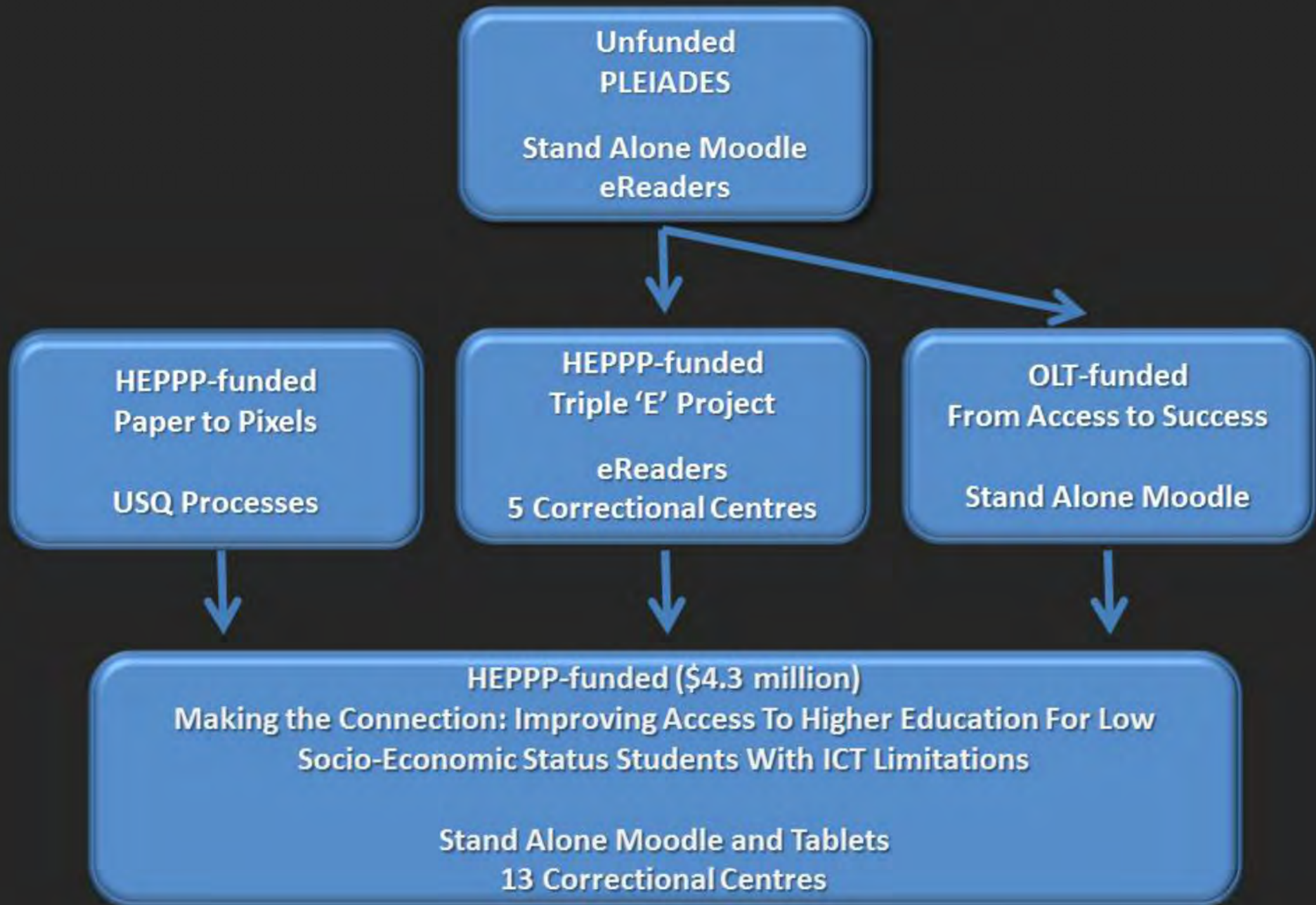
# Back to USQ ...

\$6 million in projects over 5 years

## **Our vision:**

We promise to partner with learners in the pursuit of their study objectives regardless of their background, location or stage in life.





**Unfunded  
PLEIADES**

**Stand Alone Moodle  
eReaders**

**HEPPP-funded  
Paper to Pixels**

**USQ Processes**

**HEPPP-funded  
Triple 'E' Project**

**eReaders**

**5 Correctional Centres**

**OLT-funded  
From Access to Success**

**Stand Alone Moodle**

**HEPPP-funded (\$4.3 million)**

**Making the Connection: Improving Access To Higher Education For Low  
Socio-Economic Status Students With ICT Limitations**

**Stand Alone Moodle and Tablets**

**13 Correctional Centres**

**We'd normally send them paper-based materials ...**

**But universities are  
becoming increasingly online**



# Digital literacies



# Any university's toolbox is the Learning Management System



USQ Study Desk (Moodle)



# Making the Connection



**Improving Access to Higher Education  
for Low Socio-Economic Status  
Students with ICT Limitations**

# What we're doing ...

USQ Offline Study Desk  
Personal devices  
Correctional centres



# We're modifying courses and programs

Tertiary Preparation Program

Indigenous Higher Education Pathways Program

Diploma of Science

Diploma of Business Principles

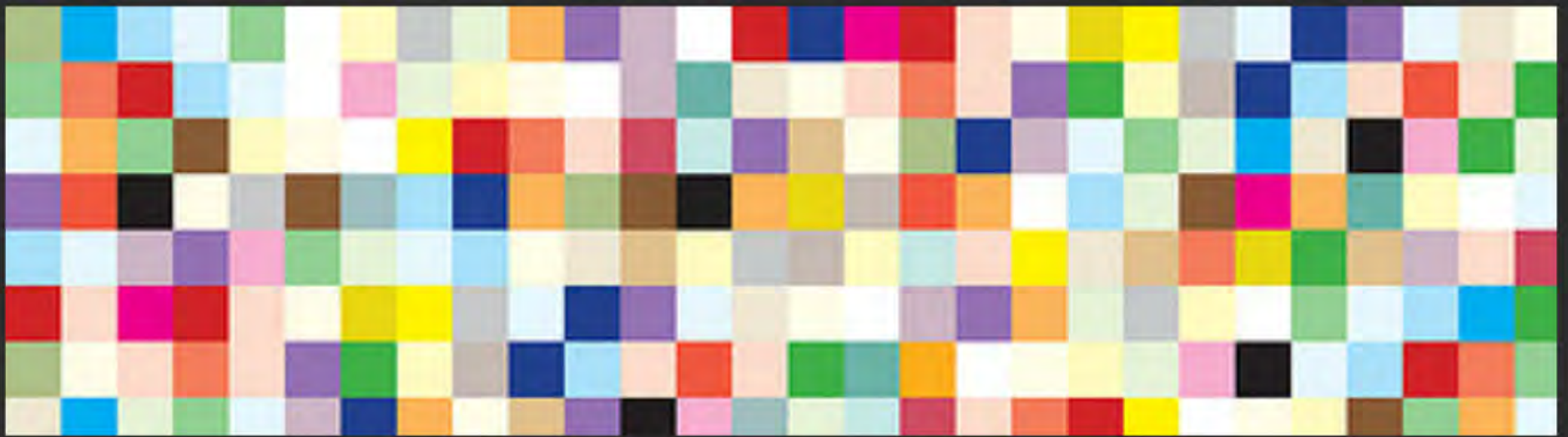
Diploma of Community Welfare



# Engaging with community ...



# Paper to Pixels





H O

P

E

# All photos from Flickr ...

Wired by strakt7

Thank You by Nate Grigg

Not 365:63 - Fake rage by Hilde Skjølberg

Cat nap by Duncan Harris

Authorised Traffic Controller by Dushan Hanuska

.. and me behind the eight ball by Zacha

Brilliant Flag by Mark's Postcards from Beloit

Black swan by David Elliott

paws by Judy van der Velden

The essence of the beautiful is unity in variety. by

Kate Ter Haar

"Dodged" A Bullet by John Spade

Aboriginal Flag painted on wall, Apperley St,

Fitzroy North, Melbourne by David Jackmanson

the difference engine by Zach Stern

Despondent homeless - Street art in Newtown,

Sydney by Neerav Bhatt

Illuminated Paper Blowing in the Wind by

mymodernment

Handy Man by Ryan Hyde

Hope by moonty

Community ..... by Kamaljith K V



**Thank you ...**



**Helen Farley**

***Email: [helen.farley@usq.edu.au](mailto:helen.farley@usq.edu.au)***

***Ph: 0401 878 880***