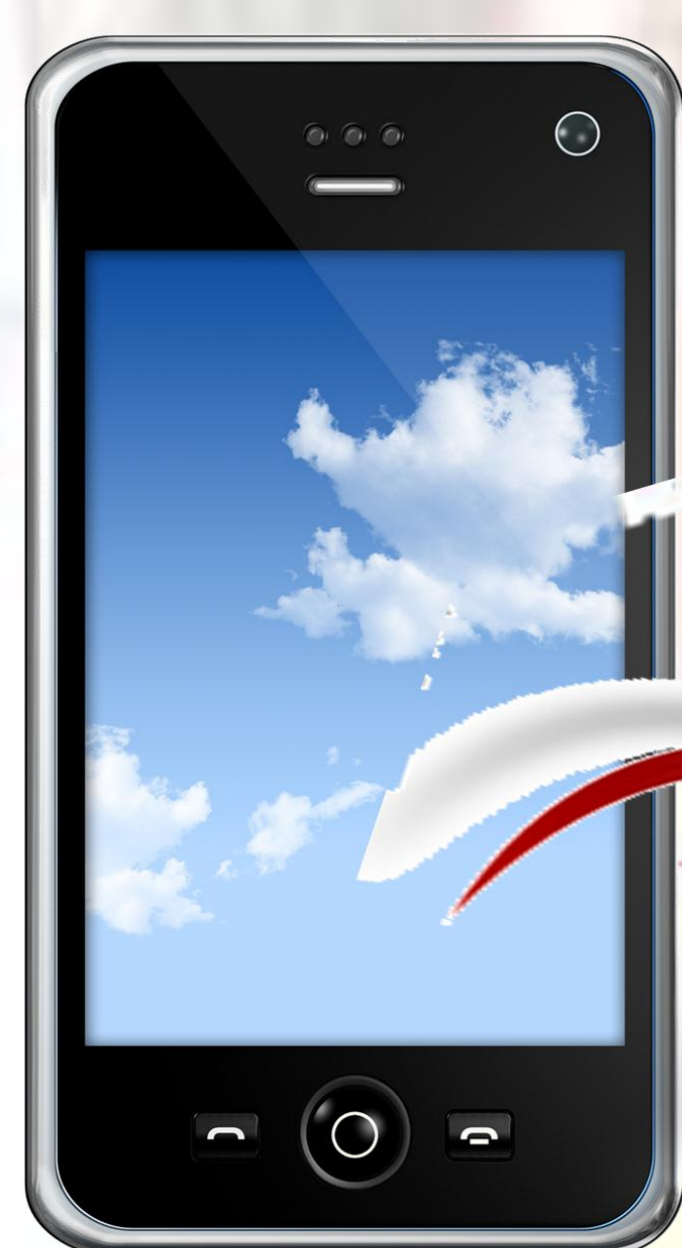


## It's Mobile, But Is It Learning?

The field of mobile learning is becoming more capable of supporting high quality learning experiences and students are increasingly demanding greater mobility and flexibility.

As a result, Higher Education Institutions are increasingly considering the implementation of institutional m-learning strategies.

Higher education stands on the edge of a great precipice of change – change brought about by mobile technology  
(Engel, Palloff & Pratt, 2011)



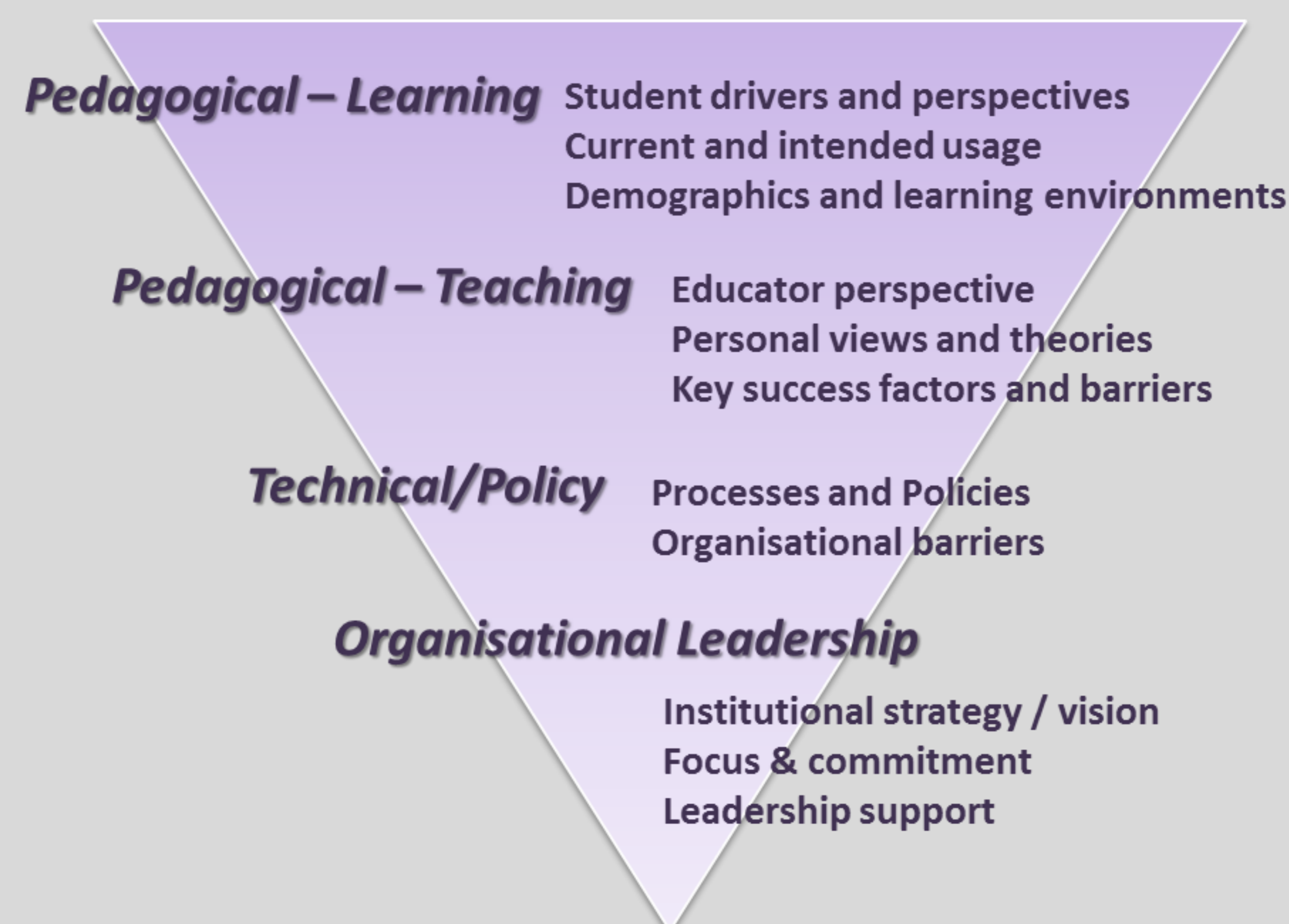
The following trends have motivated this project:

- The m-learning community is faced with broader **challenges of scale and embedding**, yet traditional evaluation techniques are no longer satisfactory to meet the needs of new constituencies of mobile learners (Traxler, 2009).
- Evaluation of the impact of m-learning on learning processes and outcomes is **difficult due to the challenges posed by attempting to research mobile and distributed students across multiple informal and formal learning contexts**, with consideration of learner privacy, yet still obtaining an understanding of the full lifecycle of the m-learning innovation (Vavoula & Sharples, 2009).
- Technology has resulted in a unique set of teaching and learning principles and curriculum requirements, and therefore the **simple adaption of standard education evaluation methods is not sufficient to capture the multiple facets of m-learning** (Quinton et al., 2011).

How would you define mobile learning?



Four levels within Higher Education Institutions will form the focus of the study with the primary emphasis on the pedagogical (learning and teaching) levels



## Project Overview

The aim of this project is to develop a framework for mobile learning that will enable Higher Education institutions, learning designers and educators to evaluate the impact and sustainability of m-learning initiatives within a range of learning contexts.

The Mobile Learning Evaluation Framework (MLEF) will be developed to facilitate and support Higher Education institutions in the assessment, development and embedding of m-learning policies and/or practices to enhance the learning experiences of students and support long-term planning for improved learner and institutional outcomes.

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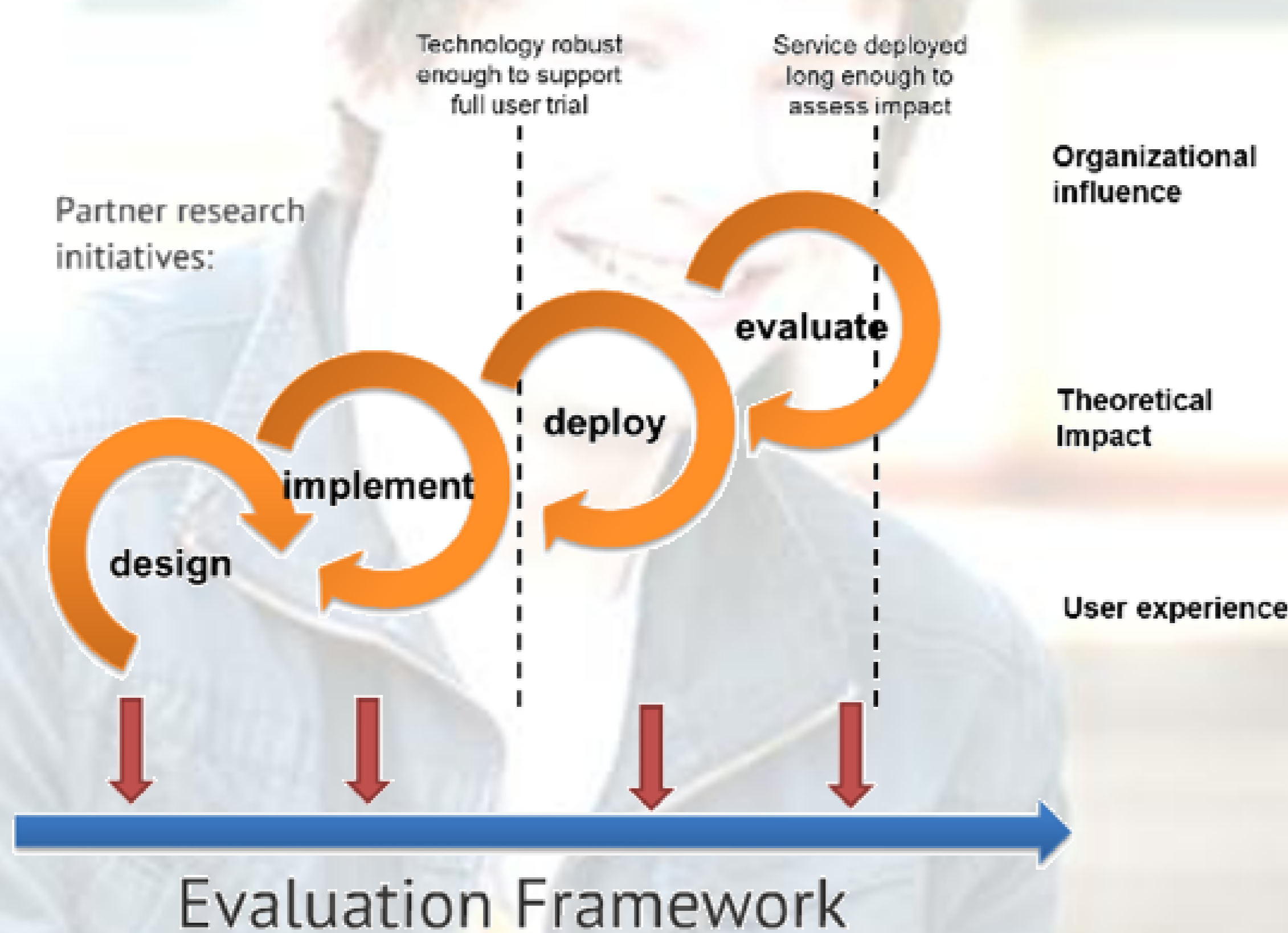
## Approach

The focus of the project is on building an evaluation model that is **sufficiently flexible** to accommodate **the current and future needs** of students and educators for m-learning initiatives.

For this reason an iterative approach will be used to ensure that each commencing stage is built from the insights obtained in the previous stage and allow the inclusion of new insights and innovations in the field as the research project matures.

The framework will be independent of specific technologies and therefore will remain relevant despite the emergence of new devices.

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) methods will be used as the project involves the development of artefacts, such as the toolkit, which are aimed at being responsive and relevant to the needs of the education community.



The m-learning evaluation toolkit will consist of the following components:

- **A conceptual evaluation framework and evaluation resources** consisting of a set of evaluation criteria and standardised assessment instruments as well as checklists, guidelines and step-by-step tutorials for the evaluation of m-learning initiatives within various contexts;
- **An m-learning maturity model** that will enable Higher Education institutions to assess the maturity of their m-learning capabilities and provide best practice recommendations for policy development and institution-wide co-ordination and communication;
- **A database of m-learning exemplars** in the form of case studies and resources that have been demonstrated to contribute to high quality learning experiences; and
- **A mobile user model** consisting of normative data compiled from the research component of the study that provides insight into the context, background, needs and learning styles of students and enables



## Outputs and Deliverables

The primary deliverable of the study will be an online m-learning evaluation toolkit that will provide a set of procedures, guiding principles, methods and examples to be used by Higher Education institutions and educators when evaluating m-learning initiatives for inclusion in policy and practice.

## Project team

**Research Fellow:** Angela Murphy (USQ)

**PhD candidates:** Sharon Rees, Maxine Mitchell (USQ)

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Mobile phone ownership by country

