

Shining a light with institutional data



**Who holds the
torch?**

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Do you feel lucky?

If scholarly analysis is not properly resourced, the institution is playing Russian roulette with outcomes of research.

This is the first and foundational tier of Terenzini's (1993) model of organisational learning.

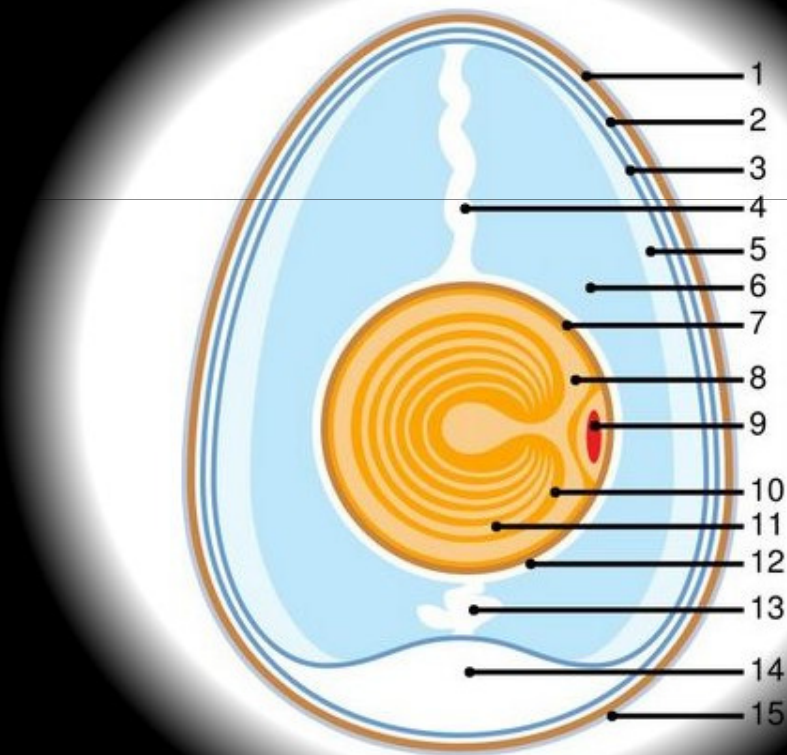


Training on how to suck eggs?

Faculty can be:

a source of information through
formal research and
informal knowledge;

an audience who can
discuss and disseminate
results.



Let the people decide

Faculty can be:

users of information;

providers of expert analysts
who can process and
disseminate findings.



My torch is better than your torch

Acknowledgement that the researcher does not hold exclusive access to truth entails openness about interpretation and the involvement of those at the 'chalk face'.

Acknowledgement of the complex nature of truth leads to a greater challenge to interpretation and, through that, more robust conclusions.



The elephant in the room

"We exist only because someone finds our work valuable.

We are not paying people.

We are not registering students.

We are not paying the bills.

We are not cleaning the
offices.

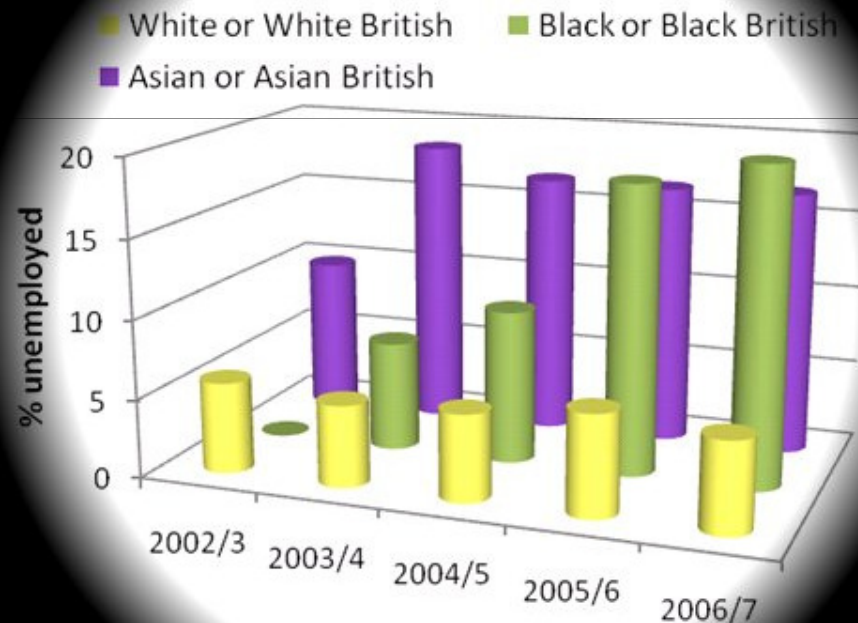
Our analytical work must
be of a measure that
people find valuable, or we
don't exist."

Head of institutional research unit
(Knight 2006)



Reflections 1 - Graduate destinations survey

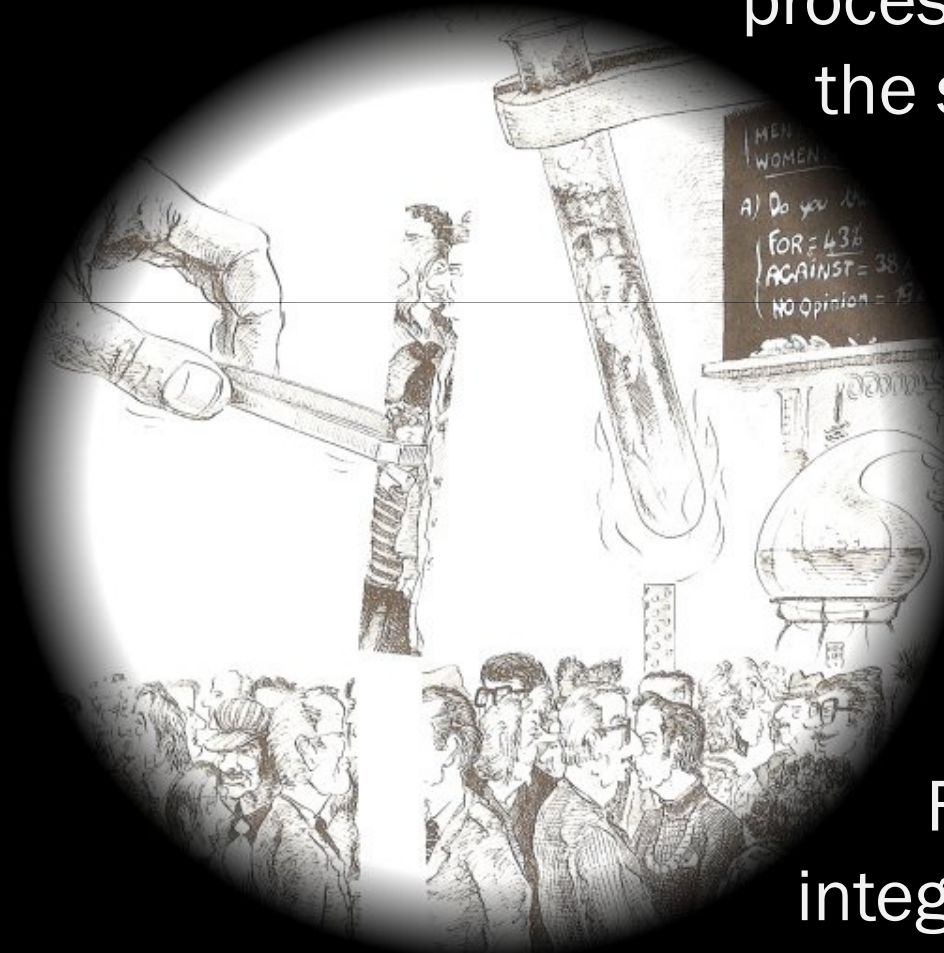
There is a stark difference between a "common sense" interpretation of the graph, and one informed by literature and statistical analysis.



Local and institutional context, both formal research and informal knowledge held by faculty staff, is vital to the proper understanding of data.

Reflections 2 - A new internal survey

We have incorporated these good practices in the process of designing and running the student engagement survey.



Mixture of quantitative and qualitative results.

Results used to generate discussion with faculty.

Further investigation an integral part of the process.

Who holds the torch?

"Processes that encourage the folding together of many points of view may be more useful than processes that allow ideas to be considered in more linear or isolated ways.



Success seems to flow not from proceeding from one clearly defined concept or decision to the next but from continual, though not always straightforward, progress toward outcomes many help to form."

(Frost 1998)

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Research in Higher Education. Volume 34, Number 1