

Learning analytics in a time of an insatiable thirst for data and evidence: A provocation



By Paul Prinsloo
(*University of South Africa*)

 @14prinsp

Public lecture, 22 November, 2017 - International Seminar "*Evidence-based research: methodological approaches and practical outcomes*" hosted by the UNESCO Chair in Education and Technology for Social Change at the Open University of Catalonia, Spain

Acknowledgements

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Open Public Session Lecture: Will the future of higher education be evidence-based?

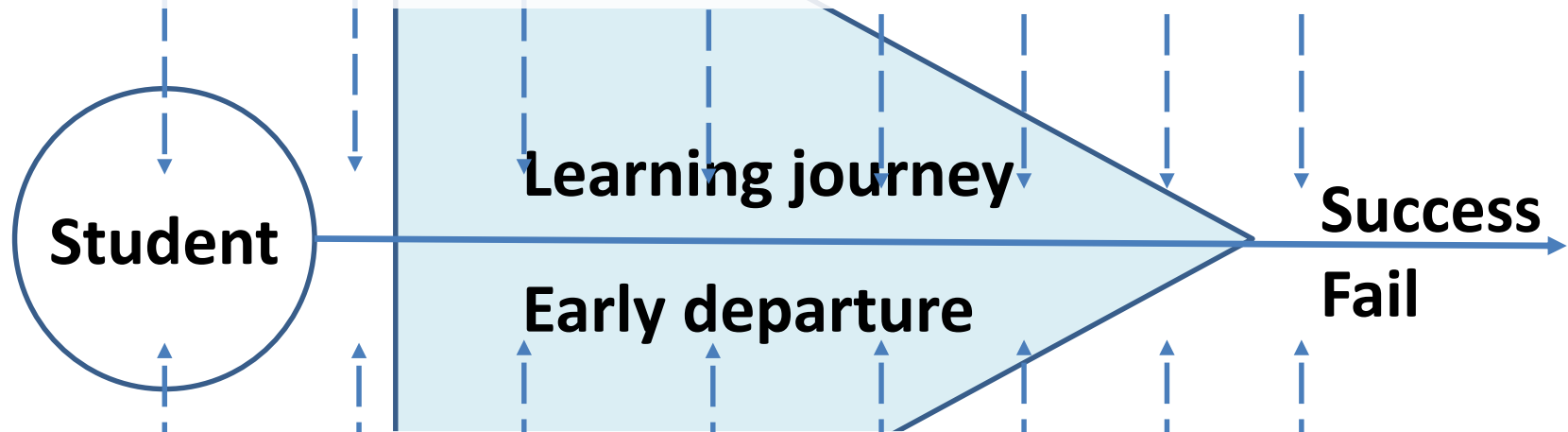


Image credit: <http://www.basicknowledge101.com/subjects/reality.html>

Some (more?) important questions to ask are...

- **Why** is there a need for evidence? (e.g. efficiency, transparency, accountability?)
- **Who** will define what counts as evidence and *what is not regarded as evidence*? (e.g. the role of gatekeepers, those who formulate criteria and standards; quantitative/qualitative data)
- Who will **verify** the evidence as **valid** and **appropriate** for the **purpose** for and **context** in which it was collected?
- **Who** will use the evidence and for what purpose?
- What is the relationship between **data**, **evidence**, **intelligence**, **knowledge** and **wisdom**?
- **And finally, how do these questions impact the collection, analysis and use student data?**

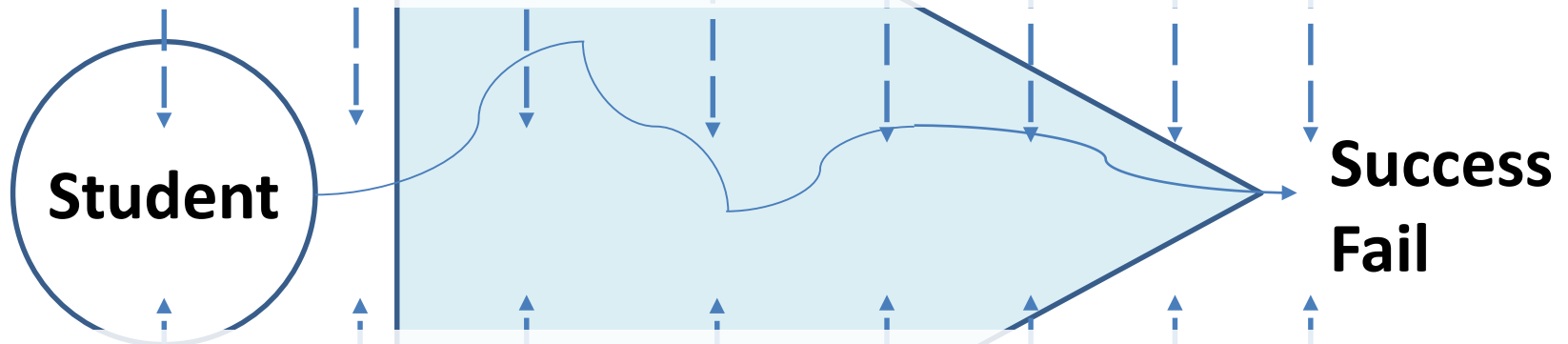
Mapping the collection, analysis and use of student demographic and learning data to inform/support pedagogy and learning



- What happened/is happening – **descriptive** analytics
- Why did it happen/is it happening – **diagnostic** analytics
- What will happen – **predictive** analytics
- How can we make it happen – **prescriptive** analytics

What data do we need to describe, understand, predict and prescribe the learning journey?

What data do we **already** have, in which formats, for what purposes, where are the data stored and governed by who?



What data don't we have and that we need to describe, understand, predict and prescribe the learning journey?

What are our **assumptions** about learning, and data-as-evidence?

What data do **students** need to make better informed choices and to take ownership of their learning journey?

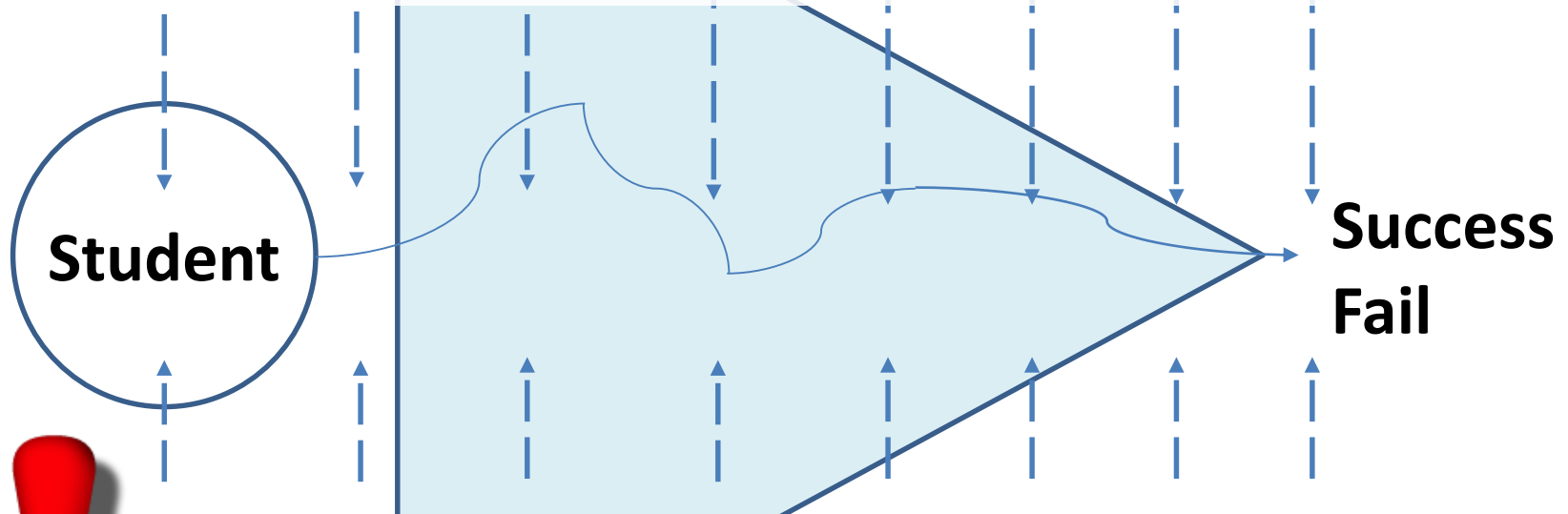
(Re)considering learning analytics:



Learning analytics

- defines ‘learning’, ‘progression’ and ‘(dis)engagement’;
- decides samples, what data to collect (and when), what to use as proxies and what data to ignore;
- who will/ how to interpret the analyses and findings;
- decides what findings to share with whom as well as choosing methods of dissemination (e.g. dashboards, early alerts, etc.)

Our understanding of learning analytics as process of collecting evidence and measuring/increasing success and efficiency is shaped by...



... how we understand and describe students and learning

Students as broken and sick...

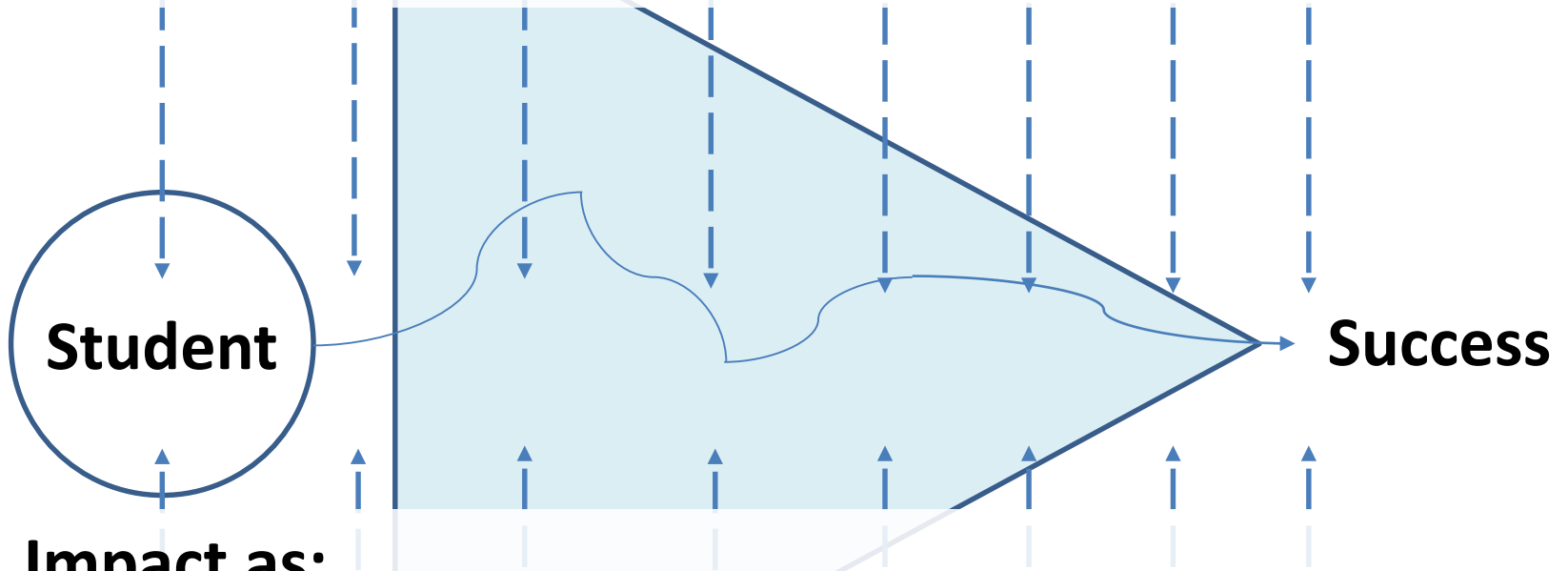
“Focused hospitals are built around a very specific value-adding process activity: They take incomplete or broken parts and then transform them into more complete outputs of higher value while charging a fee for the outcome.”

Source credit: <https://www.edsurge.com/amp/news/2017-11-13-what-can-higher-ed-learn-from-precision-medicine>



Image credit: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:I_Dont_Know_What_to_Call_This..._\(8455760157\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:I_Dont_Know_What_to_Call_This..._(8455760157).jpg)

How will we know that learning analytics is having a positive *impact*?



Impact as:

- More successful/satisfied students?
- More effective and appropriate teaching?
- Better allocation/utilisation of resources?



Retrieved from

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/245d/03eb70a6ad06314257d997f570b1a71ab4cc.pdf>

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Where is the evidence? A call to action for learning analytics

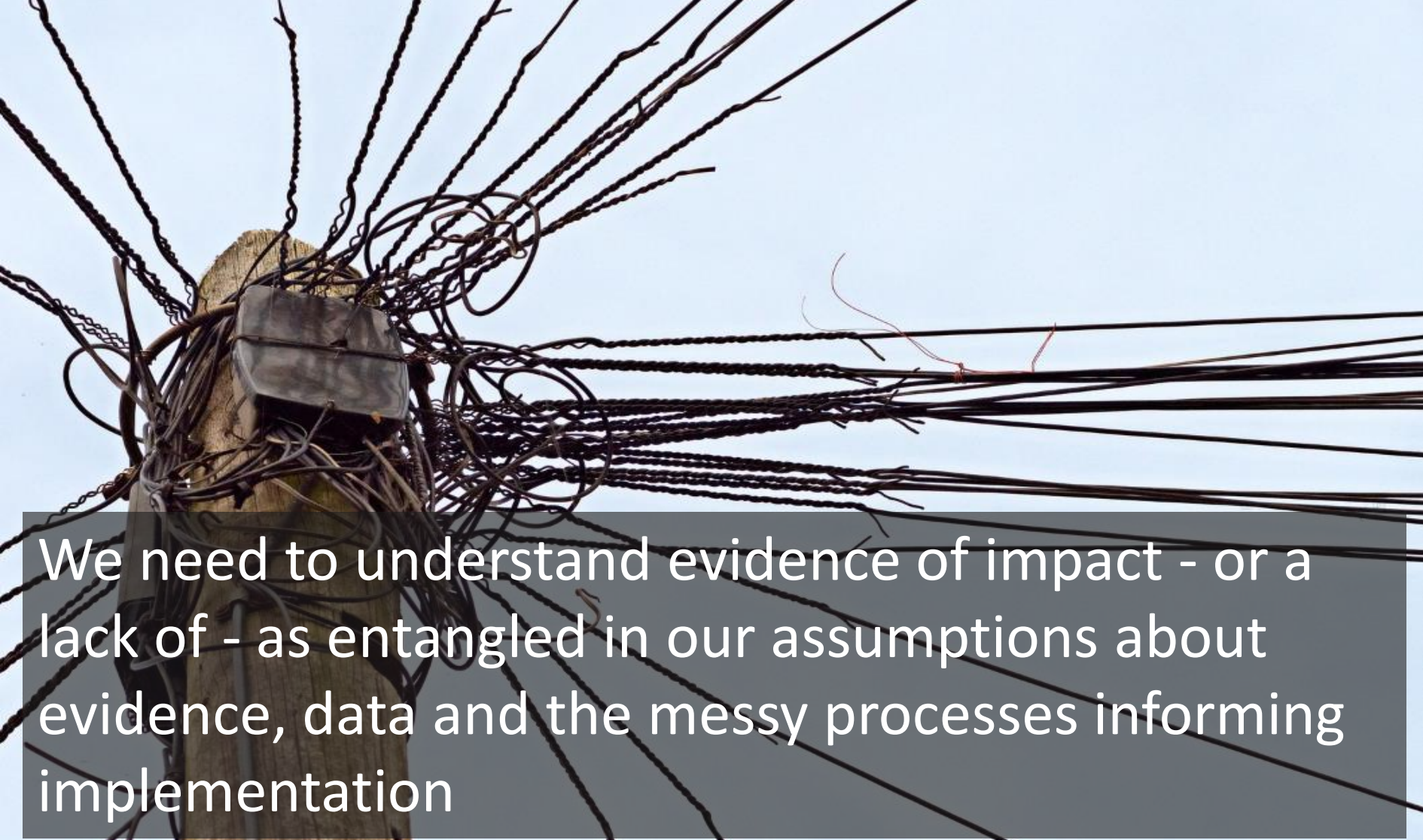
Conference Item

How to cite:

Ferguson, Rebecca and Clow, Doug (2017). Where is the evidence? A call to action for learning analytics. In: LAK '17 Proceedings of the Seventh International Learning Analytics & Knowledge Conference, ACM International Conference Proceeding Series, ACM, New York, USA, pp. 56-65.



Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/en/boy-child-sad-alone-sit-1636731/>



We need to understand evidence of impact - or a lack of - as entangled in our assumptions about evidence, data and the messy processes informing implementation

Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/en/telephone-telegraph-pole-wire-1822040/>

A close-up photograph of chess pieces on a wooden board. A white king is in the foreground, with other pieces like a black king and a white pawn visible in the background.

Contested

Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/en/checkmate-chess-resignation-1511866>

A black and white photograph of a statue of a man, possibly a historical figure, in the foreground. In the background, the dome of the United States Capitol building is visible.

Political

Image credit: https://pixabay.com/p-584751/?no_redirect

A photograph of a large construction site. Several yellow cranes are visible, and the building under construction is heavily scaffolded. The sky is blue with many birds flying.

Evidence is...

Incomplete

Image credit: https://pixabay.com/p-768815/?no_redirect

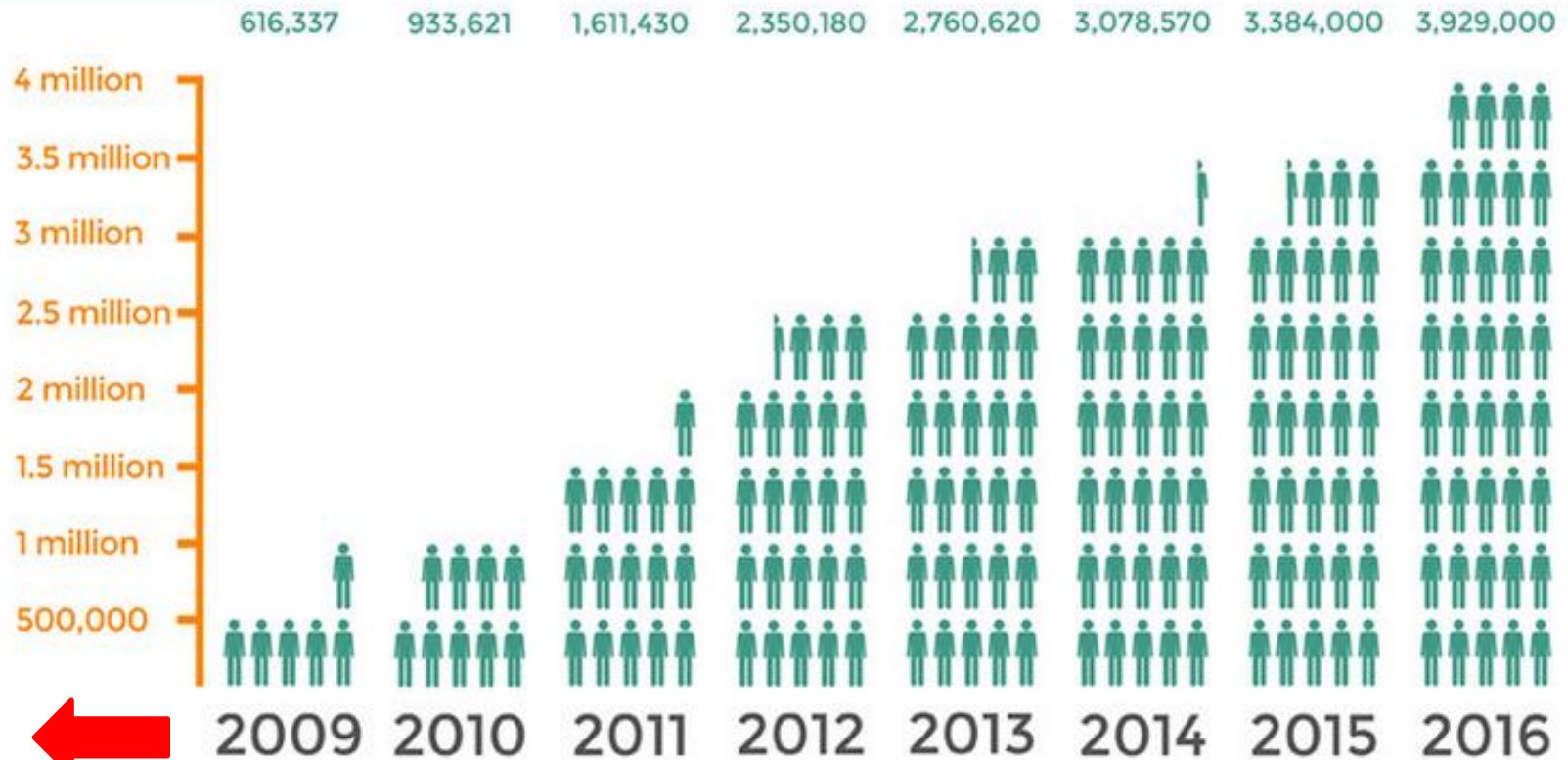
A photograph of several stacked cardboard boxes. The most prominent box is brown and has the word 'FRAGILE' and 'EGGS' printed on it in large green letters, along with 'HANDLE WITH CARE'. There are also smaller boxes with 'THIS SIDE UP' and '4-1 Gallon' printed on them.

FRAGILE ↑ EGGS ↑ HANDLE WITH CARE

Fragile

Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/paulk/6881580862>

Antiretroviral program (ART) in South Africa: Number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment



AVERT.org Source: UNAIDS (2016) 'AIDSinfo'

Source credit: <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/south-africa>



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Mbeki Aids denial 'caused 300,000 deaths'

South African president's refusal to accept medical evidence of virus was major obstacle to providing medicine, say Harvard researchers

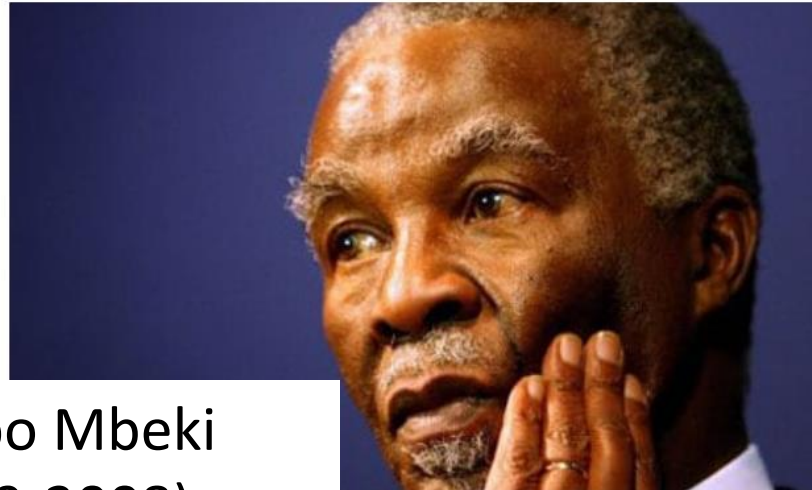


This article is 8 years old

1704

Sarah Boseley, health editor

Wednesday 26 November 2008 15:33 GMT



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2008

Most popular



Robert Mugabe's grip on Zimbabwe ebbing away after military takes control



Leonardo da Vinci painting sells for \$450m at auction, smashing records



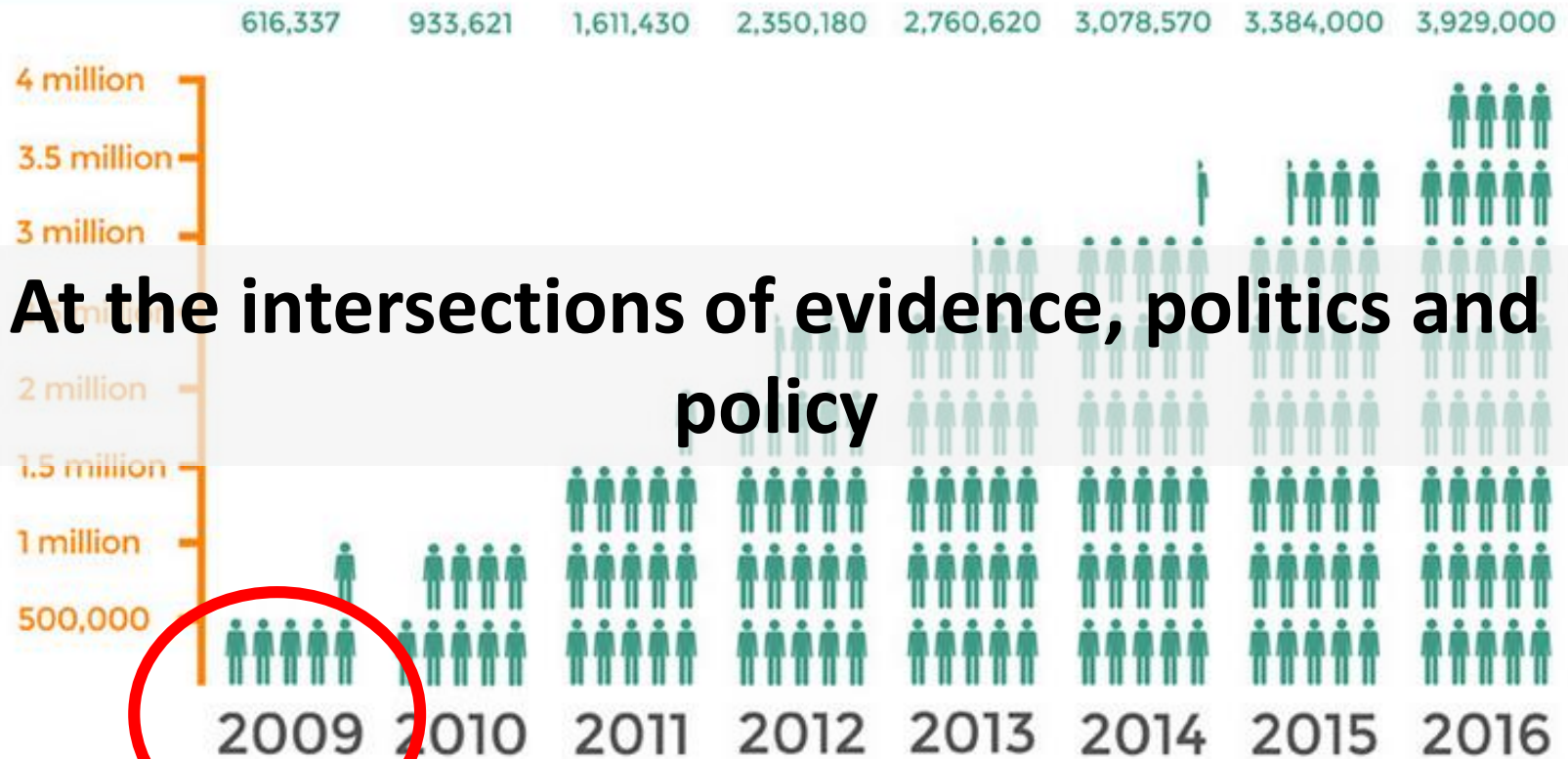
Tactical error leaves weakened Mugabe facing end of an era



Grace Mugabe: the rags to riches rise and fall of 'Gucci Grace'

Source credit: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/nov/26/aids-south-africa>

Antiretroviral program (ART) in South Africa: Number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment

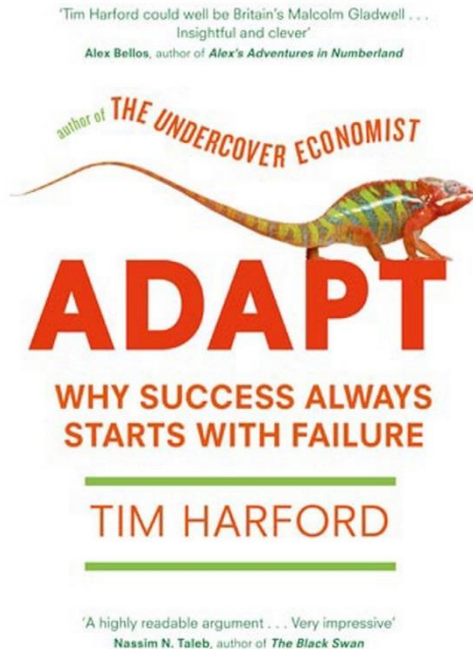


At the intersections of evidence, politics and policy

AVERT.org Source: UNAIDS (2016) 'AIDSinfo'

Source credit: <https://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world/sub-saharan-africa/south-africa>

Example 2: At the intersections of politics and evidence



Source credit:
<https://www.amazon.com/Adapt-Success-Always-Starts-Failure/dp/1250007550>

Problem: Russia 20th century – we need more sustainable water supply

Stalin:

What is the problem? Do research. Propose an evidence-based plan

Palchinsky:

Smaller dams will be more effective

Stalin:

I want to build the world largest hydroelectric dam

Stalin 1, Palchinsky, 0

Outcome: Massive costs, 100,000 people displaced

Example 3: At the intersections of evidence and Zeitgeist

HEADLINES >

[November 16, 2017] Donna Brazile To Testify In Seth Rich Murder Lawsuit ▶ NEWS

30 Solid Scientific Studies That Prove Vaccines Cause Autism

December 9, 2015 Sean Adl-Tabatabai Health 41

We have compiled a list of 30 scientific studies that show a link between vaccines and autism, disproving the myth that no official research papers exist to support what alternative doctors have been saying for years.



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Source credit: <http://yournewswire.com/30-solid-scientific-studies-that-prove-vaccines-cause-autism/>

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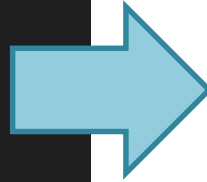
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NEWS

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LEAD *STORIES*

Hoax Alert

Fake News Website YourNewsWire Renames Itself As NewsPunch


by: [Maarten Schenk](#) 3 months ago (Tue, 22 Aug 2017 10:06:32 Z)

As of a few hours ago all links to articles on the notorious fake news website [yournewswire.com](#) seem to be getting redirected to [newspunch.com](#). The move has not been officially announced on the site as far as we can tell. It seems likely the move is an effort to dodge various fake news filters on social media and in search engines by swapping a 'burned' domain name for a (pre-aged) untainted one.

If you search Google for "[yournewswire.com](#)" several of the top results indicate the site is fake news (having [your own dedicated category](#) on Snopes.com is a dead giveaway):

Fake News Website YourNewsWire Renames Itself As NewsPunch

by: [Maarten Schenk](#)  3 months ago (Tue, 22 Aug 2017 10:06:32 Z)



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Source credit: <https://hoax-alert.leadstories.com/3468724-fake-news-website-yournewswire-renames-itself-as-newspunch.html>

A close-up photograph of chess pieces on a wooden board. A white king is in the foreground, with other pieces like a black king and a white pawn visible in the background.

Contested

Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/en/checkmate-chess-resignation-1511866>

A black and white photograph showing a statue of a man in the foreground, looking thoughtful with his hand to his chin. In the background, the dome of the United States Capitol building is visible.

Political

Image credit: https://pixabay.com/p-534751/?no_redirect

A photograph of a large construction site. Several yellow cranes are visible against a blue sky filled with many birds. The building under construction is heavily scaffolded.

Incomplete

Image credit: https://pixabay.com/p-768815/?no_redirect

A photograph of several stacked cardboard boxes. The most prominent box has the word 'FRAGILE' at the top, '↑ EGGS ↑' in large green letters in the middle, and 'HANDLE WITH CARE' at the bottom. Other boxes have labels like 'THIS SIDE UP' and '4-1 Gallon'.

Fragile


Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/paulk/6881580862>

A close-up photograph of chess pieces on a wooden board. A white king is in the foreground, with other pieces like a black king and a white pawn visible in the background.

Contested

A black and white photograph of a statue of a man, likely a historical figure, with his hand to his face in a thoughtful pose. In the background, the dome of the United States Capitol building is visible.

Political

A small inset image showing a flock of birds flying against a clear blue sky.

How does learning analytics
define, produce and use
'evidence'?

A photograph of a large building under construction, completely encased in a complex network of metal scaffolding. Several yellow cranes are visible against the sky.

Incomplete

A photograph of several stacked cardboard boxes in a warehouse or storage area. One box prominently displays the text "HANDLE WITH CARE" in green letters. Another box has a red arrow pointing up with the words "SIDE UP".

Fragile

2012

Learning Analytics: The New Black

by Melanie Booth  Wednesday, July 18, 2012 **New Horizons**  In Print  PDF

New Horizons [The Technologies Ahead]

Melanie Booth is Dean, Learning & Assessment, at Marylhurst University.

Learning analytics is the "measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimising learning and the environments in which it occurs," according to the 1st International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge.¹ The *NMC Horizon Report: 2012 Higher Education Edition* notes that this promising set of practices and tools aims to "harness the power of advances in data mining, interpretation, and modeling to improve understandings of teaching and learning, and to tailor education to individual students more effectively."² Finally, George Siemens and Phil Long have even proposed that learning analytics should ultimately be focused on disruption and transformation in education, changing the very nature of teaching, learning, and assessment as we know it.³

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2015

ECAR

The Predictive Learning Analytics Revolution: Leveraging Learning Data for Student Success


🕒 Tuesday, October 6, 2015 | Briefs, Case Studies, Papers, Reports

👤 **Author(s):** Sakinah Alhadad, Kimberly Arnold, Josh Baron, Ilana Bayer, Christopher Brooks, Russ Little, Rosemary Rocchio, Shady Shehata, John Whitmer

📁 **Sources(s):** EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR)
Collection(s): ECAR Working Group

📌 **Academic Information Systems, Analytics, Data Administration and Management, Data Mining, Learning Analytics, Learning Management Systems (LMS), Student Information Systems, Student Learning Support, Student Success**

Page credit: <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2015/10/the-predictive-learning-analytics-revolution-leveraging-learning-data-for-student-success>



Anne Boyer
and
Geoffray Bonnin

People management ©opensource.com via Flickr

Higher Education and the Revolution of Learning Analytics

2016

Page credit: https://icde.memberclicks.net/assets/RESOURCES/anne_la_report%20cc%20licence.pdf

Postsecondary Learning

Higher Education

Stanford Calls for Responsible Use of Student Data in Higher Ed

6 October 2016

By **Krysten Crawford** Oct 6, 2016



Page credit: <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2016-10-06-stanford-calls-for-responsible-use-of-student-data-in-higher-ed>

From High School to Harvard, Students Urge for Clarity on Privacy Rights

By **Jenny Abamu** Jun 13, 2017



Page credit: https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-06-13-from-high-school-to-harvard-students-urge-for-clarity-on-privacy-rights?utm_content=buffer8dd71&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer



LEARNING & TECH

The Higher Ed Learning Revolution: Tracking Each Student's Every Move

January 11, 2017 · 6:23 AM ET

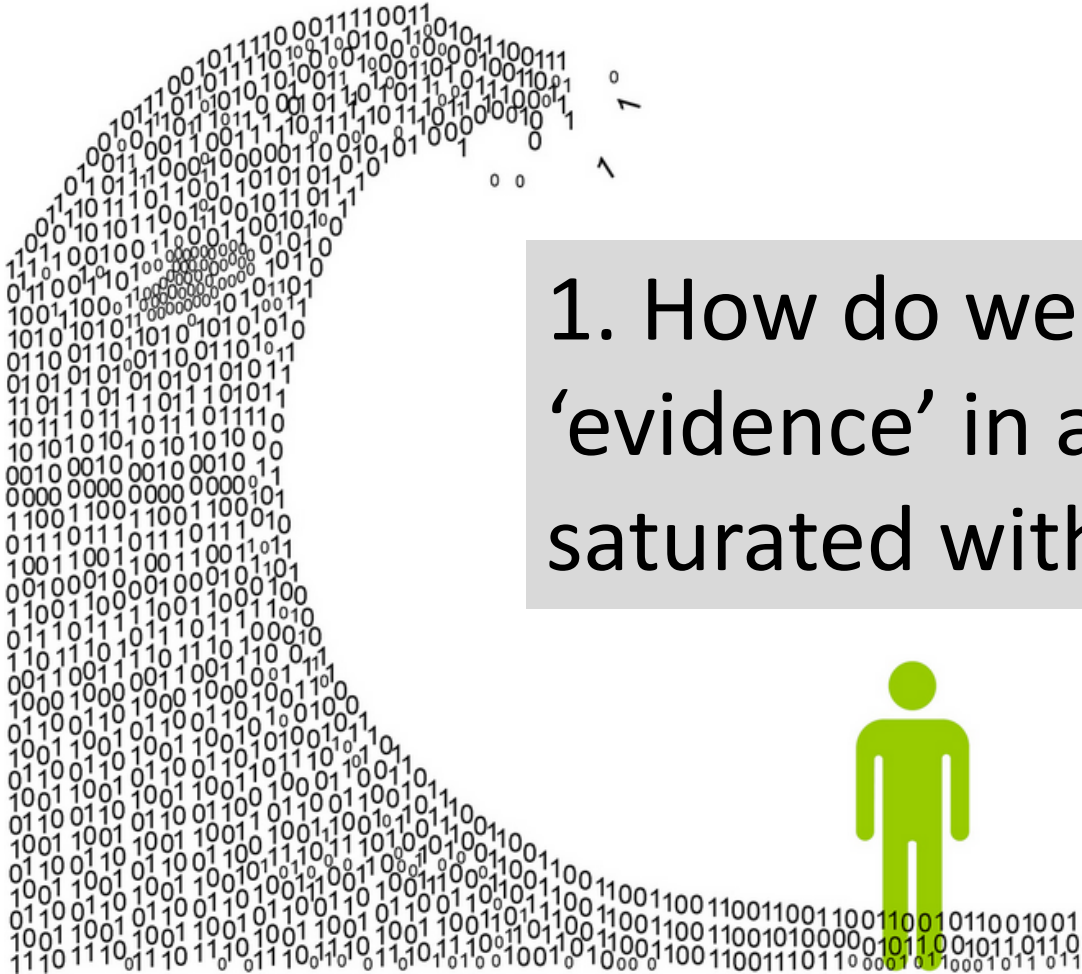


ERIC WESTERVELT



Page credit: <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/01/11/506361845/the-higher-ed-learning-revolution-tracking-each-students-every-move>

Eight provocations for thinking about 'evidence'



1. How do we think about 'evidence' in a world saturated with information?

Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/intersectionconsulting/7537238368>

“Our problem is keeping up with, sorting out, absorbing, prioritising, and using information. Our technological capacity for gathering and computerising information far exceeds our human ability to process and make sense of it all. We’re constantly faced with deciding what’s worth knowing and what to ignore”

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*. [4th edition]. London, UK: Sage publications, p.5

2. How do we think about 'evidence' in a world of 'fake' news', myths, alternative facts, and post-truths?



Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/freepress/6641427981>

SundayReview | EDITORIAL

President Trump's War on Science

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD SEPT. 9, 2017



“This is a president who has never shown much fidelity to facts, unless they are his own alternative ones.”

Site credit: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/09/opinion/sunday/trump-epa-pruitt-science.html>

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Source credit: <http://www.educationalneuroscience.org.uk/neuromyth-or-neurofact/>



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Science and Society

Neuroscience and education: myths and messages

Paul A. Howard-Jones

Source credit: https://www.nature.com/articles/nrn3817?WT.ec_id=NRN-201412/

CHRISTIAN JARRETT SCIENCE 01.05.15 12:53 PM

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE 'LEARNING STYLES' MYTH, IN TWO MINUTES

MOS POP



Source credit: <https://www.wired.com/2015/01/need-know-learning-styles-myth-two-minutes/>

3. How do we think about 'evidence' in a world where 'knowing' is distorted and manipulated to create biased and distorted findings?

salon

Bush knew Saddam had no weapons of mass destruction

Salon exclusive: Two former CIA officers say the president squelched top-secret intelligence, and a briefing by George Tenet, months before invading Iraq.

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

09.06.2007 • 1:16 PM

Source credit: https://www.salon.com/2007/09/06/bush_wmd/

4. How do we think about 'evidence' in a world where 'what we know' is increasingly determined by the algorithms and automated agents on Google, Amazon and Facebook?



André Staltz

THE WEB BEGAN DYING IN 2014, HERE'S HOW

30 OCT 2017

Before the year 2014, there were many people using Google, Facebook, and Amazon. Today, there are still many people using services from those three tech giants (respectively, GOOG, FB, AMZN). Not much has changed, and quite literally the user interface and features on those sites has remained mostly untouched. However, the underlying dynamics of power on the Web have drastically changed, and those three

It looks like nothing changed since 2014, but GOOG and FB now have direct influence over 70%+ of internet traffic.

Source credit: <https://staltz.com/the-web-began-dying-in-2014-heres-how.html>

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The Automated Public Sphere ☆

U of Maryland Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2017-31

28 Pages • Posted: 10 Nov 2017

[Frank A. Pasquale III](#)

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law; Yale University - Yale Information Society Project

Date Written: November 8, 2017

Abstract

“The promised *Wealth of Networks* has given way to a black box society – one where trolls, bots, and even foreign governments maraud to distort the information environment on Twitter, Facebook, Google News, Reddit, and other networks.”

Source credit: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3067552

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Fleeing from Frankenstein's monster and meeting Kafka on the way: Algorithmic decision-making in higher education

[Paul Prinsloo](#) <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1838-540X>,

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20



Source credit: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2042753017731355>

5. How do we think about 'evidence' in a world where 'knowing' does not mean we **will** act?

Lessons from Rwanda - Lessons for Today - Assessment of the Impact and Influence of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda –

Source: <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/lessons-from-rwanda-lessons-for-today-assessment-of-the-impact-and-influence-of-the>

“... the refusal of international agencies and world leaders to take seriously and use the data they were given” (Patton, 2008, p. 9)

Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfid/3403032782>



+ TRIAGE +

6. How do we engage with 'evidence' in a world where 'knowing' does not mean we have the resources or capacity to respond effectively and appropriately?

Image credit: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wounded_Triage_France_WWI.jpg

7. How do we collect ‘evidence’ in a world where evidence of efficiency/effectiveness does not mean that the intervention was appropriate, moral and/or ethical?

Biesta, G. 2007. Why “what works” won’t work: evidence-based practice and the democratic deficit in educational research, *Educational Theory*, 57(1), 1–22. DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-5446.2006.00241.x.

Biesta, G. 2010. Why ‘what works’ still won’t work: from evidence-based education to value-based education, *Studies in Philosophy of Education*, 29, 491–503. DOI 10.1007/s11217-010-9191-x.

8. How do we present ‘evidence’ in a world where the evidence will only be considered “when a problem is recognized as serious and requiring a new solution; when the policy community develops a financially and technically workable solution; *and when political leaders find it advantageous to approve it*” (El-Khawas, 2000, p. 50; emphasis added)

El-Khawas, E. 2000. Patterns of communication and miscommunication between research and policy. In S. Schwarz & U. Teichler (Eds.), *The institutional basis of higher education research. Experiences and perspectives* (pp. 45-55). London, UK: Kluwer Academic Publishers

“The pursuit of evidence is probably the most pressing moral imperative of our time”

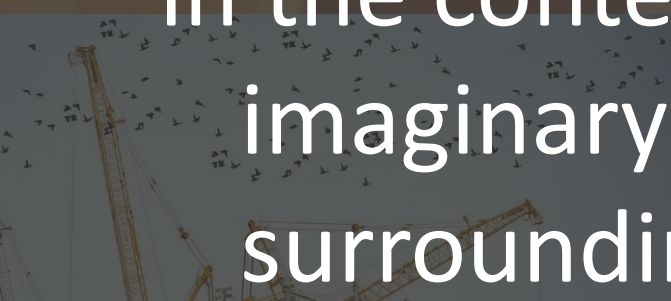
Alice Dreger (2016). *Galileo's middle finger. Heretics, activists, and one scholar's search for justice*. New York, NY: Penguin Books

A close-up photograph of several chess pieces on a wooden board. A white king is in the foreground, with other pieces like a white knight and a black pawn visible in the background.

Contested

A black and white photograph of a statue of a man, possibly a historical figure, with his hand to his face in a thoughtful or distressed pose. In the background, the dome of the United States Capitol building is visible.

Political

A photograph of a construction site featuring several tall cranes and a large structure under construction, partially covered with scaffolding and safety netting.

(Re)considering learning analytics
in the context of the social
imaginary and realities
surrounding 'evidence'

A photograph of a building under construction, completely encased in a dense network of metal scaffolding.

Incomplete

A photograph of several stacked cardboard boxes. One box has a large green arrow pointing up and the text 'HANDLE WITH CARE'. Another box has a red arrow pointing up and the text 'THIS SIDE UP'.

Fragile

1. (Re)considering Evidence-Based Management (EBM)

“Evidence-based education seems to favour a **technocratic** [and quantitative] model in which it is assumed that the only relevant research questions are about the effectiveness of educational means and techniques, forgetting, among other things, that what counts as “effective” crucially depends on judgments about what is educationally desirable” (Biesta, 2007, p. 5)

1. (Re)considering Evidence-Based Management (EBM)

Evidence-based decision making is entangled in/at the intersection of the impatience of policy makers to find quick solutions (in line with their political agendas), stakeholders 'on the ground' and specialists who research the problems

(El-Khawas, 2000)

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

[Explore this journal >](#)

WHY “WHAT WORKS” WON’T WORK: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Gert Biesta

First published: 6 February 2007 [Full publication history](#)

DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-5446.2006.00241.x [View/save citation](#)

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Source credit: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2006.00241.x/full>




[Studies in Philosophy and Education](#)

September 2010, Volume 29, [Issue 5](#), pp 491–503 | [Cite as](#)

Why ‘What Works’ Still Won’t Work: From Evidence-Based Education to Value-Based Education

Authors

[Authors and affiliations](#)

Gert J. J. Biesta 

Article

First Online: 09 July 2010

17

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Source credit: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11217-010-9191-x>

2. (Re)considering Data

We have access to ever **increasing volumes, velocity and variety of student** digital data, that **allows us to expand** not only on the traditional scope of institutional research with regard to student data, but **also to infer relations unthinkable ten years ago**. We may therefore be tempted to rush to look for patterns without considering our own assumptions and epistemologies

Noisy systems with underdeveloped theory – there is a real danger to mistake the noise for a signal, and not realising that the noise pollutes our data with false alarms and “setting back our ability to understand how the system really works” (Silver, 2012, p. 162)

2. (Re)considering Data (2)

Data are not neutral, raw, objective and pre-analytic but framed “technically, economically, ethically, temporally, spatially and philosophically. Data do not exist independently of the ideas, instruments, practices, contexts and knowledges used to generate, process and analyse them” (Kitchen, 2014, p. 2)

2. (Re)considering Data (3)

- Data do not speak for itself (as claimed by Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013)
- It is not enough to know *that* people do things without understanding *why* they do act in a particular way
- **N ≠ all** (contra to Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2014)
- Data sets represent cultural, moral, and instrumental choices (Brock, 2015)

2. (Re)considering Data (4)

- More or big(ger) data are not (necessarily) better data (Prinsloo, Archer, Barnes, Chetty & Van Zyl, 2015)
- “The sheer size of analysis does not eschew the limitations of subjectivity” – the “unbearable lightness of information” (Papacharissi, 2015, p. 1097)
- What happens when we collect, analyse and use the bleeps, the logins, the downloads, the posts in and outside of an institutional Learning Management system (LMS) as the **full/only narrative** of what is happening in our students’ lives, of *their* aspirations, and of *their* learning?

2. (Re)considering Data (5)

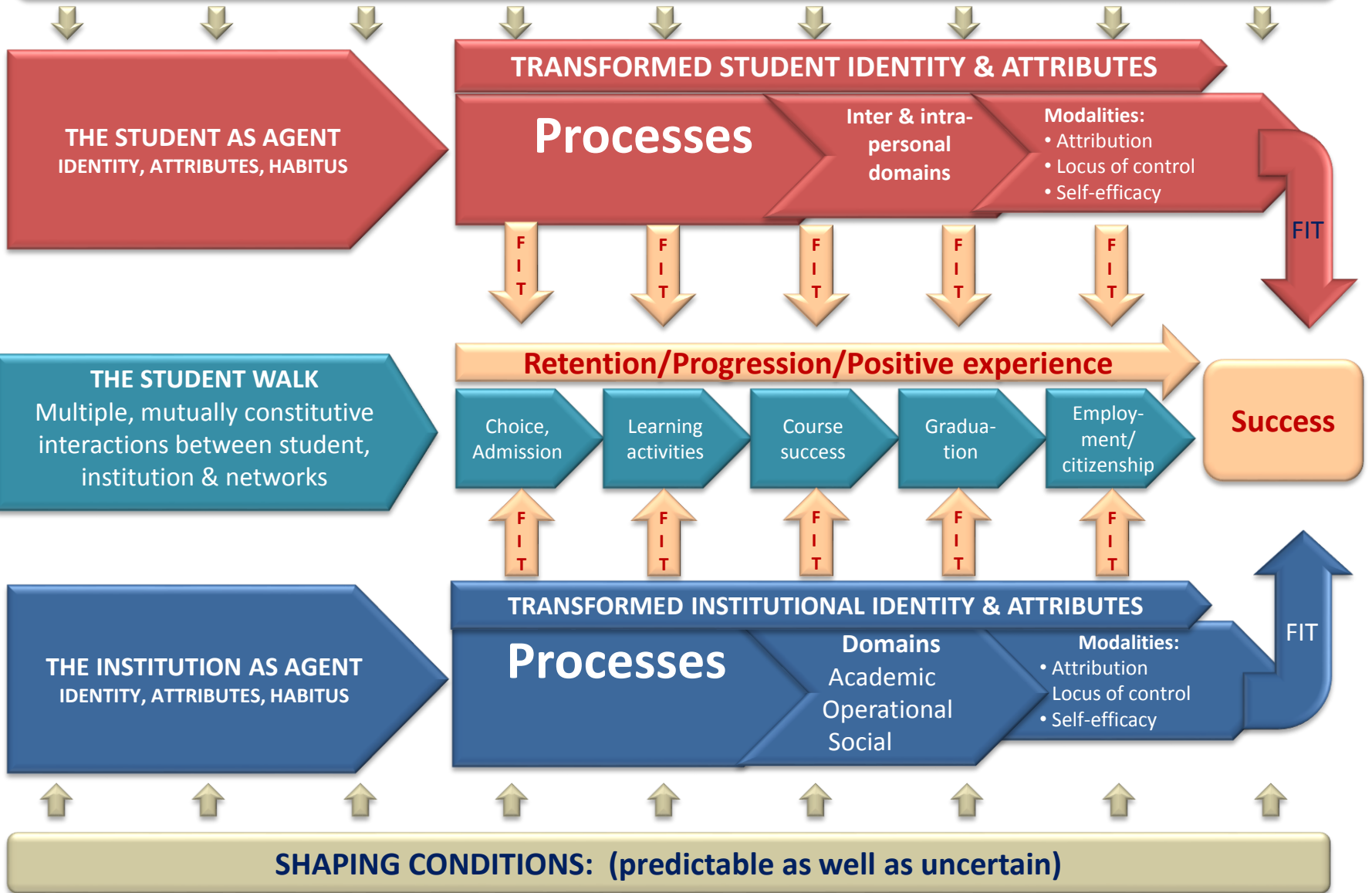
What are the implications when we use *their* data points to describe, diagnose, predict and prescribe *their* learning journeys without ever asking them what these data points mean *to them*, and what data would matter to *them* to allow them to make more informed decisions, to complete *their* journeys and not ours?

3. (Re)considering learning

How does evidence look and function when we consider education as an open and recursive system, worlds apart from research environments where we can control variables?

How does evidence look when we consider student success as a complex, non-linear process and result of intersecting, often interdependent and mutually constitutive variables in the nexus between students' life-worlds, capital and contexts, institutional assumptions, epistemologies and (in)efficiencies, and macro-societal shifts and changes?

SHAPING CONDITIONS: (predictable as well as uncertain)



SHAPING CONDITIONS: (predictable as well as uncertain)

Pointer 1: Learning analytics as *moral* practice



Paul Prinsloo

@14prinsp



Just because you can collect their data, does not mean you have to. Even if it may be legal, it may not be ethical.

Nick Seaver wants this website to ban the Nazis @npseaver

Twitter friends: if you had to put in a single classic-length tweet the most important task for “the ethical use of data,” what would it be?

8:07 AM - 8 Nov 2017

14 Retweets 26 Likes



Pointer 1: Learning analytics as *moral* practice

“Learning analytics should not only focus on what is effective, but also aim to provide relevant pointers to decide what is appropriate and morally necessary”

(Slade & Prinsloo, 2013, p. 1519)

Pointer 2: Change the narrative: Whose story is it anyway?

If learning analytics' primary aim is to improve students' learning (Gašević, Dawson, & Siemens, 2015), maybe we should ask...

- To what extent has learning analytics become *our voice-over* of student learning experiences by telling them 'this is what your learning looks like and it is the only narrative that matters'...?
- How can we replace our epistemological arrogance and colonisation of the student experience with an epistemological shift from 'knowing' to listening, humility and respect?

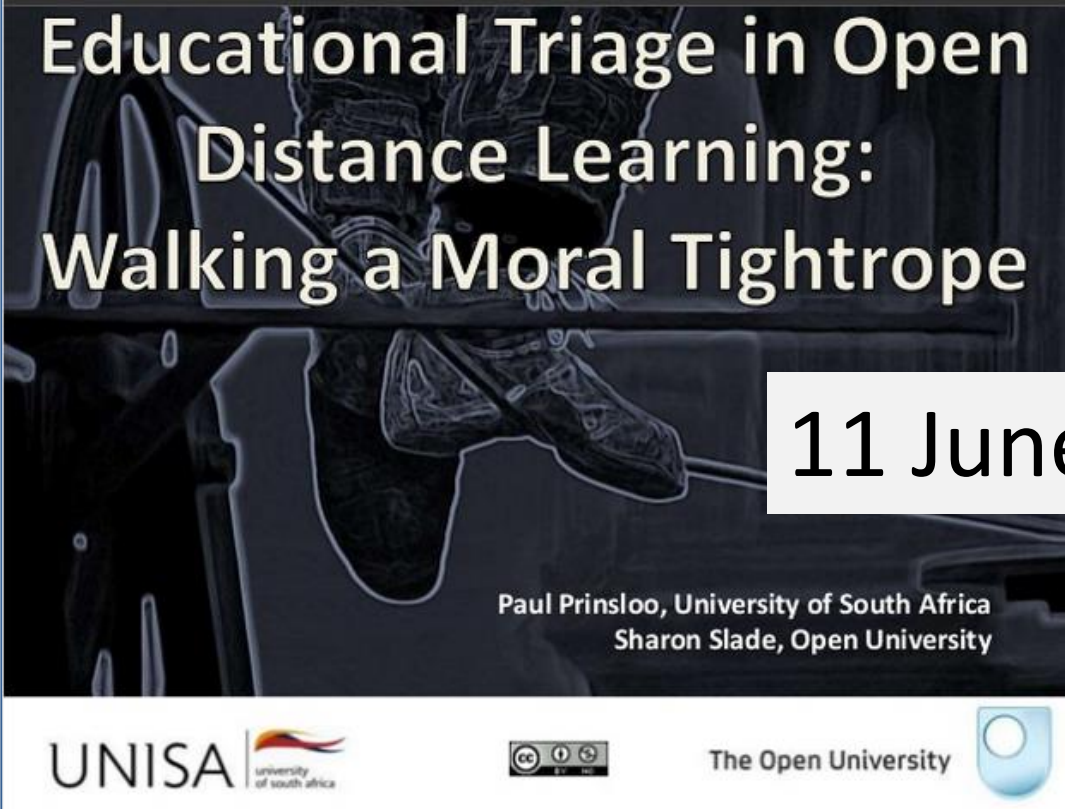
Gašević, D., Dawson, S., & Siemens, G. (2015). Let's not forget: Learning analytics are about learning. *TechTrends*, 59(1), 64-71.

Tuck, E., & Fine, M. (2007). Inner angles. A range of ethical responses to/with indigenous and decolonising theories. In Norman K Denzin and Michael D Giardina (Eds), *Ethical futures in qualitative research. Decolonising the politics of knowledge* (pp. 145-168). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc.

Pointer 2: Changing the narrative: Whose story is it anyway? (cont.)

- What happens if we stop talking about ‘students as sick, ‘broken’ and ‘dropouts’? What happens when we discard a deficit model of student learning to one that focuses on what they have, what they bring to the table?
- What data do *we* have that, if *they* have access to that data, will allow *them* to make better and more informed choices?
- What data do *they* have that if we have access to that data, and with their permission, will allow *us* to help them make better choices?

Pointer 3: It is also *our* story and being responsible



The image shows the cover of a book titled "Educational Triage in Open Distance Learning: Walking a Moral Tightrope". The cover features a dark, high-contrast photograph of a person walking a tightrope. The title is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the top. Below the title, the authors' names are listed: "Paul Prinsloo, University of South Africa" and "Sharon Slade, Open University". At the bottom of the cover, there are logos for UNISA (University of South Africa), a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-SA), and The Open University.

Educational Triage in Open Distance Learning: Walking a Moral Tightrope

Paul Prinsloo, University of South Africa
Sharon Slade, Open University

UNISA | university of south africa

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The Open University

11 June 2014

Page credit: <https://www.slideshare.net/prinsp/eden-triage>

Pointer 3: Response-able (cont.)

6 September 2016



Learning analytics: At the intersections between student support, privacy, agency and institutional survival

Paul Prinsloo (University of South Africa, Unisa) @14prinsp
Sharon Slade (Open University, OU) @sharonslade

Image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/haydnseeek/2534088367>

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ASSOCIATION FOR LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

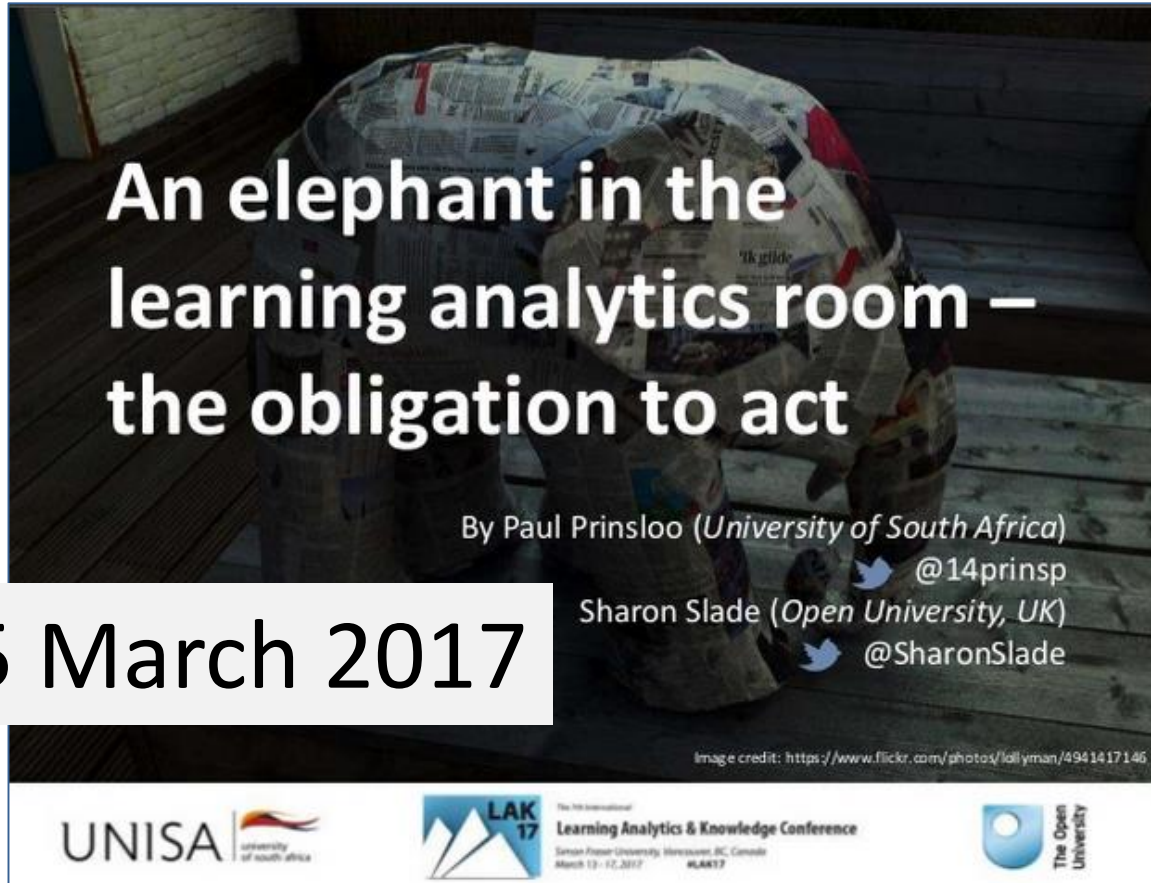
ALT

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2016
Connect, Collaborate, Create UNISA

UNISA university of south africa

Page credit: <https://www.slideshare.net/prinsp/learning-analytics-at-the-intersections-between-student-support-privacy-agency-and-institutional-survival>

Pointer 3: Response-able (cont.)



An elephant in the learning analytics room – the obligation to act

By Paul Prinsloo (*University of South Africa*) @14prinsp
Sharon Slade (*Open University, UK*) @SharonSlade

15 March 2017

image credit: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/lallyman/4941417146>

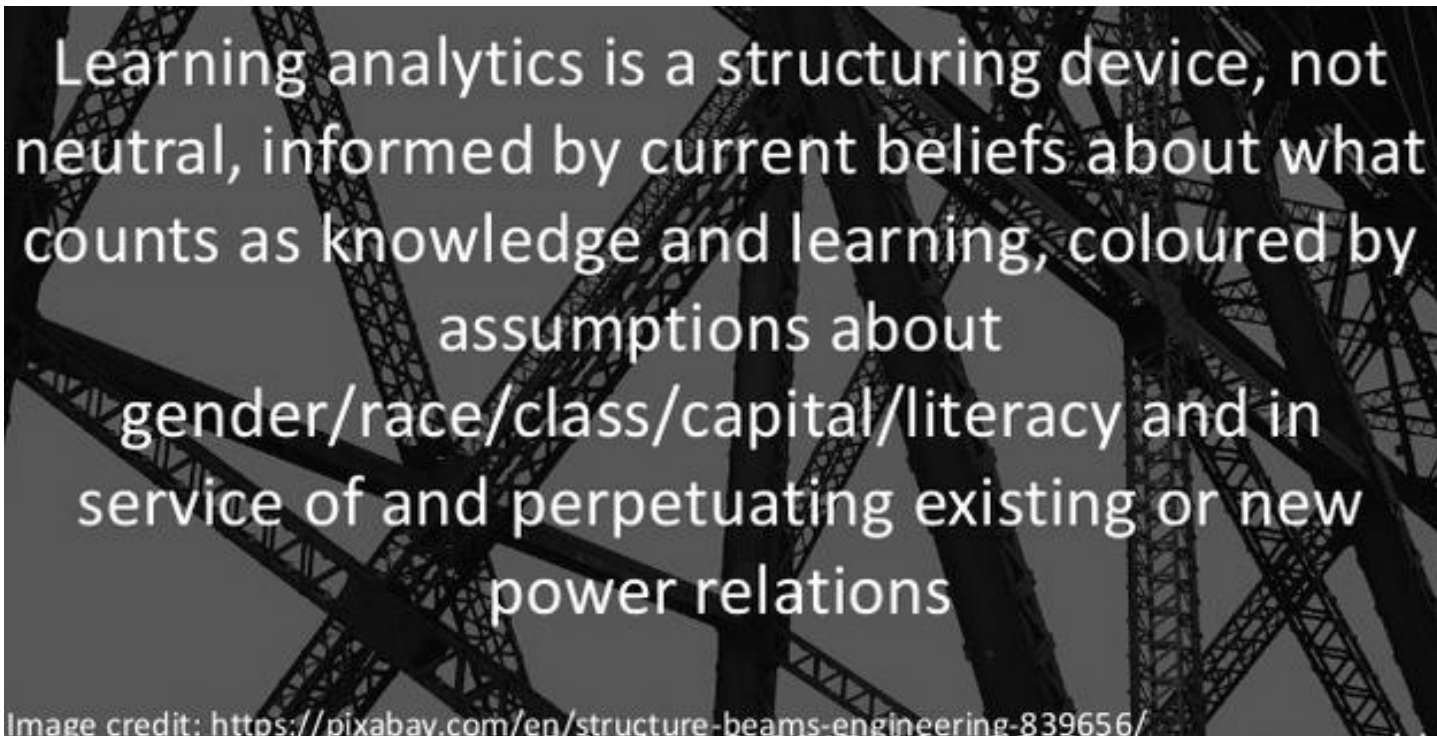
UNISA | university of south africa

LAK 17 The 17th International Learning Analytics & Knowledge Conference Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada March 13-17, 2017 #LAK17

The Open University

Page credit: <https://www.slideshare.net/prinsp/an-elephant-in-the-learning-analytics-room-the-obligation-to-act>

Pointer 4: Recognise the political nature of data and evidence



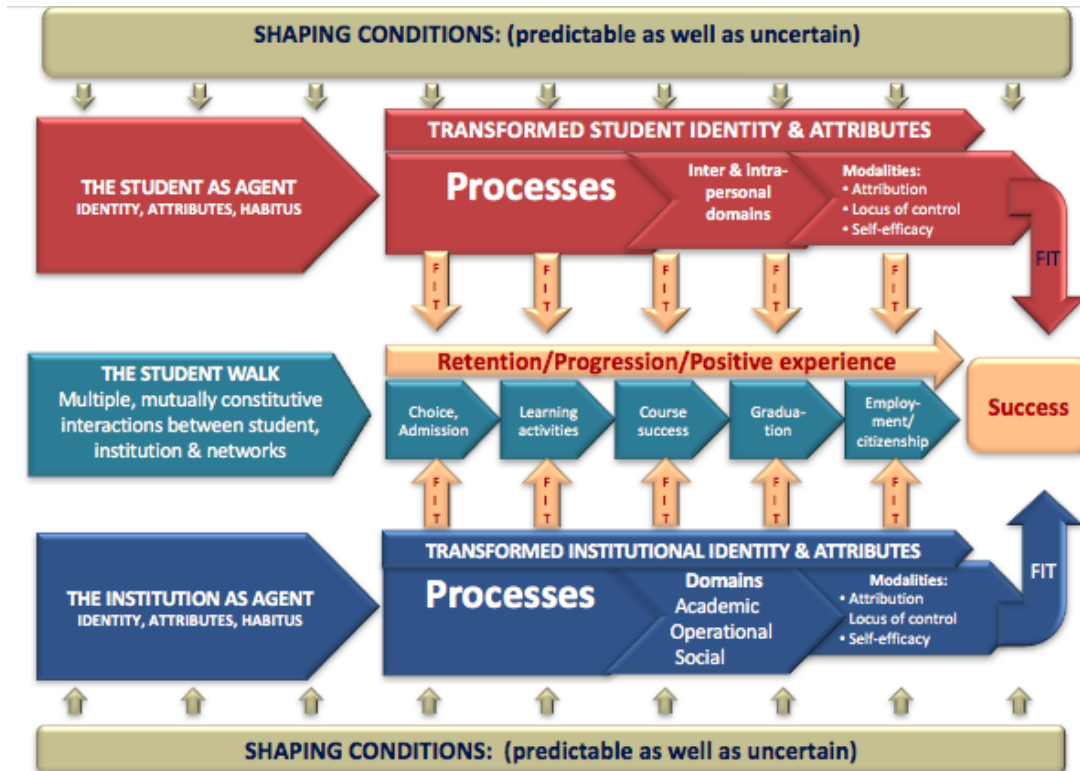
Prinsloo, P., & Slade, S, (2017, March 17). Building the learning analytics curriculum: Should we teach (a code of) ethics? Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/prinsp/building-the-learning-analytics-curriculum-should-we-teach-a-code-of-ethics>

Pointer 4: Recognise the political nature of data and evidence

How do we collect, analyse and use data when the data represent the results of generations of structural inequalities and injustices?

How do we use learning analytics to break inter-generational cycles of bias, discrimination and exclusion?

Pointer 5: Consider the difference between correlation and causation in highly complex and dynamic systems



Pointer 6: Oversight and accountability

Education Tech Research Dev
DOI 10.1007/s11423-016-9463-4



DEVELOPMENT ARTICLE

Ethical oversight of student data in learning analytics: a typology derived from a cross-continental, cross-institutional perspective

James E. Willis III¹ · Sharon Slade² · Paul Prinsloo³

An interpretative multiple-case study: Indiana University, Open University (UK) and the University of South Africa (Unisa)

Willis, J. E., Slade, S., & Prinsloo, P. (2016). Ethical oversight of student data in learning analytics: A typology derived from a cross-continental, cross-institutional perspective. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 64, 881-901. DOI: 10.1007/s11423-016-9463-4 <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11423-016-9463-4>

Pointer 7: Higher education can not afford NOT to collect, analyse and use student learning data

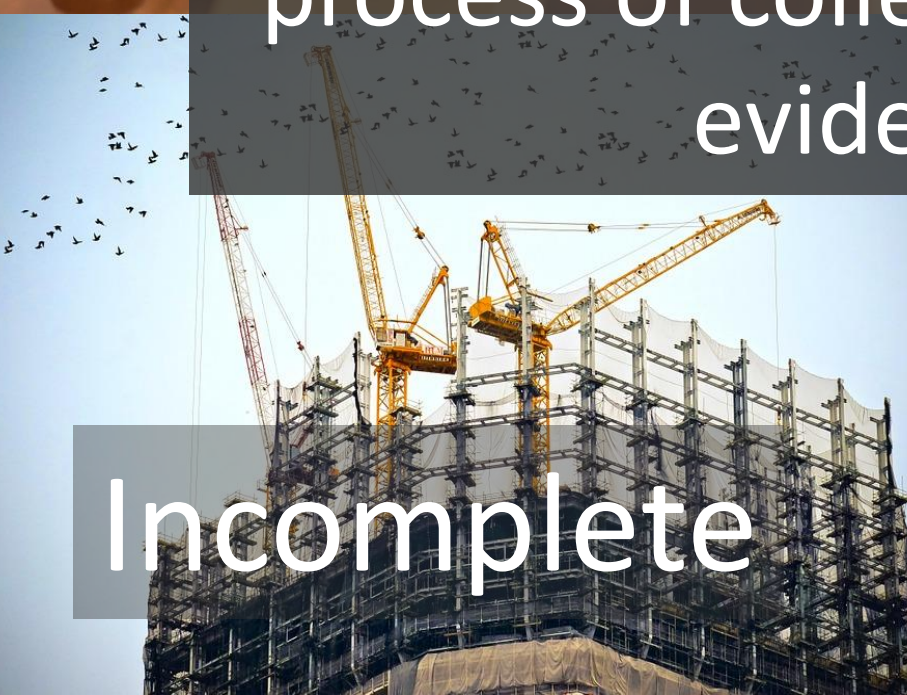
- We have a *contractual* duty to ensure effective and appropriate learning experiences
- We have a *fiduciary* duty of care in the context of the asymmetrical power relationship between institution and students
- We have the opportunity and the authority to act/care/respond
- We don't have unlimited resources
- We need to be transparent and accountable for what we can and cannot do.
- Once we know, we cannot un-know knowing – we have a moral duty to respond

A close-up photograph of chess pieces on a wooden board. A white king is in the foreground, with other pieces like a white pawn and a black king visible in the background.

Contested

A black and white photograph of a statue of a man, possibly a historical figure, with his hand to his face in a thoughtful pose. In the background, the dome of the United States Capitol building is visible.

Political

A photograph of a large-scale construction site. Several yellow tower cranes are visible against a clear sky. The building under construction is heavily scaffolded.

Pointer 8: Learning analytics as process of collecting data and/as evidence is...

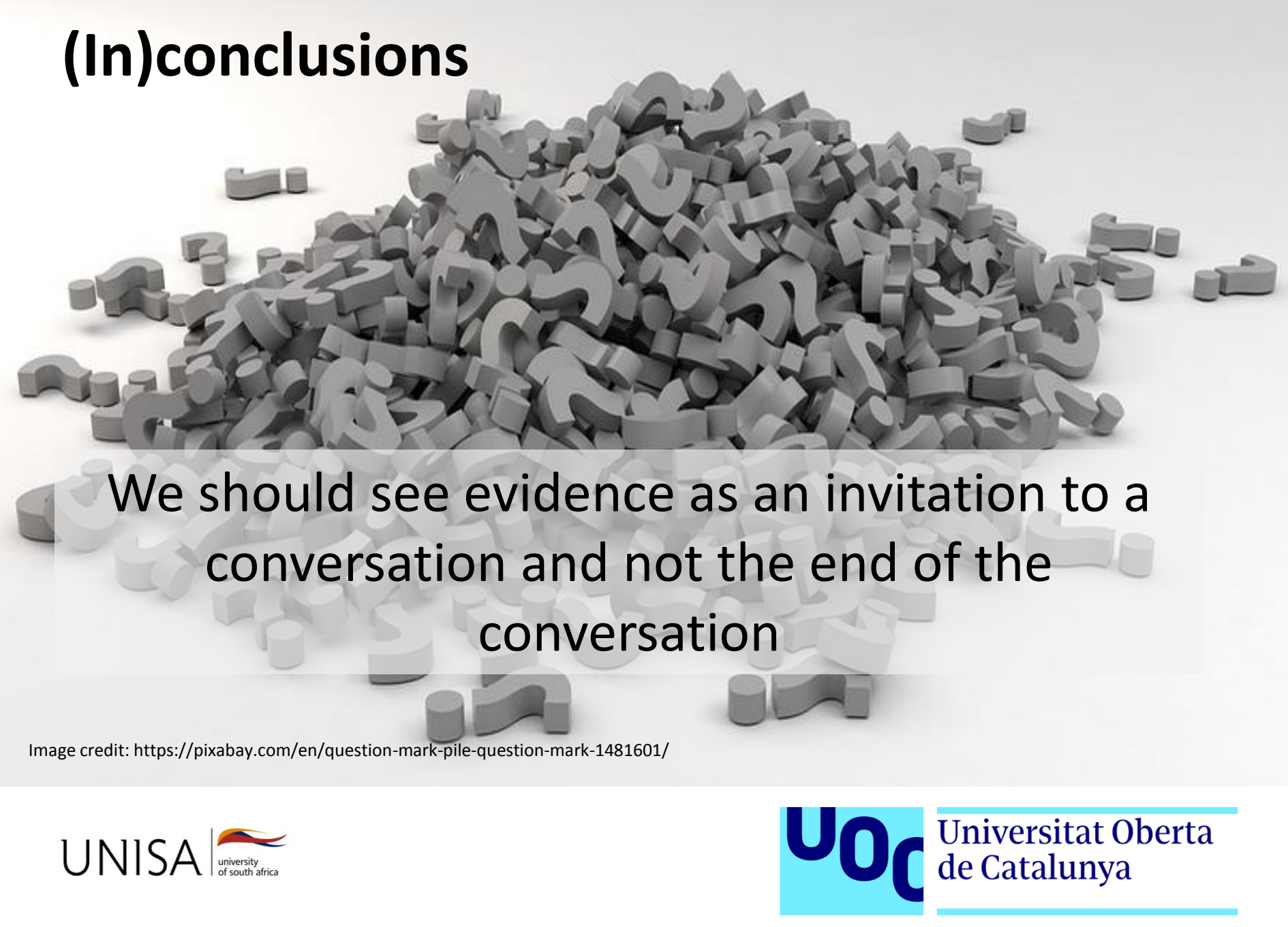
A photograph of a large-scale construction site. Several yellow tower cranes are visible against a clear sky. The building under construction is heavily scaffolded.

Incomplete

A photograph of several stacked cardboard boxes. The most prominent box is brown and has the word "EGGS" printed in large green letters with upward-pointing arrows on either side. Below it, the text "HANDLE WITH CARE" is visible. Other boxes in the background have labels like "THIS SIDE UP" and "4-1 Gallon".

Fragile

(In)conclusions



We should see evidence as an invitation to a conversation and not the end of the conversation

Image credit: <https://pixabay.com/en/question-mark-pile-question-mark-1481601/>

The question therefore is not: “Will the future of Higher Education be evidence-based?”, but how do we define evidence, and who defines it, and what/whose purpose will it serve when enacted upon?



Image credit: <http://www.basicknowledge101.com/subjects/reality.html>

Gracias. Thank you.

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Personal blog:

<http://opendistanceteachingandlearning.wordpress.com>

Twitter profile: @14prinsp