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Joining the dots: Making connections between institutional  
research policy and practice



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# Overview

- Case Study
- Research Question
- The literature
- Institutional Research – some issues
- Joining the dots



# Brief Case Study

- Who are we?
- What do we do?



# The Research Question

- ❖ How can the value of Institutional Research be captured?
- ❖ How can Institutional Research inform (and be informed by) wider HE research, policy and practice?
- ❖ What is its impact?



# What the literature says

- A disparate picture
- Undervaluation of Higher Education Research
- IR sits in a liminal position in the field of HE research
- Grounding Institutional Research in literature and theory – what's the problem?



HE policy is argued to be a 'research free zone' (Locke, 2009)

'a distributed and fragmented function across the university' (Longden and Yorke, 2009)

'the term *institutional research* is barely recognized, although most of its constituent practices are well recognized' (Taylor, Hanlon and Yorke, 2013)



'today's answers to yesterday's questions'

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'compromising their academic autonomy' (Locke 2009)



‘...ignoring the evidence when we have got it – especially when it says the wrong thing’  
(Watson, 2009)

‘a failure to know thyself is hurting UK universities...’ (Gill, 2008).



<http://khoshgozaran.com/images/blog-pics/social-media-fragmentation.jpg>

‘Is the institutional researcher bound by institutional loyalty and corporate responsibility or by academic and professional freedom and open contributions to knowledge?’ (Taylor, Hanlon and Yorke, 2013)



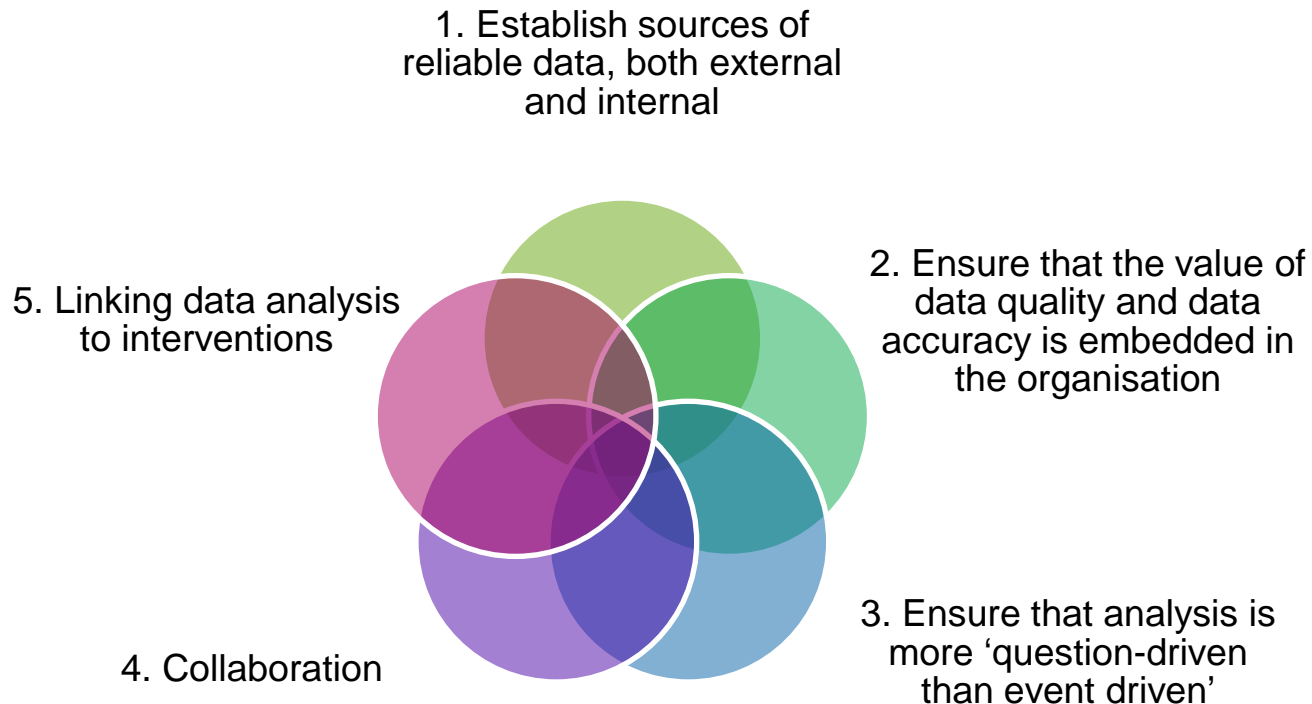
‘I’m amazed at how the university world has rolled over in response to the politicians’ obsession with the world-class rankings’  
(Watson, 2009)





# Institutional Research

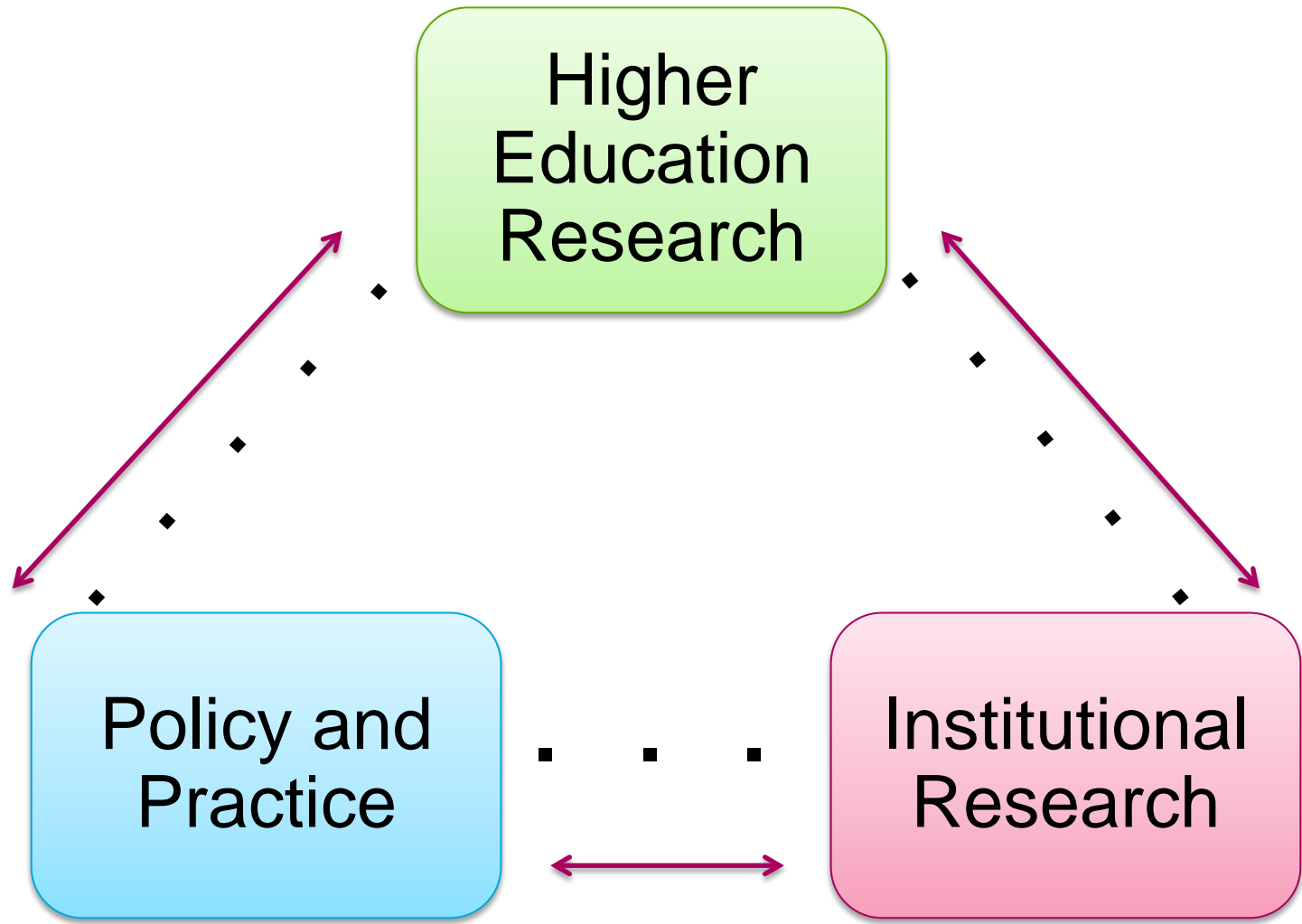
Chester (2014) discusses ‘five pillars of a strong institutional research function’



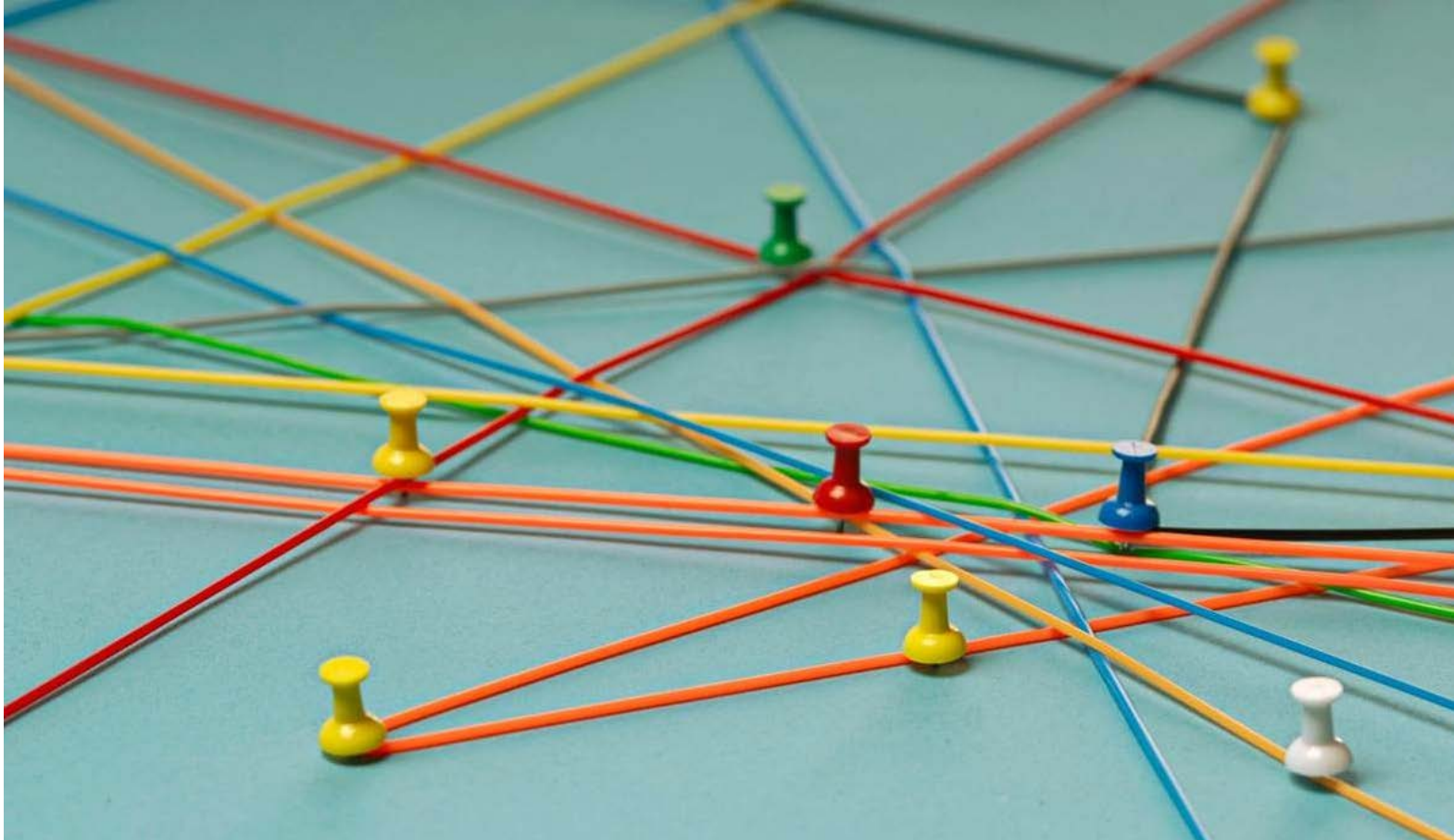
# Some issues with IR

- Resources
- Sensitivities
- Access
- Student Record Systems
- Dissemination
- Scrutiny





# Discussion: Joining the Dots



[https://belmontteach.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/connecting\\_the\\_dots.jpg](https://belmontteach.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/connecting_the_dots.jpg)



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