

# VISUAL METHODOLOGIES IN EVALUATIONS

JUNE 2020

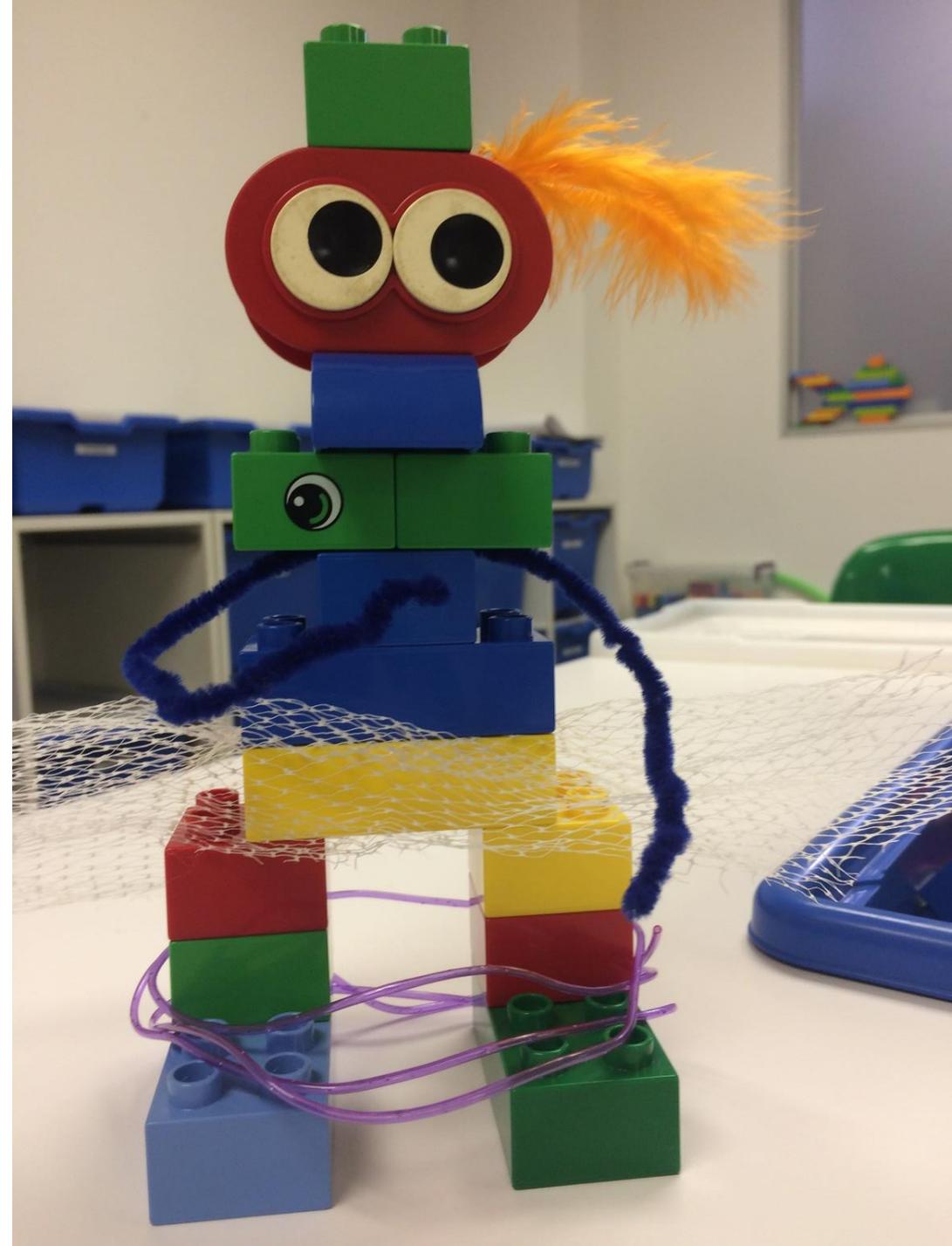
Acknowledgement: Mark Tomlinson, University of Sheffield, 2015  
Visual Methods for Social Sciences

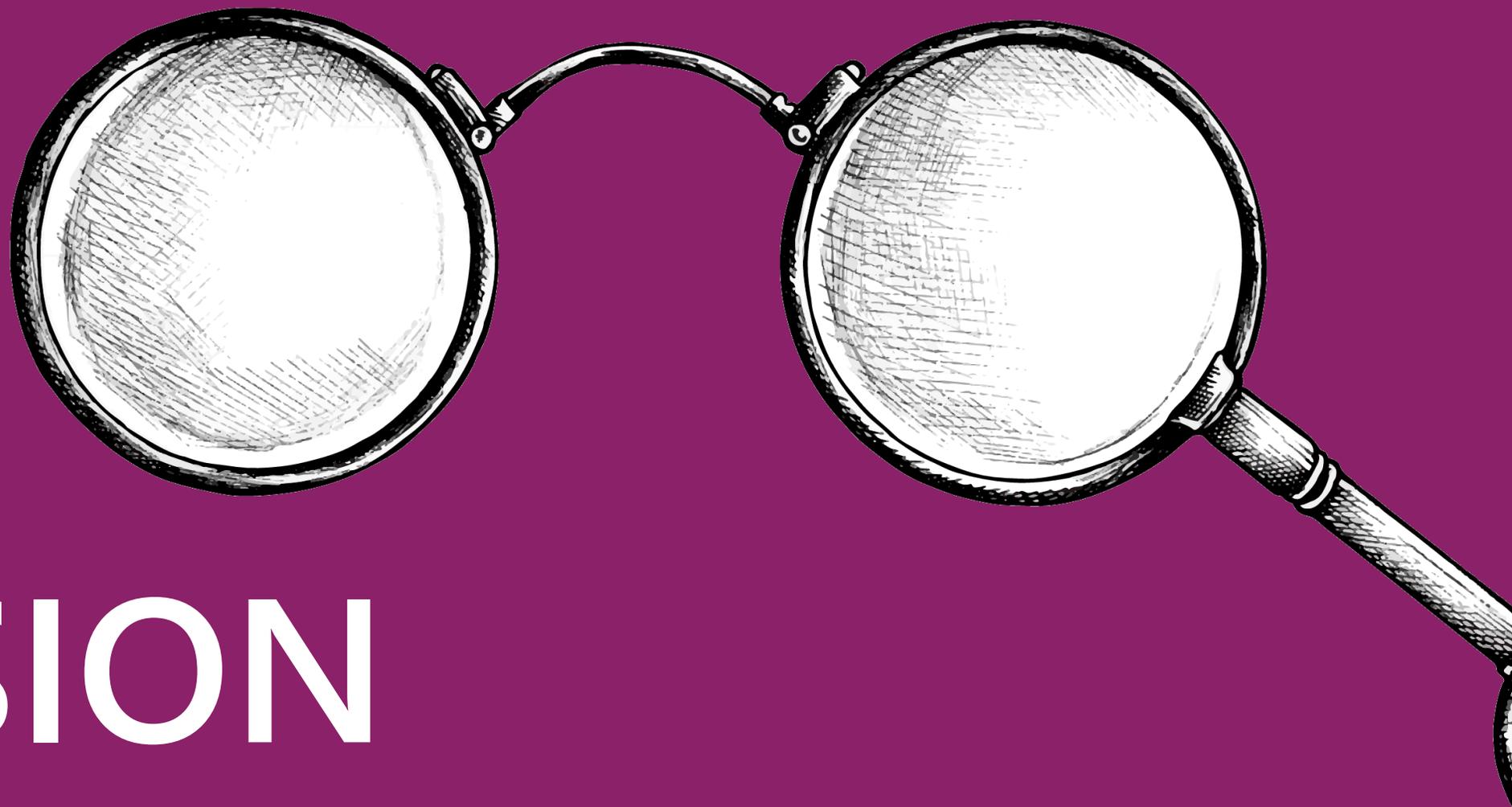
# What we will explore today ...

1. Explore an understanding of the 'visual'
2. Critical elements of visual methodology approach
  - The 3 sites
  - Using photographs and interpretation of the visual
  - Visual analysis
3. Why use visual in evaluations?
4. Ethics

# When you think of 'visual', what comes to mind?

- Drawings, paintings
- Newspaper articles and photos
- Brochures, posters
- Photographs
- Maps and GPS
- Drones
- Video, sound clips,
- Diagrams
- Remote sensing
- Timelines
- Self-portraits
- DVDs, film, voice clips etc.





# VISION

The physiological aspect of seeing

# VISUAL

How vision is constructed in various ways

- how we see, are able to see, are allowed to see
- vision as a sensory experience (ocularcentrism)
- social interpretation of the visual

Images have become increasingly dominant in everyday life

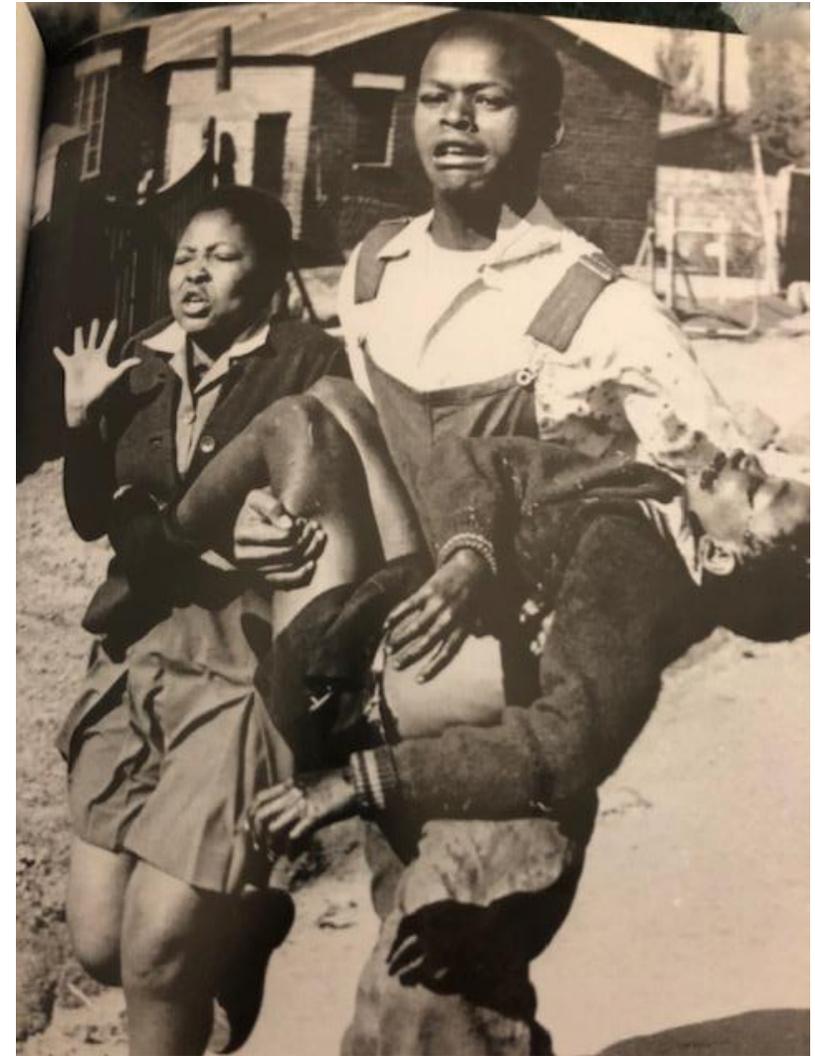




Image: Wikipedia



Bob Capa. 1944. D-Day landings.



June 16, 1976  
Soweto, South Africa  
Sam Nzima





critical considerations  
when thinking of  
visual methods ...



## Site of production

1. How was the image made and by whom?
2. Time and place?
3. Why this image?



## Site of the image

1. What is the visual effect?
2. Composition
3. Visual meanings



## Site of audience

1. Dissemination?
2. Viewing positions? Relation to text?
3. How interpreted, by whom and why?

# USING PHOTOGRAPHS

(or other visual tools)

4 Approaches ...

# 1. Documentary

Carefully planned series of photos to document and analyse a particular visual phenomenon

- What is the evaluation question?
- And how does this link to photographs?



# 2. Elicitation

- Research participants make photos
- Then discussed in an interview
- Dialogue for
  - reflection, insights, everyday life, empowerment (to raise social phenomena, issues, emotional responses, brings implicit to be explicit)
- Collaboration and participation
- Must be planned

# 3. Photo essays

- Series of photos put together (often with text) to make interpretation of a social situation or problem
- Photographs as important as the writing
- More of a dissemination than a research
- Powerful messages to the viewer – NB ...need a conceptual framework
- Subjective



# 4. Evaluation validation

- Evidence of event
- Compare sites of observation
- Consistency of valuing criteria

**February 2013**



**February 2017**



My lockdown ...

A black and tan dog is sitting on a paved surface, looking towards a green metal fence. The dog has a white patch on its chest and white markings on its paws. A speech bubble above the dog contains the text "Mum I need my walk!". The fence is made of vertical green bars with a chain-link mesh. In the background, there are trees and a house with a grey roof.

Mum I need my walk!





#WorkingPJs





Because my life in  
coronavirus is comfort



My lockdown working  
from home 😊



My biggest struggle with this whole virus [REDACTED] Only people with glasses will feel me



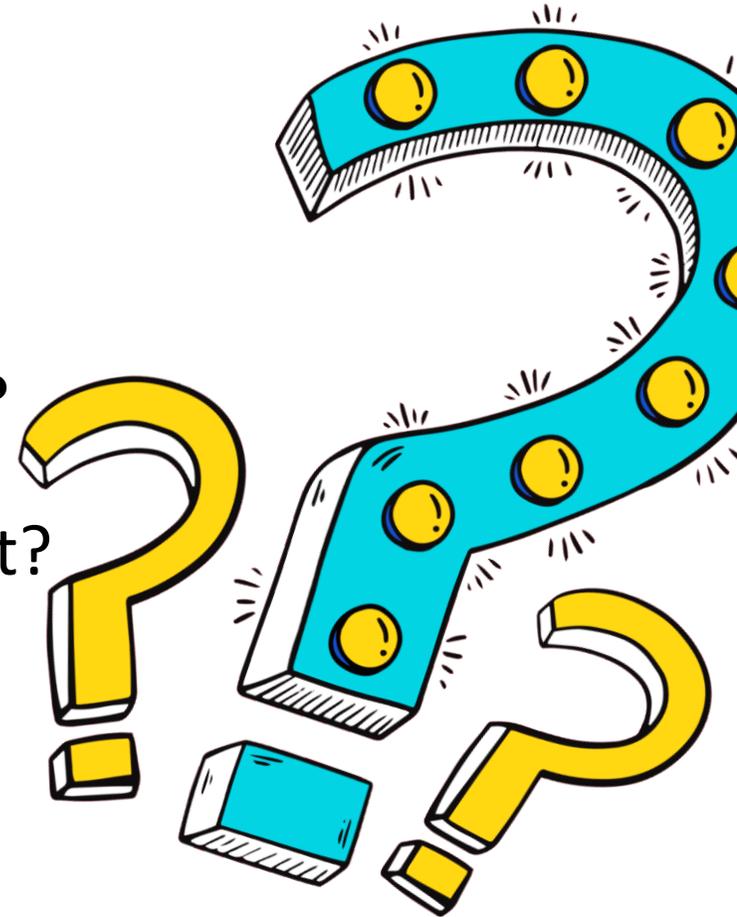
And don't even get me started with my ears pulled forward by my mask - glasses falling off face!

My sad life in lockdown ..  
The real struggle 😞

# Looking at these Lockdown Photos ...

- What do they convey about the feel of the environment?
- What do they convey about spatial arrangements?
- Can you picture people in their environment?
- Do they depict social differences and operations?

**Do they convey ‘sensory richness and human  
inhabitation’ of the work / home / urban environment?**



Rose, 2016, pg308

**Visual Methodologies: An Introduction  
to Researching with Visual Materials**

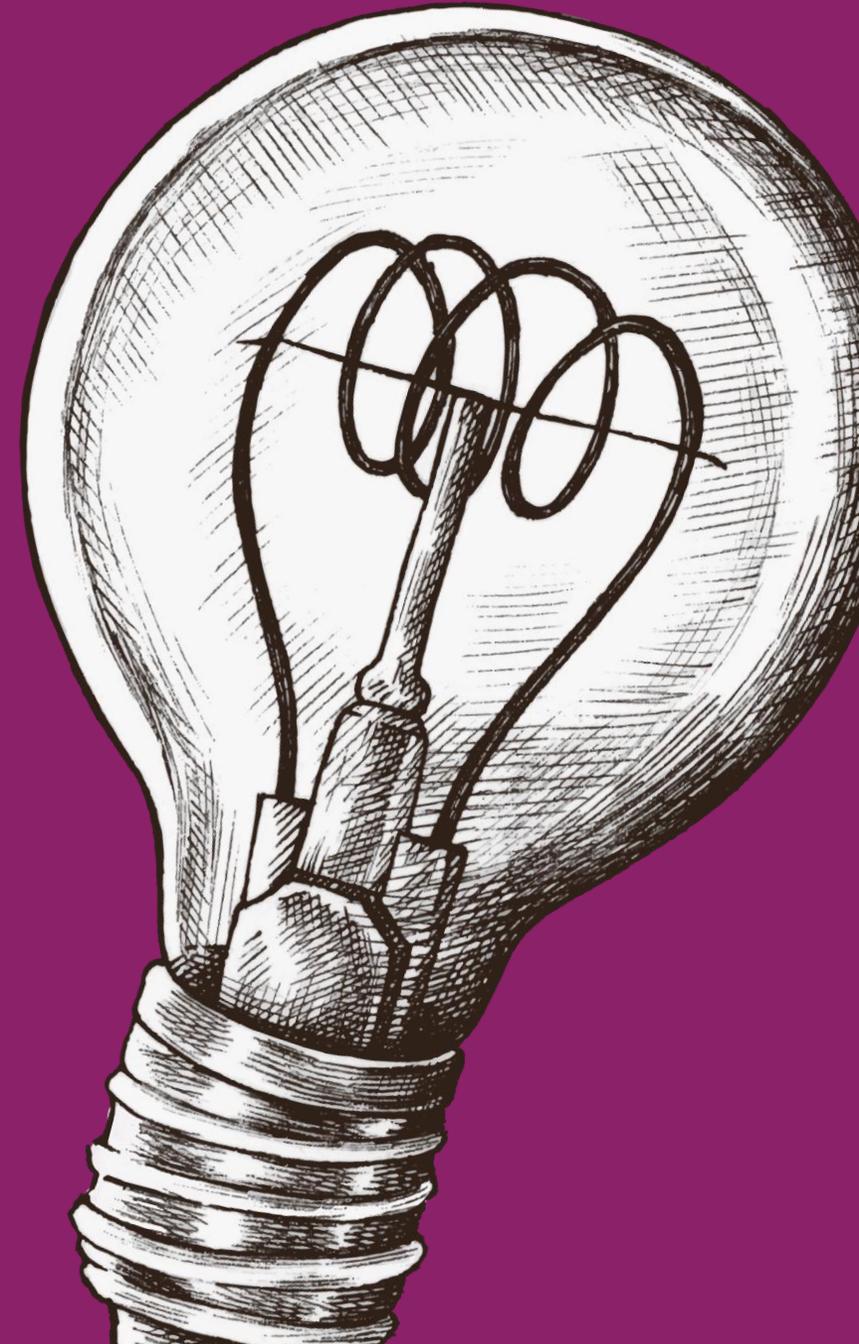
# Social interpretation of the visual?

## **EVALUATIONS?**

The eye of the viewer is important to consider because of the expression of power relations embedded in the images and the social categories presented and interpreted

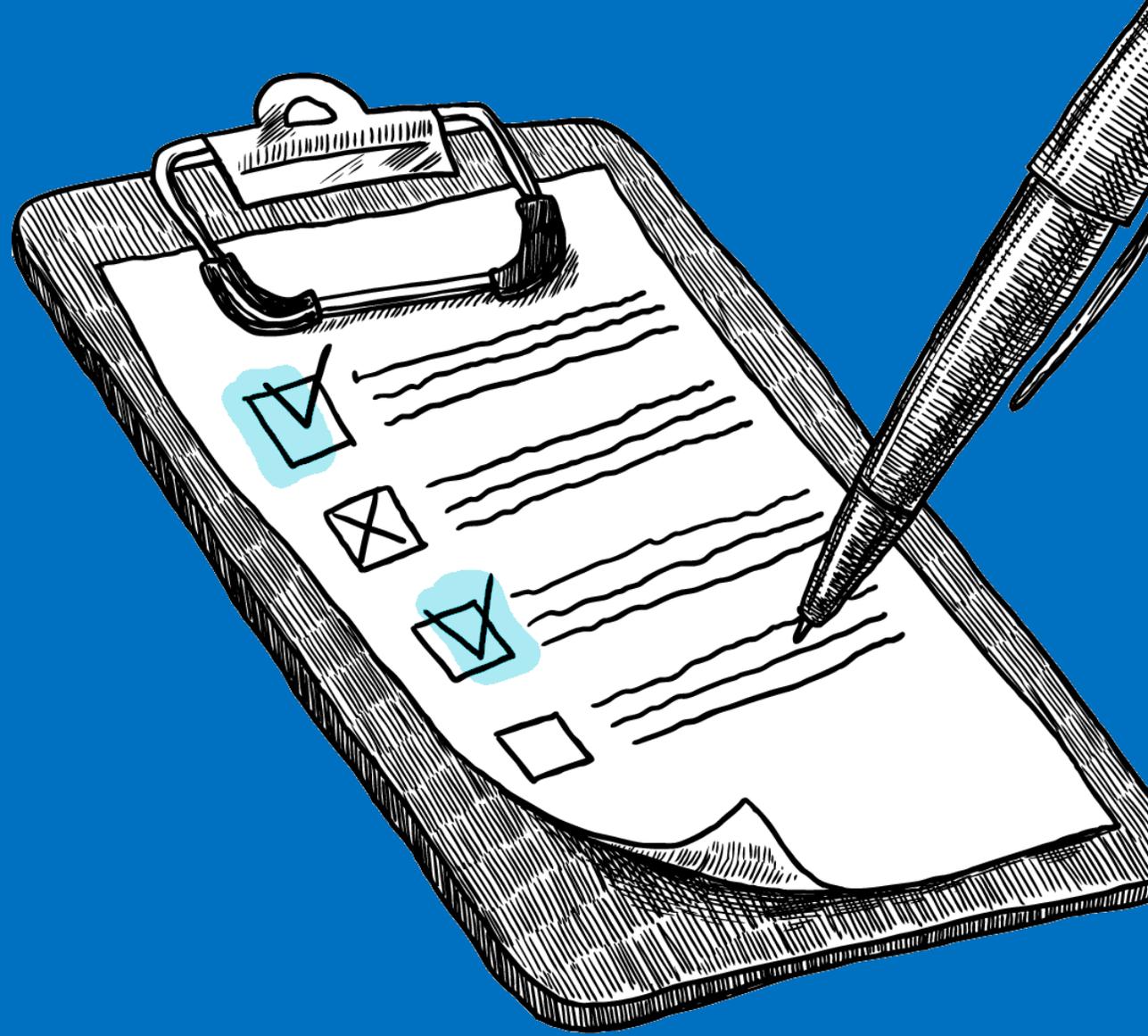
# The importance of analysis and interpretation ...

1. Critical visual criteria
  1. Site of production
  2. Site of image
  3. Site of audience
2. Select analysis method
3. Interpretation and valuing
4. Evaluation use



# Analysis options?

1. Content analysis
2. Discourse analysis
  - Text
  - Institutions



# Analysis options?

## 3. Semiology

- Interpreting visual materials and culture
- Social effects of meaning
- The way social difference is created
- Principles:
  - Purposively sampled images because of social significance
    - (not necessarily statistically representative)
  - Analytical integrity critical
  - Clearly define what is appropriate data, how collected
  - Know who the audience is for the image
  - Basic unit is the sign (sign=unit of meaning)
    - e.g. age, size, gender, expressions, pose, props etc.
    - Object
    - Icon or index or symbol



# WHY USE VISUAL METHODOLOGIES IN EVALUATIONS?



- Part of evaluation methodology and instrument
  - Quantitative & qualitative
  - Communication representing text
  - Collaboration, empowerment, ownership
  - Ethnographic vs Phenomenology approaches ...
  - Evidence and data
  - “Street / classroom / clinic etc. photography”
  - Context
- What are the benefits to ...?
  - Evaluand
  - Evaluator
  - User
    - Client
    - Influencers
    - Community
- Use in validity and valuing criteria

# Using GPS location to map fieldwork site locations





# And what about ethics?

- Integrity of evaluator
- Informed consent
  - Dissemination of images
  - No harm
  - Voluntary
  - Confidentiality and anonymity
- Manipulation of digital images vs. analogue vs. photomontage
- International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA)
  - Code of Research Ethics and Guidelines
  - [www.visualsociology.org/?page\\_id=405](http://www.visualsociology.org/?page_id=405)