



#LTSE2023

Artful Methods in Management Learning

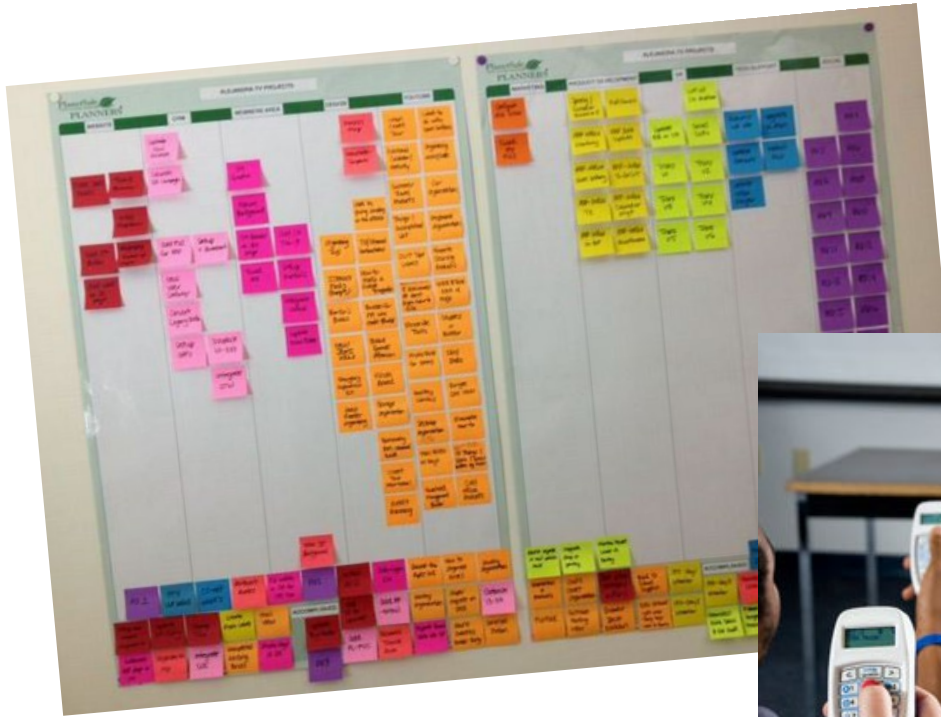
*Visual approach for engaging students in reflection
and co-creation in Organisation Theory context*

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Visualisation tools in a management classroom used for representation and translation of knowledge



Largely they do not stimulate deep reflection, creative thought or how to approach *unstructured problems*

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• **Explore visual methods and arts-based education tools**
to trigger engagement, reflection, and co-creation in management
students

- Go beyond representation and translation of knowledge in the classroom to ones of **connectivity** and **co-creation**

Holtham, C., Owens, A. and **Bogdanova**, M. (2008). M Level inquiry across disciplinary boundaries: Using reflective sketchbooks. *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*

Bogdanova and Woollock (2015) Mark-making for Management: Using a Japanese cultural artefact for creativity, problem-solving and reflection. 8th Annual Irish Academy of Management Conference 2015 - Galway, Ireland



E-ma (絵馬) are small wooden plaques on which participants **write** their hopes for the future. The *e-ma* are then left hanging up on a frame in the street as a public installation in the Donegal Pass Community Belfast (Woollock 2015)

Literatures: Creative methods, the visual turn, reflection

Visual methods in **management education**; the Visual turn in **organisation studies**

The **derive/photography** as learning vehicles to promote curiosity, **creativity and reflection** in management education

Holtham, C., M.Biagioli, A.Owens, A.Pässilä, 2021. Crafting strategic thinking: **Creative pedagogy for management studies**, Innovative Practice in Higher Education

Yang, C., Ivanova, E. and Hufnagel, J., 2021. Using contemplative **photography** in transformative sustainability **management education**: Pedagogical applications in the United States, Russia, and Germany. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(3)

Gray, D. (2007). Facilitating management learning developing **critical reflection** through **reflective tools**. *Management Learning*, 38(5), 495-517.

Kolko, J. (2015). “**Design Thinking Comes of Age**” *Harvard Business Review*, September

Meyer, R. E., et al. (2013). The **visual** dimension in organizing, organization, and organization research: Core ideas, current developments, and promising avenues, *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1)

Warren, S. (2005) “**Photography** and voice in **critical** qualitative management research”, *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 18(6), 861-882.

Sievers, B. (2014) “It is difficult to think in the slammer: A **social photo-matrix** in a penal institution” in Kenny, K., & Fotaki, M. (Eds.). *The Psychosocial and Organization Studies: Affect at work*. Palgrave Macmillan

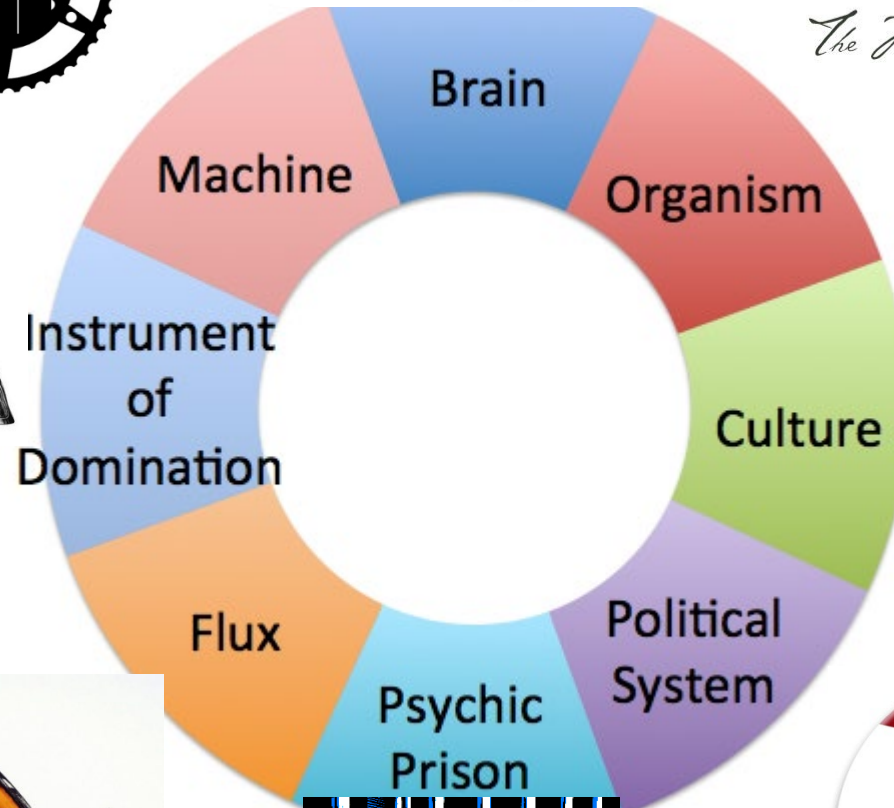
The Activity: Getting students to think and act like researchers



- ***Teaching context:*** Getting students interested in the ***organisation theory*** material – understanding what organisations are and how scholars have studied and theorised them
- ***Postmodern & interpretivist methods*** and getting students to try them out - walking, photography, thinking metaphorically, discussing organisation and organising as a group

The Teaching Context: Interpretive frameworks & Organisation Theory

- Images of Organization* (Morgan 2006) presents **8 metaphors** for understanding organisational context and its elements
- offer different ways of seeing, studying and managing them
 - point out that organisations are complex, ambiguous and paradoxical
 - ... and different things at different times.



Morgan, G., 1998. *Images of organization: The executive edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA.

The Brief given to MSc students in class: Week 1 Seminar (2017-2020)

Group warm-up Exercise in OT thinking

- Using Images of Organisations by Morgan (2006) as inspiration, **propose your own organisational metaphor** based on your interpretivist safely conducted exploration of London – the dérive - and the visual, collective sense-making (take photos on your walk)
- Present **only one photo-based metaphor with a short (300word) description** of it and how you arrived at the image (consider discussing online after the walk rather than in person)
- Consider using multiple photographs and reflect on the discussion and interpretations of each group member in the process of arriving at the metaphor
- **Each group (3-4 members) uploads one file 1pg** (.pdf or .ppt slide) in a week's time



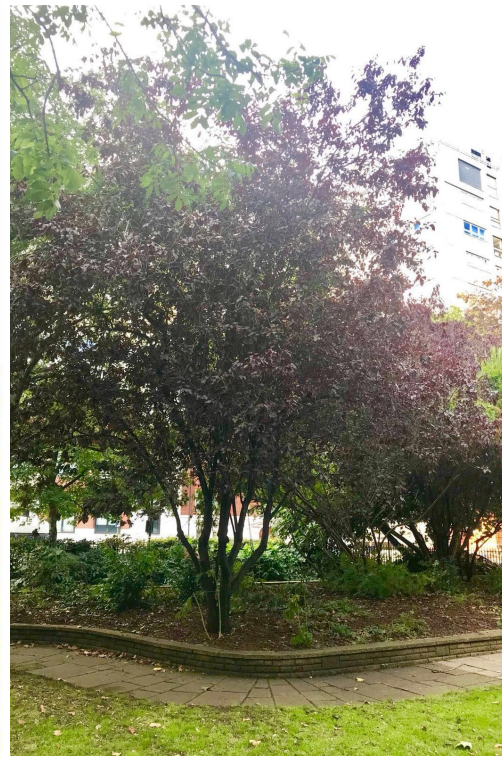
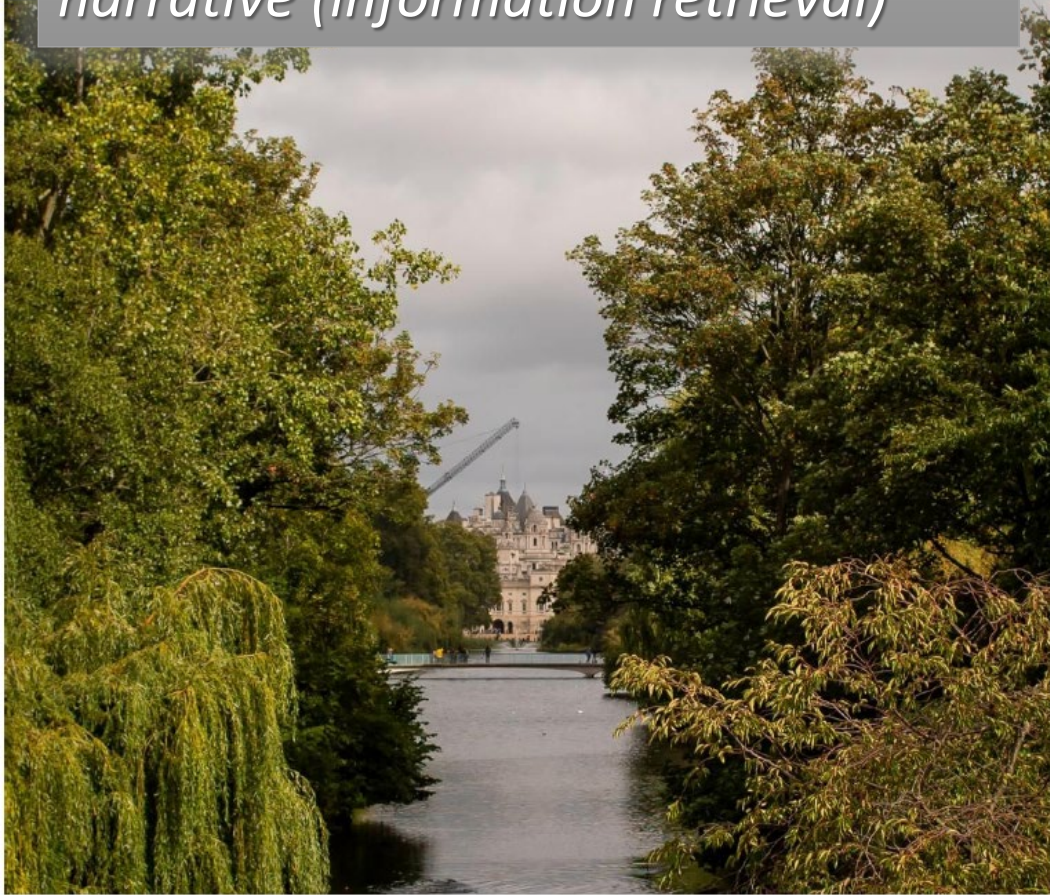
Debord, G. (1958). *Theory of the Derive*



OBSERVATIONS & REFLECTIONS (2018-2019 student images, MSc HRM at LSE)

Some students go for the literal e.g. they find an organisation which looks progressive like the accelerator SV open-plan office here...and project this as a metaphor (the “hub accelerator”)

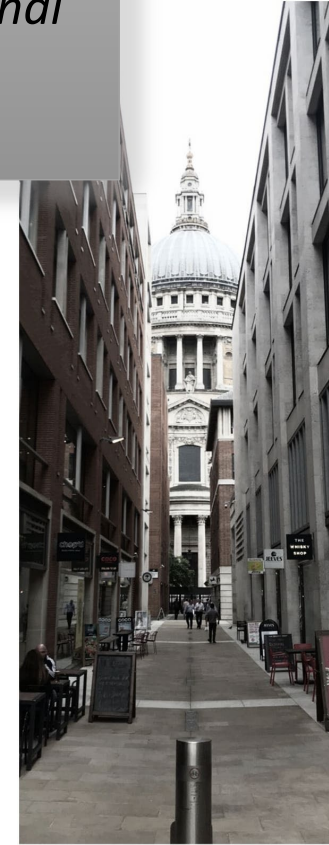
*... while others focus on one of the **existing metaphors** and try to replicate the relationship to the **theorised organisation** in the narrative (information retrieval)*



Most popular is the **tree** metaphor, i.e. the organisation as **organism** (not a new metaphor) – the structure and function of branches, leaves, its place in the **ecosystem**, the sky of possibilities, renewal and death in nature. Some deeper reflections appear here: organisation as landscaped nature - controlled, organised but also chaotic by design.



Many look to symbolically relate **immediate observations** to what they know about **existing organisations** :
Street lights and signs regulate organisational behaviour, the clock symbolises efficiency, product lines are lanes etc.



Like an **organization**, a **city** is a group, a cluster, a hive of individuals that cohabitate a physical or psychological space. They are drawn together because the nature of the geography, the climate, the environment around them demands that they band together and build a greater whole to achieve a collective goal: **survival and prosperity**.



As with the **informal relationships** of an organization, a city's **parks** serve to bring citizens together around their shared interest and build stronger communities, weave a united whole, and give them a chance to catch their breath amid the hustle and bustle.



Like **information** in an organisation, a city's **traffic** flows back and forth, appearing chaotic, but always with a purpose, guided by rules and regulations. In a distant past, dirty signs and bright traffic lights installed to enforce order, and barriers haphazardly erected to react to the latest developments.



*“A photograph (...) works dialectically: it preserves the particularity of the event recorded and it chooses an instant when the correspondences of those particular appearances articulate a general idea”
(Berger 1967: 92)*



Resembling an organization's **culture**, a city's **skyline** is both planned and organic, the result of a million intentional decisions, rules, plans, ideas, and accidents all adding up to a jumbled and unique whole that no one could have foreseen.

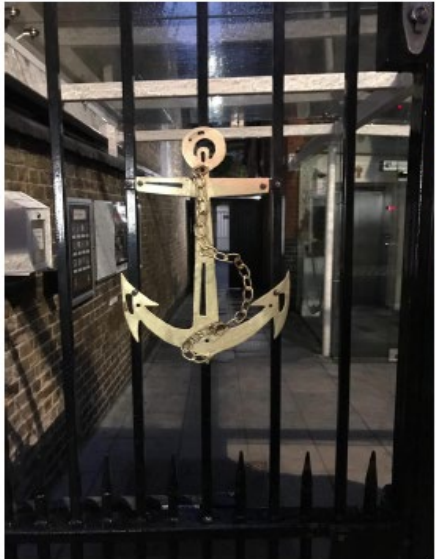
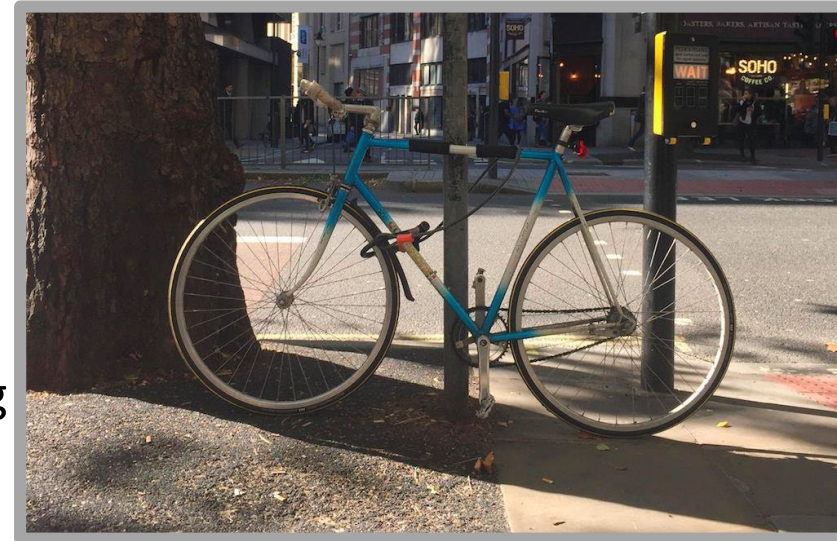


Similar to an organization's **structure**, a city's **roads** set the foundation for all connections within the city and to the outside world. They define the paths that relationships and information can take, but are always changing, evolving, being built and rebuilt, and crossed when drivers least expect it.

Berger, J. (1967)
Understanding a Photograph.
Penguin Books.



- Some highlight the **parts-and-whole aspect** – the parts of a bicycle in the well-oiled machine (Morgan’s machine metaphor), every part is essential to the functioning of the organisation;
- The **modular organisation**, with different blocks (Lego) to reassemble to meet changing strategies in response to the external environment.
 - The organisation as a **vehicle** for everyone heading in the same direction (train passengers) even if they have different goals (stops); “we’re all in the **same boat**” is

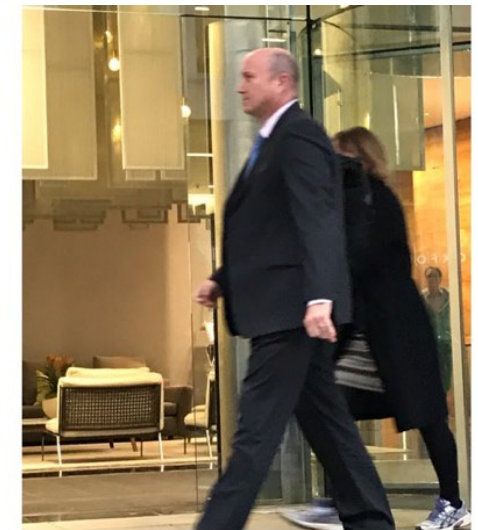


...
*these are
 new metaphors
 (creating new
 connections between
 Information & concepts)*





- A few highlighted the importance of the **rules of the game** in the organisation, competition and skill (tennis court).
- Looking for a **possibility for change alongside the established order** when institutions become outdated (London protests, right), the ability to form groups with different interests.
 - Raising the **fairness and transparency** issue of the organisation, where some will get ahead with opportunities (revolving doors), but not others (diversity and equity).





- A few groups decided to focus on the **dark forces** in the organisation, the lurking evil of greed and unethical behaviour, even when the complex structure seems to be operating smoothly in the background (like a Ferris wheel).
- The possibility of **burning out** when being drawn to the prize, or staring at the workplace screens (unnatural light) as the death of the human inside their job!
- ...and man as narcissus (Dali painting), **self-obsessed**, and creating organisations in his image



Questions emerging

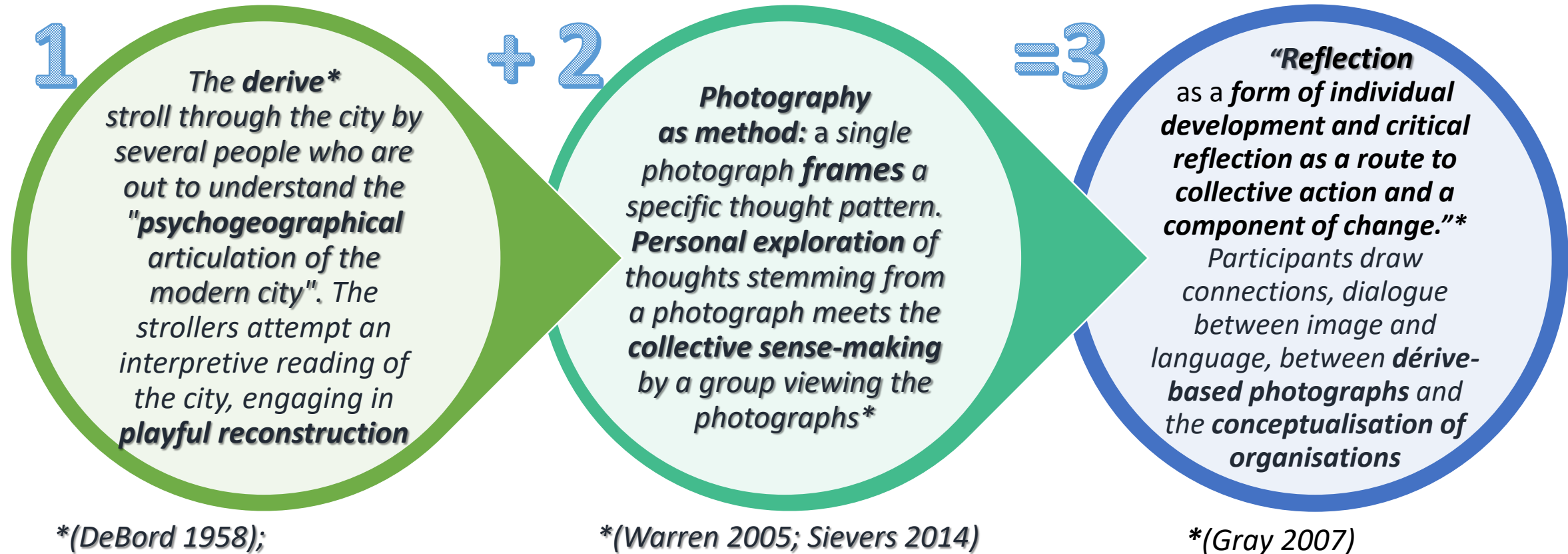
- What specifically do students **notice** about their surroundings? Why?
- What part(s) of the task do they focus most/least on? **Conceptualising** a new metaphor, **linking observations** to knowledge about organisations, **photographing, discussing**?
- Information retrieval or knowledge creation?
- How much emphasis do they put on **the collective reflection** and negotiation of meanings?
- How do they make a **decision**?
- Is **critical thinking** involved at all? Literal, symbolic, political (identity-related)?
- What do they **gain/value** from the experience?

Value in the process...

1. Being in an unfamiliar place with new people stimulates **noticing** what is there and **being aware**
2. Teams discuss what the challenge is, what each person understood from the reading, what is going on in their surroundings, how it is connected = **teambuilding**
3. Raises awareness of the **diversity** of views, backgrounds, the need to **negotiate** one submission

Methods: Getting students to think and act like researchers

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Contribution & SDG link: Aware and engaged students thinking creatively (about innovative business models)



Responsible management education Conference theme (3)

“Advancing *innovations* in sustainable and responsible education and developing *ethical* graduates”

