Original Paper

Heritage Tourism as a Means for International Student Cultural Integration: The Baludik and aPlace4u User Experience

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Abstract

Intercultural education is taking on momentum in the education field. As part of a language project, a group of international Master's level students at the Ecole Centrale de Nantes was asked to use two tools: "Baludik" (a gamified circuit editor) and "aPlace4u/eZoomBook" (an enriched book editor). Our goal was to suggest possible pedagogical uses of these tools as a means for gaining an understanding of a foreign environment, its history and heritage, all of which contribute to cultural integration. Our article reports on the methodology used to offer students creative activities based on the Baludik and aPlace4u/eZoomBook editors, and analyses the results and student feedback. The study concludes that the use of multimodal devices fostered student creativity and helped them better interpret their new environment. The tools required the students to elaborate hybrid productions in their story-telling integrating elements of both the host and the home culture. In this sense, the combination of the two tools served as a catalyst to connect the widely divergent aspects of home and host cultures.

Keywords

interculturality, language teaching, enhanced ebooks, mobile locative narratives, digital storytelling, heritage tourism, tourism fiction, sense of place

1. Introduction

Every year in the Masters' programs at Centrale Nantes Engineering School in Nantes, France, approximately 100 international students take part in school programs. These students do not know each other when they first arrive and their level of English varies from intermediate to fluent. Few have

lived in or visited France prior to their academic stay. 90% of the students come from outside Europe, with 80% from India and Pakistan. These international students need to integrate quickly not only to the new academic culture, but also to the day-to-day demands of the host country's cultural environment. These non-academic demands can be at times be overwhelming as the distance between their home cultures and European culture is wide.

To facilitate the integration of these students, the ECN language department decided to offer an innovative course to help them quickly develop the knowledge and skills for cultural integration. The premise underlying the course objectives is that integration can be facilitated by connecting the students' past cultural experiences with their present physical environment. Making students comfortable with their physical environment is a way to lessen the identity crisis that comes from being surrounded by the new and unfamiliar. The assumption is that appropriation of place will lessen the impact of being culturally uprooted and will help the international student make connections between the new environment and their own cultural heritage.

To bridge the gap of knowledge that international students have about the host country, and to facilitate the appropriation of their new environment, we propose applying digital story-telling to "heritage tourism" (which we will define below) as the means to foster connections between home and host cultures. Our assumption is that more familiarity with the physical environment will lessen the stress arising from being constantly surrounded by the unfamiliar. The findings of our experiment with heritage tourism will be summarized in relation to the analysis of the student productions and a 46-question survey sent to the79 students who participated in the exercise.

Our study is empirical and adds to an emerging interdisciplinary research field on the impact of digital narrative devices on cultural identity. We have focused our attention on the applications of digital storytelling to heritage tourism to take advantage of international students' impressions of the city and the advantages of having them design their own means for navigating their new location.

1.1 Heritage Tourism as a Facilitator of Place Appropriation

In comparing American, European and Japanese conceptions of space, Edward T Hall underlines the impact that space can have on foreigners when introduced to a new culture, and in particular the feelings of disorientation that these foreigners experience.

> "Those who travel and live abroad frequently get lost. An interesting feature of these complaints reveals the relationship of the layout to the person. Almost without exception, the newcomer uses words and tones associated with a personal affront, as though the town held something against him. It is no wonder that people brought up on either the French radiating star or the Roman grid have difficulty in a place like Japan where the entire fixed-feature pattern is basically and radically different. In fact, if one were to set out to design two systems in contrasts, it is hard to see how one could do better" (Hall, 1990, pp. 105-106).

Hall even concludes that spatial orientation influences every aspect of a culture. In the example below, he indicates the relationship between the highly centralized French road system and the structure of

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education in France.

> "There are those, of course, who will say that the fact that the French school system also follows a highly centralized pattern couldn't possibly have any relationship to the layout of offices, subway systems, road networks, and, in fact, the entire nation, but I could not agree with them. Long experience with different patterns of culture has taught me that the basic threads tend to be woven throughout the entire fabric of a society" (Hall, 1990, pp. 105-106).

Whether one agrees with Hall's hypothesis or not, the point is that there is a subtle, implicit, and underlying influence of space orientation on a given culture. While Hall's observations draw attention to the disorientation and feelings of being lost that inhabiting a foreign space can provoke, it is Durkeim who coins a term to describe this feeling of "uprootedness". Anomie results when one has cut the ties with one's native culture without having established ties with the host culture. The international traveler then exists in a no-man's land between the two leading to feelings of homesickness and dissatisfaction. Durkeim's anomie has been applied to language learning by Wallace Lambert (Lambert 1963, 114-121). Lambert describes the concept as follows.

> "Depending on the compatibility of the two cultures, he [the learner] may experience feelings of chagrin or regret as he loses ties in one group, mixed with the fearful anticipation of entering a relatively new group. The concept "anomie", …/…refers to the feelings of social uncertainty or dissatisfaction which sometimes characterize not only the bilingual but also the serious student of a second language" (Lambert, 1963, pp. 114-121).

As Western universities compete for international students, they strive to make their country, region, and city attractive and inviting. The university branding process is connected to nation branding, defined as "the strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capital through economic, political and social interest promotion at home and abroad" (Szondi, 2008, p. 5). For Gudjonsson, "nation branding uses the tools of branding to alter or change the behavior, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way" (Gudjonsson, 2005, p. 285), University branding capitalizes on nation branding to attract foreign students. International students' choice of place of study has importance in that it is often a combination of the academic reputation of the school, but also the quality of life of the city-region-country where the student will be living. Europe's rich historical heritage is a competitive advantage for attracting students. History largely defines European space. The past is implicit in the architecture, monuments, and street layouts. Unfamiliarity with European history places the international traveler at a disadvantage in that the lack of recognition of surroundings and their importance can lead to a feeling of being out of place and time.

Prentice (1993) combines the "sense of the past" with the "sense of place" reminding us that heritage is concerned with the interrelated interpretation of time and space, facilitating a sense of belonging. Heritage tourism, however, has been criticized for its reliance on nostalgia, which may lead to a fossilization of history rather than a fluid appropriation of the past. Melanie K. Smith, brings forth the view that "we must think not only in terms of the past, but also in terms of the present and future when

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planning and managing heritage" (2003, p. 99). In this experiment, handing over the production of heritage-based fictions to international students was a way to give them the opportunity of diving into the process of heritage making in a recreational way. While creative writing makes clear that the discourses produced belong to the realm of imagination, the workshop required that they present their research on the history of Nantes from their own perspective, both as newcomers and as 21st century inhabitants of the place.

1.2 Heritage Tourism Revamped: An Approach through Fictional Narratives

Robinson and Andersen research the link between literature and tourism (2002). One of their points is that literature unintentionally serves a "quasi-promotional role" (Robinson & Andersen, 2002, p. 40) by motivating readers to travel to the places that they have read about.

> "Novels, short stories and poetry can impart useful information on places but they do so unknowingly, unintentionally, and outside of the usual structured time-frames of tourist decision making. Images created through reading fiction in childhood for instance can remain with us into our adult lives, shaping our preconceptions of places and communities and our expectations of experiences. These images are built around constructs of space, allowing us to recognize distant and distinct geographies. But they also rest on admixtures of temporal and emotional constructs, such as remembrance, recollection, nostalgia, permanence, innocence and a range of subtle Proustian sensory sensations" (Robinson & Andersen, 2002, p. 50).

Stijn Reijnders (2011) develops the concept of "places of the imagination" around the idea that media fictions (including literature, but also popular shows, cinema, etc.) trigger specific forms of tourism, i.e., "media pilgrimages" to the sites where these fictions are produced. Specifically addressing literary fictions, Anja Saretzki creates a five-category typology of literary places:

(1)   Sites concerned with the biography of an author;

(2)   Places which provide the setting for a novel;

(3)   Themed visitor attractions associated with a famous literary figure or character;

(4)   Literary towns with an extensive literary repute (e.g. Dublin);

(5)   Story tours ("new way of exploring a city based not on existing novels, but by writing a historical novel or a crime story that can be downloaded onto smart phones").

Our project fits in the fifth category, i.e., "story tours" (Saretzki, 2013, p. 63). The emergence of "city story tours" shows how cities can capitalize on the different categories of literary places by offering thematic tours. Nonetheless, Anja Saretzki argues against the tours that participate in the "disneyfication of heritage or cityscapes" by "disembedding […] heritage from its traditional framing" (Saretzki, 2013, p. 69). She draws on Barthes's notion that novels generate a "reality effect" (1968), which "makes tourists less concerned with the distinctions between the fictional world of the novel and the historic meaning of a site" (Saretzki, 2013, p. 68). One can think of the success of Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*, which has led to the creation of a "Da Vinci Code tour" at the Louvre Museum that aimed at "rectify[ing] some of the [novel's] exaggerations". While Saretzki's cautionary note should be kept

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in mind to avoid any misinterpretation of history, story tours can be seen as an entry point or enticement to get students to interact with their environment in a way that is meaningful to them. In a pedagogical setting such as ours, the danger of taking fiction for fact is limited by the presence of the instructor and the group interaction and discussion.

In recent years, "mobile locative narratives" (Farman, 2013) have been in the spotlight of narrative studies (Ryan, 2014, 2015), and media studies (Jenkins, 2003), among other fields. These approaches highlight the potential of such tools for creating meaning in relation to place. Likewise, local institutions such as tourist information centers and regional institutions also have a stake in creating links between attractive fictional content and the places they promote. The synergy between narrative, touristic areas, and digital technologies is becoming more and more apparent to all parties. This is especially true in Nantes, as the city was labelled "French Tech capital" in 2014 because of its economic drive in digital technologies. Such events as the yearly "Nantes Digital Week" showcase start-ups—including Baludik—who propose innovative ways of promoting heritage through storytelling, and projects such as "hackathons" in which students from various disciplines brainstorm to find creative ways of enhancing the scenography of museums. For the language teachers involved in our workshop, importing this creative outlook in the class with the support of the start-up, Baludik, was a way of familiarizing engineering students with current technological trends in Nantes, while facilitating their cultural integration in the city on a more personal level. Precedents in the field of education include research on "multimodal and digital literacy" (Livingstone, 2004; Lapp, 2012), which acknowledges the necessity to acquaint students with digital tools for self-expression, learning and communication. An indication of this importance are keywords featured in university programs such as "transmedia storytelling" (Jenkins, 2010; Sangalang et al., 2013) and "digital storytelling" (Alcantud-Díaz et al., 2014).

2. Method

2.1 Presentation of the Tools

2.1.1 Baludik

Baludik was created by a start-up company headed by Jérémie Simon. Jérémie Simon's objective is to offer an app that allows you to create circuits with questions along the way. Each circuit offers a one-hop-at-a-time approach: when a tourist reaches a specific location, a GPS system confirms the location and presents questions of interest on the place.

The Baludik editor interface makes it possible to construct a step-by-step circuit, weaving in the questions and clues of one's choice: cultural questions, sports questions, historical questions, trivia, etc. When the circuit is ready, it is published on the platform. To access the content of a given circuit, participants stand in the precise spot where the circuit begins. The objective is to fulfil an objective or a mission involving finding flash codes, corresponding clues, and participant response to questions programmed into the app. When the mission is validated, the phone beeps and the next clue is made

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available.

Figure 1. Interface of the Baludik App (Note 1)

2.1.2 aPlace4U/eZoomBooks (eZB)

The prefix "aPlace4u" indicates here that tourism is the specific focus for the eZB methodology. An eZB is a multi-level electronic book incorporating different layers of content accessible by tabs in a menu. eZBs include a zooming in and out function allowing readers to navigate between the different layers of multimedia content. The eZB tool has been used for a number of pedagogical projects in higher education, primary and secondary school (Evain, De Marco, & Carolan, 2013; Evain & De Marco, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016; Bellay, Evain, & De Marco, 2017). The software was created by students and teachers at ECN and has been used in many different types of application in relation to literature and science.

The eZB editor allows anyone to create an eZB and to personalize the menu. The name aPlace4u has been given to eZBs which highlight given places and seek to allow an experience of place which goes beyond a touristic experience. The aPlace4u/eZB menu tabs can include a wide range of content such as an original work, summaries, vocabulary (words and phrases), translations, games, pictures, links to online resources (text, image, video, audio).

The main classroom use of eZB tool is to promote reading and writing, and to facilitate the pedagogical exploitation of multimedia resources. eZB also allows the development of curriculum materials for

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multiple uses (different targets, learning objectives and contexts). Finally, as eZBs focus both on a process and a finished product—an enriched book—, they foster the means of "learning to learn" by giving students more control over the learning process and establishing a powerful connection between the learning process and reading.

The combination of these two tools underlies the methodology to facilitate cultural integration through heritage tourism.

- The Baludik application offers the possibility of creating a collaborative information gathering exercise built around the idea of a circuit, with clues allowing for group interaction (hence the tourism applications and place/heritage applications). As part of this experiment, our students had a license to use the Baludik editor and create the circuits of their choice.

- The eZB is a multimodal e-book (multi-level, free navigation, recommendations to steer the learning path towards an effective adaptation to reader's abilities).
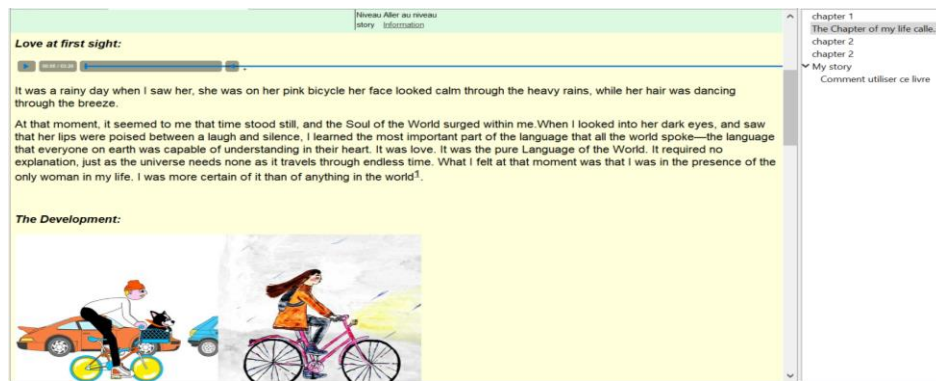
Figure 2. Screenshots of Three aPlace4U/eZoomBooks Designed by the Students

The Baludik app and eZB software can also be supplemented with other tools such as photovoice (Mcgovern) for a sound and visual coverage of the final event.

2.2 The Baludik-aPlace4U/eZB Challenge

The project was named "the Baludik-aPlace4u/eZB challenge". The learning objectives included English language practice in a collaborative context, text mediation, the promotion of creativity and originality, the effective use of the tools (electronic book creation and editing).

79 students from the following countries participated in the project: India and Pakistan (65 students), China (6), Russia (1), Iraq (1), and various European nationalities (6). The age of the students was between 22 and 29 years old, with 91 per cent male and 9 per cent female.

The project required the students to work in groups to produce both an aPlace4u/eZB and a Baludik circuit of tourist sites in Nantes. The project provided an opportunity for group work and development of collaborative skills such as team-building, creative thinking, observation and problem solving. Our goal was to measure the benefits of the experiment of weaving history and cultural heritage into a story-telling production for cultural integration.

The preparation work involved reading, researching, summarizing, presenting, explaining existing material and creating original material through translating, writing. At the end of the semester, during and event called the "Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge", the students were to test each other's circuits and eZoomBooks, according to a set of rules defined by a group of students called "the organizers". The challenge took place in downtown Nantes on the last day of class. The development of a circuit using the Baludik tool included the following requirements.

-        The circuit had to last less than an hour with a minimum of three stops (with GPS coordinates), within walking distance of one another;

-        The questions linked to the stops on the circuit had to be connected to a given theme and to the eZB stories: each Baludik team needed to pair up with an eZB team for the circuits and stories to be linked. While the two activities—circuit and eZB constructions—remained separate, the communication between the two teams was necessary for the circuits to function in tandem with eZB stories.

-      Two historical figures and one foreign character experiencing Nantes needed to be included into the stories.

The groups of 6 to 8 students were composed of one team of organizers (in charge of running the event), one team of "reporters" (in charge of reporting on the preparation of the event and the event itself), six eZB teams and six circuit teams. The group of organizers defined a set of rules, which included which teams would compete against one another and how they would score points. They also "coached" the teams whose goal it was to produce eZBs and Baludik circuits. The eZB and Baludik teams' work involved them in defining the locations of their story and circuit and then liaising closely to allow the circuit questions to reflect the eZB story. In order to move beyond the Saretzki criticism of disneyfication of stories, the students were encouraged to produce an original, personal and culturally appropriate text and enrichments. Instructor feedback guided the students' efforts.

The evaluation of the project was based on peer evaluation and teacher evaluation of an end-of-semester presentation of each group. The feedback was collected through a Google survey. The questionnaire was developed to evaluate student satisfaction and to obtain feedback on the experience. The questionnaire was rather long and extensive to obtain a maximum of information. The analysis was qualitative and descriptive. In this sense, the aim was exploratory and intended to determine the overall strengths and weaknesses of the approach for future research.

Out of 32 hours of total class time, 24 hours were devoted to the preparation of the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge: five 4-hour sessions were dedicated to group project work, with 4 hours devoted to oral presentations of the finished eZoomBooks and Baludik circuits. The remaining 4 hours were used for the "Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge" day. Student-generated resources were shared on a padlet (https://www.fr.padlet.com/vermamayank293/thebaludikchallenge).

3. Results

3.1 Student Production

The students produced hybrid forms of discourse—game + story telling. This was expected as it was part of the brief. The length of the stories ranged from 3000 to 5000 words. They were divided into chapters. The first chapter served as an introduction and the last as a conclusion. Most stories included multimedia enrichments. The articulation, subject matter, and enrichment material of the stories are summarized in a table on our website (Note 2). The groups were composed mostly of Indian students (70%) which culturally impacted the story-telling process (Note 3).

The Baludik/eZB groups worked together as instructed and the stories influenced the city circuit construction. Without the eZB story-telling component, the Baludik circuit would have just been a game of factual questions which would have had little importance except for the quiz aspect.

The stories were original and reflected what the students' cultural perspective of the new place they had moved to, i.e., "Nantes". It was a hybrid form of discourse where their background culture merged with the new information they were receiving. It also gave them authorization for a cultural appropriation of

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Nantes. Humor was generally sought throughout the exercise: the students enjoyed playing with history, including funny comments and jokes. They allowed their stories to include anachronisms and unlikely events in order to enhance the humor. For example, in "A Time Riddle", the protagonists move from Mumbai to Nantes and interact with figures such as Napoleon, right in the midst of the Second World War.

Both the eZB and Baludik tools are digital making it easier to connect the two tools and to implement the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge. No physical preparation is required to set up the challenge (no placing of clues in the various locations of the circuits, no printing out of the stories). Multimedia effects can be produced at any location of the circuit, thus adding to the impact dimension of the challenge and the range of sensorial effects that the students can build into the stories and circuit. Digital devices that stage territories' cultural heritage have become a significant trend in recent years, as stated by Jessica de Bideran and Patrick Fraysse (Bideran & Fraysse, 2005). Juliette Dalbavie, Émilie Da Lage and Michele Gellereau (Dalbavie et al., 2016) have highlighted that guiding tools using narrative scenarios facilitate visitors' appropriation of the heritage sites and objects that they seek to promote. These scenarios foster identification with the first-person fictional character of a quest.

The pairing of Baludik and eZoomBook teams required the students to combine not only two different technologies, but also to superimpose and articulate two discourse types aiming at different purposes. On the one hand, mediating a selection of heritage sites for their classmates using narrative devices on the Baludik app. On the other hand, on eZoomBook producing engaging stories inspired by the places that could be read for their own sake and inspire readers to visit Nantes. We suggest that such an experiment as the eZoomBook-Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge makes it possible to articulate fictional material with historical elements in a fluid and dynamic way, combining the imaginative appeal of fiction with more traditional didactic material while distinguishing the contents. For instance, in addition to the feedback gathered on site during the tours, factual information about the locations could be included to the eZoomBooks, making use of the multi-layer functionality of the editor. However, few students took advantage of this functionality, using only one layer dedicated to the story. Obviously, to quote Saretzky, creating story tours aimed at visiting a city is tantamount to "doing heritage" (even at the scale of one class), and historical accuracy should not be overlooked.

The addition of eZoomBook gave the story writing part a special emphasis, and took it, even, a level further; the students wrote comprehensive narratives to support the circuits, with objectives focused on literary creation. Since the instructions mentioned that each story should include a foreign character experiencing Nantes, the texts produced could be defined, as a genre, as fictional travel writing, some of them including features of the detective story. Both the creative license and the possibilities of the digital tools allow for humorous interaction amongst students who naturally weave in elements of Nantes, turning them into a common reference. It is a well-known fact to neuroscientists that humor is a memory facilitator, thereby leading us to suppose that the facts about Nantes constructed into the stories were likely to be remembered and appropriated by student groups.

Overall the teams' scriptwriters displayed appreciable creative skills and sometimes unbridled imagination, which shows that they did not feel limited by the place branding requirement in terms of literary creativity. This showed in particular in the plots, i.e. when Brittany's most celebrated Duchess Anne de Bretagne meets the world of Harry Potter through the mention of her lost "horcrux"—supposedly hidden in her parents' tomb inside the Cathedral of Nantes—in the introduction of the plot. Although the irruption of fantasy showed little concern with historical accuracy in this case, it has the merit of raising the question of the distinction between story telling aimed at cultural mediation, and location-based creative writing. Are these compatible? The students' cognitive filter became apparent in some of their creative writing. The love story written by one group of Indian students had a Bollywood-in-Nantes feel to it. Many of our questions concerning their cognitive filter remain unanswered. For example, how does the colonial history of the student's countries affect their perception of Nantes? Indian students will have a different perception of France than they have of England in regard to colonial history.

This leads us to suggest another idea for future aPlace4u/eZB and Baludik activities. Drawing inspiration from methodologies used during recent "Hackathons" dedicated to promoting culture and heritage (Note 4), we could plan an intervention by historians or heritage specialists at the beginning of the semester, and perhaps a guided tour, with the specific prospect of preparing the workshop. The students might pay extra attention to the visit and be more willing to ask questions to the guide if they had in mind that they would subsequently have to write a story about the places that they are touring.

3.2 Feedback: Student Satisfaction

3.2.1 Mapping the Data Obtained through the Google Survey

Student feedback was collected via a Google Survey and included 43 questions. This data, along with the teacher and co-author observations, and discussion with the students, allowed us to analyze the strength and weaknesses of the project and suggest improvements for future editions of this project (R-A approach). The questionnaire included information on the student's profile, cultural background, and reading habits as well as open and closed questions on student perception of the process and final presentation of the project. The questions on project perception were worded to be easily understandable to international students. Representative responses to the open questions are given here as written in order to preserve the authenticity of the material.

All the students' verbatim were fed into a tree-cloud-construction software. The results mapped up the verbatims in the form of a tree cloud that highlighted key recurring elements: "persons", "points", "location", "eZB", "App" and "that depends".

The students express their understanding of the connections, leading us to think that they perceive themselves to be at the heart of the experience. Their verbatims in tree-cloud form maps out the fact that their comments show the move from the merely factual to the experiential.
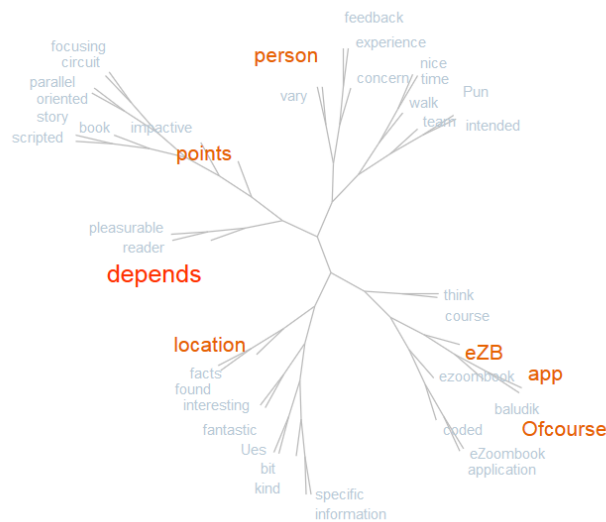
Figure 3. Tree-cloud of the Answers Extracted from the Google Survey

The tree-cloud emphasizes connections between:

- person and experience: the word "person" is often used in the same context as : feedback, experience, intention,

- points of interest and circuits,

- locations and specific information, the eZB and Baludik tools.

The students said that Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge provided an opportunity for them to pay more attention to details. It also made them aware that they often wander about the city of Nantes with little sense of history. It encouraged them to have more of a sense of history: a sense that things are in flux, things change. Places are constantly evolving and altering. And that's what gives people a sense of history. The students said they were "looking for something" while wandering through the city; they were made aware that they needed to "observe things": the density of the newness sometimes makes it impossible to process their environment. The guided selection process that the tools help them make—a process taught inductively—makes it possible to ignore irrelevant details and select the things that they can make sense of. This leads to the "time-space compression" mentioned earlier on, which the students experience first-hand.

In one of the eZBs (called "A Time Riddle"), the "treasure" is time itself. At the end of a quest in which time travelling is largely involved, the protagonists experience a supernatural state of consciousness as time passes before their eyes in fast forward. They see how Nantes's cityscape has evolved through the centuries. At the end of the journey, they conclude: "These were the pieces of the treasure. The biggest treasure is time".

Because of the huge technological advances we have experienced, people have a sense of our epoch being the most important, the most significant, which is a falsehood. By doing exercises like the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge, teachers give their students a sense of history and a sense that things

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change and evolve across time and have evolved significantly and that will continue to be so.

In preparation for the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge and indeed during the challenge itself the students expressed a certain humility in terms of the way they judge their own place in history. Perhaps the activity encouraged them to be less arrogant and complacent about this particular epoch; their comments do seem to indicate that they gained a sense that they were just another milestone on a journey. The discussions we had with the students after the activity highlighted the following perception in their part: Although the rate of technological achievements has increased exponentially, we haven't "just arrived" and this isn't "the moment when we've achieved all". There was a before our time and there will be an after. This perspective is valuable for society but also available for individuals not to have a complacency or hubris about the present epoch.

3.2.2 Analysis of Key Questions

The complete questionnaire is to be found on the blog: https://www.ezbresearch.hypotheses.org/workshops-with-centrale-students.

(1)   "Do these tools help to create a 'wow' moment during the tourist visit?" (Question 28)

The instructors had monitored classroom interaction and paid special attention to the language of the students. For example, the expression "wow moment" was one that the students themselves had used in class and so it was included it in the questionnaire.

There was an overwhelming majority of students who responded "yes" to this question: 2 "no" and 2 "not really / not yet", 3 "maybe" 13 "no answer" and 41 "Yes/ of course" (with or without extra comments).

Verbatims:

"yes at the points when we actually found new facts about the location"

"yes depends on the ezoombook"

"yes indeed, makes it more pleasurable"

"Yes, if the eZoombook application was properly coded."

"Yes, they are very fantastic."

"As far as my feedback and experience is concern I had a really nice time.(Except We had to walk more than every other team. Pun intended.)"

"Yes, they do. A well scripted story or book with parallel oriented circuit focusing on the impactive points."

These comments reveal:

- Some criticism of the eZB interface as being not user-friendly enough,

- Enjoyment of the task and excitement about discovering places that were not new to them but that had never been examined in a historical and cultural perspective of place,

- Appreciation of putting together a tourist circuit and a story: the stories produced had been read by the class before the challenge and made further sense during the circuit because of the link with places.

(2)   "When you're given a text to read in relation to a place that they visit" using Baludik, does that

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enhance your personal perception of the place in question?" (Question 29)

There was some discussion as to what was meant by "personal perception", but, overall, the students felt they were more engaged with the places they visited thanks to the two apps. This can be deduced from the following figures in response to question n°29. 45 students responded "Yes, [when given a text to read in relation to a place, one's personal perception of the place in question is enhanced]".

The verbatims are in keeping with the quantitative results. Although there was no obligation to fill in the comment box and few counts were collected, the verbatim show an overall positive response. Given the 45 "yes" to question n°29, we can suppose that the people who didn't detail out their answer (because perhaps of the sheer length of our questionnaire) would have given a positive comment if they had taken the time to comment.

Verbatims:

"Imagination is wild, so yeah…

It depends on the text.

It really enhanced a lot which made us to think in a complete different way.

"No, it doesn't enhance your personal perception because your personal perception is by definition, personal. It gives another point of view about the place but it should not influence your personal perception."

Yes, it does it gives me new prospective to look at the place

Yes, makes you more immerse in the place

Yes, if the text is comprehensive enough it does orient one's vision

Yes. It was so amazing to explore the unknown places.

You surely get to know something about the place for sure and it may intrigue you with the facts and historic information if you are into it.

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(3)   "If it does enhance your creative response to the text, do you: imagine the place in a different time/Do you think that happened in that place/Do you want to share your comments or your excitement about the place/Does it leave you speechless, in awe…?" (Question 30)
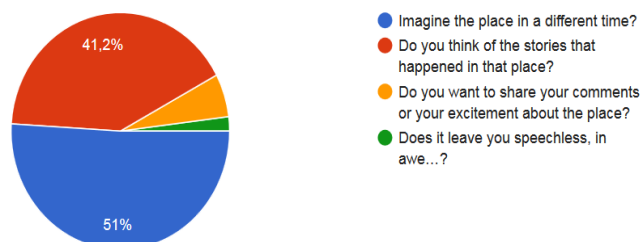

Figure 4. Diagram of the Students' Answers to Question 30

When using the app, 51% of the students imagine the place in a different time and 41% think of the stories that happened in that place. Thus, the app seems to stimulate the students' imagination, mainly in giving them a sense of continuity and change: the historical elements of a place are present in the students' minds when doing the circuit: in response to the questions asked, historical figures and places often came up. These references also came up in jokes and humorous comparisons. And most importantly they were included in the eZBs produced for the challenge. This seems to indicate that students are sensitive to places marked by time.

(4)   "Does your perception and discourse about the place change as a result of having visited the place and done the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge?" (Question 31)

In response to this question, an overwhelming majority responded positively: 58 "Yes" (with or without extra comments), against 5 "no" and 5 "not really", 3 "not sure" or "I don't know".

Verbatims

"It can give you some insight on some aspects of the place that you hadn't necessarily paid attention to in the first place.

Yes, possibly. It is interesting to visit locations in a specific order and associate it with a story. It makes the exercise more memorable.

Get to know the history

In fact it did. Before I didn't knew about few places in the list. But now we know all those places and we are very aware about the history of those places.

Some memory in addition

Yes, we have a clear idea about the place once visiting it, and knowledge about its history if the Baludik speaks about that.

Yes, if the circuit was properly written, in a challenging (example: riddles) way.

Well we can say that one would be able to catch the details about and around the place which would be missed otherwise.

Yes it was nice doing the challenge with some tools in hand, making the best out of it!

Of course you tend to have more information about the place by default.

Not so much but yes i got to see new places

Yes, in a positive way

Yes. It rekindled my inside Indiana Jones :)

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(5)   "How does the challenge compare to a traditional guided tour? Is it: less enjoyable/equally enjoyable/more enjoyable/complementary?" (Question 33).

33. How does the challenge compare to a traditional guided tour? Is it:
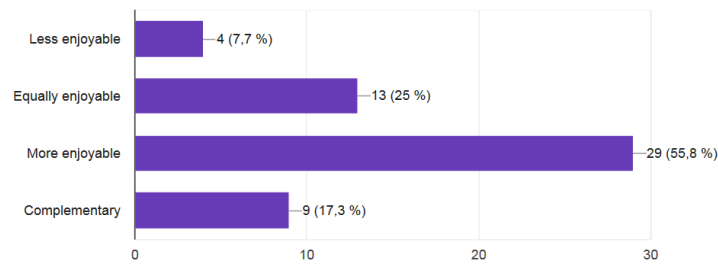
52 réponses

Figure 5. Diagram of the Students' Answers to Question 33

This question was prompted by our desire to understand the teacher's role: should he/she be organizing traditional tours or ask the students to produce circuits with the app.

4. Discussion

The students' feedback allowed us to identify the following areas of improvement for the challenge using both Baludik and eZoomBook: the circuits need to include more tasks in relation to local people; we need to emphasize the link between the eZB software and the Baludik software; we need to aim for higher standards for the story writing and cultural research. In particular, the narrative and storytelling need to be placed in the perspective of historical facts and accurate information. This is possible by making use of the multi-layer functionality of the eZB editor and making it a project requirement. In the future, we would also like to set up links with cultural initiatives and events for the student production to be uploaded on a well-known collaborative platform

Our revised pedagogical objectives include:

- Developing a greater awareness of different epochs among students
- Fighting against a misconception concerning the present being superior to the past
- Creating a greater sense of bonding within the group
- Using the eZB/Baludik tools and methodology in conjunction with other digital tools

Our objective was that by participating in the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge students would gain an awareness of history and its influence on culture. The response to the questionnaire shows that students are sensitive to places marked by time as it stimulates their imagination in many ways. It also helps them to develop a sense of a collective shared history, even if it is not the history of their home country, but rather the history of their host country. The Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge is a shared experience of embarking on the discovery of Nantes through a student-driven circuit. The shared experience adds depth to their historical understanding because of peer interaction through questions, riddles and stories. Student comments seems to indicate that the experience had given them a sense of heritage which was indeed one of the main objectives of the project: all that has gone before should not be ignored or jettisoned, because there are things we can take from the past that have value today or will have value in

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the future. Laying the foundations for the theory of reception in literary studies, H.R. Jauß (2010) formulated the notion of a dynamic history of literature, in which each epoch is derived from the previous rather than following a linear progression (thus according to Jauß, modernity is neither superior (positivist view) nor inferior (conservative view) to the past). By designing a fictional experience based on the interpretation of the place heritage, we suggest that the students have gained a more distanced, less chrono-centric perspective on the era that they are living in. Not only did they gain knowledge of the past through their research, they also learned how to process this knowledge creatively in order to integrate it into their vision of the present times.

From the point of view of language, combining circuit tools with an enriched story-telling tool encourages the emergence of a hybrid form of discourse. The production of such a discourse requires the selection and processing of information, which leads to better opportunities to highlight different aspects of a new culture.

Finally, the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge is an experience which connects group members to a new place—a place they wished to come to, because of the reputation of the university combined with place branding, a place they perhaps imagined differently and which, upon arrival, surprised them both positively and negatively. Although they come from different horizons, the students now have "Nantes" in common: the Baludik/aPlace4u/eZB challenge brings that home to them, perhaps in a way no other classroom activity does.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

Note 1. https://www.baludik.fr/fr

Note 2. https://www.ezbresearch.hypotheses.org/workshops-with-centrale-students

Note 3. If the other nationalities had been better represented, it would have been interesting to keep "nationality" as a variable and monitored the results accordingly. Here we need to accept that the classroom constraints led to a predominance of Indian cultural perspective in the eZB stories.

Note 4. These include: Hackathon Memory (https://www.openagenda.com/annee-europeenne-du-patrimoine-culturel-2018/events/hackathon-memory-du-chateau-de-la-tourlandry?lang=en) and the "Hackéologie" Nantes Digital Week (http://www.nantesdigitalweek.com/evenement-2018/hackeologie-etudiants-chercheurs-ont-carte-blanche-chronographe/).