

Projekt Project: Berlin 2015

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In the first week of November 2015 we ran the first assessed version of our projection teaching method.

Preparation

As described in the last report we prepared the students beforehand with a prototype demonstration and all lectures on the course had been structured around slide presentations. With the prototype we demonstrated the types of questioning and theorising which can arise in this highly unusual situation. Glenn and I also gave a walking presentation on the first night of the field trip along Unter den Linden where we projected on key sites:

- Fernsehturm (Television tower),
- Marienkirche (St Mary's Church)
- River Spree and Schlossbrücke,
- Berliner Schloss reconstruction site
- Lustgarten,
- Neue Wache,
- Brandenburg Gate



Image: Coventry students gathered at the Neue Wache Wed 4th Nov 2015

Assessment Brief

Each student was asked to choose a site in Berlin to research and prepare a projected presentation according to the assignment brief below. Most of the students prepared their presentations in advance and were familiar with the appropriate programmes such as PowerPoint. Their computer literacy assisted in the smooth delivery of this project.

Assessment 1.

Project Presentation (50%)- students will make a video presentation on their findings from their desk and field research in situ in Berlin.

Presentation.

Working in alone or in pairs students are required to make a short visual presentation with spoken commentary of 5-10 minutes about a place or site in Berlin of their choice.

Students will be required to research the history of their chosen location and using appropriate written and visual materials to:

- explain the rationale behind their choice of location
- present the key facts about its history
- offer an account of its role and significance in Berlin past and present

Using portable Pico projectors supplied by tutors students will be required to project their visual presentation materials onto their chosen site in situ in Berlin from Ipads, Laptops or phones.

Sites

Students worked alone or in groups at the following sites.

- Bernauer Strasse Berlin Wall memorial – (Shelley Harrington, Shanise Sharpe, Courtney Evans, Annalise Cowan)
- The Reichstag building, now the Bundestag – (Anya Hussain, Jack Miles)
- Berliner Philharmonic (Edward Hale)
- Checkpoint Charlie (Eliott Sheppard, Rachael Hobbs)
- Kunsthaus Tacheles, an infamous alternative arts centre - (Izabella Leszay)

Reflections

1 - Unter den Linden tour: November 4th 2015 [8.00pm – 10.00pm]

Our tour acted as a keynote for the trip and the method. Despite the logistics of herding an audience of 20 it kept student attention and vividly illuminated the past of the sites we visited. Significantly, this 'first night Berlin orientation' provided the students with an entirely outdoor experience, contrasting with the largely indoor tour that we had used to demonstrate the application of the projection methodology in Coventry. Away from the university setting and in the open air, the collective encounter with the city and the chosen

landmarks resulted in a strong sense of purpose throughout the evening. Students showed real interest in examining the use of projection on buildings as a teaching mode and of a peeling back various contextual layers. We were very encouraged by the serious minded questioning and discussion at projection points and during the walks in transit.

The projections which worked the most effectively were the ones with the strongest parallels or contrasts to the present e.g. images of Nazi rallies in the pleasant park area of the Lustgarten, the East German car park on the site of the reconstructed royal palace, the devastated Brandenburg Gate of 1945 on the walls of todays corporatized tourist destination.



Image: The culmination of the Unter Den Linden tour on the first night orientation, AP projecting upon the Brandenburg Gate.

2 - Student presentations: Saturday 7th November 2015 [5pm – 9.30pm]

Student presentations were given on the penultimate night commencing at first dark.

Most of the students were well prepared, mainly armed with facts rather than theories or concepts. They all visited their chosen sites several times in preparation and had gathered and edited appropriate images. In relation to last year's group, the student commitment to research was much greater. Their factual knowledge, historical insight and an emotional connection to their materials was also much deeper.

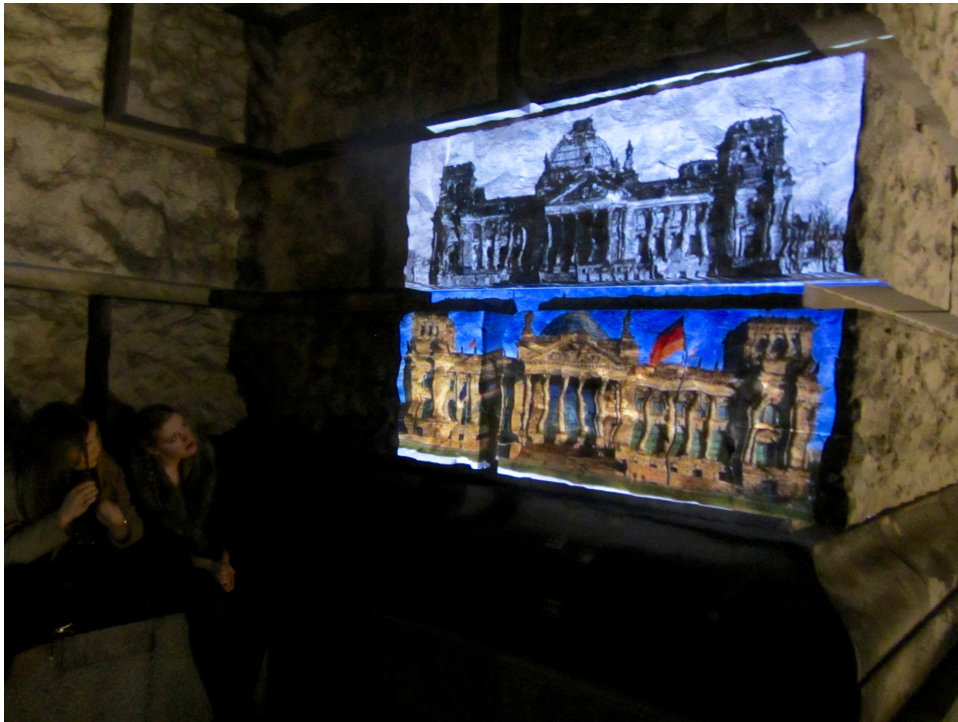


Image: Anya Hussain and Jack Miles presentation on the Reichstag/Bundestag building.

The weaker presentations were a little mechanical, facts read from a script with sites simply used as screens and not as palimpsest. Despite this, some visual materials and juxtapositions were striking, drawing the attention of passers by. The creative potential of the projections was under utilised.

The stronger presentations used the projections creatively to make connections and integrated prepared research with research on site. The most ambitious conceptually, looked at the fall of the wall from the perspective of movement studies around the notion of “the step”.

The night-time atmosphere and vivid visual display kept the attention of the students who appeared receptive to the method. From our perspective the projection method deepened student engagement, knowledge and retention.

Student feedback

We organised a debrief two weeks after returning, with the responses below.

How did the use of the pico projectors affect the trip?

There was something really special about learning about locations on site - when we were stood at the Brandenburg Gate on the first night and we had the images projected on the stone showing the different histories of it - it was so powerful and deep!

To have had ‘taught content’ in Berlin on the walls and floor of the locations we were in was so important to the atmosphere and purpose of the trip. It was totally immersive - I get that from a theatre point of view, but it was very moving and I felt an additional sense of serious thought being there and projecting the history, the stories on the actual

stone of the very sites.

The projection presentation up at the wall site made me realise so much about opposition against oppression and how people overcome situations. The images of the graffiti were works of art and they were so powerful - and to have them projected on the actual wall - the actual thing that divided them and that they fought against was incredible.

I loved how interested the general public were in what were doing - there was a brilliant vibe having people stop and come and watch for a while.

It opened up for me the possibility of public lectures - it was like site specific performance, people was generally interested and engaged and wanted to listen to our presentations.

The little projectors were so helpful and useful for delivering the presentation - they were really effective at making us give the information importance. It was so much more - it wasn't like a PowerPoint.

I found it terrifying in Berlin to project what had once been, in places where there is now nothing - it highlighted devastation and loss. It was incredible to be stood where Hitler had addressed the masses and project the very image and see the specifics of where we were, what had happened.

It was so out of the ordinary to be studying, to be taught outside with projections and images on the surface of such important and significant buildings.

To be honest, when I am sitting in class, I will be polite and respectful and listen to presentations, but when we were out and about and I was listening to you guys, I was REALLY listening and interested - not wanting to miss bits even though we were outside and freezing! I was like - Wow!. It was great to walk them around, they are so portable and accessible.

You just remember things more because of it - I can remember the specific pictures and images at which site they were presented - some of them are burnt onto my eyes!

It does something to the way that we listen and watch - It is psychological... the atmosphere was really special.

At the Neue Wache - when we where there and Adrian was speaking, there was the acoustic coming back at you that you would never get in the classroom, and with the projector I had a sense of being involved in something really special - something that probably hadn't been done before.

I think the projectors are really good in the way we used them - but I could see it being over used -there needs to be a real reason for the projections, for the images.

I wish we had had more projections to be honest. They do work in the daytime because of how strong they are - we could huddle around them to see.

I think having them there and being able explore the 'how' to use them in site was really interesting. It was like a purpose to be there in itself.

Having the ability to suddenly stop and have a quick visual lecture was like being there in 'the book - in the guide' immediately having information, images was brilliant.

It would be cool to have more than one projector with us - like three or four, it would be like having a collective exhibition with stuff on loads of different surfaces.

The projectors enhanced the trip in a really creative way... they... I can't explain.... I went back through the site we projected in the next day and I felt like I was part of the site, a part of the history of the site (laughter) I was really proud that people had seen us doing the presentations there and had probably talked about us and what we were doing. It felt like a performance there that mattered...

Whilst using the portable projectors, the repeated process of projecting historic photos onto historical buildings really hit home the importance of these buildings. Putting pictures on landmarks like the Brandenburg gate, and the Reichstag building gave a context that is unparalleled on an educative field trip. The best example of this was what is becoming a

museum of African art. Its own history was something I wasn't aware of, but the different purposes of the space were communicated brilliantly through being able to see what they were through the last hundred years. The very humorous transition from palace to carpark is something I doubt will ever leave me.

Conclusion

The projections fulfilled some pedagogic aims extremely well.

- Enrichment of the learning undertaken on the field trip in broad terms.
- Archival, web and interview based research both in the UK and in Berlin.
- Investigation of creative potentialities of presentation modes and forms
- Direct engagement with broader contexts (Urban planning & design, architectural, historical, socio-political, cultural, palimpsest analogy) whilst on 'performing arts focussed' international field trip
- Performative and interventionist possibilities of portable projections and presentations.

We need to make more detailed preparations and issue students with projectors to experiment with beforehand and on site. Also, we will need to emphasise the creative potential as well as the presentational and point students towards existing creative work with projections.

Technical considerations:

- The 'finger swipe' functionality of tablets/ipads is both a really satisfying visual transition and effective operation, however with the Bluetooth dongle, this transition is lost, replaced by a 'click insert' from the projector. Because of this we continued operation with a HDMI cable link between projector and tablet, which brought other restrictions. We hope to resolve this with the alternative projector and hope to preserve the mirroring of swipe transition.
- The length of the HDMI cable is something to consider in the meantime!
- As the pico projectors require an external power source for mobile use, a longer power lead to the battery cell is required so that the battery may be carried in a rucksack or pocket to reduce the amount of handling weight and 'juggle'.
- The Lumens strength of the projectors was very impressive considering their size and has proved capable of facilitating 'dull' daytime projection – any further increase in the lumens capabilities of these pocket (or small portable) projectors should be followed and considered.

- Equipping students with projectors with which to trial their presentations and undertake R&D style testing of images and material in site ahead of presentations is to be encouraged. In addition to this, multiple projectors would, as mentioned by students during debriefing, facilitate a plural/gallery installation approach to presentations.

The Next Steps

Evaluate student reflective assignments (submission December 9th)

Disseminate findings

- internally DMLL/PA/CSAD/CU
- key partners in Berlin (HTW/HZT/Kunst am Spreekniefestival)
- externally - to be discussed (we need to name the process and take some ownership)

Develop method in A204PA Berlin field trip module

Refine walking-talking-projection-technique- GN/AP create definitive model

Acquire more projectors for students (Antony Weir)- we currently have three.

Discuss wider usage –pedagogical, creative, commercial including with Berlin partner universities.

Discuss potential combinations with other technologies including sound, beacon and telepresence.

Funding –

We need to identify funding sources to dedicate more time to this method, including equipment, dissemination and staff buy out. Current deadlines for Pump Priming/Equipment grants/CSAD research grants are too short. DMLL?

