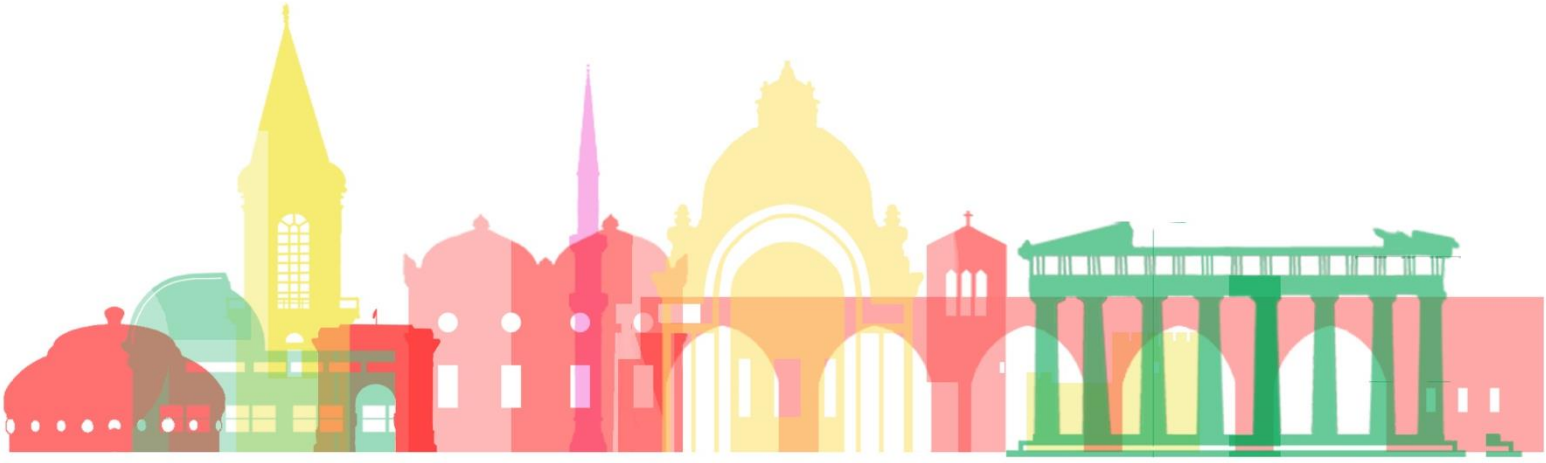
PALIMPSEST CITIES

GAMIFICATION AND STORYTELLING FOR ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AWARENESS

ÇOK KATMANLI ŞEHIRLER: MIMARLIK TARIHI VE KÜLTÜREL MIRAS FARKINDALIĞI IÇIN OYUNLAŞTIRMA VE HIKÂYE ANLATICILIĞI

Evaluation Report (1)

Written by: Klaudia Allajbej (INNOVED)



INTRODUCTION

The “Palimpsest Cities: Gamification and Storytelling for Architectural History and Cultural Heritage Awareness” project is a higher education project designed primarily for architectural students, with a broader focus on fostering inclusion and diversity across all educational fields. Many people are unaware of the rich history, layers, values, and stories of the surroundings of their cities. This is particularly true for underrepresented groups such as the disabled, refugees, and those with lower incomes, who often don't get the opportunity to explore and appreciate these aspects. Consequently, some buildings are left abandoned, and the cultural significance remains unknown to many, except for the physical landscape.

To address this issue, the Palimpsest Cities project emphasizes the need for change in our education system and aims to develop a new curriculum/ course for architectural history and cultural heritage awareness. This course involves incorporating innovative and creative approaches, utilizing digital tools extensively, and exploring techniques like gamification and digital storytelling to make learning more engaging and accessible.

The Palimpsest Cities curriculum was developed and followed by the testing of lectures and implementations, along with an evaluation of the impact of this new approach. To facilitate this process, an evaluation booklet was created to guide both online and face-to-face assessments. Initial testing involved the distribution of questionnaires, followed by engaging focus groups with instructors and students actively participating in the course implementation.

METHODOLOGY

The tools employed for testing lectures and implementations, as well as evaluating the impact of the new curriculum. Initially, four questionnaires were devised—two for instructors and two for students. The first set was administered before the initiation of the Palimpsest Cities course, while the second set was completed after the course implementation. This approach allowed us to assess the evolution of knowledge, measure progress, gather feedback on the course experience, and determine overall success.

Following the questionnaire phase, both instructors and students engaged in focus groups post-implementation of the course and questionnaire. This additional step was taken to cross-check responses and obtain more robust insights into the success of the Palimpsest Cities course.

DISCLAIMER

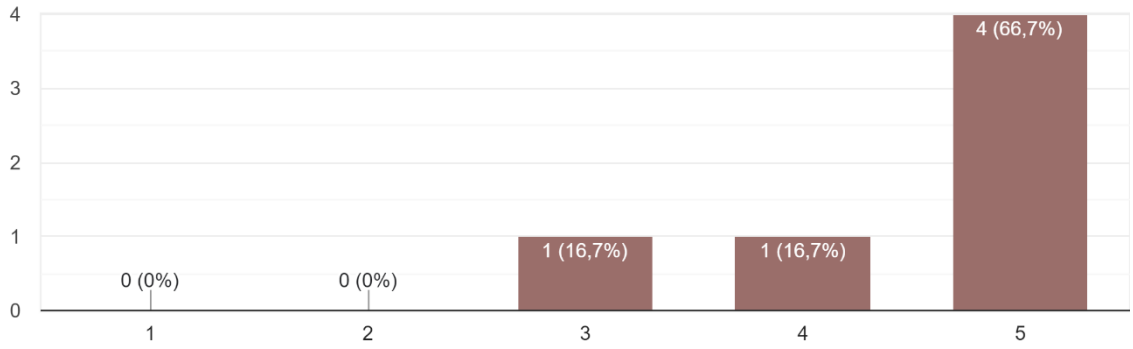
QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (INSTRUCTORS)

Six instructors from AHEP and ITU University answered the questionnaire anonymously.

1. What is your current level of knowledge about architectural history and cultural heritage in the region around your university? (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

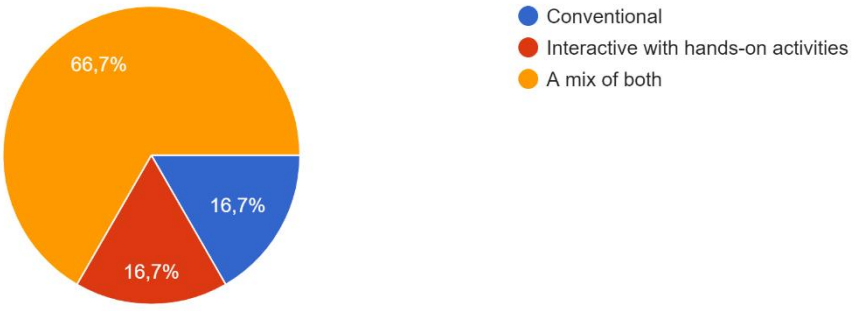
6 απαντήσεις



Among the six instructors, four expressed a high level of knowledge about the history and cultural heritage of the region of their university. One instructor considered their knowledge to be good, while the remaining one described it as moderate.

2. Your teaching style, before the “Palimpsest Cities” project and course, used to be:

6 απαντήσεις



In terms of their teaching styles, four instructors mentioned employing a blend of both conventional and interactive methods with hands-on activities. One instructor identified their approach as predominantly conventional, and another supported an interactive style with hands-on activities.

3. Are you satisfied with your teaching style (the one you answered in the previous question)? (1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-Neutral, 4-Quite, 5-Very)

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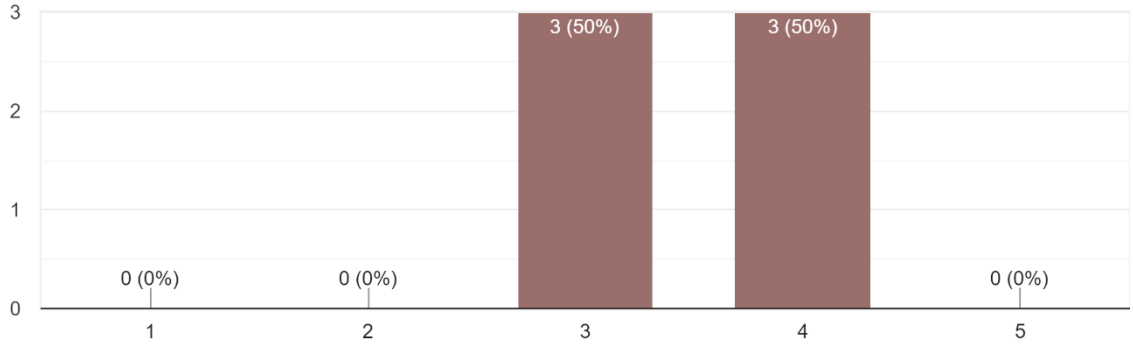

Half of the instructors expressed considerable satisfaction with their teaching style, while the remaining half indicated a neutral stance.

4. Before the “Palimpsest Cities” project and course did you know about gamification?

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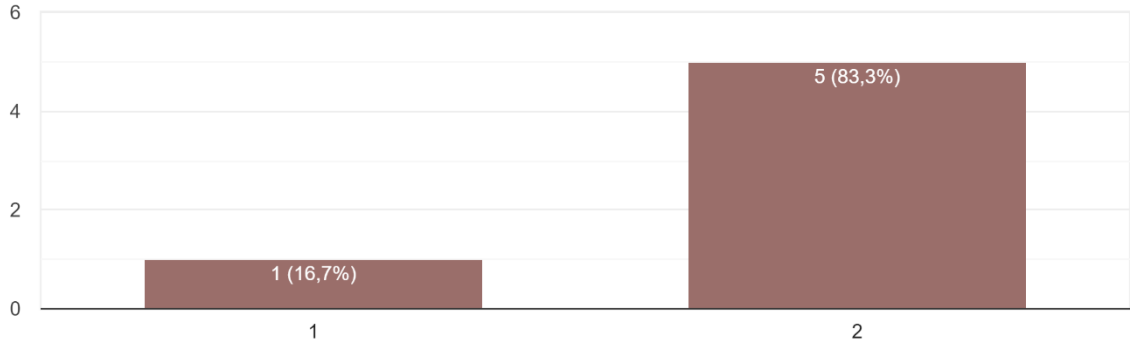
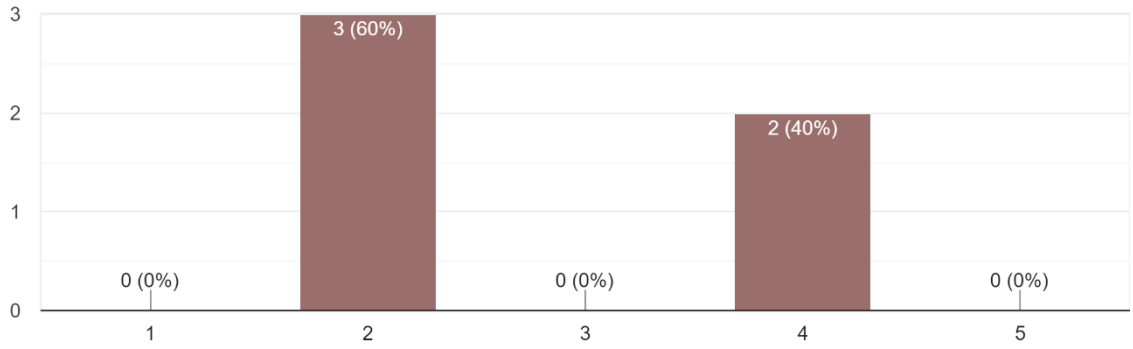


Before the Palimpsest Cities course, five instructors were familiar with the gamification technique, while only one was not aware of it.

5. If you answered “Yes” in the previous question, rate your knowledge of gamification from 1 to 5, with 5 being high. (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

5 απαντήσεις



Among those who indicated awareness of gamification, four mentioned having a good understanding, while the remaining three stated they had a low level of knowledge.

6. Before the “Palimpsest Cities” project and course did you know about storytelling?

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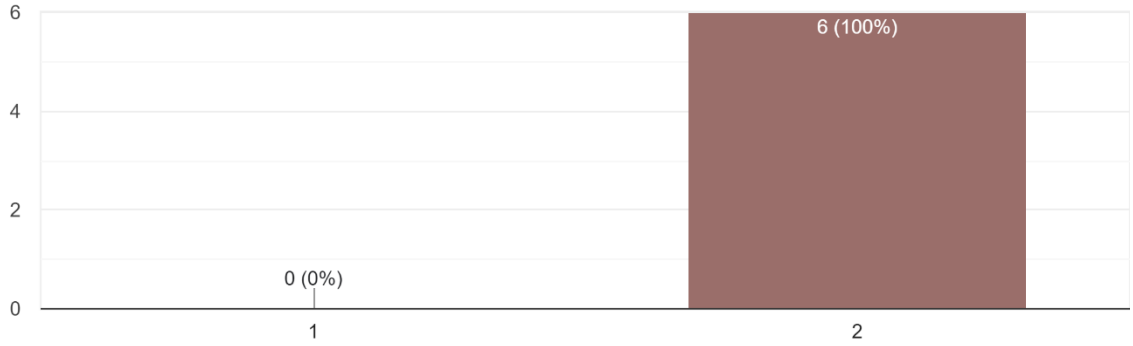
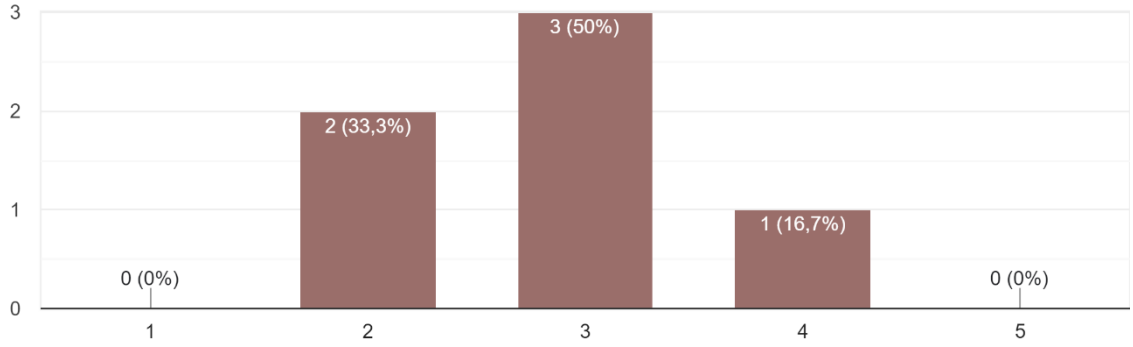


All instructors stated that were familiar with storytelling technique.

7. If you answered “Yes” in the previous question, rate your knowledge of storytelling from 1 to 5, with 5 being high. (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

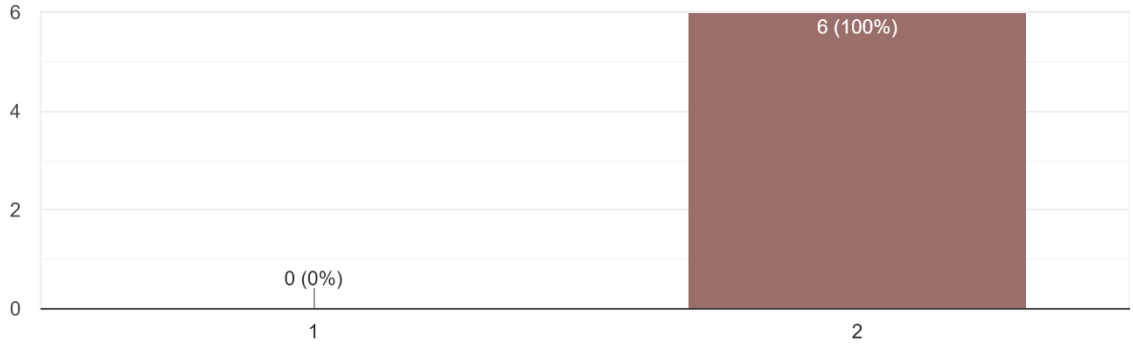
6 απαντήσεις



One instructor claimed to have a good understanding of storytelling, while three mentioned a moderate level of knowledge, and two expressed a low level of familiarity.

8. Are you comfortable using mobile applications and digital tools for educational purposes?

6 απαντήσεις



All partners agreed that they were comfortable using mobile applications and digital tools for educational purposes.

9. Can you name some of the applications and tools you’ve been using?

- Timeline Travel, Khan Academy, MS Teams

- Google Classroom

- Timeline Travel, Padlet, Photoshop, iMovie, PowerPoint

- We used the project of google earth, students wrote articles for Wikipedia, so they couldn't copy from there, nothing special

- Kahoot, Miro

- Navigator, Peek, Google Maps, Google Forms

10. Do you have any fears regarding the implementation of the "Palimpsest Cities" course?

- I wonder if the students will enjoy it or not. I am a bit concerned about the workload that they will have, as they were very used to being passive. I am also concerned about the timing of the activities in the course. Since I am not experienced in model making, I am also worried about those specific weeks and I will mostly depend on other two instructors who will help me in that activity.

- I cannot be sure that students will be able to participate at a sufficient level.

- Only I am nervous about the workload. As it is an elective course, some students have a conventional understanding. They don't want to deal with different methods in an elective course. Perhaps this course could include not only theoretical but also practical teaching hours in ECTS.

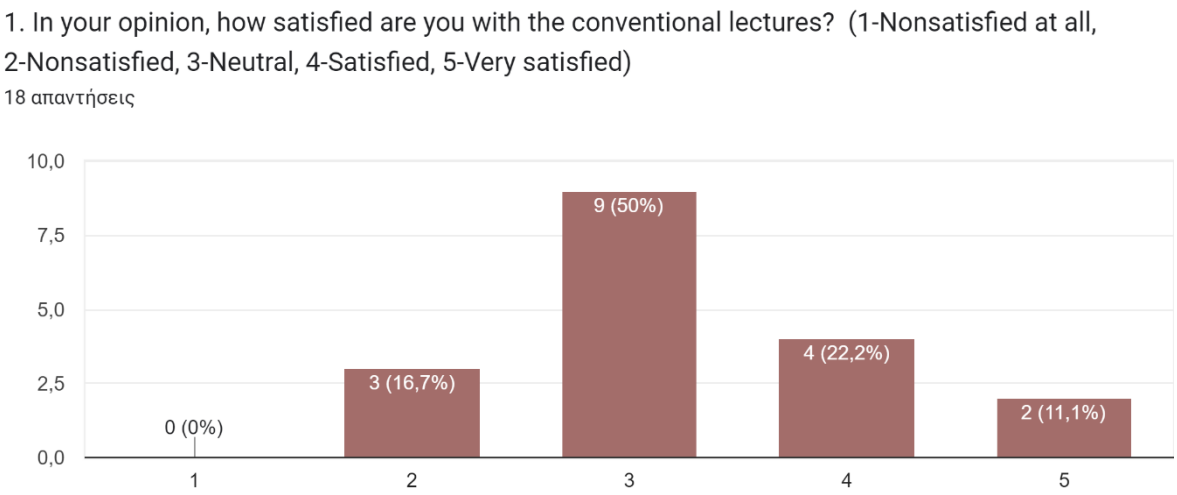
- Fear is funny. It is always good to get new inputs for the classes.

- I am concerned that the syllabus contains too many modules and tasks to cover in one semester.

- The program seems a little bit intense, and it seems that time management is going to be critical throughout the semester.

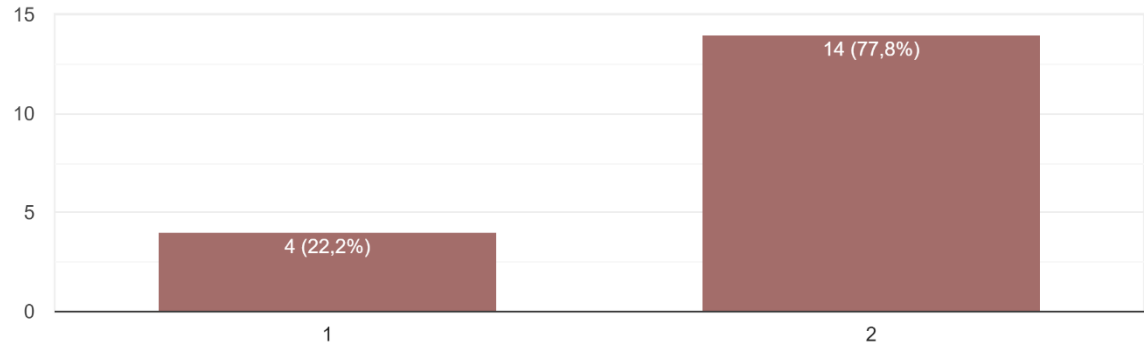
PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENTS)

Eighteen students from AHEP and ITU University answered the questionnaire anonymously.



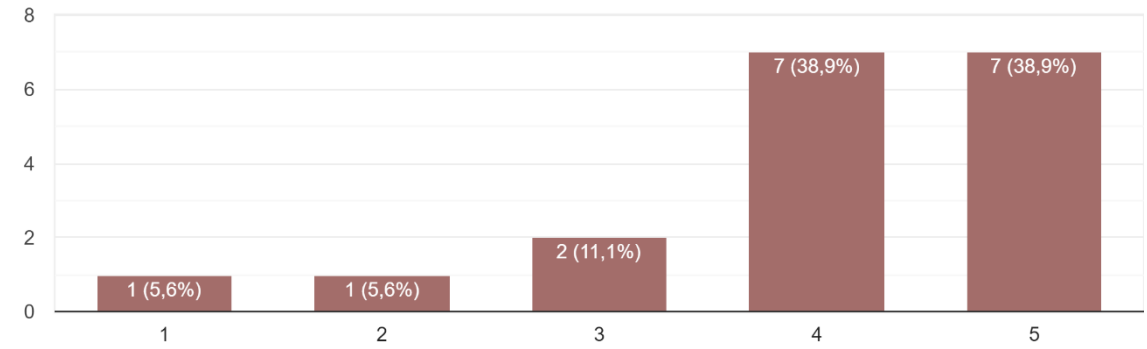
Among the eighteen students, two expressed being very satisfied with conventional lectures, four reported being satisfied, nine indicated a neutral stance, and three declared dissatisfaction.

2. Are you open to using mobile applications and digital tools for educational purposes?
18 απαντήσεις



Fourteen students expressed interest in using mobile applications and digital tools for educational purposes, while four students did not express such a preference.

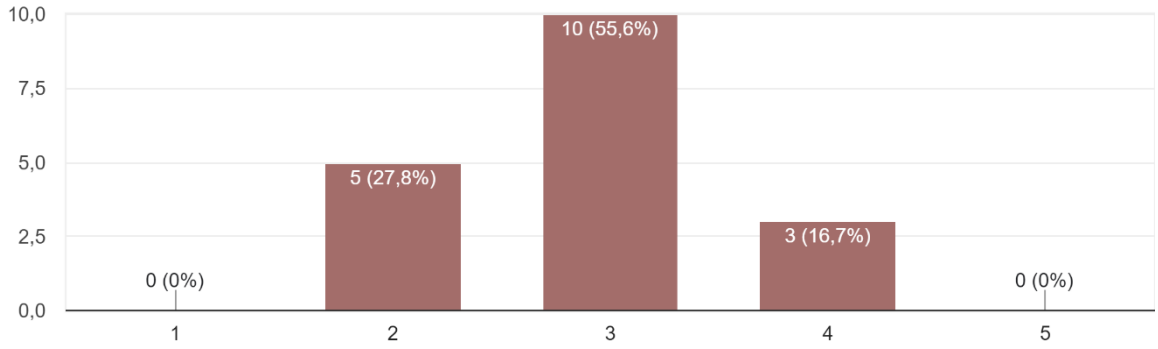
3. How interested are you in exploring the historical buildings and landmarks in the region where your university is located? (1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-Neutral, 4-Quite, 5-Very)
18 απαντήσεις



Seven students showed a high level of interest in exploring the historical landmarks in the region where their university is located, while another seven expressed a moderate level of interest. Two students remained neutral, one displayed a slight interest, and the last one showed no interest at all.

4. What is your current level of knowledge about architectural history and cultural heritage? (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

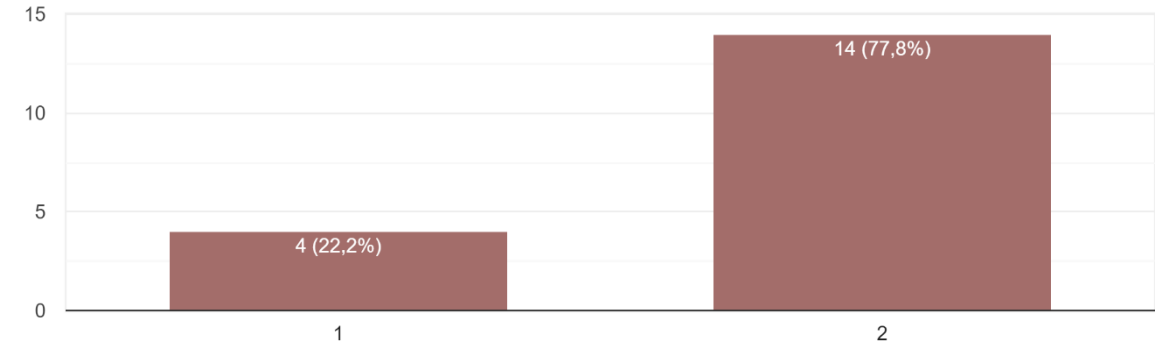
18 απαντήσεις



Three students said that possessed a good level of knowledge in architectural history and cultural heritage, while ten had a moderate level, and five had a low level.

5. Have you visited any historic sites or cultural heritage locations in the region where your university is located before?

18 απαντήσεις



The majority of students, namely fourteen people, have been to historic locations in the region where is located their university while four haven't.

6. How do you usually prefer to learn new information or concepts? (You can choose more than one option)

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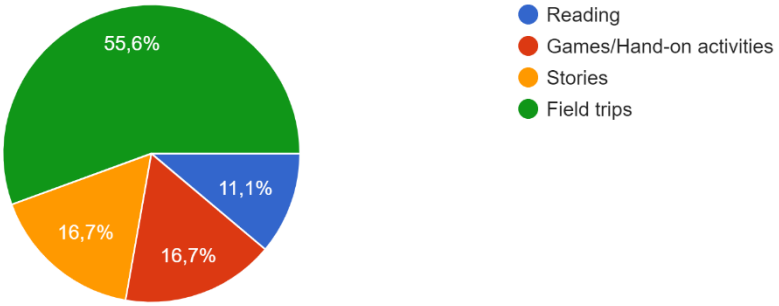
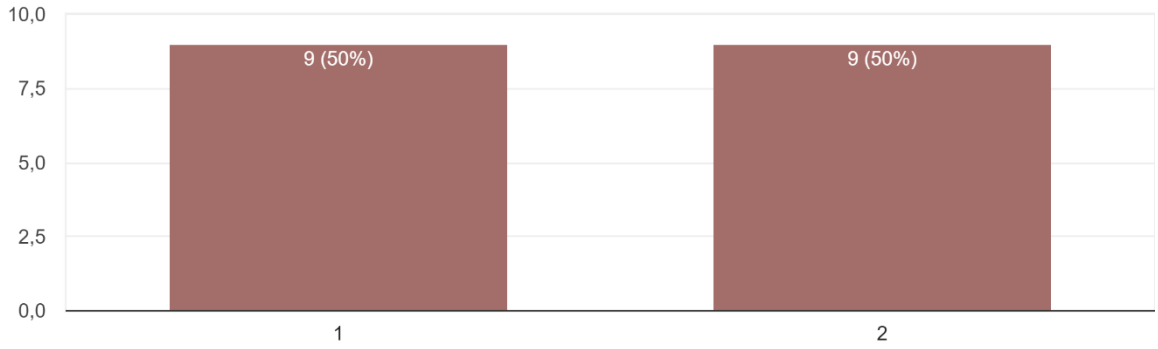


Among the students, 55.6% expressed a preference for learning through field trips, 16.7% favored stories, another 16.7% preferred games and hands-on activities, and 11.1% leaned towards learning through reading.

7. Do you know what is gamification?

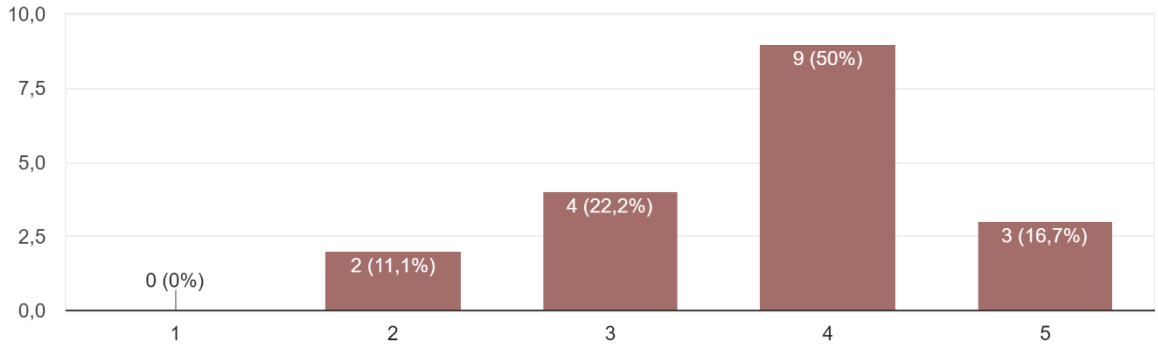
18 απαντήσεις



Half of the students indicated they were familiar with the concept of gamification, while the other half stated they were not familiar with it.

8. How interested are you in the idea of playing games as part of your learning experience? (1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-Neutral, 4-Quite, 5-Very)

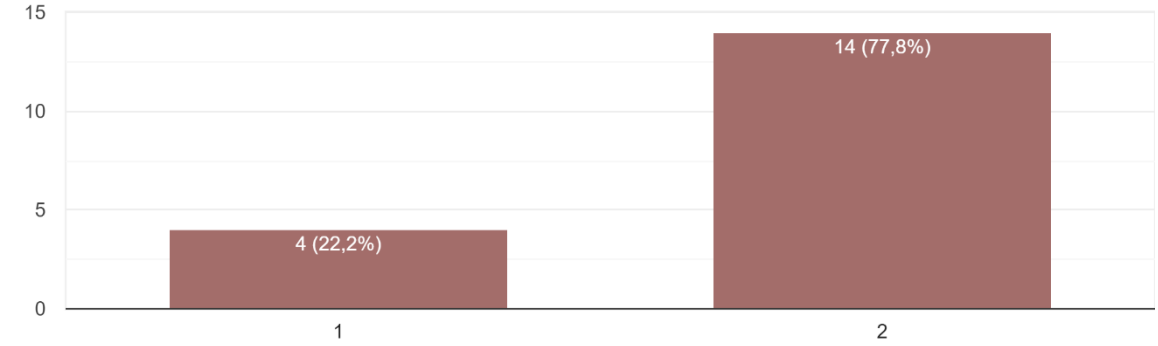
18 απαντήσεις



Regarding the idea of incorporating games into the learning experience, three students were very interested, nine were quite interested, four were neutral, and two were a little interested.

9. Are you aware of the storytelling?

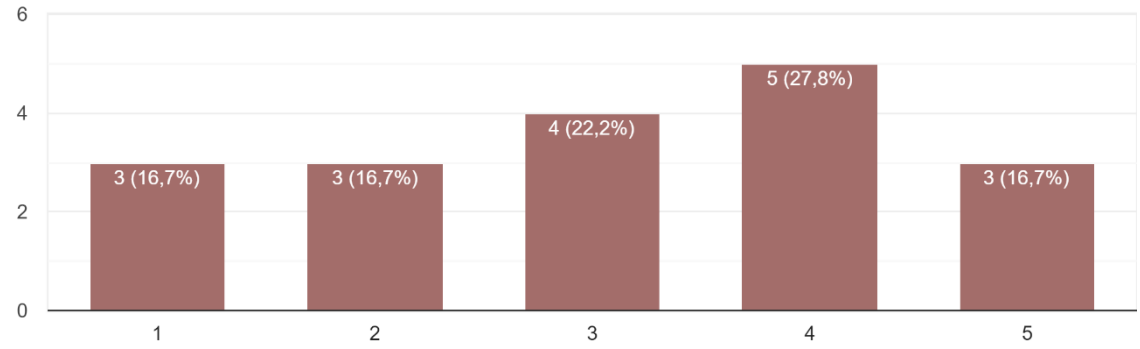
18 απαντήσεις



Fourteen of the students were aware of storytelling and the rest four were not.

10. How interested are you in the idea of creating a digital story/short film as part of your learning experience? (1-Not at all, 2-A little, 3-Neutral, 4-Quite, 5-Very)

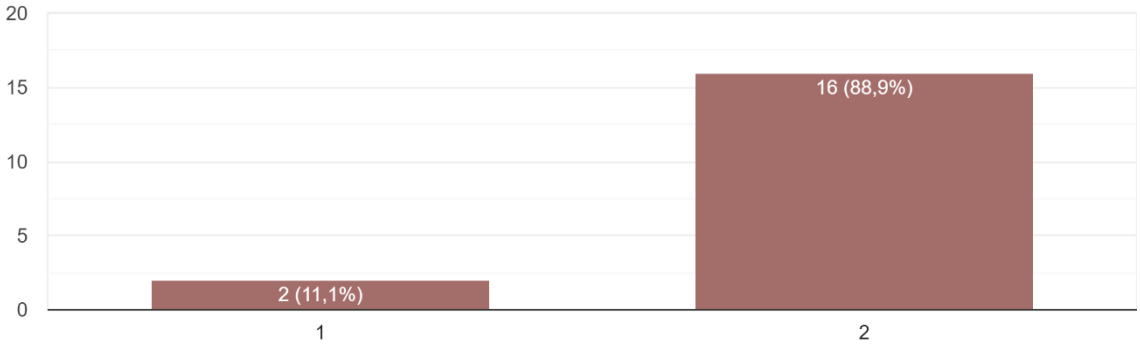
18 απαντήσεις



Three students were very interested in creating a digital story/film as part of their learning experience, five were quite interested, four were neutral, three were a little interested, and another three were not interested at all.

11. Do you expect this course to change your perspective on your city's cultural heritage?

18 απαντήσεις



Sixteen students expected that the Palimpsest Cities course would change their perspective on the cultural heritage of the city they study, while two did not believe that would be the case.

CONCLUSIONS (PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRES)

Instructors from AHEP and ITU University exhibited varying levels of knowledge about the history and cultural heritage in their university's region. Teaching styles among instructors also varied, with a majority favoring a blend of conventional and interactive methods.

Concerns and expectations were raised among instructors, primarily related to student enjoyment, workload, timing, and the elective nature of the course. Despite these concerns, a positive and open-minded approach towards receiving new inputs for classes was observed.

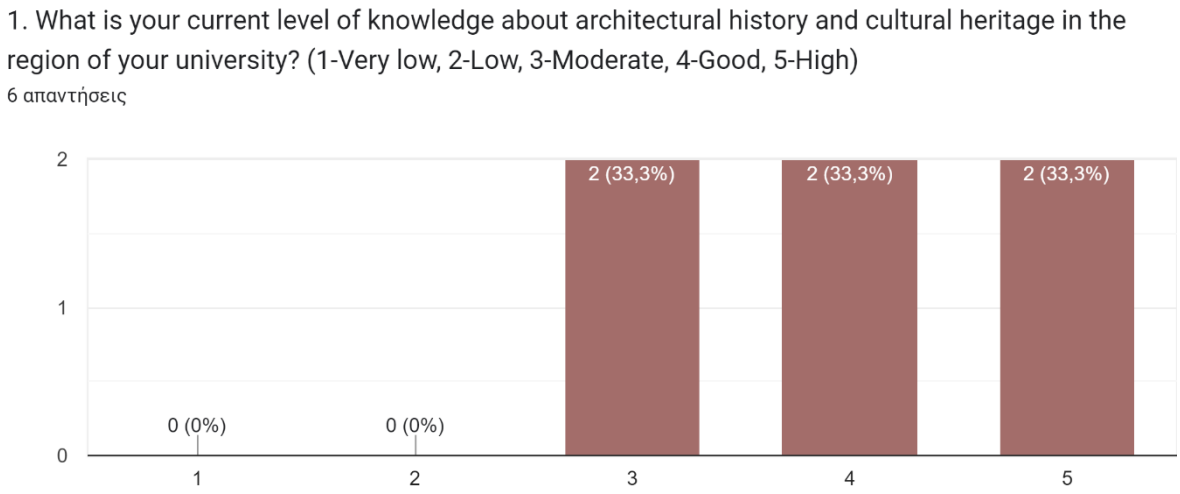
In terms of digital tools, instructors displayed comfort using various applications and tools for educational purposes, such as Timeline Travel, Khan Academy, MS Teams, Google Classroom, Padlet, Photoshop, iMovie, PowerPoint, Kahoot, Miro, Navigator, Peek, Google Maps, and Google Forms. Some concerns were voiced about the program's intensity and time management.

Students from AHEP and ITU University presented varied satisfaction levels with conventional lectures, with a notable proportion expressing interest in using mobile applications and digital tools for educational purposes. The majority of students had visited historic locations in the region where their university is located.

Learning preferences among students indicated a preference for field trips, stories, and hands-on activities. Awareness of gamification varied, and interest in incorporating games into the learning experience was mixed. A significant number of students were aware of storytelling, and their interest in creating a digital story/film varied.

AFTER-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (INSTRUCTORS)

Six instructors from AHEP and ITU University answered the questionnaire anonymously.



In terms of knowing about the history of buildings and cultural heritage in their university's area, we noticed a 33.4% drop in the "High" category. Meanwhile, the "Good" option rose by 16.6%, and the "Moderate" option also increased by the same percentage. This shift is puzzling since the pre-test indicated that instructors initially had higher knowledge, and now it seems to have decreased.

2. Did your experience with the “Palimpsest Cities” project and course impact your teaching style in being more interactive?

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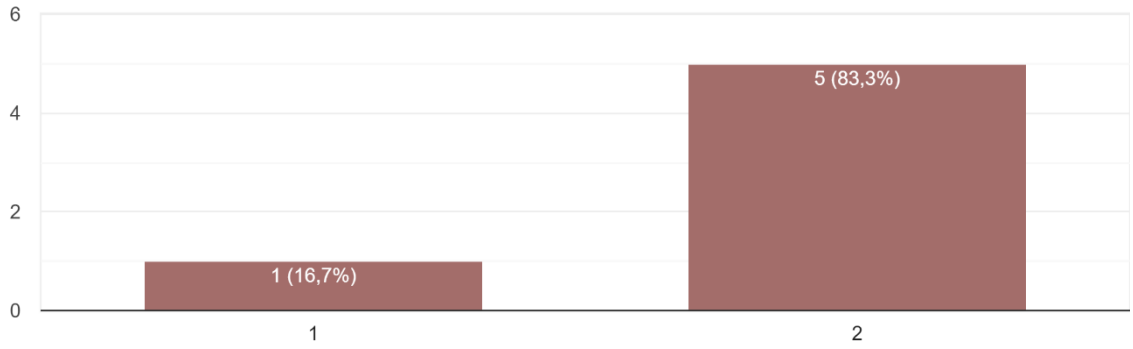
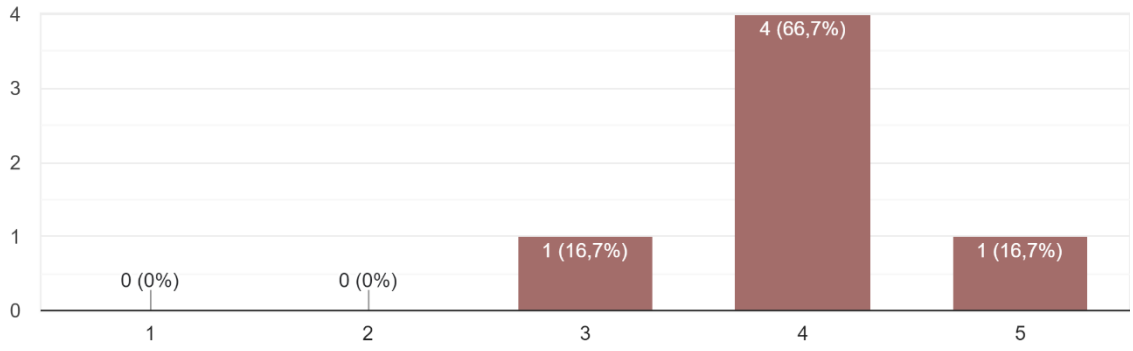


Five instructors, the majority, mentioned that the Palimpsest Cities course influenced them to make their teaching style more interactive, while one of them didn’t agree with that.

3. Rate your knowledge of gamification from 1 to 5, with 5 being high. (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

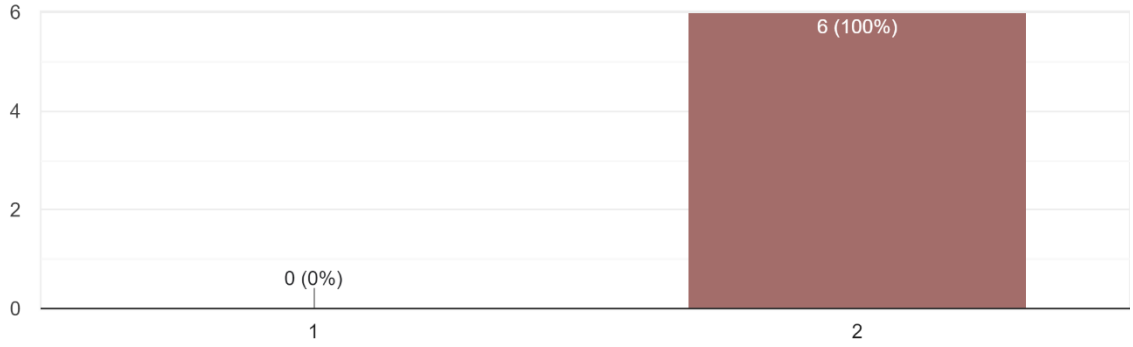
6 απαντήσεις



In response to this question, compared to the pre-test questionnaire, instructors claiming high knowledge in gamification increased from zero to 16.7%, those with good knowledge went up by 26.7%, those at a moderate level increased from zero to 16.7%, and those stating low knowledge dropped from 60% to zero.

4. Do you believe that the use of gamification techniques in the learning procedure was effective for your students?

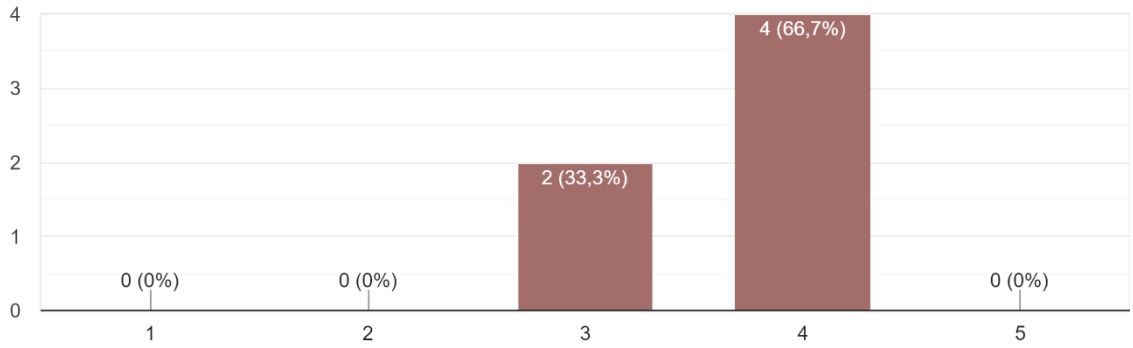
6 απαντήσεις



All the instructors believe that the use of gamification techniques, in the learning procedure, were effective for the students.

5. Rate your knowledge of storytelling from 1 to 5, with 5 being high. (1-Very low, 2-Low, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-High)

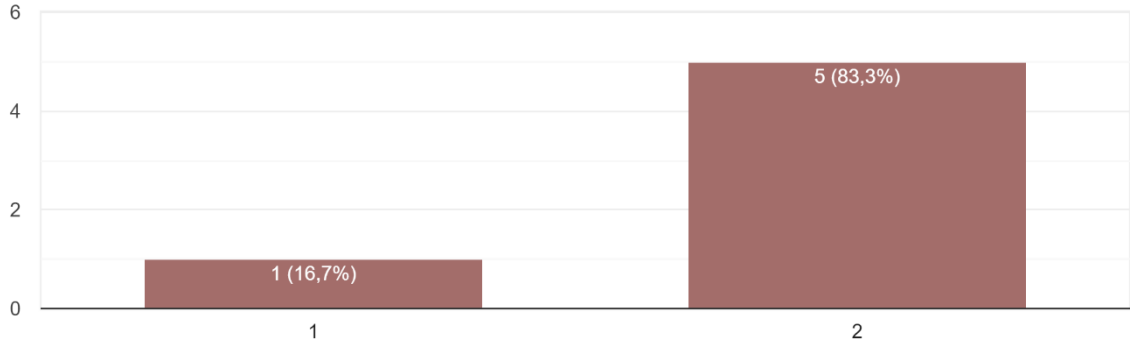
6 απαντήσεις



When it comes to rating their knowledge on storytelling, in comparison to the pre-test questionnaire, there's a 50% increase in instructors considering their knowledge good. Meanwhile, those stating moderate knowledge decreased by 16.7%, and those claiming a low level dropped from 33.3% to zero.

6. Do you believe the use of storytelling technique in the learning procedure was effective for your students?

6 απαντήσεις



Five instructors believe using storytelling in the learning process was effective for students, but one disagrees.

7. Please rate the “Palimpsest Cities” curriculum from 1 to 5, with 5 being excellent. (1-Very poor, 2-Poor, 3-Moderate, 4-Good, 5-Excellent)

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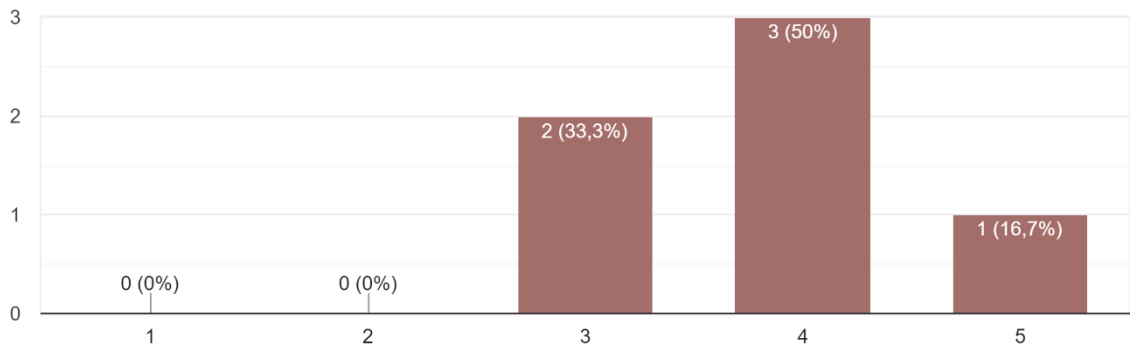

Out of the six instructors, one rated the Palimpsest Cities course as excellent, three said it's good, and two considered it moderate.

9. Are you willing to use the Timeline Travel mobile application in your future lectures? (1-No, 2-Maybe, 3-Yes)

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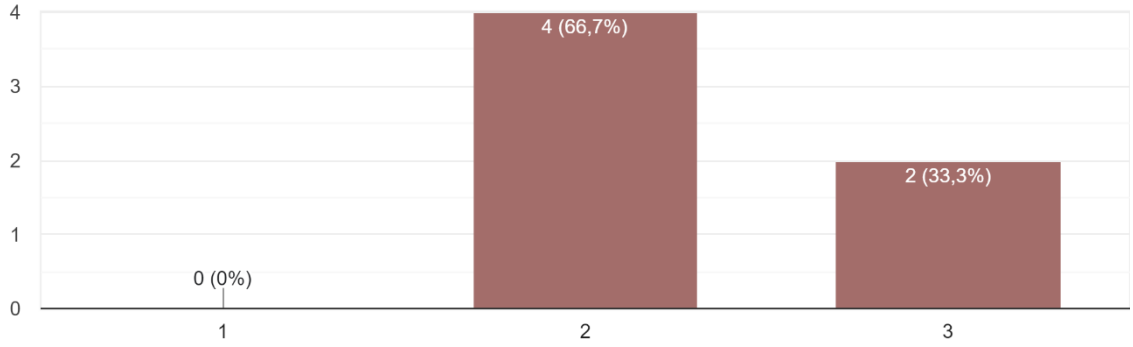

Two instructors expressed their willingness to use the “Timeline Travel mobile application” for their future lectures, while the remaining four said maybe.

10. Are you willing to implement the “City-on-Trial” workshop in your future lectures? (1-No, 2-Maybe, 3-Yes)

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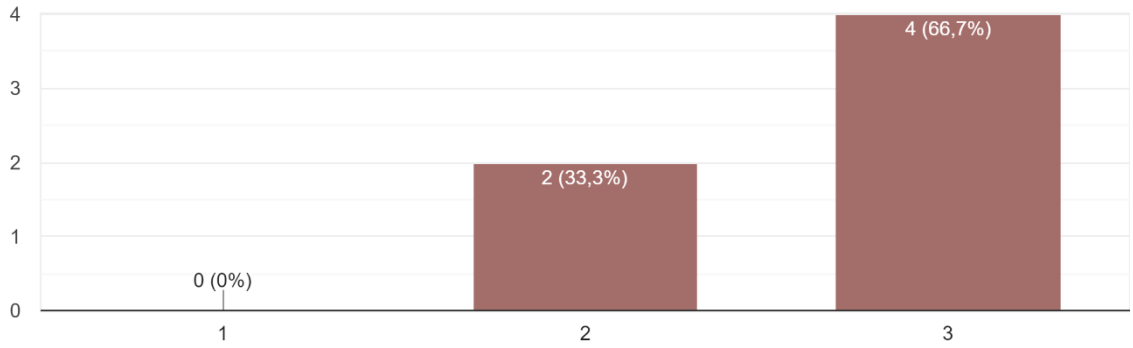

Four instructors expressed their willingness to implement the “City-on-Trial” workshop for their future lectures, while the remaining two said maybe.

11. Are you willing to implement the “Model of the Palimpsest City" activity in your future lectures? (1-No, 2-Maybe, 3-Yes)

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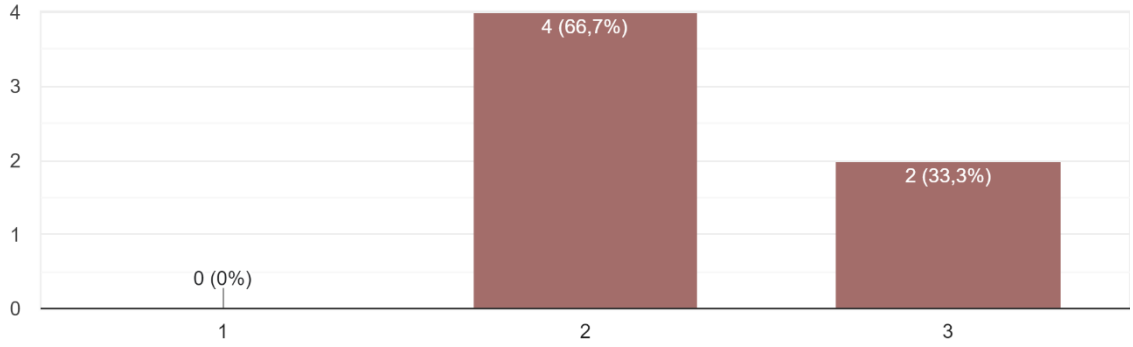

Two instructors expressed their willingness to use the “Model of the Palimpsest City activity” for their future lectures, while the remaining four said maybe.

12. Which teaching style do you believe helped your students the most in learning?

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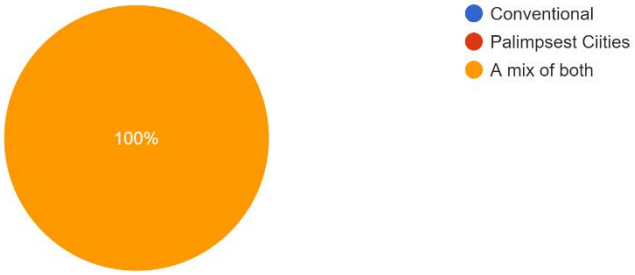


All the instructors unanimously agreed that a combination of traditional methods and the Palimpsest Cities course was most helpful for their students' learning.

13. Write your feedback regarding the whole course (e.g. what you would change, things that could have been done better, etc.)

- The curriculum is too intense.

- The curriculum was too intense. In the next courses, It would be good to cancel some of the modules.

- The curriculum consists of very rich modules. And supportive tutorial videos are provided in the project's website. Though I think its still very much up to the knowledge and experience of the tutor (or whoever is delivering the curriculum) that define the learning experience. That I think is the weakness of the curriculum. Also, evaluation principles can also be shared or even developed with the students.

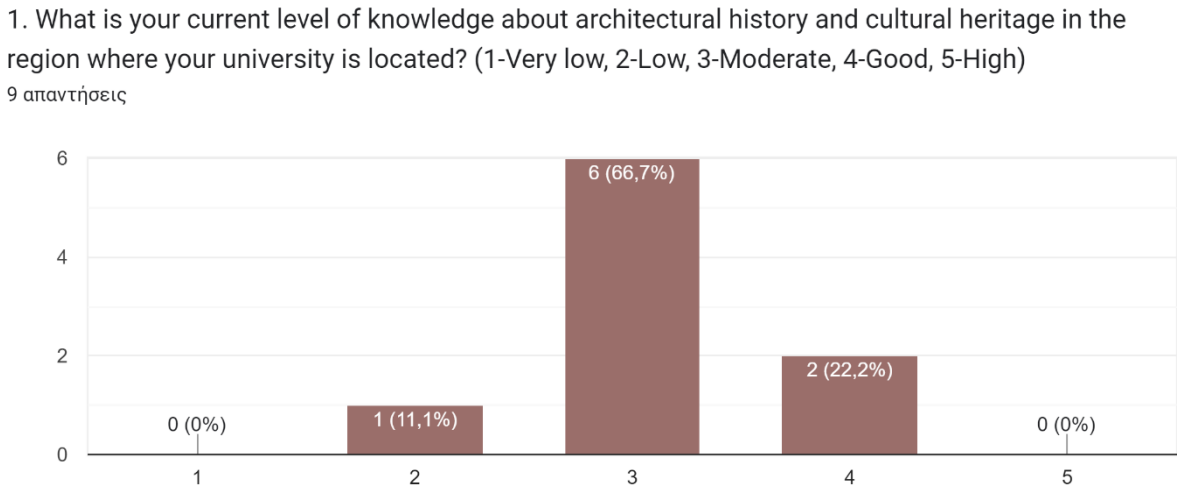
- The theoretical part in this kind of architectural history courses is important. Therefore, 1 or 2 weeks of lectures about the city and its architectural history can be added to the curriculum. Since the first two weeks of the semester are add-drop weeks, only in the 3rd week the number of students can be fixed. That's why many activities that we did in the first two weeks were not very efficient. The curriculum required too much effort for a 2 credits course and students were not willing to meet these requirements. The number of field trips should be increased.

- The students should get some sort of information in the old style way, maybe 3 weeks. I think that gamification should be a part of the curriculum and not the whole content. So the course should not explode with games. The students should invent themselves games. Timelinetravel has positive and problematic sides as the students create the dots but they do not create the content-just copy it- and in the end, they only know some points on the map (maybe). The model we tried was a good trial but too many persons working on one big model is probably not something that should be done the whole time. "Model" should include many variations, the same is with the films, the semester was too much packed with modules so in the new courses we could do them alternatively, for example, the film and model modules could be exchangeable. So they spend more time on one. The timeline Travel could be mixed with the writing of a wikipedia article so they cannot copy from wikipedia...

- Mixing modules

AFTER-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENTS)

Nine students from AHEP and ITU University answered the questionnaire anonymously.

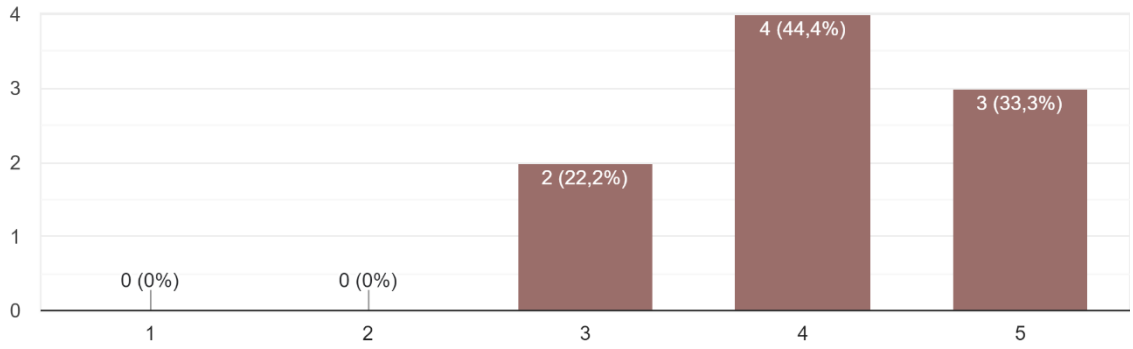


Two students asserted having a good understanding of architectural history and cultural heritage in the region where their university is located, while six indicated a moderate level of knowledge, and one acknowledged a low level of familiarity.

In contrast to the pre-test questionnaire, we observe a positive shift in understanding levels among students. The percentage of students with a high understanding increased by 5.5%, those with a moderate understanding rose by 11.1%, and the proportion of students with a low understanding decreased by 16.7%.

2. Are you satisfied with the introductory lecture? (1-Nonsatisfied at all, 2-Nonsatisfied, 3-Neutral, 4-Satisfied, 5-Very satisfied)

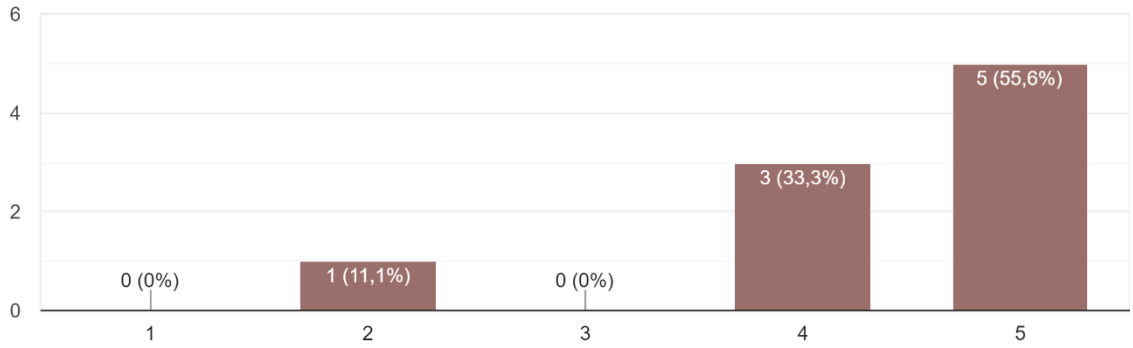
9 απαντήσεις



Three students expressed high satisfaction with the introductory lecture, four reported being satisfied, and two remained neutral.

3. Did you understand the aims, methods, and contents of the project and the course? (1-Totally disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Totally agree)

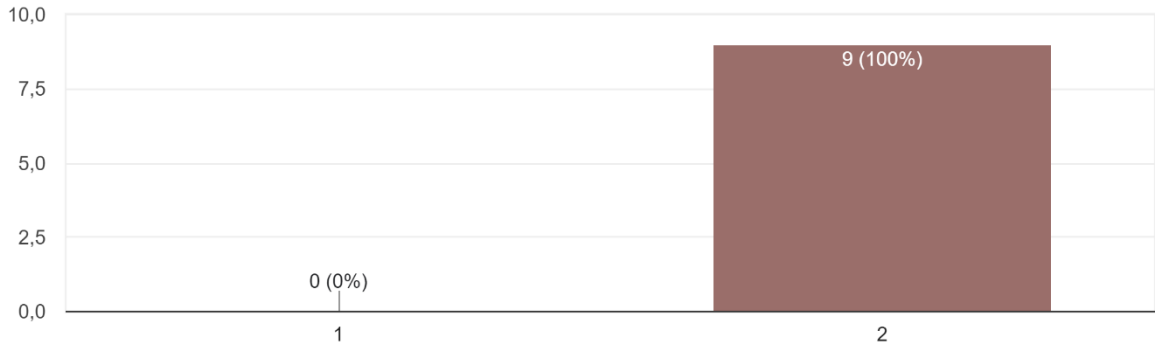
9 απαντήσεις



Five students said they fully understood the project and course goals, methods, and contents. Three agreed, and one disagreed.

4. Do you know what is gamification?

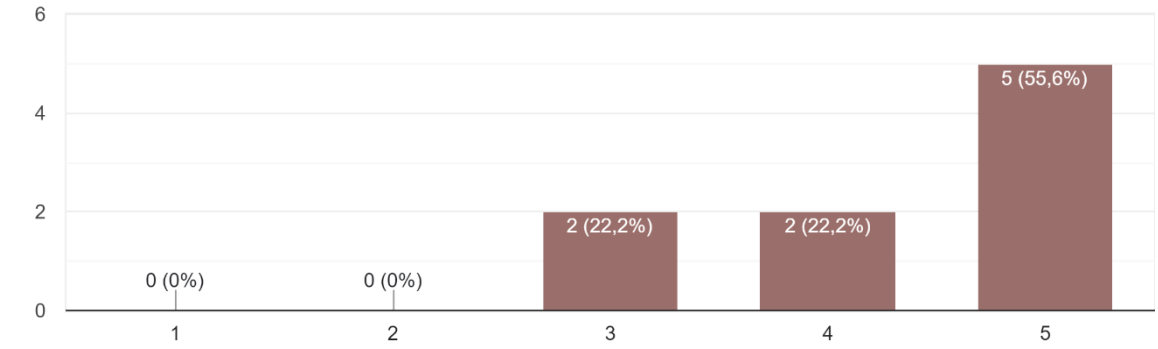
9 απαντήσεις



All students confirmed their familiarity with the concept of gamification.

5. Did the field trips help you understand the importance of the gamification technique? (1-Totally disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Totally agree)

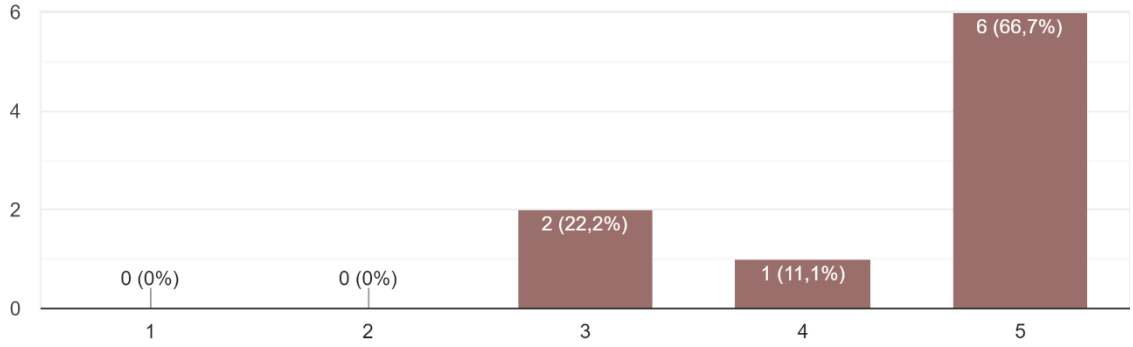
9 απαντήσεις



Five students strongly agreed that the field trips during the Palimpsest Cities course significantly helped them understand the importance of the gamification technique. Two students agreed, and two remained neutral on the matter.

6. Did you enjoy the field trips and also explore and learn new things? (1-Totally disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Totally agree)

9 απαντήσεις



Six partners expressed complete agreement that they enjoyed the field trips, exploring and learning new things. One partner simply agreed, and two partners remained neutral.

7. Did you like learning through the Timeline Travel mobile application? If yes, what did you like the most, if not what you didn't like?

- No, I don't think the app works any differently than other sources of learning information

- Yes

- Yes, I like visual materials and because we do it through timeline, it is permanent in memory and effective in learning

- Yes, I like to create new timelines with timeline travel because I think it gives a different perspective when we look through the events

- Yes, you can do the research

- Yes, this app is very easy

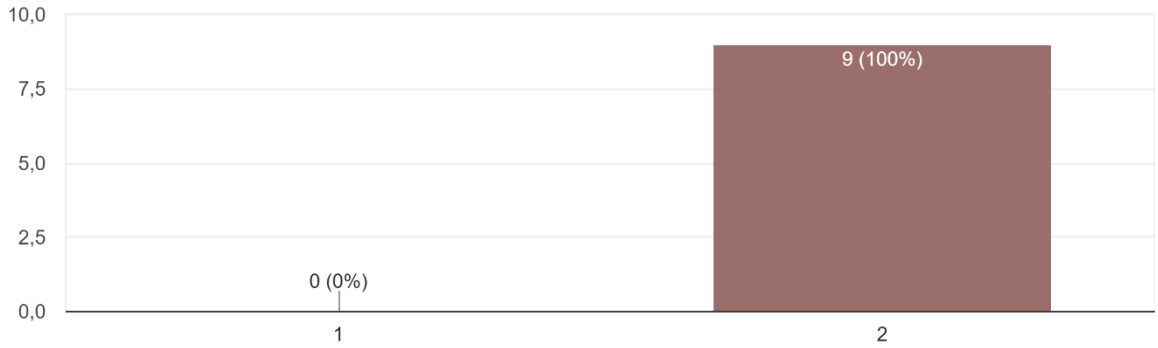
- I liked the process of the app and the techniques

- It was nice

- I reckon the application can be very useful if some of the problems are solved such as difficulty of navigating in map to pick a location and gathering information about a building in the timeline

8. Are you aware of the storytelling technique?

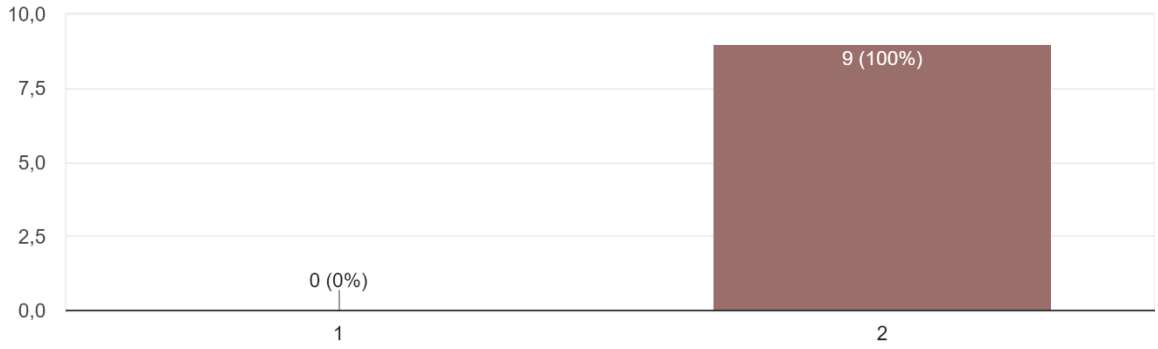
9 απαντήσεις



All the partners stated that are aware of the storytelling techniques.

9. Did you like creating from scratch your digital story/film? (1-Totally disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Totally agree)

9 απαντήσεις



All the students liked creating from scratch their digital story/ film.

10. Which part of your digital story creation you liked the most (you can choose more than one option)?

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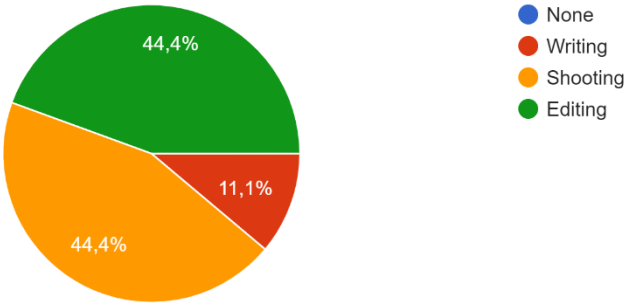


Nearly half of the students, 44.4%, enjoyed the shooting part the most in the creation of the digital story, while an equal percentage found the editing part most appealing. The remaining 11.1% expressed a preference for the writing part.

11. Did you enjoy the "City-on-Trial" workshop? If yes what did you like the most, if not what you didn't like?

- Yes

- Yes

- Yes, I like to try to create new ideas and look at different perspectives

- Everything

- I liked it

- I liked it a lot. I really liked the model and the game where we divided into groups and tried to find a place on the historical peninsula

- People can learn things when it is required the defend an idea. We can understand way better while arguing because we are researching reasonable arguments to support our idea so can the opponent team. It was an effective way of information exchange

- Yes

- Yes, it helped us look at it from a different perspective

12. Did you enjoy the activity "Model of the Palimpsest City"? If yes what did you like the most, if not what you didn't like?

- İts Okay

- Yes

- Yes, I saw the buildings on the trip and in the model that I've never seen before

- I liked creating markets in different techniques

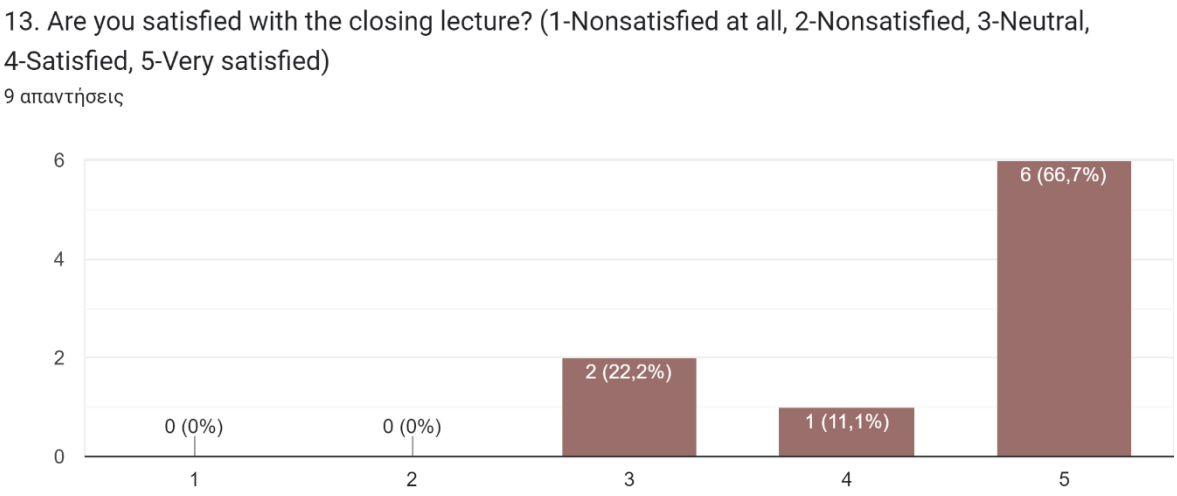
- It gave me the right to examine the model in more detail

- Yes

- The activity was fun but maybe It could be worked in a smaller area and more limited buildings with precise research about their history and the state of today's story

- Yes

- I liked it but I wish model making was in the later stages of the course.



Six students expressed high satisfaction with the closing lecture, one was satisfied, and the remaining two remained neutral.

14. Do you prefer the conventional lectures, the "Palimpsest Cities" course, or a mix of both and why?

- Palimpsest Cities

- I think some of the design lessons can be conventional but other courses should be like the Palimpsest Cities course

- A mix of both is more interesting

- I prefer a mix

- Mix

- We all took 3 courses in the History of Architecture but this course was more nurturing and effective than all three of them. But maybe a brief conventional lesson before making a trip can make our experience more self-conscious and prepared.

- Mix of both

- I prefer a mixture of both

15. Write your feedback regarding the whole course (e.g. what you would change, things that could have been done better, etc.)

- Everything was good

- It was a really different course and I like to do something on my own. The instructor helped us but we did most of the things and that's why we liked it

- Contrary to a boring narration from the beginning, it was a very positive lesson with field trips and model closure

- The emphasis is on visiting places that we would normally not be able to visit on our own (Haydarpaşa) and excursions. By the way, some games are very well thought out (we tried to divide into groups and find a place, the game was very good) Thank you for everything

- As I mentioned in previous questions: Model-making activity might take taking shorter time ,in my opinion, focusing on a smaller area and fewer buildings but with better and more detailed research. This can feed our final module. Timeline Travel app can be used more effectively so Its main purpose can be understood better. Lastly the whole term curriculum can be simplified, even if all modules are so much fun, it is intimidating to see so many to-do's for students and also some parts should be skipped so fast when there are too many modules.

- Activity model-making to be done individually

- I really liked the way the course worked because it was different from our classical courses, especially the trips were very instructive and entertaining

CONCLUSIONS (AFTER-TEST QUESTIONNAIRES)

In summary, despite a puzzling shift in knowledge levels regarding the history of buildings and cultural heritage in their university's area, the majority of instructors found the Palimpsest Cities course positively influencing their teaching styles, making them more interactive. The integration of gamification techniques garnered widespread approval, with notable increases in perceived knowledge levels. The effectiveness of storytelling in student learning received mixed opinions, while the evaluation of the Palimpsest Cities course varied among instructors. Additionally, there was a shared acknowledgment of the importance of combining traditional methods with innovative approaches for optimal student learning. The instructors' willingness to adopt new tools like the "Timeline Travel mobile application" and engage in workshops demonstrated an openness to incorporating technology into their teaching practices.

Some instructors found the curriculum to be overly intense, prompting a suggestion to consider canceling certain modules in future courses. The weight of the coursework, especially in a two-credit course, raised concerns about students' willingness to meet the requirements. Additionally, the suggestion was made to use the initial weeks more efficiently, perhaps incorporating theoretical lectures during the add-drop period. In terms of teaching methods, suggestions were made to adopt a more balanced approach to gamification, avoiding an overload of gaming content. Instructors advocated for students to invent their own games and

provided feedback on the positives and challenges associated with the Timeline Travel module. Concerns were raised about students potentially copying content without actively creating it.

The students' knowledge about architectural history and cultural heritage showcased a positive shift, with increases in high and moderate understanding levels and a notable decrease in low understanding. Satisfaction with the introductory lecture varied. A majority of students affirmed their understanding of project goals and methods. Gamification concepts were well-understood by all students. Field trips during the course were highly praised, significantly aiding students in comprehending the importance of gamification techniques.

The Timeline Travel mobile application received mixed reviews, with some students appreciating its ease of use and visual appeal, while others found it similar to other sources of information. Students unanimously demonstrated awareness of storytelling techniques, expressing enjoyment in creating digital stories or films from scratch. Preferences varied regarding the most enjoyable part of digital story creation, with shooting and editing being equally popular among students. The "City-on-Trial" workshop garnered positive responses, with students appreciating the opportunity to explore new ideas and perspectives.

The "Model of the Palimpsest City" activity also received favorable feedback, although some suggested working in a smaller area for more detailed research. Satisfaction with the closing lecture varied, with six students expressing high satisfaction. Regarding the preferred teaching method, a mix of conventional lectures and the Palimpsest Cities course emerged as the popular choice among students.

Overall, the students found the course to be different and engaging, praising the instructor's guidance while emphasizing the importance of field trips and hands-on activities. Some suggestions for improvement included shorter model-making activities, more effective use of the Timeline Travel app, and a simplified curriculum. Despite varied preferences, the majority appreciated the unique approach of the course and the instructive and entertaining aspects of the field trips.

FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

SUMMARY FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH AHEP INSTRUCTORS

Two instructors from AHEP participated in the focus group.

During the conversation, instructors highlight the notable effectiveness of gamified field trips, particularly emphasizing the success of activities such as the treasure hunt in engaging students. Additionally, digital storytelling and city-on-trial activities are recognized as impactful in enhancing students' understanding of cultural heritage. Both instructors and students express positive sentiments about these activities, indicating their effectiveness in creating an engaging and educational learning environment.

The discussion also touched upon changes observed in student behavior and appreciation of historic sites and cultural heritage throughout the course. Instructors note an increased awareness among students of different layers of the city and a more profound understanding of preservation perspectives. Noteworthy instances, such as increased curiosity during field

trips, even in adverse weather conditions, highlight positive behavioral changes among students.

Insights into the use of gamification and storytelling in architectural history and education emerged from the discussion. Instructors expressed a desire for more courses to incorporate these techniques, citing increased student motivation as a valuable outcome. Points-based motivation during field trips was highlighted as particularly effective in encouraging student participation and engagement.

The evolution of instructors' perceptions regarding the use of gamification and digital storytelling techniques in teaching was discussed. Instructors recognized the need for more student-centered approaches and expressed newfound perspectives gained from the Palimpsest Cities course. They emphasized the value of enjoying the lesson as a teacher and the potential for increased student engagement in other courses through gamification and storytelling.

Suggestions for further improvement of the course were put forward. Instructors recommend providing more guidance at the beginning of activities and suggested dividing modules to ensure effective learning. Considerations for adjusting the duration of activities and making fine-tuning to improve the overall course structure were also discussed. Challenges encountered during the course, including a smaller-than-expected number of students and the perception of the course's importance, were acknowledged. A proposal to increase the course's ECTS is pending official approval, indicating a commitment to addressing challenges and enhancing the course's significance.

SUMMARY FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH ITU INSTRUCTORS

Four instructors from ITU participated in the focus group.

One of the instructors mentions the effectiveness of reflection tasks after field trips, such as drawing exercises, emphasizing engagement and attention to details. Another instructor emphasizes the enjoyment of field trips, treasure hunts, acting, and drawings. The City on Trial activity is highlighted for its efficiency and student enthusiasm. One of the instructors discusses the positive impact of field trips, particularly when combined with gamification methods, citing Treasure Hunt and City on Trial as examples.

Instructors note changes in student behavior, increased awareness during field trips, and improved understanding of cultural heritage. The discussion touches on the use of gamification and storytelling in architectural history education, with varying opinions on their effectiveness. The need for a balance between entertainment and education is highlighted.

The instructors share insights into their evolving perceptions of gamification and digital storytelling, emphasizing the importance of student engagement and learning outcomes. Challenges faced during the course, such as a packed curriculum and student dropouts, are discussed, along with attempts to adapt and reduce content.

Suggestions for improvement include a more balanced course, fewer modules, and increased theoretical components. The importance of a balanced curriculum with a mix of theoretical and practical elements is emphasized. Challenges like accommodating late-joining students and maintaining the course calendar are acknowledged.

The discussion concludes with a focus on the impact of gamification and storytelling on student connections with historic sites. The instructors express the need for a mixture of methods, including theoretical knowledge, to enhance the learning experience. The challenges of student enrollment and program intensity are recognized, concluding the insightful conversation.

SUMMARY FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH AHEP STUDENTS

Five students from AHEP participated in the focus group.

The discussion touched upon memorable experiences during site visits, with students expressing joy in exploring historical buildings and learning their stories.

The conversation shifted towards the use of gamification and storytelling techniques in the course. The students acknowledged that creating videos and engaging in storytelling was a new and exciting experience. They noted that this approach made learning more enjoyable and instructive than conventional methods.

Participants were asked about the most impactful or transformative week or activity in the course. Responses highlighted the enjoyment of the storyline and field trips, demonstrating a positive engagement with the various components of the course.

The students discussed how the Palimpsest Cities course encouraged collaboration and teamwork, especially in the final weeks when they had to work together on a model. While they acknowledged the challenges of group work, they also saw it as a valuable experience.

In evaluating the success of the course, participants praised the unique concept of learning through practical experiences rather than traditional exams. They appreciated the opportunity to work on something meaningful for themselves.

However, challenges were also addressed, such as the limited availability of information for the Timeline activity, especially in English, about Alanya for their projects. Some students expressed a preference for individual model-making activities due to difficulties faced during group work.

The participants provided constructive feedback on how to improve the course, suggesting solutions to challenges faced, such as more accessible information and potential adjustments to group activities. Finally, the students discussed personal challenges encountered during the course, such as the workload and the need for simpler elective courses, considering their other academic responsibilities.

SUMMARY FROM THE FOCUS GROUP WITH ITU STUDENTS

Four students from ITU participated in the focus group.

The primary motivations for taking the Palimpsest Cities course were revealed during the discussion. Initially, expectations were conventional, but the course's unique approach, involving collaboration with other countries, gamification, and observing the city through games, sparked interest.

Participants shared memorable experiences, with one highlighting a treasure hunt game. Despite losing, the game led to the discovery of two historical places they wouldn't have visited otherwise, emphasizing the value of experiential learning.

Gamification and storytelling techniques were seen as effective tools for engagement. Participants noted that practical experiences, collaborative model-making, and storytelling enhanced their learning compared to traditional lectures.

The Treasure Hunt activity stood out as the most impactful for one participant due to its comprehensive coverage of different areas, fostering both understanding and enjoyment. The hands-on, interactive nature of the activity made it particularly effective.

The course's encouragement of collaboration and teamwork was evident, fostering a sense of collegiality among students. Working together on a model and participating in various activities helped participants get to know each other better.

Success, according to participants, involved gaining theoretical knowledge about Istanbul, discovering the city's hidden aspects, and recognizing the importance of teamwork and alternative learning methods beyond textbooks.

Participants suggested improvements, particularly regarding the duration of model-making sessions. They proposed dividing the sessions into sightseeing weeks, allowing for a more balanced and efficient approach.

Challenges included the drop in the number of participants due to the course's selectivity and initial concerns about workload.

ANNEX

All the questions from online questionnaires and focus group discussions can be found in the "Evaluation Booklet".