



**Teaching Culture with GoogleMaps: Bookmapping as  
a Tool for Cultural Learning in the L2 Classroom**

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## Teaching Culture with GoogleMaps: Bookmapping as a Tool for Cultural Learning in the L2 Classroom

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In the L2 classroom, cultural learning – learning about societies' items, acts, expressions and their underlying beliefs and values – is often assumed to take place as students learn and engage with a language and discuss texts. With the advent of the Internet and Web 2.0, however, cultural learning can intentionally be integrated in the L2 classroom by making students active participants in the learning process. This article, a reflection and summary of a course, describes the implementation and effects of bookmapping in an intermediate German class to facilitate cultural learning. Bookmapping is the process of following a novels' protagonist(s) movement on a map, either on paper or online. The focus of the class was Germany's *Ruhrgebiet* (Ruhr area); for the assignment, students collaboratively bookmapped Frank Goosen's novel *Radio Heimat – Geschichten von Zuhause* along with secondary texts discussed in class. After briefly outlining the course and explaining the mechanism of bookmapping, this article describes how bookmapping was implemented in an L2 classroom. The second part evaluates the maps created by the students and discusses the results from student reflections. The conclusion highlights possible benefits of incorporating bookmapping in the classroom to teach students about culture.

### 1. Introduction

Mapping a book describes the process of following the movements of the protagonist(s) in a novel on a map. This can be done as a pen-and-paper exercise with traditional maps or, since the development of the Internet, with online mapping applications. This article, a summary of and reflection on a course, describes the implementation and some of the outcomes of bookmapping in an upper-level German course to facilitate cultural learning. Bookmapping refers to the use of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technology to map locations that appear in books on an interactive map online. In the context of the class, Alexander Thomas's definition of culture was used as the basis for evaluating cultural learning. Alexander Thomas defined culture as a 'typical orientation system for a given society' (2008: 138), in which acts, expressions, and items made by humans display the underlying values of a society. Culture is thus the visible expression of the unconscious values and beliefs created and internalized throughout socialization. Claire Kramsch adds to this in her more detailed definition of what culture means in the

foreign language framework, which includes ‘the native speakers’ ways of behaving, eating, talking, dwelling, their customs, their beliefs and values’ (2013: 66). Cultural learning can then be described as the process in which visible manifestations (culture) are utilized to analyse and interpret a society’s underlying value and belief systems. The goal for the language learner is to understand the unique characteristics of different cultures by encountering both the familiar Self and the foreign Other from what Kramersch defines as the ‘third place’, a position from which ‘they see themselves both from the inside and the outside’ (2013: 62).

## 1.2 The course

The course ‘The Ruhrgebiet – Von Schrebergärten und Gartenzwergeren’ was designed for German minors and majors who had completed the German language requirements and sought to expand their written and spoken German at the B1/B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). As an open topics course, students were able to take this class twice with different subjects, which meant the class had a mixture of students with varying degrees of German language ability. Rather than merely offering a range of texts from post-1945 German literature, the course focused on a geographic location – the Ruhr area – and its development from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary times. The goal was to have students explore the history, geography and language of this important and influential region of Germany. In doing so, issues of immigration, the idea of cultural pluralism, as well as the influence of cultural variety on the German language were considered.

As all of the students were German minors or majors, works available in translation did not limit the choice of authors. Instead of using several shorter works, the course consisted of one longer text supplemented by newspaper articles, the movie *Das Wunder von Bern* (2003), music about the *Ruhrgebiet*, and performance clips from the comedian duo The Missfits, all available online. The material was selected to represent a variety of periods from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, as well as a range of texts, from investigative newspaper articles to satirical pieces, in an effort to represent the many facets of the Ruhr area. The main text, *Radio Heimat – Geschichten von Zuhause* (2009) by Frank Goosen, is a humorous autobiographical look at the Ruhr area from the 1950s until the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By incorporating these readings into the course, students were able to (a) observe changes in perception of the region, (b)

notice examples of the diversity of the Ruhr area and (c) discover the region's exceptional development in post-1945 Germany.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Consulting a map to know where one is geographically located has been part of humanity since antiquity. In *History of Cartography*, Leo Bagrow traces the origins of cartography back to the time of Ptolemy in about 150 AD, when maps were drawn as a form of art more than for accurate geographic representation. From the beginning, maps included cultural reference points, often 'decorated with fine miniatures portraying life in distant lands, various types of ships, coats-of-arms, portraits of rulers, and so on' (2010: 21). The printing press invented by Gutenberg in 1440 signalled the end of monasteries' domination of map production, the growth of publishing houses in the 17<sup>th</sup> century made maps available to people outside the elite upper class and, in the centuries since, maps have evolved from paintings and wooden carvings to electronic versions that allow for instant location without complicated triangulations via apps and Global Positioning System (GPS). In the process, elaborate artwork for the most part gave way to symbols necessary for navigational and information purposes, thereby abandoning more elaborate references to the cultural context. Maps have advanced from the concrete, observable reality of the person exploring an area to the more abstract generalizations with which we are familiar in contemporary maps. Representation of geographical landmarks has become standardized, while references to cultural life included in the map are mostly limited to buildings such as churches, schools, and administrative offices.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, with the advent of the Internet and the rise of online mapping, however, maps have (re-) gained some of their original, aesthetic and culture-specific features, along with a host of new purposes the digital sphere has enabled. The ability to zoom in and out, overlay map views with satellite images, terrain or live traffic views, and most importantly, the use of street view to virtually walk around in remote locations, allow for a previously unknown interactive experience with maps; indeed, digital media have expanded our understanding of what a 'map' is and blurred the boundaries between representations of places and places themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Exceptions to this are maps designed for a specific audience, such as tourists or children, or specific activities, like hiking or wine tours. These maps normally do include statues, restaurants, stores, trails, and other locations of interest.

Bookmapping as pedagogical activity makes use of the interactive features of online mapping to enhance how readers engage with books. Bookmapping is based on the fact that all stories take place somewhere, in real or fictional locations, and readers can plot a story's location on a map while following the protagonist(s) as the story unfolds. While this can of course be done with conventional paper maps, online mapping takes this basic exercise to a new level, by offering opportunities to add images, descriptions, plot out routes between locations, and collaboratively gather information about the places mentioned in a story. Bookmapping thus encourages readers to engage with books from new perspectives enabled by the technology, such as through researching the setting, and visualizing geographical connections. The use of these digital tools can also facilitate learning by making readers active participants in the learning process, beyond mere reading and discussion. As a teaching tool, bookmapping moves beyond the conventional instructional paradigm of the teacher as conveyor of information and the student as passive recipient. Although passivity of students is no longer the norm, through bookmapping students learn to pursue knowledge and then apply it, making them responsible for their own learning. When students actively engage in the learning process, they are more motivated to learn and do well (Gardiner 2002). Amy Driscoll and Swarup Wood (2007) argue that conditions for such motivated, active participation in learning are more likely to be created when learning outcomes are student-centered. Moreover, providing a setting in which students apply their knowledge and make connections between texts, concepts and cultural representations teaches critical thinking and raises the potential for students to utilize such skills beyond the classroom as well (Facione; Gittens 2015).

Integrative learning, that is, approaches to student-centred learning focused on teaching critical thinking skills, did not begin with the introduction of technology into the classroom. The development of learning management systems (LMS) and the integration of technology has, however, changed students' access to material and the ways in which they engage with it. Online bookmapping is just one example of the successful merging of technology, an integrative learning approach, and a student-centred approach, which allows teachers to shift responsibility for learning to the student. Another reason for using bookmapping specifically in the context of the foreign language classroom is the benefit of visual representations through maps. Incorporating visuals improves reading ability and understanding of vocabulary by visualizing

content, creating connections, and activating background knowledge. Several studies have shown that students extract and recall more information from a text when visual aids are available to them (Schwartz et al 1998, Vekiri 2002). Using highly structured visuals like maps furthermore aids in organizing information and developing deeper cognitive processing ( Craik; Lockhart 1972, Jonassen; Grabowski 1993).

### 3. The Assignment

The bookmapping assignment consisted of four parts: (a) finding the location on the map and dropping a pin; (b) adding the corresponding lines from the reading material describing the location; (c) linking supplementary material to the location pin (images, geographical information, weather data, history of the location, etc.); and (d) commenting on the cultural significance of an item, act, or expression.<sup>2</sup> Students were required to provide sources for any supplementary material they linked and for their comments on the cultural significance of the location. These comments on the cultural significance of the location constituted the only extensive writing students did for the project.

The assignment was tightly sequenced; students were asked to complete one step before proceeding to the next and needed to include relevant information to receive points for that step. Nevertheless, they were permitted and in fact expected to explore their interests in the supplementary material they linked to the location pin. They were encouraged to add as much supplementary information as possible, as this part of the project was central to enhancing their cultural knowledge. There was no minimum number of locations the students had to identify with a pin, giving them the freedom to skip locations they could not readily identify. The grading rubric did show, however, that the highest number of points could be earned for identifying more than 10 locations. Finding the location of places mentioned in the reading material was a way of actively engaging with the novel they were reading. In order to take note of where the protagonist was geographically situated, students had to read the novel carefully,

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<sup>2</sup> Cultural significance was defined as the importance that an item, act, or expression had in creating or contributing to the differences of the *Ruhrgebiet/Ruhrdeutsch* in comparison to Standard German or to what students know of Germany at large. An example of this is the cultural significance of coal mining for the development of *Ruhrdeutsch*, both in terms of loan-words from Polish, Turkish, and Russian and the structures of the dialect, such as contractions, etc.

identifying not only street names but also mention of buildings and other structures, and identifying the corresponding places on the map.

As mentioned, student comments about the cultural significance of an item, place, act, or expression could include information from outside sources with proper citation. The comments were thus the main way of assessing their writing skills, in particular their ability to argue a point in German. There was no length limitation for the comments, in order to give students the chance to expand on their argument, as they deemed appropriate. The minimum requirement was 7-10 sentences, appropriate for the level of the class and a good indicator of written German skills. As indicated in the rubric, students were required to provide a minimum of three commentaries. Yet beyond assessing student performance based on the number of commentaries, the rubric indicated that they would be assessed on how they connected what they had read in class with their own research and experience. Thus, students could gain the greatest number of points for well-developed cultural commentaries, rather than quantity.

Dividing the class into groups allowed students to delegate the different parts of the assignment to individuals. While all users in a group could access their shared map in GoogleMaps, having them create individual user accounts assured that each entry could be attributed to the student who added it.

### **3.1 Evaluation of student maps**

It should be stressed that for the bookmapping project students had to research places in Germany, relying almost exclusively on material available online in German or, in few cases, English. In any case, they needed to apply their German skills and knowledge of German culture. Materials were to be selected through targeted Google searches, based on reflections on the reading material; students were also expected to provide an explanation for their choice of supporting material to be included in their bookmapping entries. The commentary on cultural significance, likewise, needed to include sources and an in-depth reflection. It was made clear to students that viewing the completed maps needed to comprise of more than a sampling of quotes and scattered or random supplementary material; the audience should be able to follow in the footsteps of the protagonist and understand the cultural significance of the locations he visited in the novel.

The maps students created were, overall, of very high quality. All three of the groups met the minimum requirements for number and length of entries, with two groups exceeding expectations for the locations mapped and supplementary material provided. As the students indicated in their reflections, contributing critical commentary on the cultural significance of items, places, acts and expressions was challenging for some due to what they perceived as insufficient German language abilities. Accordingly, their comments often lacked substance, with one group omitting this part of the assignment altogether. The strength of all final products was the supplementary material students opted to include and the explanations for their choices. All were able to apply the content knowledge learned in class, with eight of nine students listing this activity as the most useful one in their evaluations. Collectively, the students provided solid insights into the significance of the *Ruhrgebiet* in the history of Germany, the linguistic differences between *Ruhrdeutsch* and *Hochdeutsch* and idiosyncratic aspects of the region's culture. For example, students included excerpts from the graphic narrative *Asterix* written in Ruhr dialect, lyrics by Herbert Grönemeyer, a German video clip showing production of steel and information about soccer teams in the area. Samples of the maps students created are also included in Appendix B.

### 3.2 Implementation

In the Spring semester of 2016, the students in the upper-division German Conversation and Composition course at a medium-sized public university in the southeast of the United States were asked to use GoogleMaps to bookmap the material they were reading in class. This course was ideal for bookmapping for several reasons. The class members were German minors and majors who had already completed their German language requirements and had attained proficiency in German on the B1/B2 level of the CEFR. Additionally, none of the students had previously learned about the *Ruhrgebiet*, creating a good basis on which to assess their learning of the history and culture of the region. Finally, the main reading assignment, *Radio Heimat – Geschichten von Zuhause*, provided the real world setting necessary for bookmapping, whereby the students could literally – or virtually – follow the protagonist's footsteps on a digital map.

Utilizing bookmapping in the college classroom for cultural learning was not a formal research project. As a stand-alone class comprised of just nine students, no comparisons



with other groups not using bookmapping were possible. Direct and indirect assessment results acquired through student reflections, feedback and written exams, however, do suggest a positive association between student engagement, improved cultural knowledge, and bookmapping. To have an opportunity for comparison within the class, the class was divided into groups of three students. Each group was responsible for collaboratively mapping the reading material. Table 1 shows the number of map entries created by each group and student as well as their final exam grades, and Appendix D contains the questions asked in the exam. Though not based on a statistical analysis, the results indicate that a higher number of entries on the map was associated with a stronger performance on the culture section of the final exam. The exam was broken down into a culture and a language section, thus limiting the influence of German language skills on the test results in the culture section. Although this does not prove that bookmapping enhances cultural learning, it does suggest that the students who actively engaged in the activity demonstrated greater cultural knowledge than those who did not. Additionally, even when individual participation was low, students in the group where other group members contributed at an average or above average rate received higher grades than those where group participation was low throughout.

Cultural Knowledge by Number of Map Entries and Final Exam Grades				
	# of map entries		# of map entries	Grade
Group A	85	Student 1	15	C
		Student 2	23	B-
		Student 3	47	A
Group B	147	Student 4	48	A
		Student 5	57	A+
		Student 6	42	A-
Group C	108	Student 7	50	A
		Student 8	25	B-
		Student 9	33	B+

Table 1: Assessment of cultural knowledge by numbers of bookmapping entries and grade received on the culture section of the final exam.

Before commencing the project and again after its conclusion, students were asked to complete a questionnaire to assess their level of cultural knowledge about Germany and the *Ruhrgebiet*. The students evaluated five items based on their knowledge, on a five-point scale from ‘no knowledge’ to ‘know all about it’. Table 2 summarizes the

students' responses on both the pre- and post-project surveys. Predictably, only a few students had heard about the *Ruhrgebiet* and *Ruhrdeutsch* prior to the unit, the majority responding with 'no knowledge' on all items.<sup>3</sup> On the post-project survey, students overwhelmingly asserted that they were 'somewhat familiar' with the five items; only with three items did students indicate they felt they had learned all there was to know about the *Ruhrgebiet* and *Ruhrdeutsch*, while four responded 'have heard of it' for *Ruhrdeutsch*, *Strukturwandel*, *Bergbau in Deutschland* and *Gastarbeiter in Deutschland*.<sup>4</sup>

The pre- and post-project surveys, while voluntary to complete, were not administered anonymously, thus offering the possibility to compare post-test results with grades achieved by students in the cultural section of the final exam and their participation in the bookmapping project based on the number of entries added by each student. Not surprisingly, the students who participated the least in the bookmapping project were the ones who displayed the least improvement in knowledge, based on their self-assessments. Students were informed prior to the project that they could opt out of participating in the study with no impact on their course grade. All students decided to participate in the project and all voluntarily completed the pre- and post-project survey.

Pre- and Post-Project Survey Student Answers				
Pre-Project				
Item	Student Answers in % (n=9)			
	no knowledge	have heard of it	somewhat familiar	know all about it
1. Ruhrgebiet (Ruhr area)	78	22	0	0
2. Ruhrdeutsch (Ruhr dialect)	89	11	0	0
3. Strukturwandel (structural change)	100	0	0	0
4. Bergbau in Deutschland (mining)	89	11	0	0
5. Gastarbeiter in Deutschland (guest workers)	100	0	0	0
Post-project				
Item	Student Answers in % (n=9)			
	no knowledge	have heard of it	somewhat familiar	know all about it
1. Ruhrgebiet	0	0	89	11
2. Ruhrdeutsch	0	11	67	22
3. Strukturwandel	0	11	89	0
4. Bergbau in Deutschland	0	22	78	0
5. Gastarbeiter in Deutschland	0	0	100	0

Table 2: Student assessment of self-reported cultural knowledge before and after participation in bookmapping.

<sup>3</sup> To limit the influence of German language skills on pre-project survey answers, English translations were provided. On the post-project survey, these translations were excluded based on the expectation that students had learned vocabulary essential for discussing the *Ruhrgebiet*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ruhrgebiet* (Ruhr area), *Ruhrdeutsch* (dialect of the Ruhr area), *Strukturwandel* (Structural Change), *Bergbau in Deutschland* (mining in Germany), *Gastarbeiter in Deutschland* (guest workers/migrant workers in Germany).

To evaluate how students had perceived the bookmapping assignment, the post-project survey included space for students to reflect in writing on the project, their level participation, and their perceived learning. Due to the fact that the post-project survey was also an extra credit opportunity, all students turned it in and provided valuable feedback about the project. The students' reflections were overwhelmingly positive, citing better engagement with the texts and the opportunity to include outside material as positive. What the students noted as negative was the amount of time spent on this assignment, especially at the beginning of the semester when students were still relatively unfamiliar with the digital application. All but one student reported that they would again sign up for a class that incorporated bookmapping. One student suggested sharing the maps created by the groups with a wider audience, in order to increase the incentive for student participation. Asked about the difficulty of the assignment (easy, just right, difficult, too difficult), only one student found bookmapping too difficult, while seven students thought the assignment was 'just right' and one student found it difficult but appropriate for the amount of points awarded.

#### **4. Discussion of student reflections**

The student reflections turned in as part of the post-test were mostly positive in regard to the project but quite critical about the details of the assignment. The overall impression gleaned from the reflections was that students felt they benefited from the project in two ways. All agreed that they had learned more about German culture through bookmapping the reading material, with the majority noting that their language skills and vocabulary increased in the process of completing the assignment. Seven of the nine students were 'more interested' in the novel because of the project and eight 'enjoyed' it or found the assignment 'interesting'. One student commented negatively on the 'amount of work' bookmapping proved to be, citing lack of time as the reason for the shortcomings of his/her participation. This student also emphasized, however, that she/he found the project 'engaging' and 'a new way to learn about Germany'. The 'best' or 'nicest thing' and most 'fun' part of the assignment for the students was the ability to explore their own interests for the supplementary material they included. Although time limitations and difficulty reading some German websites were cited as obstacles to that part of the project, five of the nine students in the class 'liked' to do the research and share their findings. The section students repeatedly mentioned as being 'difficult' or

‘very hard’ related to the expected comments on cultural significance. Students felt inadequately prepared to provide such commentary about the cultural significance of things they encountered. They thought that the length requirement for this task also made completing it more difficult, in part due to the extent and depth of German knowledge it required. One student expressed that she/he would have preferred a presentation of each group’s finished map at the end of the semester instead of cultural commentary; another thought ‘more interaction between the groups or sharing information’ should have been included. Based on the comments from the reflection task, it appears that the students were more engaged in reading the novel and did increase their cultural knowledge about the *Ruhrgebiet* and Germany through bookmapping than they might have without the project.

## 5. Conclusion

While the outcome in terms of student performance on the cultural section of their final exam is satisfying, some changes would have to be implemented to include bookmapping as a course assignment again. Based on useful comments made in the student reflections, it would be beneficial to add an oral component in the form of a presentation at the midpoint and again at the end of the semester. The students most actively engaged in adding supplementary material and writing commentaries on cultural significance were eager to share their knowledge, often engaging in lively discussion about what they had discovered. Oral presentations would provide a further forum for students to function as autonomous language and culture learners, and also offer a chance to assess the speaking abilities of the students and their cultural knowledge. The fact that presentation material is already available as part of the map means that this would not add significant work for the students, and it would benefit the class as a whole in the dissemination of new information.

Dividing the students into groups worked well, requiring them to collaborate; it also distributed the workload of the assignments significantly and, in my view, appropriately. The only downside to group work became apparent in the group consisting of one highly engaged student and two less engaged classmates. While each student was required to create a minimum number of links and comments for each section of the assignment, it was left to the students to divide the work and rotate sections. Reflection comments from this particular group indicated that more oversight

was desired to ensure active participation. In the future, more structure and guidance would have to be provided in relation to the section rotations. During the course I noted that some students had an affinity for certain sections, oftentimes to the detriment of other sections, leading to what might have been an unfair workload distribution. To counter this, a rotation schedule for each group was assigned in the second half of the course which alleviated the problem and was seen as positive by the students.

After evaluations of the maps were done by the students, the need to make changes to the cultural commentary task became apparent. Students demonstrated in class that they had gained significant knowledge about *Ruhrgebiet* culture, language, and history, though few had actually included the cultural commentaries in their projects. It is possible, however, that cultural learning happened through other means. The difficulty of the commentary task may be attributed to (a) the higher-level German language skills required to complete it, and/or (b) a misunderstanding of what was meant by ‘cultural significance’ and ‘cultural commentary’. This was evident from group work in class, during which all students were able to draw appropriate conclusions about the way underlying values and beliefs were evident in the culture, language and history of the *Ruhrgebiet*. Interestingly, the students in fact appeared able comment on cultural significance when asked directly about the importance of a particular object or practice, yet they did not apparently make the connection between these observations and the terms ‘cultural significance’ and ‘cultural commentary’. Additionally, since especially those students who struggled with the level of German needed for the tasks reported difficulty with the cultural commentary, it seems likely that limitations of language abilities contributed to the poorer participation in this part of the assignment. To avoid this problem in future iterations of the project, the cultural commentary could be replaced with a multi-draft, short reflection essay in German. Students could be asked to elaborate on the cultural, social, and historical importance of the places they mapped, and the instructor could provide feedback; this would thus also function more as a formative than a summative assessment of the students’ cultural learning. Replacing the cultural commentary and assigning one longer reflective essay instead might also provide a better indicator of the overall learning for each student. By having the students turn in several drafts of their essay, more emphasis would be placed on grammatically correct writing through continual feedback and revisions. A multiple-

draft writing task would thus allow for a qualitatively useful focus on both content and form which would benefit students in developing their written language skills.

The extent to which students participated in class and engaged with the reading material was greater than I had experienced with previous German literature classes. While this could be attributed to the topic itself, the students' reflections suggest that mapping the reading material motivated them to pay closer attention to the text and research topics in which they were interested. The students highlighted researching supplementary material as the most valuable part of the assignment, in part because no boundaries had been set as to what they could include and in part because it allowed them to learn about something they were interested in. Furthermore, although not part of the assessment, students who participated actively in the project showed a significant increase in their command of the German language. This is evidenced both by observed improvements in their written German as well as my observations of their oral language abilities over the course of the semester. While some of this increase could be attributed to the fact that the course was designed to hone students' language skills, the fact that students who completed only the minimum number of entries did not exhibit the same improvements in language use as their more engaged colleagues points toward bookmapping as a catalyst for developing higher-level German skills.

While the focus of this project was on cultural learning for students on the B1/B2 level of the CEFR, it holds potential for adaptation to introductory and intermediate foreign language classrooms as well. Initially, bookmapping was mainly used with primary level school children to facilitate interest in and engagement with books (Burg; Cavanaugh 2011). While bookmapping is highly dependent on understanding the literary text, the degree of complexity can be varied through choice of texts. This approach thus lends itself to be used with language learners at any level. If activities and texts are adapted to the language level of the students, even introductory language learners should be able use bookmapping for cultural learning. Providing students with phrases they can use to describe images, posing yes/no questions that do not require elaborate answers, or preparing fill-in-the-blank texts are three possible activities that introductory and intermediate language learners are able to complete. With regard to cultural learning, the potential of bookmapping does not have to be limited to novels that have real-world settings. It would be interesting to explore the possibilities and limitations of bookmapping for novels set in fictional worlds, in particular the creative

and complex task of creating a world based on close-reading of the story. For novels like J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*, and Cornelia Funke's *Inkworld-Trilogy* maps do exist, both on paper and online.

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### **Author Biography**

Isabel Meusen is Instructor of German at the University of Memphis. She received her PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of South Carolina and holds a Masters degree in English and Educational Studies from the Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany). Her research interests are Women's and Gender Studies, 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century German Literature, and Educational Technologies.

### **Keywords**

Bookmapping, Cultural Learning, Cultural Knowledge, Active Learning

## Appendix A

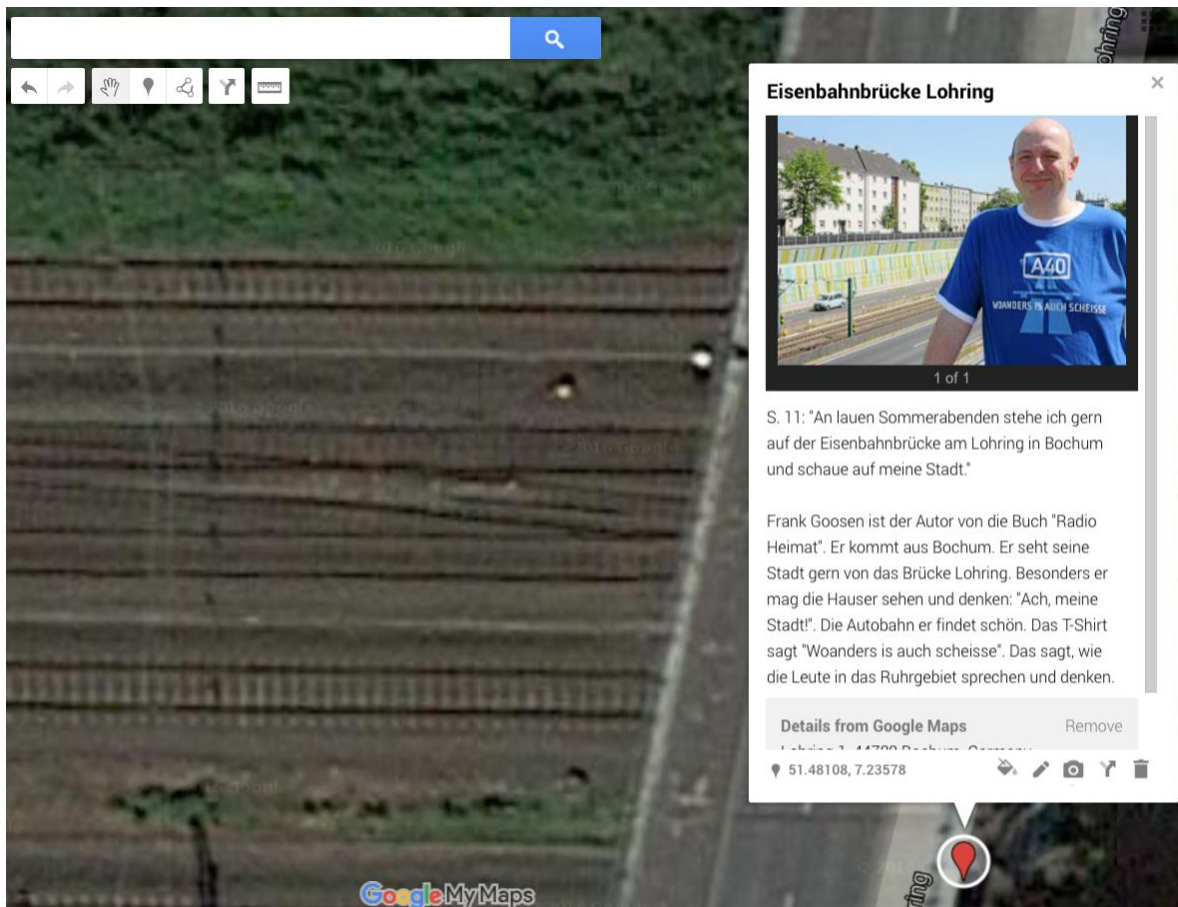
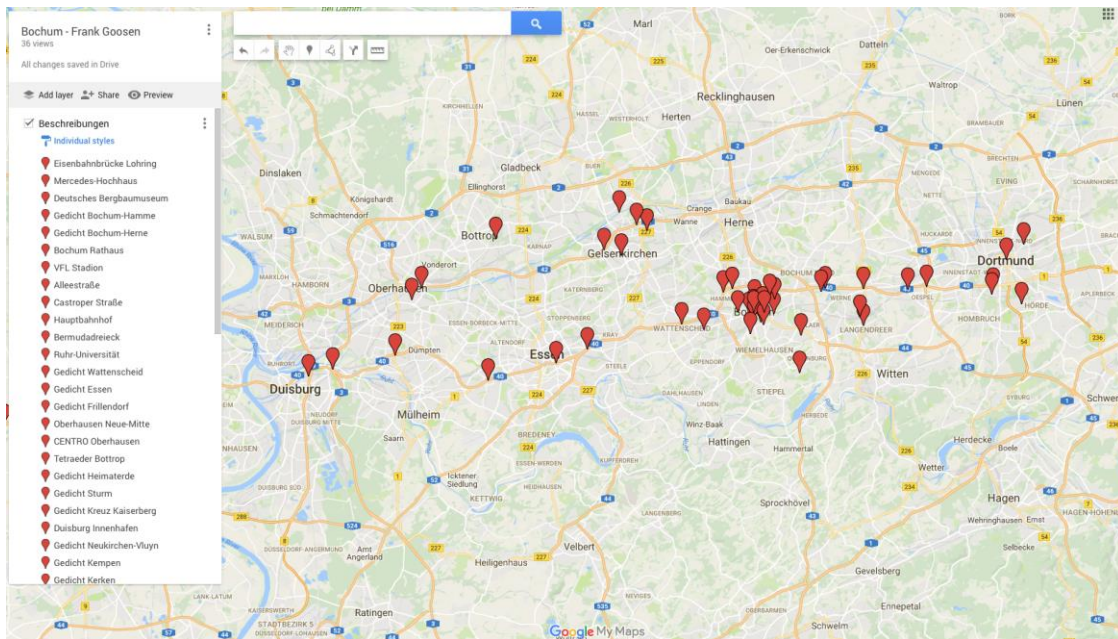
### Rubric

	Content	Points possible
Locations  <i>(from the book or the readings we discussed in class, including song lyrics)</i>	- 0-10 locations	5
	- More than 10 locations	10
	- Locations <u>not or inadequately</u> identified based on reading material description	2
	- Locations mostly identified correctly based on reading material description	5
	- Sources <u>not</u> included	0
	- Sources included	2
Quotes	- Quotations <u>not</u> included	0
	- Quotations included	1
Supplemental Material  <i>(minimum of 5 entries, can include pictures, video, music, as long as it's relevant! Has to include reasoning for choice of material)</i>	- Material not relevant/related to location and/or development in the reading material	0
	- Material relevant to location and/or development in the reading material	5
	- Reasoning for supplemental material <u>not</u> included	0
	- Reasoning for supplemental material <u>included and relevant</u>	5
Cultural Significance Commentary  <i>(minimum of 3 entries, comments should show critical-thinking skills)</i>	- <u>Not</u> included	0
	- Included but <u>not well developed</u>	5
	- Included and well developed	10
Total points		___/50



## Appendix B

### Sample of Student Maps



## Appendix C

### Excerpts from Student Reflections

A. Finding the right places on the map was not difficult and adding the right quote from the book or texts we read in class was easy, too. I liked that we could decide to do research on something we were interested in. I really enjoyed that! I learned a lot about the Ruhr dialect and how the history of a region influences the language of the people, like the coal mining industry and how words got shortened and compounded.

B. I learned a lot about the geography of Germany and especially the Ruhrgebiet. It was interesting to see how the industrial revolution changed the region. I enjoyed being able to read mor[e] about it and include it for credit. I didn't like that some people in my group did not participate as much as I did (or chose to only drop pins for the locations we read about without doing any of the other things we had to do). It would have been better to have some form of sign-up for each student so we all have to do each part of the project.

C. It was a lot of work! It's nice to see where the book character was and to create an online route of where he went but I don't know why we had to research anything and add our own thoughts about cultural significance. I think this would be better as an extra credit assignment.

D. I really enjoyed doing the bookmapping!! In my group all of us shared the work for the project and that made it easier. We talked about what things to research and how we thought what we talked about in class was important for the culture. The coal mining in the region really influenced so much! I would love to do this again!

E. Overall: A good assignment. Not too much work except for the culture thing. The research was fun and we tried to read Asterix in Ruhrdeutsch. I wish we could actually go to Germany and hear someone speak like they do there.

F. Loved it!! The only thing I would change/add is something for us to present what we found. A group presentation or something like that.

## Appendix D

Sample Test Questions from the Culture Section of the Final Exam (translated)

- 1) The image of the Ruhrgebiet has changed from the 1960s until today. Recently, the region has been referred to as “Metropole Ruhr”, a region full of innovation, cultural activities, and hospitality. Do you think this image of the region is true or false? What aspects from the bookmapping activity support your opinion? Include examples.
- 2) Throughout the history of the Ruhrgebiet coal has played an important role. What impact did coal mining and related industry have on developments in politics, religion, demographics, and schooling?
- 3) Describe the significance of soccer for the Ruhrgebiet. Include examples from material discussed in class.
- 4) What is “Strukturwandel” and how does it manifest in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Ruhrgebiet? Give examples.
- 5) Choose three of the artefacts you included during the bookmapping activity and show how they describe “Ruhrgebietskultur”. How does the culture of the Ruhrgebiet differ from other regional cultures?