Developing Narrative Content for the Virtual Shikoku Pilgrimage Immersive Platform

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Research Statement

How do we design and implement a compelling digital story experience within a virtual heritage context?

Virtual Heritage

Virtual heritage is the application of technology into cultural heritage. This project aims to replicate cultural heritage sites and experiences using the Unity 3D engine to create a virtual experience.

What is the Shikoku Pilgrimage?

The Shikoku pilgrimage is a multi-site Japanese pilgrimage that takes place on the island of Shikoku. It honors the monk Kukai and is 750 miles long and takes 1 to 2 months to complete.

Where to go from here?

My project is only the beginning. The plan for the project is to develop all 88 temples with multiple "perspectives" to play through. Other students are currently working on animations and building the environment, the models, and adding content.

Background Research

A large part of my research was learning about the Shikoku pilgrimage, Shingon Buddhism, and the history of Japan.
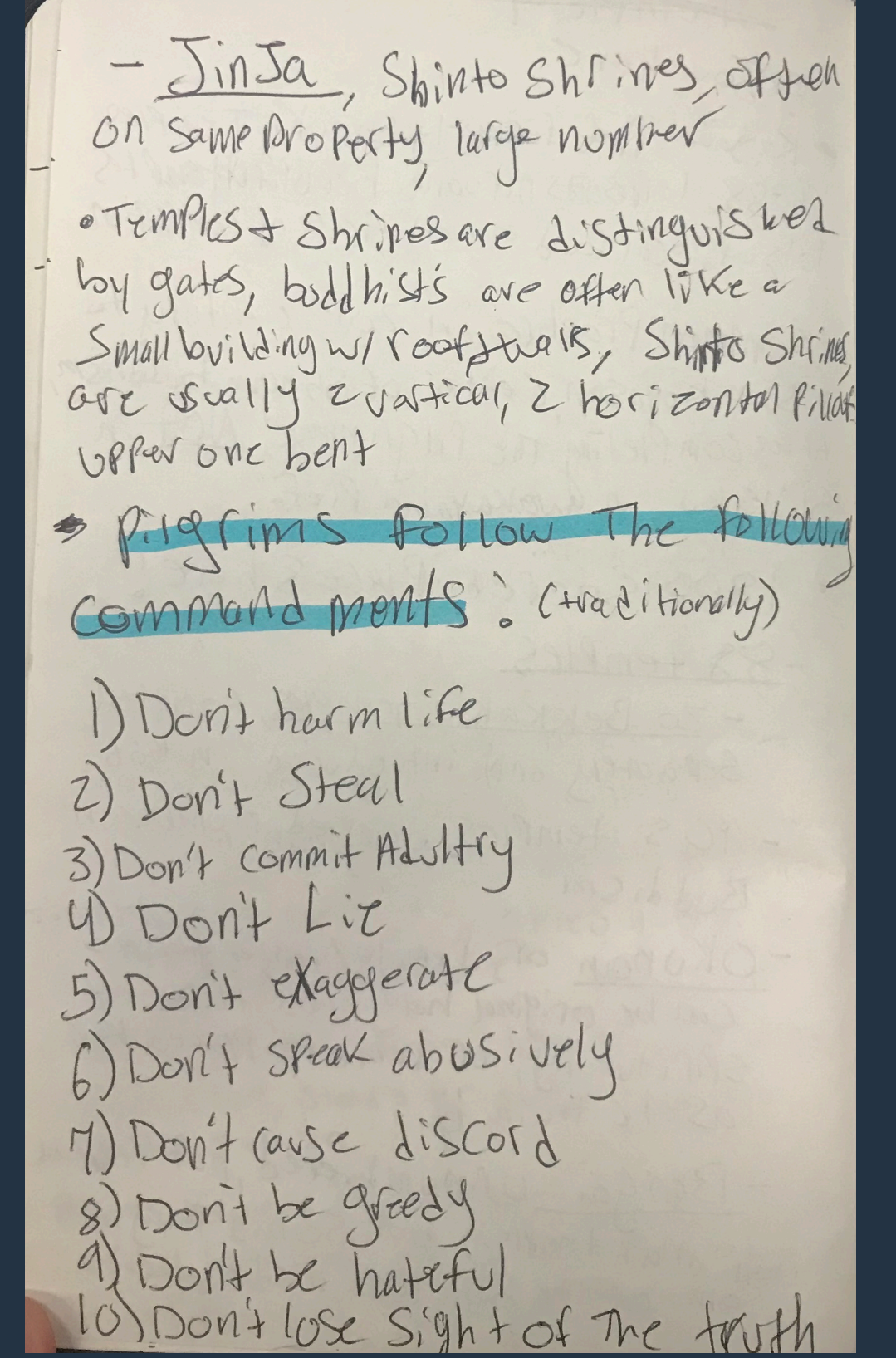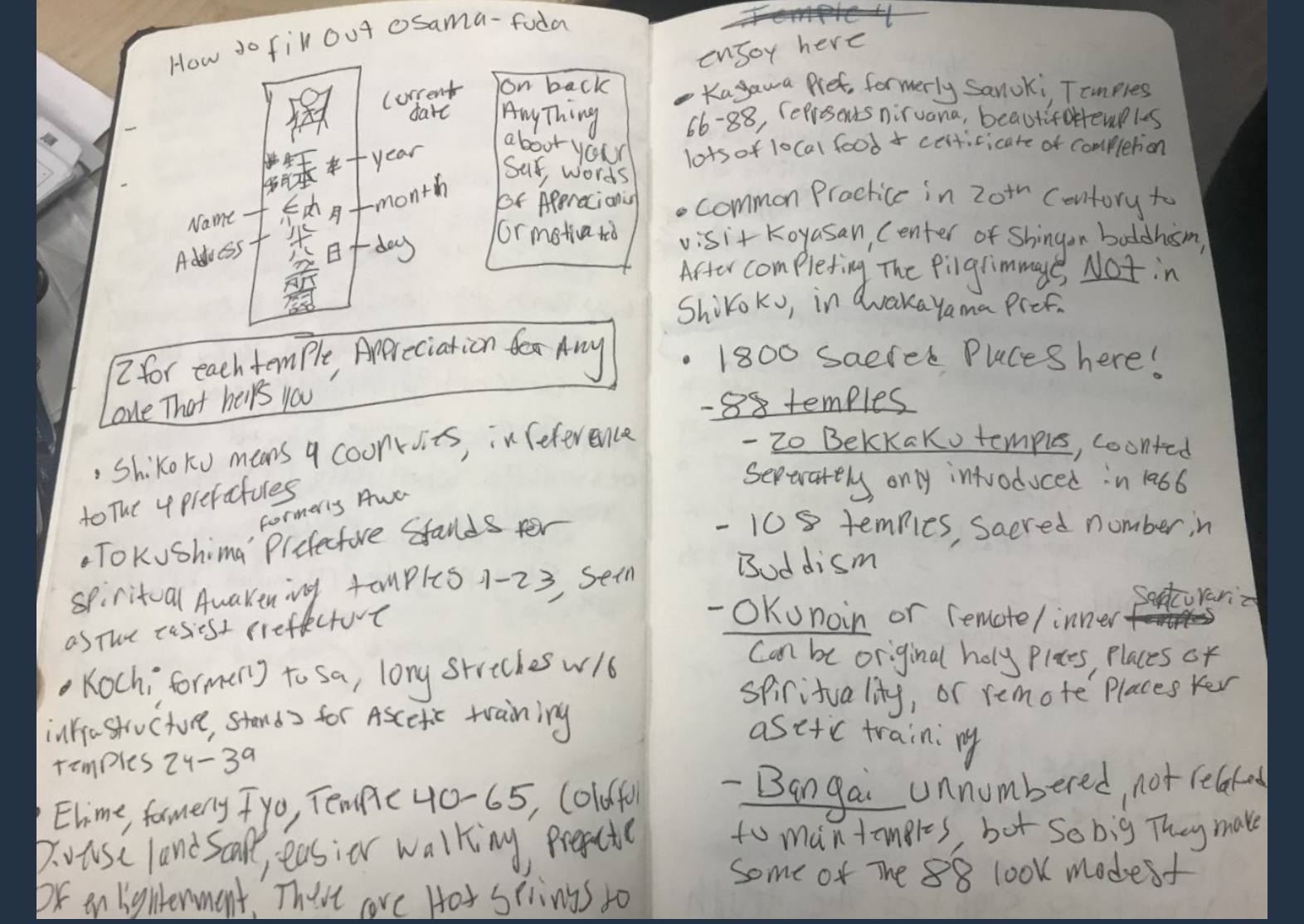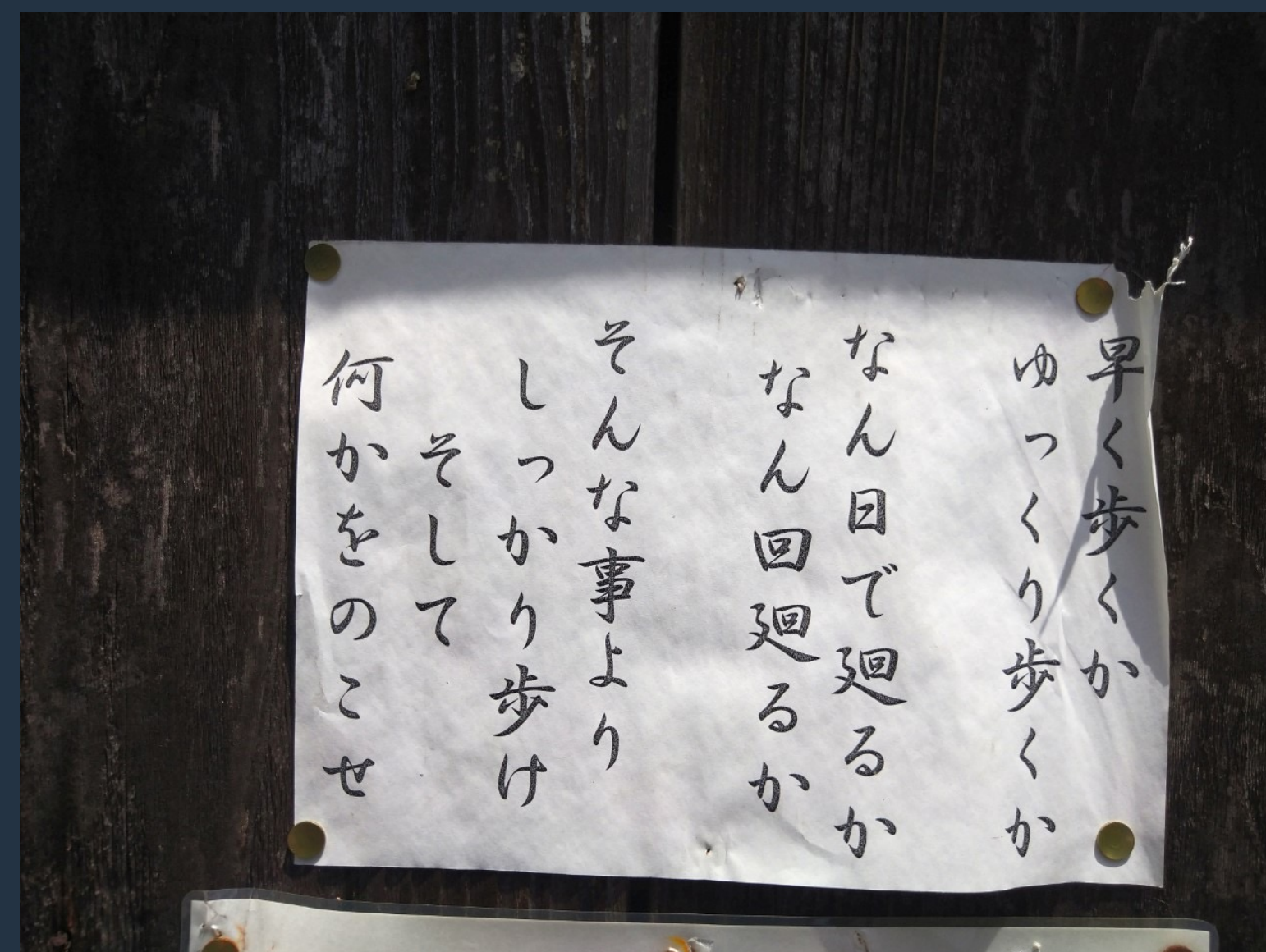
I oversaw providing information to guide the content development process of the virtual experience. This was done through literature review. I examined multiple multimedia secondary sources and mentor selected primary sources from pilgrims who have completed the pilgrimage.

Works Consulted:

Dunskus, Oliver. 2021. The 88 Temples of Shikoku: A Guide for the Walking Pilgrim. Archtop Publ.

Sibley, Robert C. 2013. The Way of the 88 Temples: Journeys on the Shikoku Pilgrimage. Charlottesville, VA: UVA Press.

Tennant, Susan, trans. 2021. The 1918 Shikoku Pilgrimage of Takamure Itsue: An English translation of Musume Junreiki. Bowen Publ.

Developing Scripts

Using the research, I helped script many rituals for the different temples. I scripted the entrance, the washing ritual, the bell ritual, the ofuda ritual and the stamping done at every temple.

I also wrote text boxes to explain the rituals and various stops at the first temple.
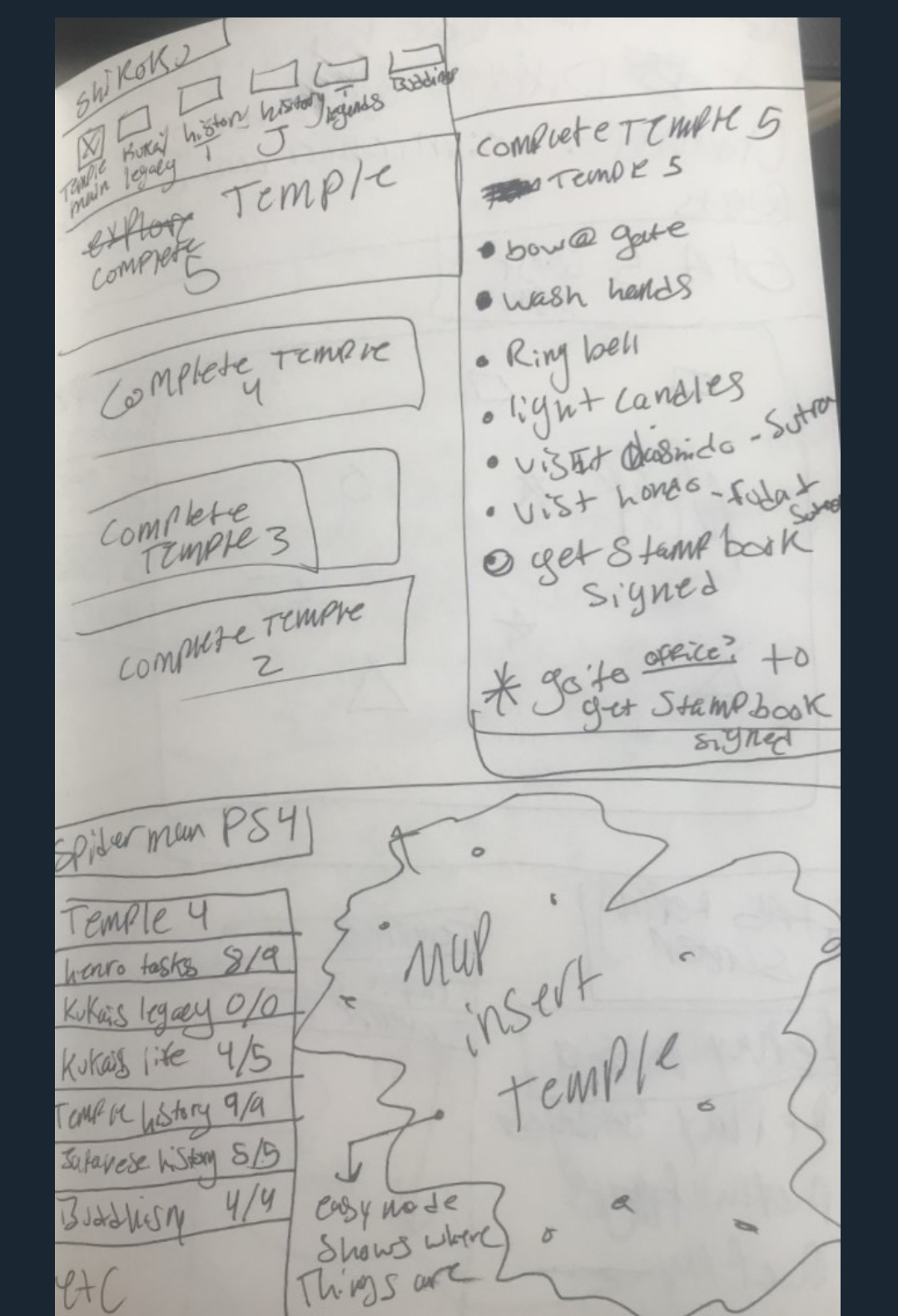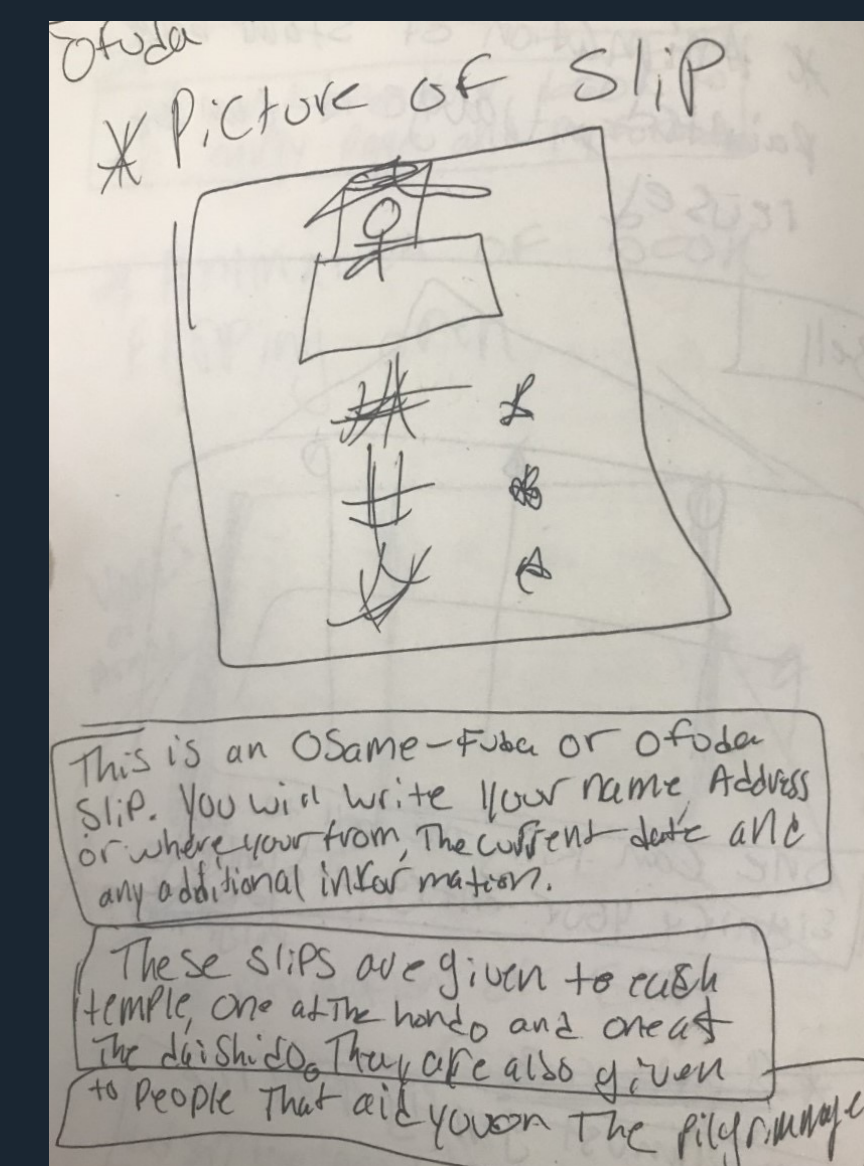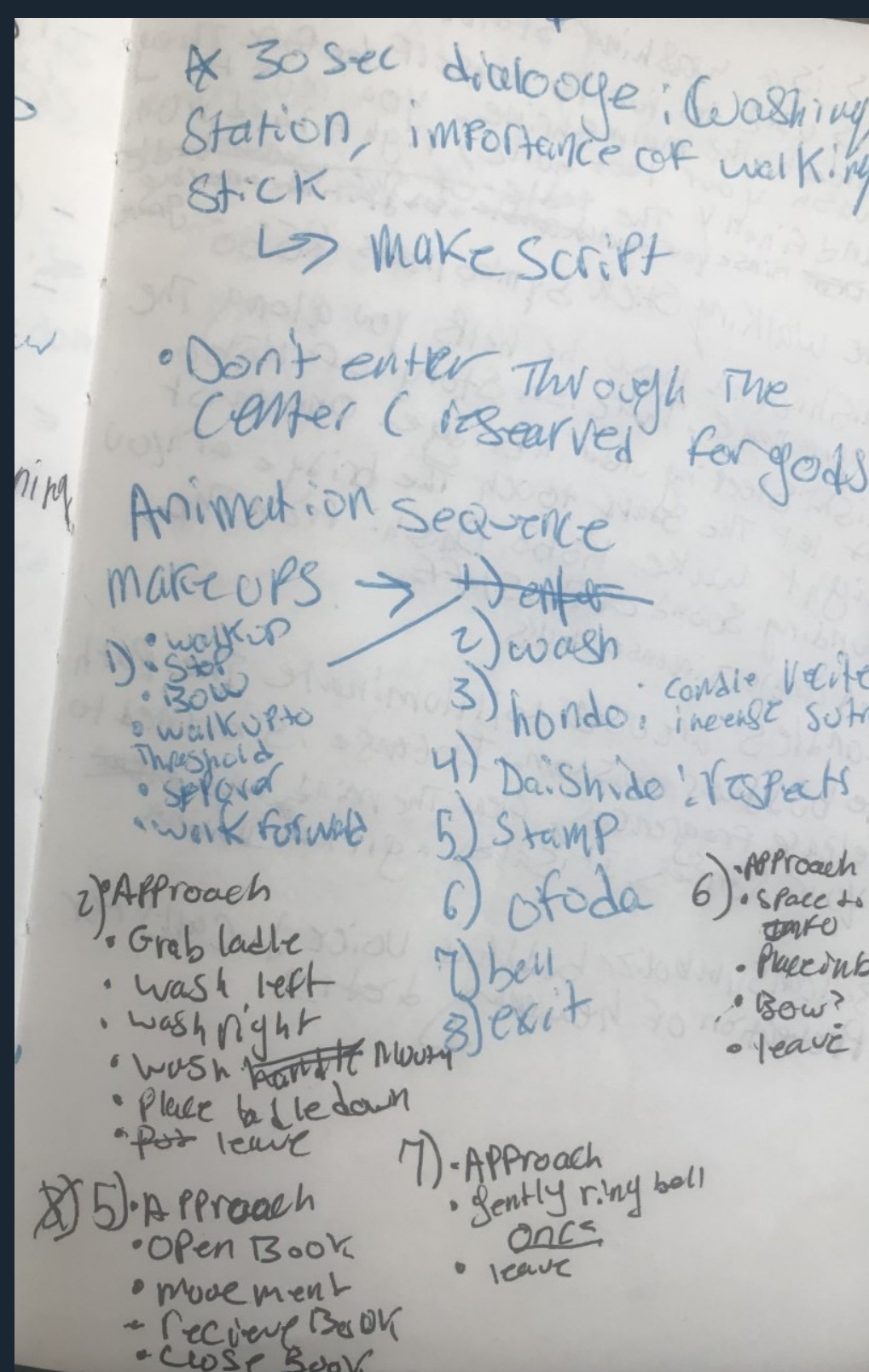
User Interface Design

Throughout my research I examined different examples of immersive UI in state-of-the-art video games, such as the Assassin's Creed and Spider-Man series. I did this to develop and design an interface to help users navigate the are, track progress, and access additional content.

Background Research

Scripts and Rituals

User Interfaces