

Teaching Qualitative Research Methods

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At Jacobs University, methods training is an integral part from the first semester of the Bachelor well into the PhD stage. Here we focus on the teaching of qualitative (and mixed-) methods courses, which are mandatory for all social science and humanities students, and centre around the study of small-N cases.

Challenges of teaching qualitative methods

- great variety of methods and methodologies (Holstein & Gubrium 2008; Muck, Bergold, Breuer & Legewie 2000)
 - extensive syllabus
- application of qualitative methods as craftsmanship (Breuer & Schreier 2010; Hammersley 2004)
 - students need to apply methods in their own research
- lack of unambiguous procedural rules (Kleinman, Copp & Henderson 1997; Poulin 2007)
 - teaching and learning as co-construction

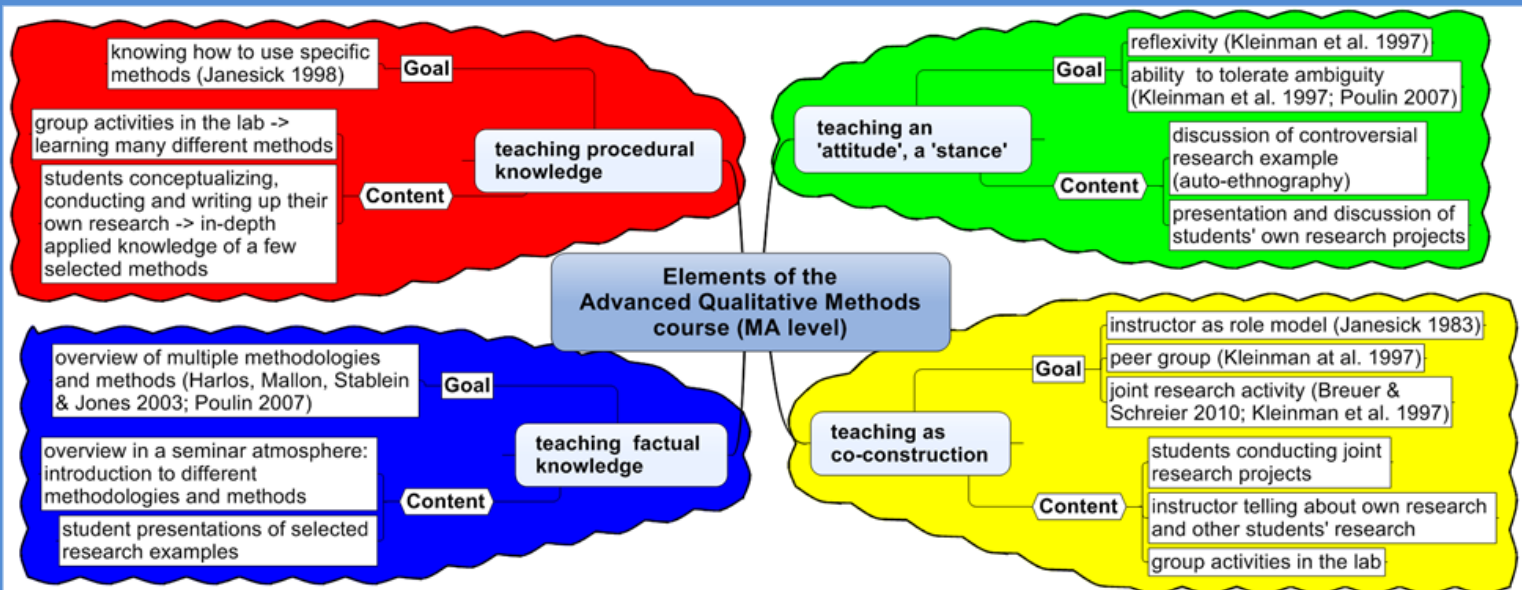
Challenges of teaching methods at Jacobs University:

Students are very heterogeneous with respect to:

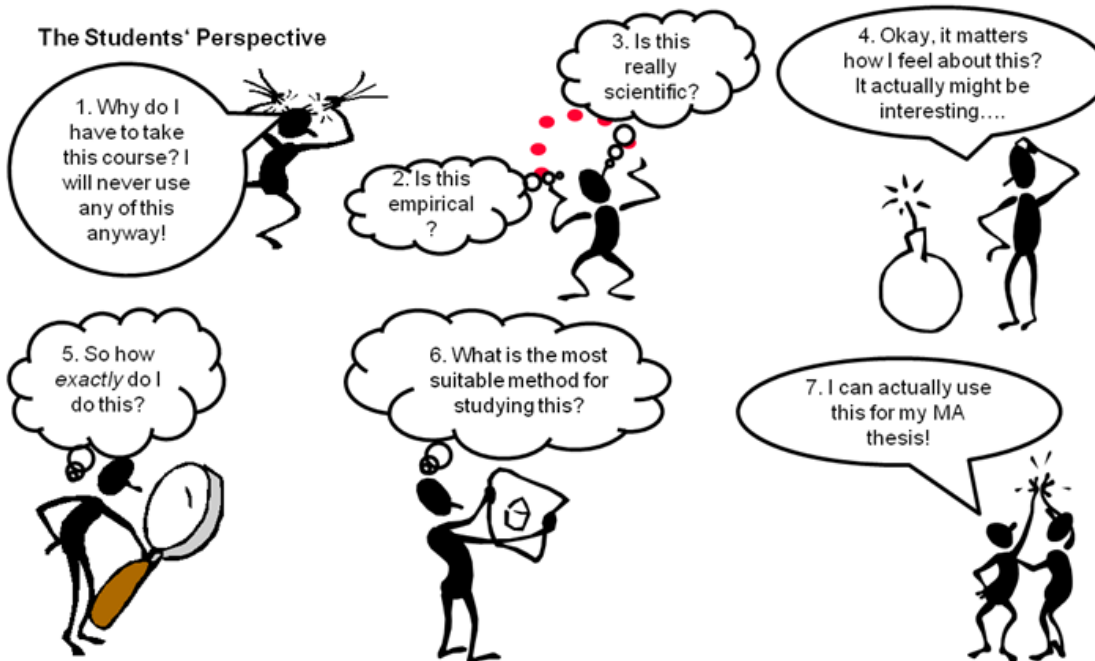
- previous knowledge of (qualitative) methods:
 - no knowledge, some training usually in quantitative methods or intensive training in both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- disciplinary background:
 - Art History, Communication Science, History, Humanities, Political Sciences, Psychology, Social Sciences, Sociology, ...
- cultural background and learning style:
 - Students from over 90 nationalities
 - Western and non-Western classroom culture.

Role of research in teaching:

- students conduct their own research
- students discuss their own research (peer-group)
 - instructor draws on and discusses own research
 - critical discussion of published research examples



The Students' Perspective



References

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- Note. Screen Beans cartoons taken from Microsoft Office 2007.

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