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Japanese Foodscapes in Berlin: Teaching Research Methods Through Food

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Summary
This paper introduces research and fieldwork methods education for Japanese Studies students at Freie Universität Berlin. It aims to support training in research design, research methods and fieldwork in and beyond Japan in order to respond to the increasing demand for systematic and transparent research practices in Japanese Studies and Area Studies communities. Drawing on Berlin's vibrant Japanese foodscape this course provides students with opportunities to plan and conduct research projects on various aspects of Japanese food. Students present their research results and reflections on methods and fieldwork in video tutorials online through the course blog. Based on my experiences with teaching this course for four years, I suggest that in order to teach a successful method course in Japanese studies programs, it is important to 1) inspire students to conduct their own fieldwork, 2) provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the course and decision-making processes with regard to the syllabus and 3) make students' results visible in order to build a body of knowledge other students can draw on. In doing so, the course contributes to a more systematic method training in Japanese Studies through continuity.

Keywords: Japanese foodscapes, Berlin, qualitative research methods, video tutorial, teaching research methods, culinary globalization

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Introduction

Japanese food is currently very popular in Berlin. Gourmet journals feature special issues on Japanese cuisine [1] and new culinary events related to Japan pop up consistently. Japanese food is no longer limited to sushi and *teppanyaki*, but is characterized by an increasing variety of dishes such as *okonomiyaki*, *gyōza*, noodle soups and *takoyaki* [2] that were unknown to German consumers until recently. Additionally, Japanese desserts, sweets and beverages have gained popularity. This includes *matcha* (green tea powder) that is not only used for the tea ceremony now, but mixed in all sorts of drinks from *matcha* latte to *matcha* beer and desserts. Japanese bakeries or confectioners also sell more traditional sweets like *dorayaki*, *mochi* and *anpan*. [3] Because of this ongoing diversification and great plurality, Japanese foodscapes in Berlin are an interesting case for studying the globalization of Japanese food (Cwiertka and Walraven 2013, Farrer 2015).

The first Japanese restaurants in Germany opened in Frankfurt and Düsseldorf in the 1970s to serve the growing Japanese business community. Back then, especially *teppanyaki* was popular. In 1973, a Japanese restaurant named Daitokai opened in Düsseldorf and later established branches in Cologne and Berlin. The Berlin branch opened in 1983 and still exists today (Trenk 2015: 139). In the mid-1990s, sushi came to German cities, with *kaiten sushi*[4] being particularly popular (Keßler 2012). Sushi bars were not only run by Japanese but also other Asian people, especially with Chinese and Vietnamese backgrounds. During the last decade, noodle soup restaurants specializing in *rāmen* and *udon*[5] opened in German cities (Trenk 2015).

Because of their omnipresence and popularity, Japanese eateries and Japanese food in Berlin are an exciting topic for field research. In addition, almost everybody is interested in food. Last but not least, food is one of my main research interests (i.e. Reiher and Sippel 2015, Reiher and Yamaguchi 2017, Reiher 2017). Therefore, when assigned to teach method courses in the Japanese Studies MA program at Freie Universität Berlin (FUB) in 2015, I decided to utilize Berlin's Japanese Foodscape and provide students with the opportunity to conduct research projects in Berlin in order to prepare them for fieldwork in Japan. The advantages are obvious: without a large budget or the time-consuming organization of a field trip to Japan, students are

1 See for example Garçon 2017, Tagesspiegel Genuss 2017, Lust auf Genuss 2019.

2 *Teppanyaki* is a dish that uses an iron griddle to cook food. *Okonomiyaki* is a Japanese savory pancake containing various ingredients. *Gyōza* are dumplings filled with ground meat and vegetables. *Takoyaki* is is a ball-shaped snack made of dough filled with octopus.

3 *Dorayaki* is a red-bean pancake. It consists of two small pancake-like patties and a sweet red bean paste filling. *Mochi* are Japanese rice cakes. *Anpan* is a Japanese sweet roll filled with sweet red bean paste.

4 *Kaitensushi* is a sushi restaurant where plates with sushi are placed on a rotating conveyor belt or moat that winds through the restaurant and moves past every table, counter and seat.

5 *Rāmen* is a noodle soup with thin, Chinese-style wheat noodles. *Udon* is a type of thick wheat flour noodle.

able to study a Japan-related topic, conduct their first interviews in Japanese and learn to design and carry out a research project by applying qualitative social science research methods. In addition to written assignments, students present their findings and insights on how to conduct fieldwork in video tutorials that are published in a blog on the internet so that other students can profit from their experiences (Reiher 2016).[6]

In this article, I will discuss how qualitative social science methods can be taught in Japanese Studies programs. In order to produce reliable, comparable and comprehensive research results in Japanese Studies, scholars from area studies and social science disciplines alike can relate to, it is of utmost importance to train students of Japanese Studies in research methods. Therefore, I suggest that for teaching a successful method course within the constraints of a Japanese Studies curriculum, it is important to 1) inspire students to conduct their own fieldwork, 2) provide opportunities for students to actively participate in the course and decision-making processes with regard to the syllabus, 3) make students' results visible in order to build a body of knowledge other students can relate to, and thereby to contribute to a more systematic method education in Japanese Studies through continuity. In order to elaborate on these suggestions, I will first introduce some challenges related to qualitative social science research on and particular to fieldwork in Japan and outline the course and its objectives resulting from these challenges. Drawing on the students' projects, I will then discuss how students experienced and solved challenges at different stages of their own projects and how they learned from projects and data from previous courses. The paper will conclude with reflections on what makes a good method course.

Challenges of conducting and teaching fieldwork and research methods in Japanese Studies

Many of the problems researchers encounter when conducting research in and on Japan are similar to problems generally related to qualitative research in any context. Without a clearly defined research questions and a reasonable research design, researchers will be lost (Turabian 2007). Planning and organizing research or gaining access to the field can be challenging no matter where research is conducted. In qualitative research, data are collaboratively made by researchers and those they study in interaction. However, to know what data are and how to make useful data is a very difficult task that "can leave a novice researcher frozen at the start of a study" (Richards 2015: 36). Information only becomes relevant data and evidence for researchers' arguments, when it is recorded and its relationship to a research question is established. Thus, the critical question for any research design is "What

6 The blog is called "Forschungswerkstatt Japanische Küche in Berlin" (Research workshop on Japanese foodscapes in Berlin) and can be accessed via this link: https://userblogs.fu-berlin.de/forschungswerkstatt-japan/.

do I need to know in order to answer this question" (Richards 2015: 37). But, even after fieldwork is successfully conducted, the work doesn't stop. In all research projects, organizing and analyzing the collected data is time consuming and can be frustrating at times (Richards 2015). Thus, organizing and analyzing data is the next great challenge.

Particular to Japan, however, is the challenge of conducting research in a foreign language and negotiating cultural and social norms, especially when doing fieldwork for the first time (McLaughlin 2010; Bestor 2003). As researchers arriving in Japan, students must learn "to navigate unfamiliar social protocols to see [their] project[s] move from idea to tangible result" (McLaughlin 2010: 1). Access to the field can be difficult, too. Sometimes it is hard to gain access at all, in other instances, relying on a certain network too much, may result in a biased perspective (see Timmerarens 2019, this issue). In some cases, exploratory fieldwork is necessary in order to build trust and to gain access, because trust is particularly important in Japan (Bestor et al. 2003: 14). Trust building involves constant negotiation of informants' and researchers' expectations and reciprocity (see Gerster 2019, this issue). Another challenge is to carry out fieldwork in a foreign language. Even the most fluent speaker of Japanese might have to master unfamiliar terminology particular to the research topic or the social group he or she is interested in (Smith 2003).

To address all of these problems in class is very difficult due to the limited time available in the Japanese Studies curriculum. At Freie Universität Berlin, a method course is mandatory only in the Japanese Studies MA program. Two courses of altogether four hours over one term are available for method teaching. It is incredibly difficult to introduce students to all the steps in the research process and to all methods of data collection and data analysis in such little time. While in the social science disciplines several courses are devoted to method training over many terms, Japanese Studies just like other area studies programs face the challenge to teach research methods that enable students to conduct research projects for their BA or MA thesis on top of language education, courses on basic skills in academic writing and teaching in-depth knowledge of Japan's society, politics, economy, literature and culture. Therefore, research methods in Japanese Studies are often neglected. This is particularly problematic in programs where students study Japanese Studies only, without the chance of taking courses in a social science disciplines where they can learn about research methods.

Limited resources with regard to time, personnel and funding are problems colleagues at other Japanese Studies institutes in and beyond Germany are facing, too. Nevertheless, they have developed different strategies to improve the training in research methods by offering on-site fieldwork experience to students (see Bernardi et al. 2019, Manzenreiter and Miserka 2019, both this issue). In Japan, David Slater's Digital Video Archive "Voices from Tohoku" is an outstanding example of training anthropologists at Sophia University in Tokyo (Slater 2017). When resources are available, colleagues from universities outside of Japan take

students to fieldtrips to Japan to conduct fieldwork in the country as part of their course work (see for example McMorran 2014; Manzenreiter and Miserka 2019, this issue). In Berlin, however, we decided to stay in the city and conduct fieldwork in our vicinity.

Course outline and objectives

In general, students of Japanese Studies and researchers focusing on Japan face the problem of choosing adequate research methods and translating them into a research design that can be applied to Japan and its area-specific characteristics. Therefore, the method course I introduce here aims to address these problems throughout all stages of planning and carrying out research projects. The course mainly introduced qualitative social science research methods ranging from designing a research project and conducting data through participant observation and interviews to data analysis, especially through qualitative content, discourse and frame analysis and coding. Students actively shape the syllabus by choosing methods they are particularly interested in.

Since 2016, the method course consists of two interrelated courses. The first course introduces and discusses research methods and the individual steps in the research process. In the second course, students apply what they have learned from the readings to their own research projects on Japanese foodscapes in Berlin, often in small groups. In a first step, they define a research topic, develop a research question and think about a meaningful design and methods to answer their respective research questions. Through this process, students begin to think about what should be studied and why fieldwork should be conducted at all in order to answer their research question. What kind of methods should be applied to collect data and how will the data be analyzed later? How much data is needed? What can we actually find out in the field if fieldwork mainly identifies local actors' perspectives and practices?

Against this backdrop, the main objectives of the method course are the following: 1) to introduce research designs and a variety of qualitative social science research methods; 2) to enable students to critically evaluate research designs, methods and the quality of data in the work of others; 3) to prepare them for their MA thesis; 4) to encourage interest in conducting research; 5) to provide a forum for testing and experiencing the making and analysis of data; 6) to apply Japanese language skills and 7) to prepare students for fieldwork in Japan. Through carrying out their own projects, students learn to pay attention to practical aspects like available time resources, getting access to the field and to informants and to organize the research process independently.

I am convinced that this hands-on and participatory approach to teaching methods is important, because methods of collecting and analyzing research data have to be put into practice in order to understand their relevance and to enable students to apply them, if they decide to conduct field research in Japan. This is not only true for teaching methods in Japanese Studies. When teaching methods, connecting learners

to research by making the "research process visible by actively engaging students in the aspects of the methods at hand" is central to bringing learners into the activity of researchers (Lewthwaite and Nind 2016: 421).

At the same time, choosing an interesting research topic is important as well for inspiring students and showing that doing research is exciting and worth leaving the classroom. Because first year MA students are often not yet sure about the topic of their MA thesis, instead of conducting research for their individual projects, I assigned a broad topic to the class that students could work on as a group, but could also be divided into many small projects that suit individual students' interests. I wanted to raise students' awareness for possible problems that could occur during fieldwork in Japan. Therefore, it seemed important to offer them first-hand fieldwork experience. But because we neither had financial nor time resources for a fieldtrip to Japan, I decided on a topic that was related to Japan and allowed for fieldwork experience in Japanese. Because Japanese food is very popular in Berlin, Japanese foodscapes in Berlin is a broad topic that offers this experience.

When I taught the course for the first time in 2015, only one course of two hours per week was scheduled. Although I was able to raise interest in conducting research; introducing the different stages of the research process, from identifying a topic and a research question to making and analyzing data and presenting them, was hardly possible in satisfactory manner. The first course featured visits from people working in Japanese gastronomy for interview training and a field trip to a Japanese restaurant where students observed customer-staff interactions, guests' food choices and the staging of Japaneseness. They learned how to transcribe interviews and how to take field notes. In addition, students also conducted their own projects and presented their results in a term paper. One task of these term papers was to critically reflect on the methods used and on whether they produced data that answered their research questions. However, I found it a shame to confine the results of their empirical research on timely and interesting topics to my desk after grading them and thought that they deserved a greater audience.

Therefore, in 2016, the second year I taught the course, I added two more hours per week to the course to devote more time to hands-on activities. Secondly, when searching the internet for materials I could use for the course, I found a couple of method tutorials and thought that creating method tutorials could be a meaningful way for our students to learn, apply and reflect methods by explaining it to others. I organized a workshop with FUB's media center where students learned how to create videos. The media center also provided students with tablet computers during the course and supported the students during the process of filming and editing. The videos about students' research projects were presented on the internet in a blog and thus, their efforts and results became visible to a wider public. Thirdly, through a cooperation with students and instructors from Heinrich-Heine-University Düsseldorf (HHU), students had the opportunity to compare their findings with those of HHU students who conducted research on Japanese food in Düsseldorf and to

present and share their results with them at a joint workshop in Berlin in 2017. In addition, in the following courses I used the videos and data students produced as resources to discuss with the next cohorts. These pedagogical hooks motivated students to engage in research and encouraged them to reflect on the research process and explain it to others via the video tutorials.

Table 1: Research method courses on Japanese foodscapes in Berlin at FUB

Year	Hours/ week	Projects	Presentation of results	Types of teaching	Coope-ration
2015	2	• "Matcha as superfood? – The commodification of green tea in Germany" • "Rāmen Restaurants in Tokyo and Berlin"	• Term papers (unpublished)	• Small group projects • Field trips • Interviews with invited guests	
2016	4	• "Matcha Latte in Berlin" • "The Japanese Bakery Kame" • "Nippon's noodle networks in Berlin"	• Video (published online)	• Small group projects • Field trips • Interviews with invited guests • Video production	HHU Düssel-dorf
2017	4	• "Vegan and vegetarian variations of Japanese food in Berlin"	• Video (published online • Joint Student conference with students and researchers from HHU Düsseldorf, Sophia University at FU Berlin • Presentation of results by instructor at lecture series (globalization of Asian food at FU Berlin)	• Small group projects • Field trips • Interviews with invited guests • Video production	HHU Düssel-dorf
2018	4	• "Practices of consumption: Japanese students and Asian supermarkets in Berlin"	• Video (published online) • presentation by course instructor at Conference of the German Japanese Studies Association	• Small group projects • Field trips • Interviews with invited guests • Video production	

Source: Author

Although I tried to cater to students' needs, this did not always work the way I planned it. For example, in 2016, I was excited about the new course features, especially about the tablet computers, video production and blog. The students, however, were less impressed with these innovations. After the video workshop, they told me that they already knew how to produce videos and it turned out that none of them used the tablet computers for filming and editing, instead preferring their own equipment. Thus, in the following years I gave up on the tablet computers and the video workshop, because students were prepared with equipment and skills

to produce videos without additional help and thus, more time could be devoted to the projects.

Defining a research topic: Inspiration and participation

Berlin's Japanese foodscapes proved to be a sufficiently open and inspiring topic that students could study from various perspectives. Research perspectives on Berlin's Japanese foodscapes could be anything from superfoods, family businesses, gender, to veganism or migrant workers. In their projects, students conducted research on Japanese green tea powder (*matcha*), Japanese noodle restaurants, bakeries, vegan and vegetarian varieties of Japanese food and Japanese students' food consumption in Asian supermarkets in Berlin. Students chose these topics based on their own interests and experiences and often, a restaurant in their neighborhood, a friend working in the food business or a Japanese dish they liked, became their source of inspiration.

In order to inspire students, I tried to provide as many direct experiences of Berlin's Japanese food culture as possible. For our course, we invited people who were involved in Berlin's Japanese foodscapes and visited restaurants. Students were encouraged to invite people they knew or in whose businesses they were interested and to select restaurants or other places for field trips. Because in Berlin many Japanese people have eateries, sell or create food associated with Japan or work in Japanese restaurants, it was not difficult to find people who were willing to visit our class to be interviewed by the students in Japanese. Many of the people we talked to during the courses were Japanese women, many of them younger than 35. Some worked as waitresses, others in kitchens of Japanese eateries, some imported green tea and *matcha* powder from Japan, and yet others were confectioners and cooks. It seemed that they all had developed their own ideas of what Japanese food is and should be and what kind of food they wanted to sell to their customers in Berlin. Most of them were self-confident and surprised us with their enthusiasm despite of their often precarious working conditions. At the same time, there are also many people involved in Berlin's Japanese foodscape who are not Japanese. Thus, it was convenient to invite people who speak German or English as well to practice interview techniques before conducting interviews in Japanese. In short, due to Berlin's vibrant Japanese foodscape, students were able to experience the challenges of interviewing people in Japanese and producing interview transcripts without leaving Berlin.

Although the plurality of Berlin's Japanese foodscape was a merit in many ways, it also posed a number of problems when students started to plan their own research projects. The first obstacle students met was to define a research topic and they often stumbled when they attempted to define what Japanese foodscape actually means. In class, we discussed questions like: "Is a Japanese restaurant one that is run by Japanese people even if it offers French pastries or Asian fusion food?" "Is it necessary that it features authentic Japanese food? How does one define Japanese

food?" "Do we just take for granted that all restaurants that feature 'Japanese' in their name or on their menus are Japanese?" Other Asian cuisines are popular in Berlin as well and often hard to distinguish from each other with Korean restaurants serving sushi and Japanese restaurants selling *kimchi* as a side dish (Byun and Reiher 2015; Trenk 2015).

It is not a new insight, that ethnic and food identities are constructed and that the category of authenticity is often not more than a strategy by food entrepreneurs to distinguish their businesses from others, especially in affluent urban settings like in Berlin that offer tastes and culinary experiences from around the world (Byun and Reiher 2015). However, in order to define an object of research, students had to explain why they chose certain restaurants over others and why they considered certain actors to be part of Berlin's Japanese foodscape. In one project, this was particularly interesting, because students wanted to conduct an interview with the owner of a restaurant that offered vegetarian fusion cuisine that used ingredients from Japan like *shiso*, *yuzu* and *miso*.[7] Judging from the menu, the students considered the food as Japanese. The owner, however, neglected this attribution and the interview never came about. While the menu is one marker of staged ethnicity in gastronomy (Byun and Reiher 2015), taking the informant's perspective seriously was an important lesson.

Due to the multi-ethnicity and plurality of Berlin's Japanese foodscapes, critically reflecting on ethnic ascriptions became an important part of the course. This also became evident during our fieldtrips to 'Japanese' restaurants. One restaurant we frequently visited is part of a group of restaurants that are quite popular in Berlin. The group consists of an *izakaya*,[8] a Japanese noodle soup restaurant and Korean BBQ restaurant. The eateries' owner is Chinese. He had experienced Japanese food while living in a Japanese community in Canada. In the restaurants, Japanese, Koreans and Europeans serve food, Japanese cook and Africans wash the dishes and clean. The ingredients, especially fresh vegetables, meat and fruits, are delivered by Turkish greengrocers. The customers are people from all over the world, including many tourists. The food in the Japanese restaurants is presented as "Japanese", however, the Japanese staff told us that they are not happy with the taste of it, because there is too much soy sauce and salt in it.

In this complex setting of intercultural staff, ingredients and dishes, the boundaries between what is Japanese and what is not become blurred. However, it is exactly this dynamic of blurred boundaries and cross-cultural culinary experiences that make

7 *Shiso* (*perilla frutescens*) is a herb that belongs to the mint family. In Japanese cuisine, *shiso* leafs are used for various dishes, in salad dressing or to garnish dishes. *Yuzu* (*citrus junos*), is a citrus fruit. Its juice and zest are used in various ways in Japanese cuisine. For example, *yuzu* is an integral ingredient in the citrus-based sauce *ponzu*, in *yuzu* vinegar and alcoholic beverages. *Miso* is a seasoning paste produced by fermenting soybeans. It is used for example for sauces and spreads, pickling vegetables or meats, and miso soup.

8 An *izakaya* is a Japanese bar where drinks and small dishes are served.

the research on Japanese foodscapes in Berlin so inspiring for the students. In order to define a research topic, students had to draw lines, justify their decisions and actively employ what they had learned in class. This includes taking their informants' perspectives seriously. By providing students with the opportunity to select their own research topics, I made sure that they were inspired to carry out fieldwork. Encouraging students to select places for field trips and asking them to invite people for interview exercises increased students' participation in the course. By discussing problems related to all steps of the research process in the group and individually, the course became a forum where everybody knew about the current state of everybody's projects and thus, enabled in-depth discussions and mutual support.

Learning from others: Visibility and continuity

The data students produced during the past four years became valuable resources for the following method courses. Audio and video files from interviews students collectively conducted during class and individually in the field, interview transcripts, field notes and videos are used in class. By making the video tutorials available online and by sharing experiences from the course on the blog, students' work becomes visible beyond the course and FUB. In the beginning of each new course we watch and discuss the videos produced by the previous groups in Berlin and Düsseldorf in order to raise awareness for methodological challenges, the students have addressed in their videos. Students remembered their fellow students' findings much better than findings from the readings. This is due to the video format, but also because they often knew the students in person and could relate to their work better than to the writing of anonymous scholars.

One video from 2016 for example showed how a group of students planned to conduct interviews with staff and customers in a Japanese bakery. They had contacted the owner and arranged a date and a time for the interview, prepared interview questions, asked for permission to film and provided forms of consent. However, they had never visited the place before the interview. In their video they described how they realized that their interview questions did not work. They wanted to find out whether customers visited the place because it was a Japanese bakery or simply because it was in their neighborhood and they found it convenient to buy bread there and did not care about Japanese baked goods. When they entered the shop, they realized that they did not sell any bread. In addition, they had prepared the questions in German, but the customers had diverse nationalities and often did not speak German. Therefore, they had to adjust the questions on the spot. In their video tutorial, they state that they learned that it is important to prepare for interview situations, to get as much information as possible beforehand and, if possible, visit the place and develop interview questions afterwards. If they had prepared the interviews in this manner they would have arranged different questions and would have been prepared to conduct interviews in English and Japanese in addition to

German. Nevertheless, through this experience of spontaneous translation and changing the interview questions, they learned that flexibility is one of the most important skills during fieldwork.

Another problem they addressed is a possible bias that can occur when selecting interview partners. In the Japanese bakery, they approached customers and asked if they could interview them. This went mostly well, but demanded courage. One elderly woman declined their request rather rudely, thus, students stated that this discouraged them to approach women of that age group again. By openly addressing this problem, they already took an important step towards reflexivity, apart from flexibility, another important feature of fieldwork. Students also said that they did not expect fieldwork to be so time consuming, demanding and exhausting. This experience triggered the reconsideration of one student's plan to conduct fieldwork in Japan for her MA thesis, because she realized how much time she would need for this.

Through discussing the video tutorials and other materials in class, students learn from the experience of their fellow and former students. They also get an idea of the format of their own video and feel encouraged to create the best video possible. In addition, the transcripts and audio files from interviews in previous classes help students to compare their own transcripts. To draw on coded interviews from previous courses as examples is helpful to provide orientation and guidance to students who code interviews for the first time. Listening to interviews others have conducted raises awareness for challenges in interview situations, such as when the interviewer talks too much, interrupts the informant or asks closed or suggestive questions.

The task of creating a video tutorial has been modified during the last years, because presenting research results and reflecting on methodological challenges proved to be quite challenging. Students' videos now focus a little more on content and on the individual research process rather than making general statements about how to use a certain methods. However, through publishing the video tutorials online via the course blog, students' work became visible. Students also wrote short blog entries and added pictures about their projects, thus presenting their work in different formats. This was motivating for the students, but also provided hints for others who wanted to carry out fieldwork or to teach fieldwork and research methods. The video tutorials and other resources we published online can be used as resources for teaching methods in Japanese studies. By making them available, we hope to contribute to a more systematic method education in Japanese studies through continuity.

Summary

Combining the introduction to research methods with first-hand research experience proved to be successful and rewarding. Students received the course well because they had the chance to participate in defining topics and the syllabus and could invite

guests themselves. They appreciated the practical hands-on experience not only with regard to carrying out research, but also because they learned how to present their findings through different media formats and improved their practical skills in filming and editing videos and managing their research projects. They found research methods much more comprehensible through actually using them. Everybody agreed that it was a good experience to conduct their own projects and be guided through the research process by regular discussion of the projects in class. Students stated that they felt inspired to conduct fieldwork for the MA thesis after taking the course. One student said that she had overcome her reservations through the course, and is now actually confident to conduct field research (Reiher 2016). And of course, students enjoyed the many opportunities to eat Japanese food, too.

From the instructor's perspective, drawing on material from previous courses is very helpful. The combination with my own research increased my motivation as much as that of the students. Reaching out with this project to Japanese Studies programs at other universities was inspiring. The problem remains however that the available time does not allow for a more in-depth introduction of individual methods in the courses. Over the years, I have adjusted the course based on my experience with previous courses in order to address this problem, but could only partially solve it.

In summary, the most important insight from teaching method courses to Japanese Studies students is that, when given the chance to conduct their own research, students always find doing research to be fun. With the right incentives, students are motivated to collect, analyze and present their own data. These incentives include inspiration through selecting an interesting research topic, in this case Berlin's vibrant Japanese foodscapes. Another hook is participation. Giving students the chance to find a topic that interests them, asking for their needs when setting the syllabus, allowing them to select field sites for the group activities and to invite guests and creating content for the course blog proved to be highly motivating. In a similar manner, visibility of research results through the video blog and joint workshops with students from other universities, encouraged students to aim for the best possible result. In addition, the resources created during the course, including video tutorials, interview files and transcripts, add up to a body of knowledge other students can relate to and thereby contribute to a more systematic method education in Japanese Studies through continuity.

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