

## Forschung und Lehre

# Teaching Fieldwork in Japanese Studies — A Blended Learning Approach

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### Summary

In the BA Plus program “Japanese Studies — Cultural and Social Perspectives” at Heinrich Heine University (HHU) in Düsseldorf, students acquire skills in qualitative research methods in order to carry out research projects in Japan. In this paper, we discuss how we prepare students for fieldwork in Japan and introduce our program’s approach to this challenging task. We rely on a small classroom setting, and utilize e-learning by combining a virtual classroom with a learning management system for documentation purposes. This blended learning setting supports students throughout their individual and heterogeneous fieldwork phases in Japan. We argue that both parts, the offline introduction to qualitative research methods before going abroad and online classes during the fieldwork in Japan itself, are equally important. We have found that e-learning and blended learning scenarios are especially useful tools for bridging the distance between teachers and students, and for better supporting the latter in the field. Therefore, we suggest that these teaching methods can be helpful and applicable outside of structured programs as well, because they can easily be adjusted to different teaching contexts.

**Keywords:** Bachelor Plus, Japan, Japanese Studies, fieldwork, qualitative research, e-learning, virtual classroom, online tutoring

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