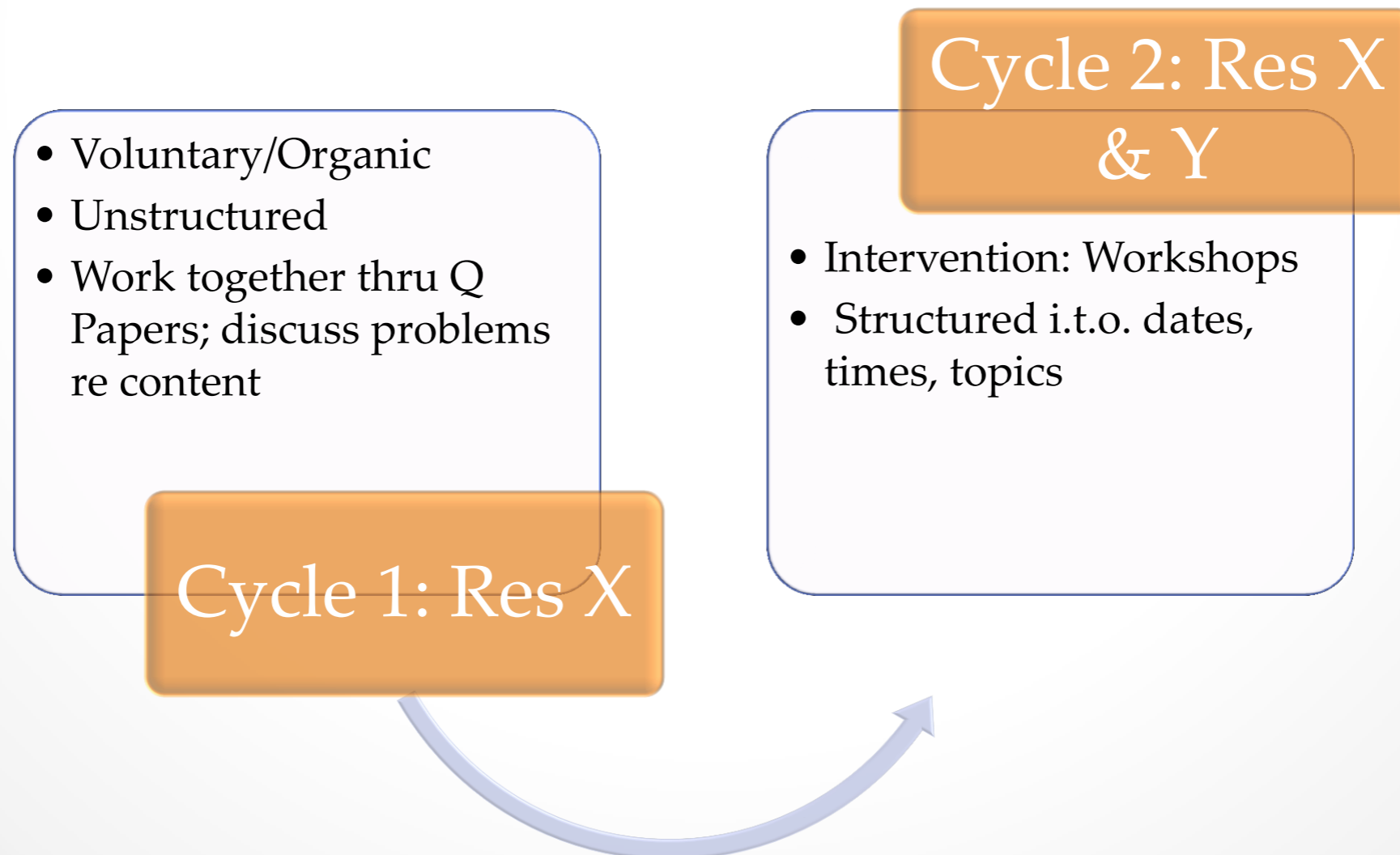


Shaping the learning
environment of first year
students: Combining
collective space with
collective learning

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HETL Conference 2013

Background

- First years are not coping – FYE initiative
- Our brief: investigate physical space on & around campus – conducive to LCs???
- My dual role – both practitioner and researcher



Theoretical Framework:

“Standing on the shoulders of giants”

- Socio-constructivist critical lens - Authors: Vygotsky, Engeström, Stetsenko, Roth & Lee, and more.
- Why Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)?
 - Situated in social/ cultural/ historical context/system
 - Don't learn in isolation (knowledge is socially constructed)
- Using Wenger's Communities of practice (CoPs) to conceptualise LCs
- Why critical theory? Habermas: “not enough to understand...”
- Lit Review: Transformation @ HEIs, FYE, LCs (US & SA Unis)

Analytical Framework

Tool

Subject

Object

Vygotsky's 1st Gen

Tool

Leont'ev's 2nd Gen

Subject

Object

Outcome

Rules

Community

Division of Labour

Tool

Engeström's 3rd Gen

Subject

Object

Object

Tool

Subject

Rules

Community

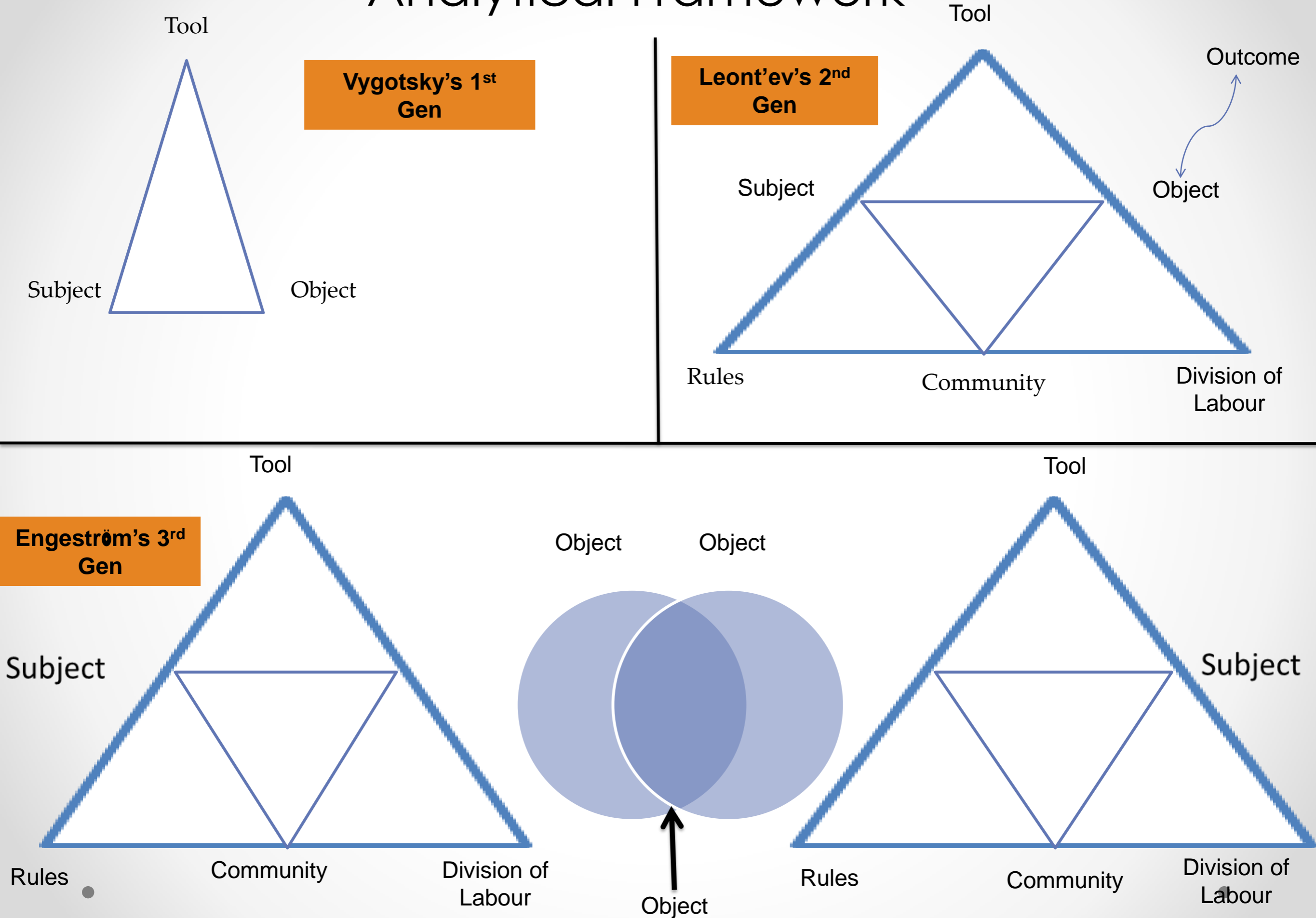
Division of Labour

Object

Rules

Community

Division of Labour



X2 Activity Systems

1st AS: FYE initiative

Students (subject)

use workshops (tool)

**to mediate the formation of LCs
(object)**

2nd AS: Student Affairs initiative

House Committee a.k.a. "HK" (subject)

use study time (tool)

**to mediate the fostering of an academic
culture**

Shared object: to shape the learning environment of first year residence students.

The **outcome** envisioned for both AS: student academic success.

Workshop Schedule

Object of Activity: to conceptualise & implement LCs in order to shape the learning environment of 1st years

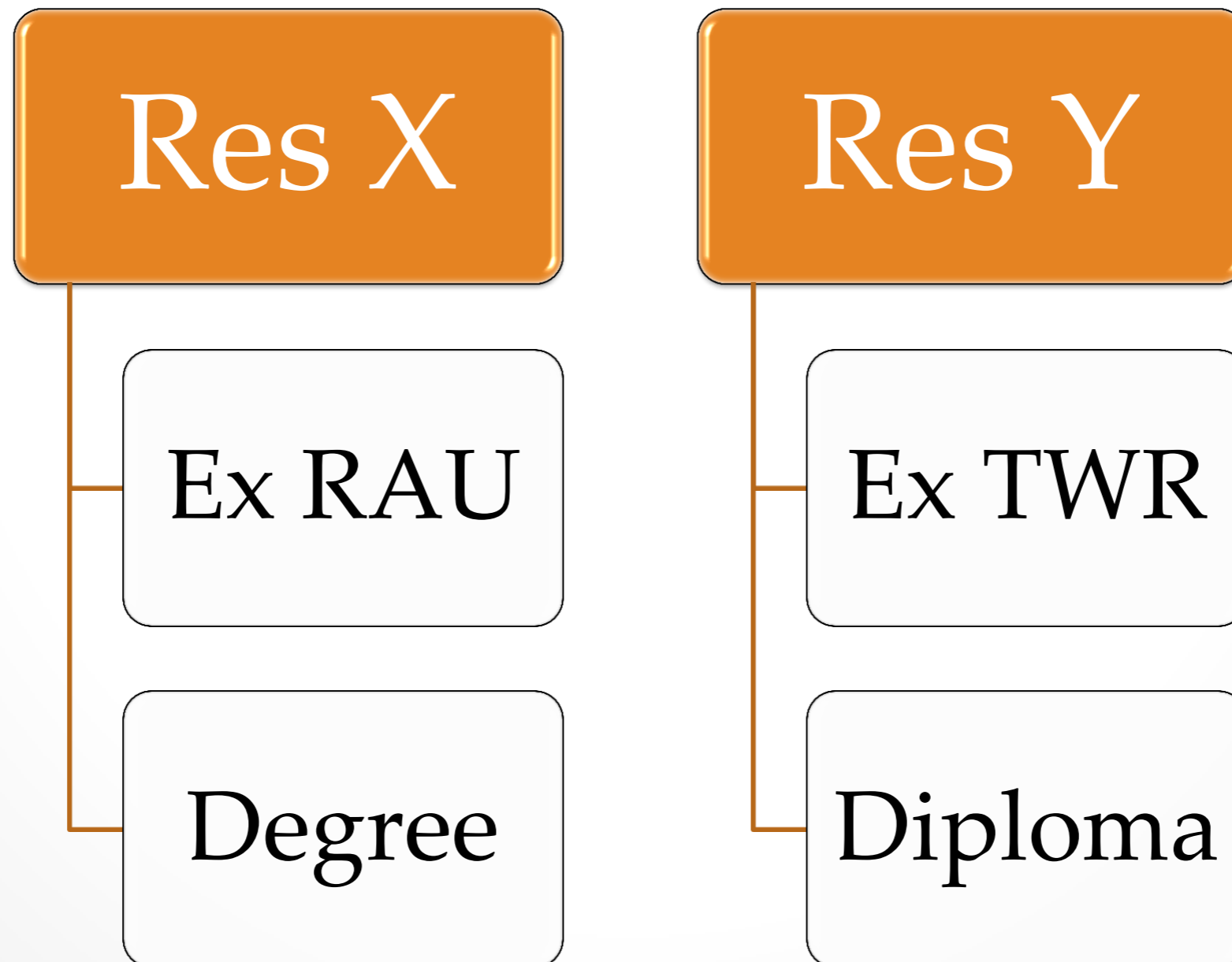
	March	April	April	May	May
Res Y	13	10	24	8	22
Res X	14	11	25	9	23
	1st session	2nd session	3rd session	4th session	5th session
	Introduction & Ground rules + Group Skills	Group Conflict & Diversity & Equity	Cooperative learning and Informal learning	Finding your voice	Your choice?

Why these topics???

Socio-economic/ Cultural/
Historical Context

...

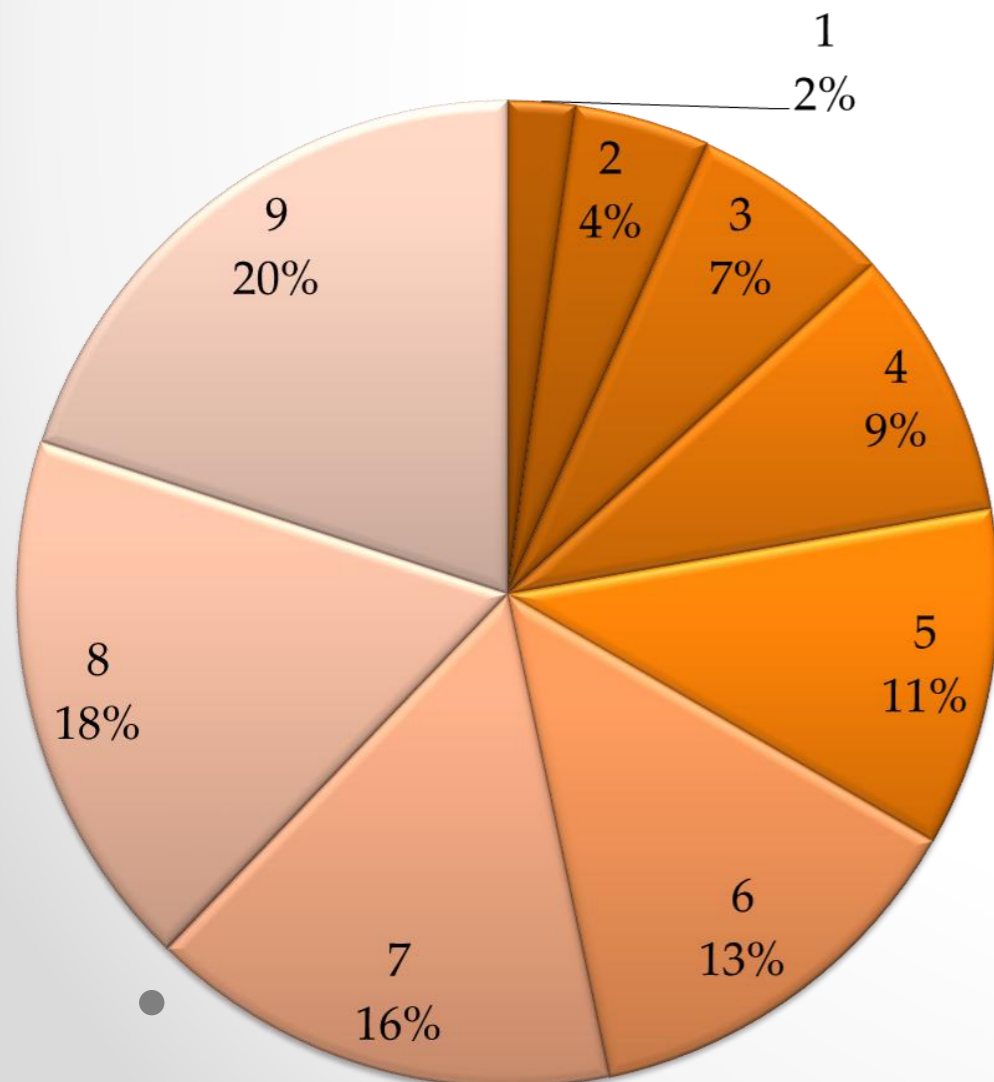
Sample Residences: Own culture



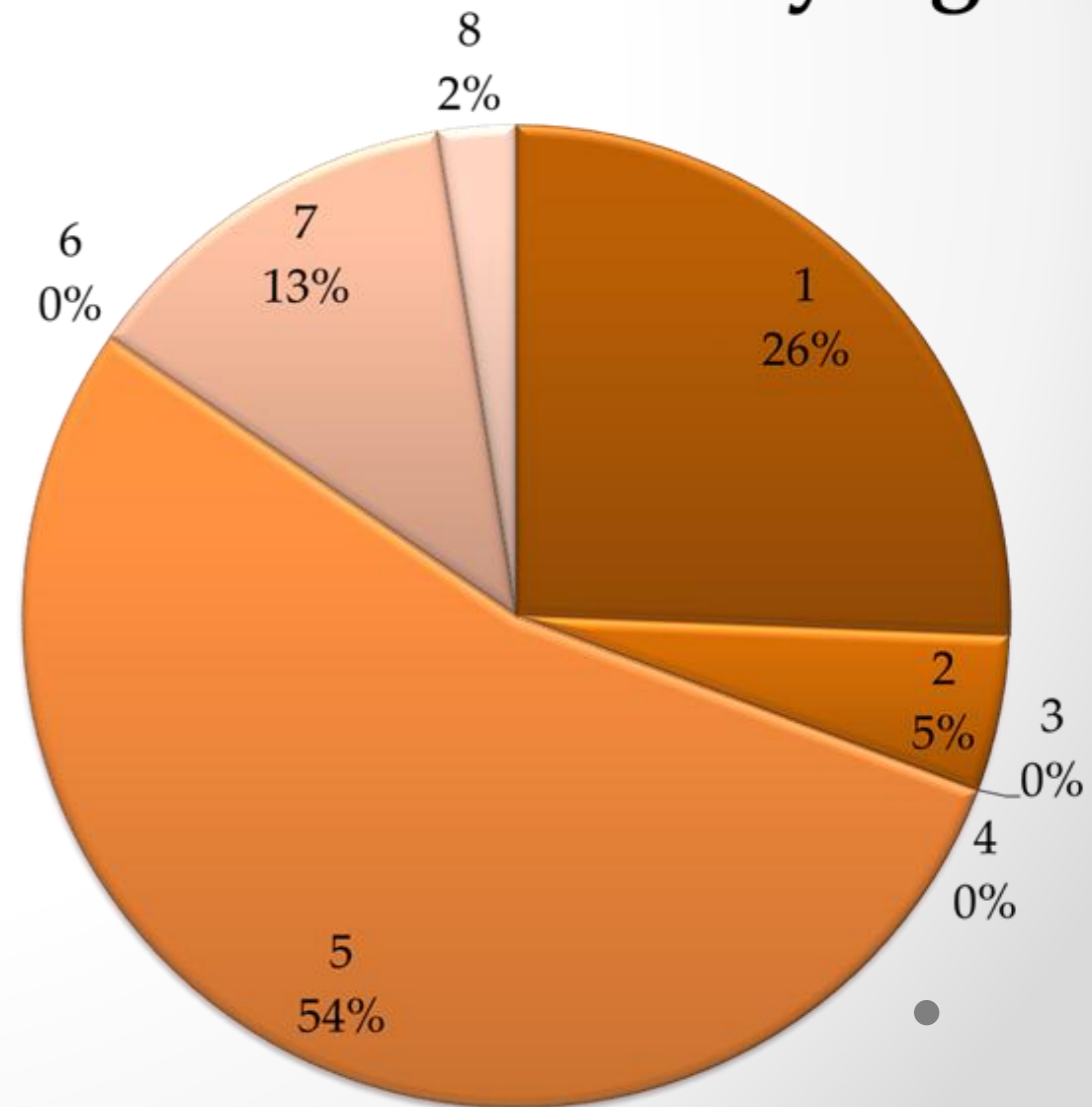
1	Sepedi
2	Setswana
3	Xhosa
4	Sotho
5	Zulu
6	Xitsonga
7	Afrikaans
8	ENGLISH (Lang of Instruction)
9	Siswati

1	Because I really want to
2	Because I don't know what else to do next
3	Because my parents or family want me to
4	Because I don't want to start working yet
5	To improve my future job opportunities
6	To get away from home
7	To learn about things that really interests me
8	Other reasons

Home Language



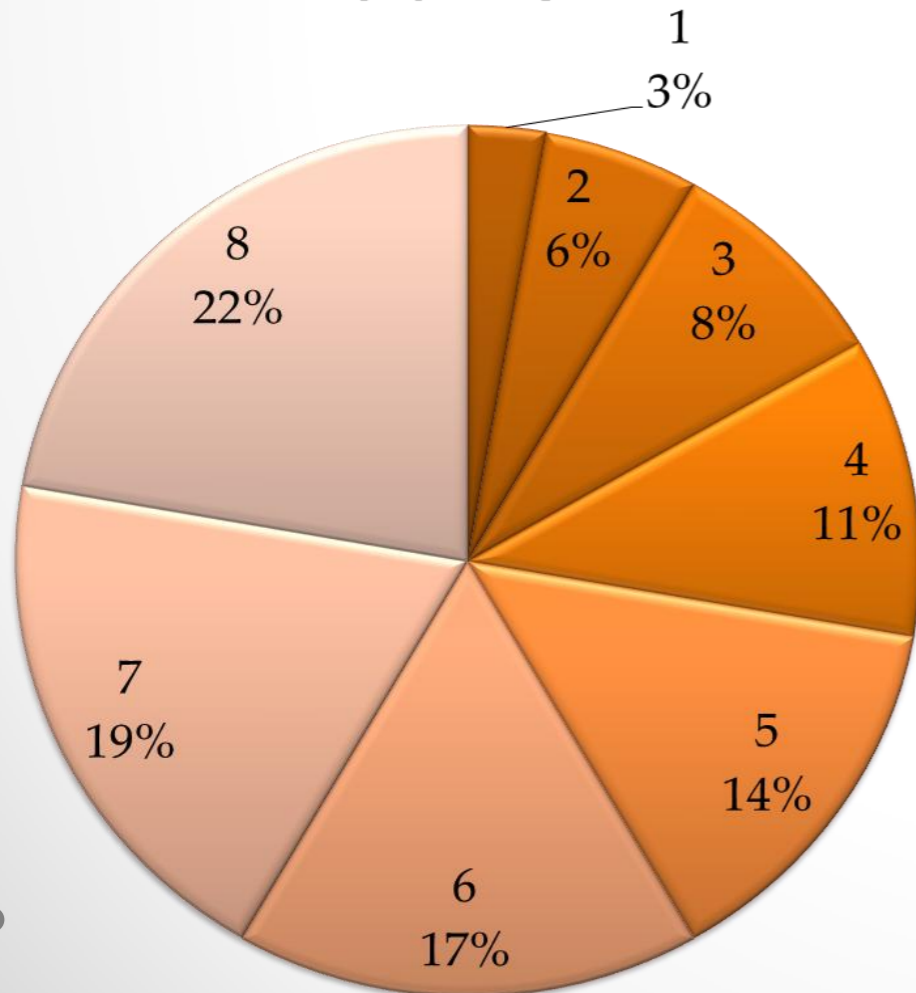
Reasons for Studying



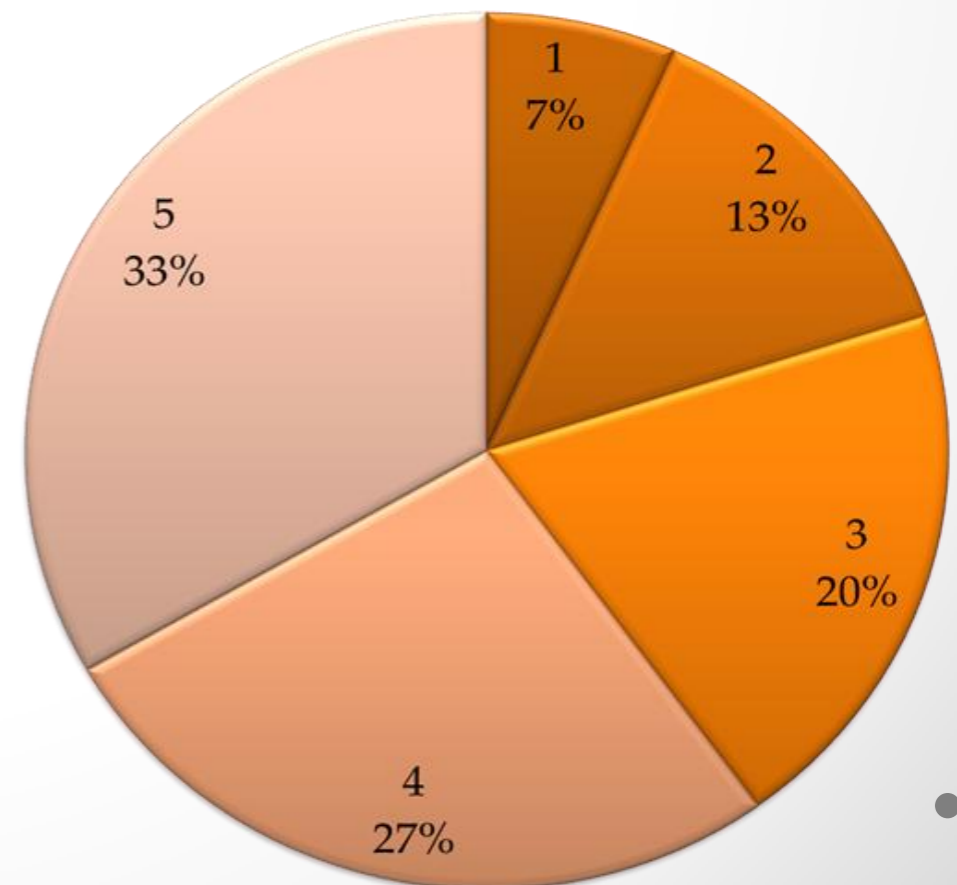
1. Economic and Financial Sciences	2. Management	3. Science
4. Engineering and the Built Environment	5. Education	6. Law
7. Health Sciences	8. Humanities	9. Art, Design and Architecture

1	My parents/family will pay for my studies
2	I will use a loan (Bank, TEFSA etc.)
3	I have a bursary
4	★ I will work to pay for my own studies
5	A combination of the answers given above

Faculties where students are located

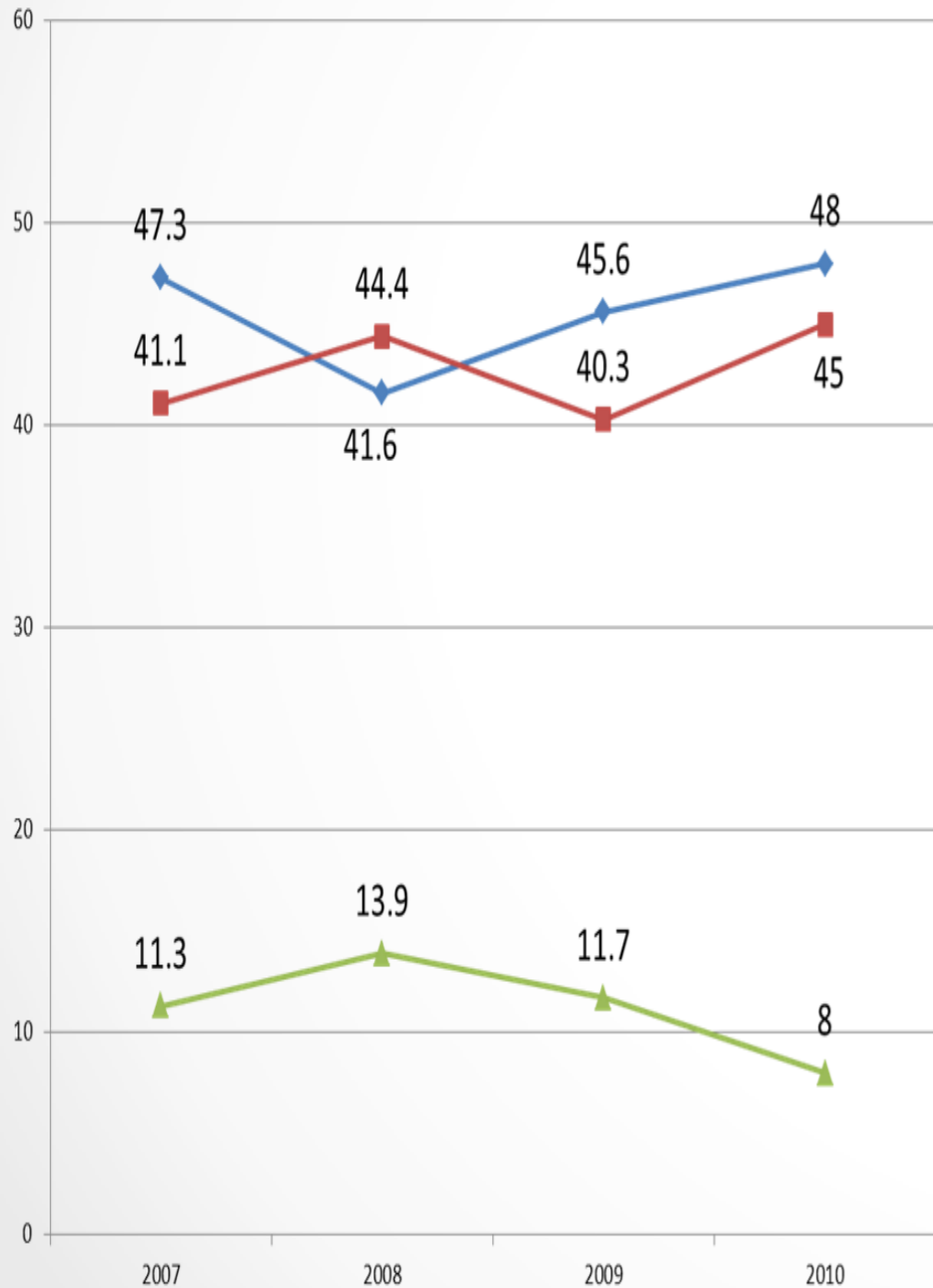


Financing of Studies



All 1st Years between 2007 & 2010

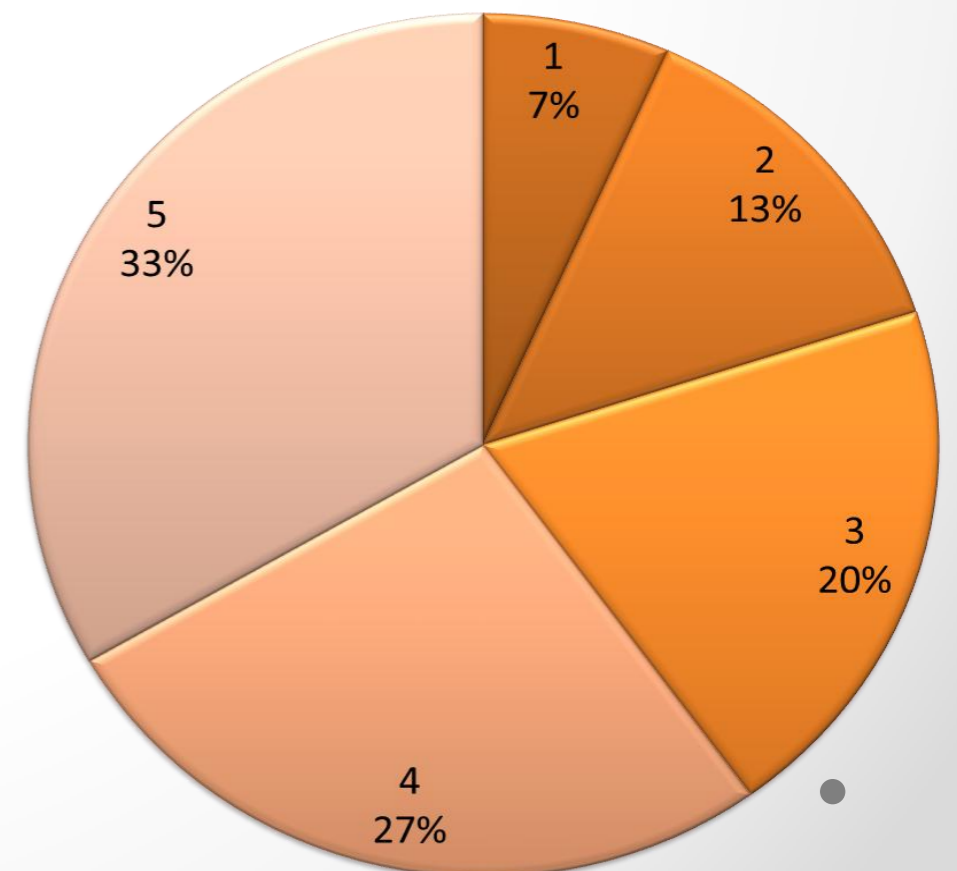
Student study hours in grade 12



- ◆ Less than 10
- 10 to 20
- ▲ More than 20

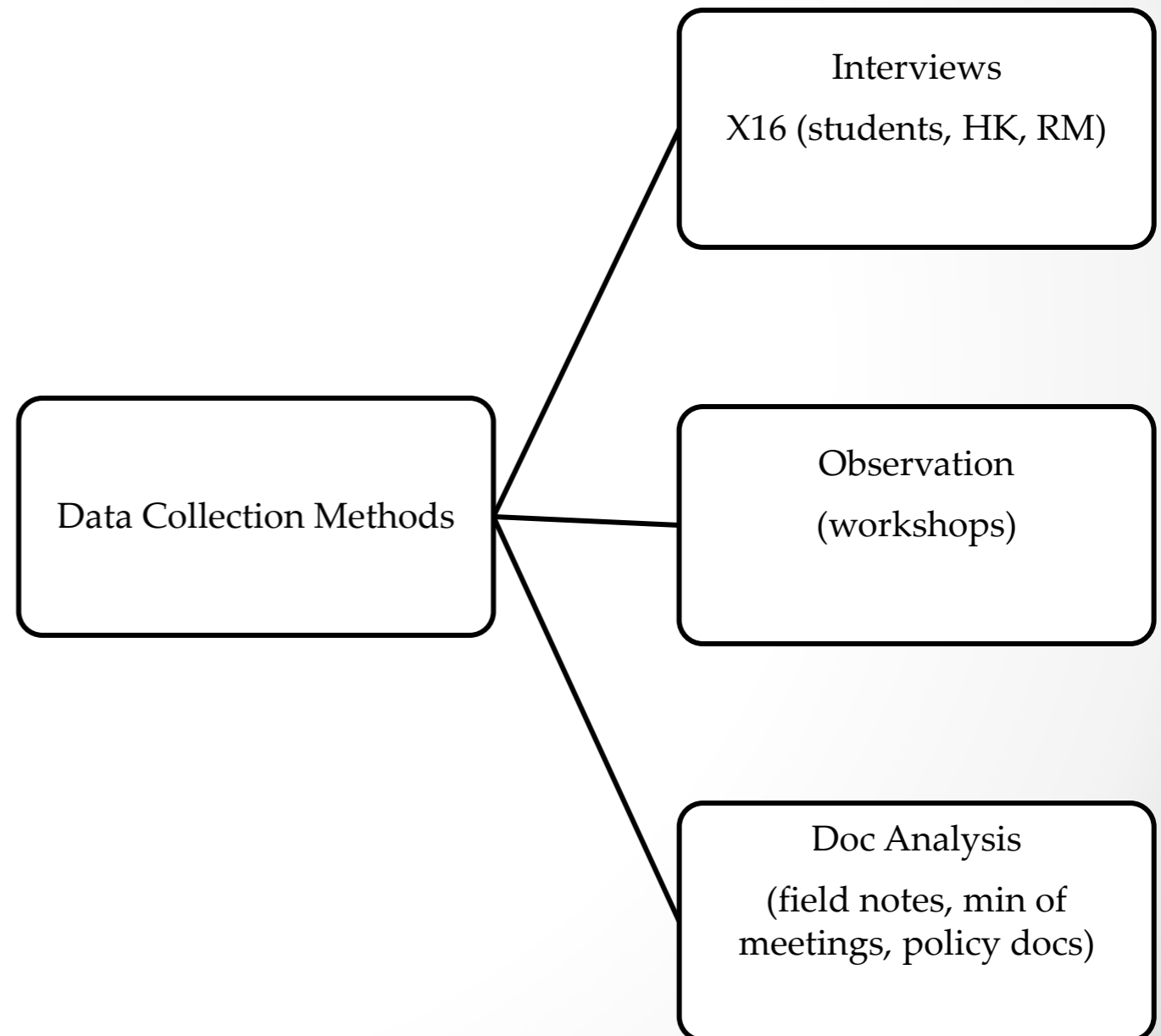
1	Less than 5 hours per week.
2	Between 5 and 10 hours per week.
3	Between 10 and 15 hours per week.
4	Between 15 and 20 hours per week.
5	More than 20 hours per week

Study Hours per Week

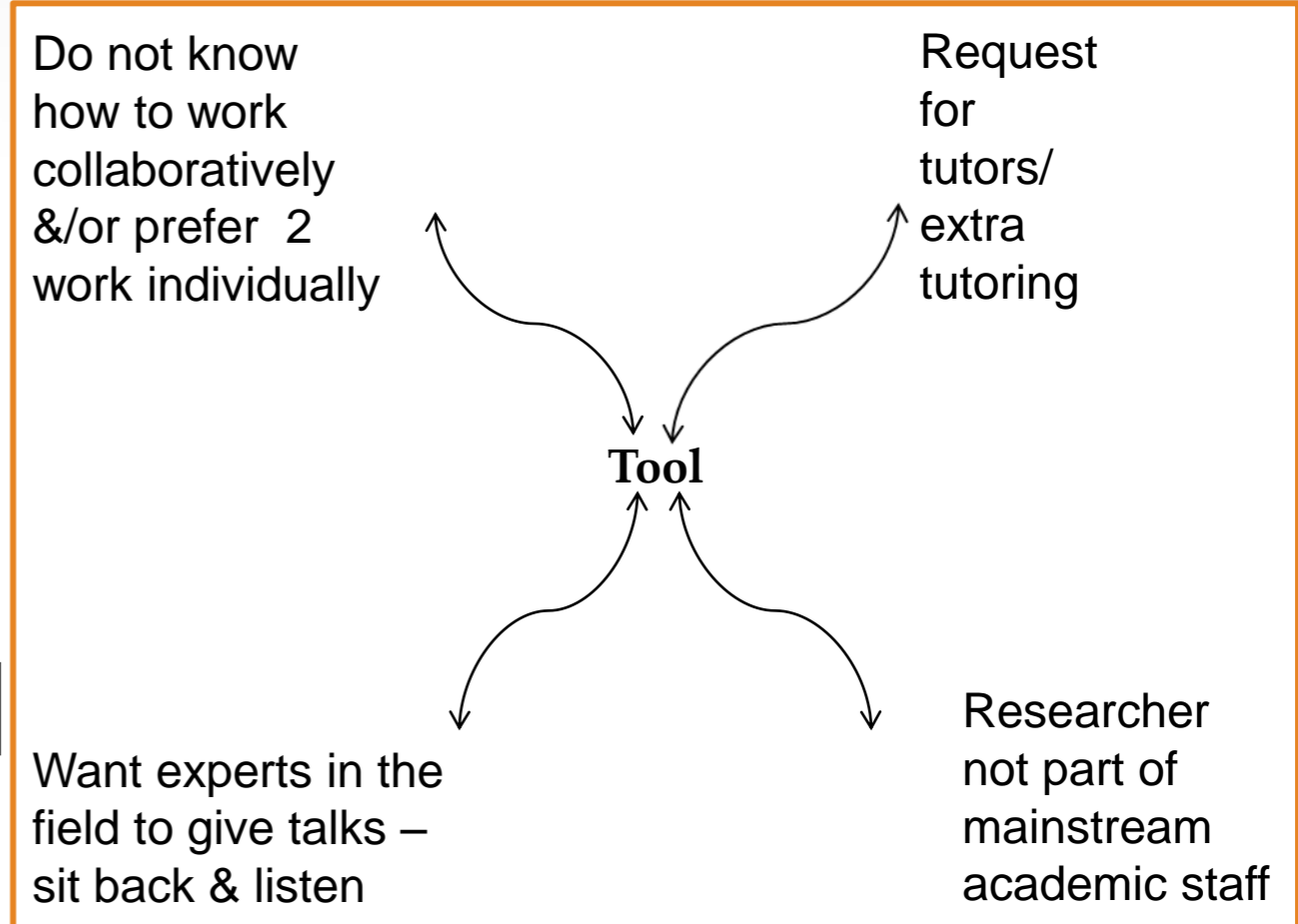
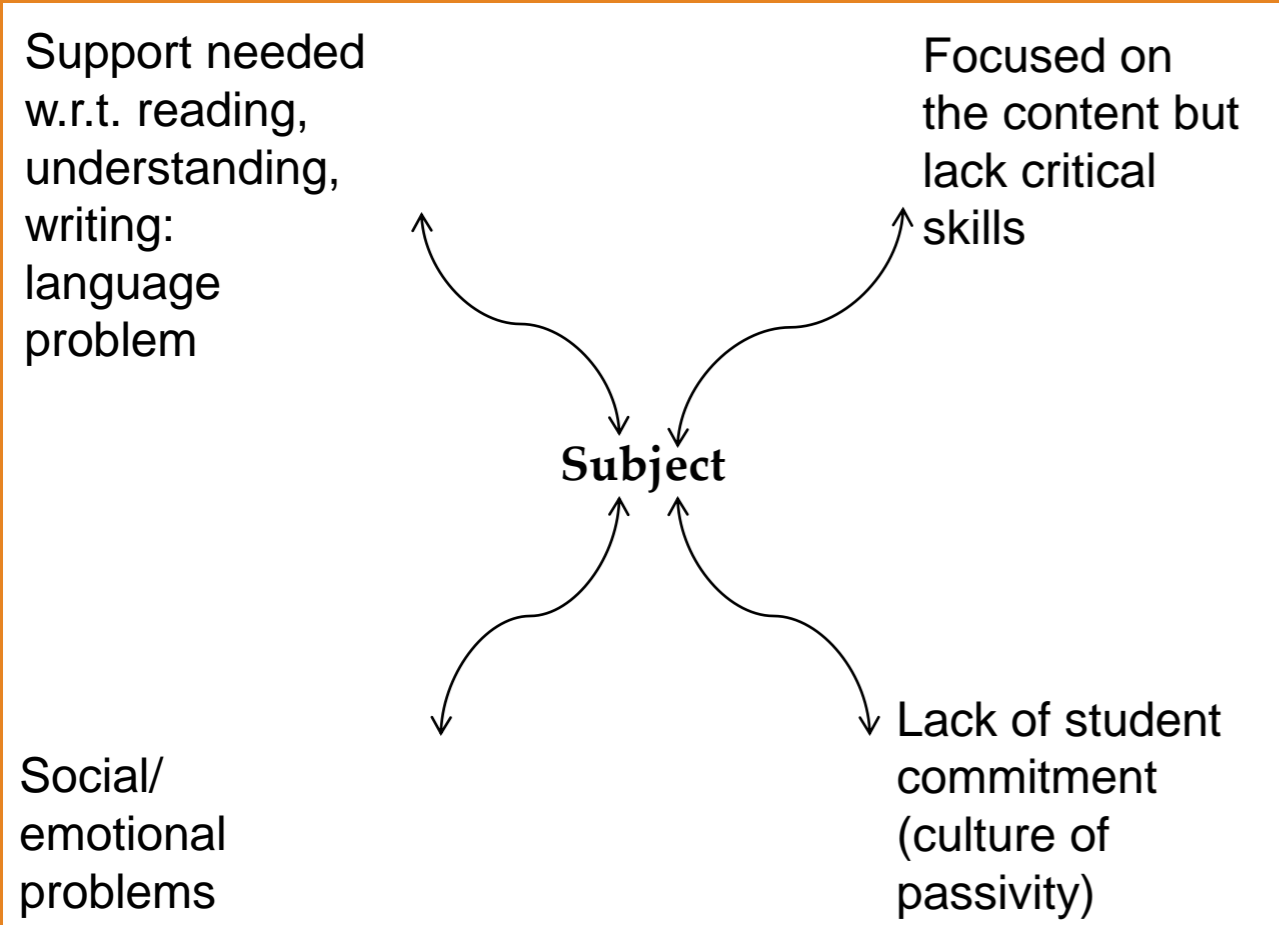


Research Design & Methods

- **Case Study Design:** bounded case, deep understanding
 - “How” question (Yin, 2009)
- **Critical Paradigm:**
 - not only *understand*, but also *critique*
- **Population and sample:** 2 UJ residences
 - First years on **voluntary basis**
- **Data analysis:** on-going, CHAT as analytical tool
 - Initial codes from CHAT framework
 - Atlas.ti analysis will reveal issues to consider at each Res respectively

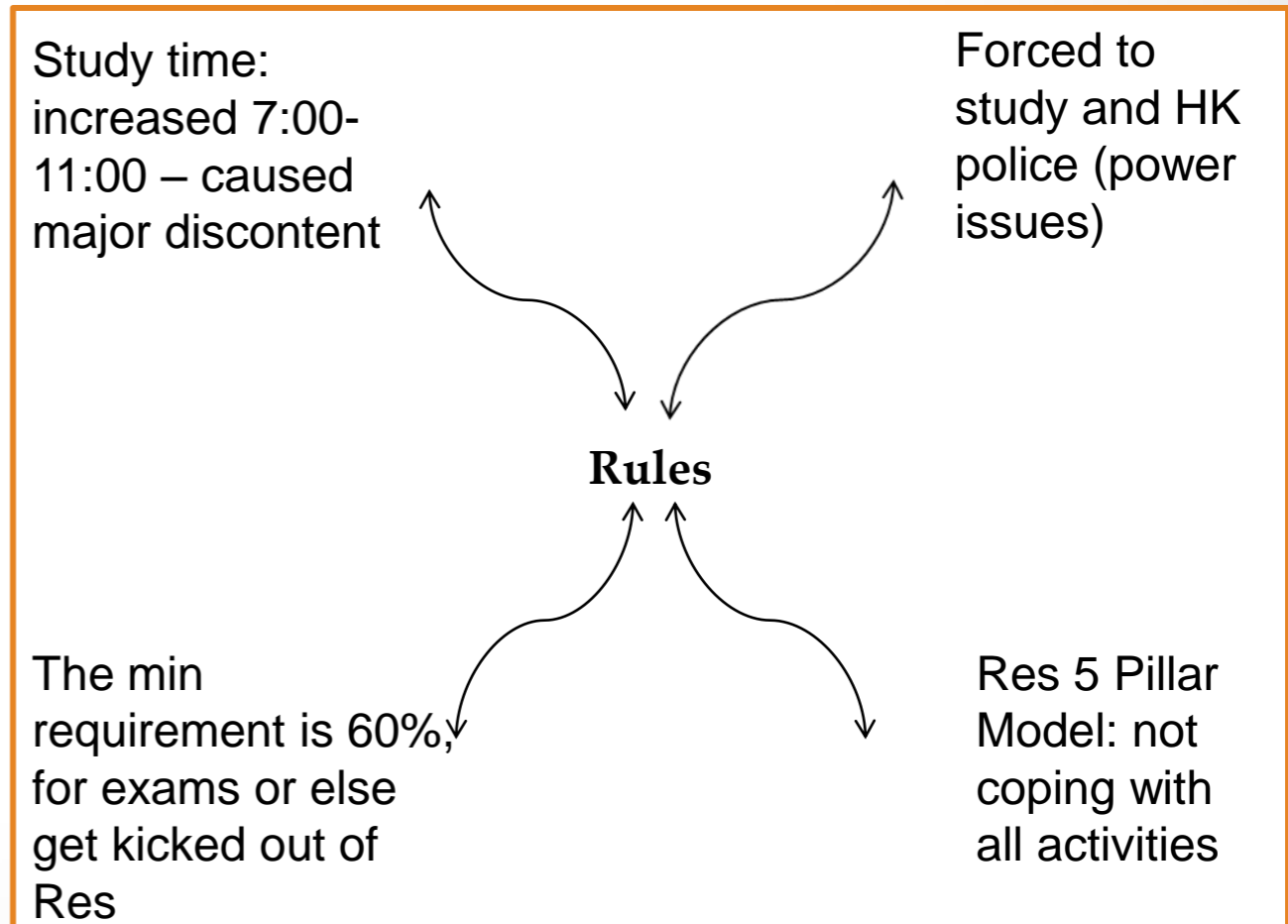
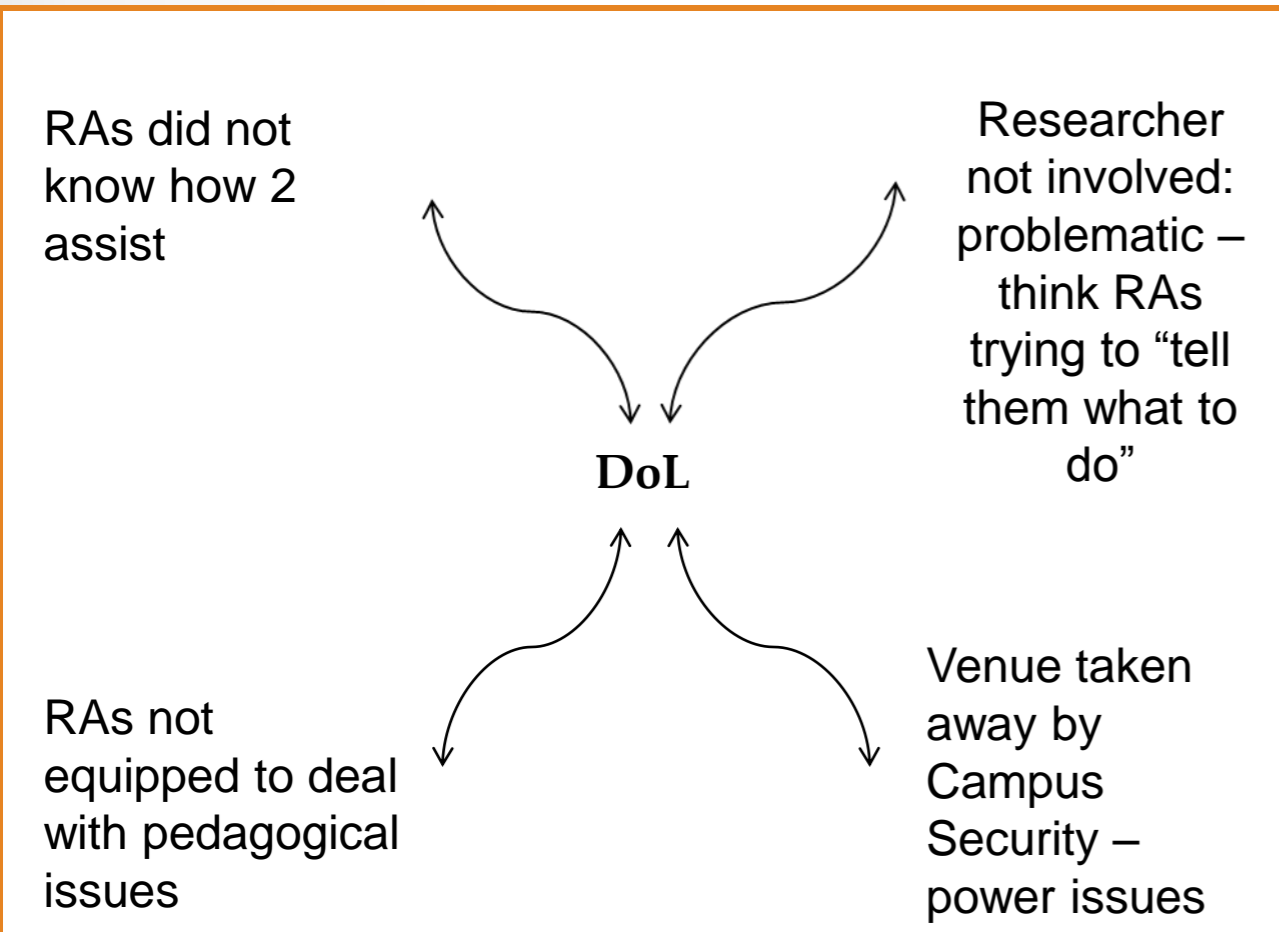


Tensions



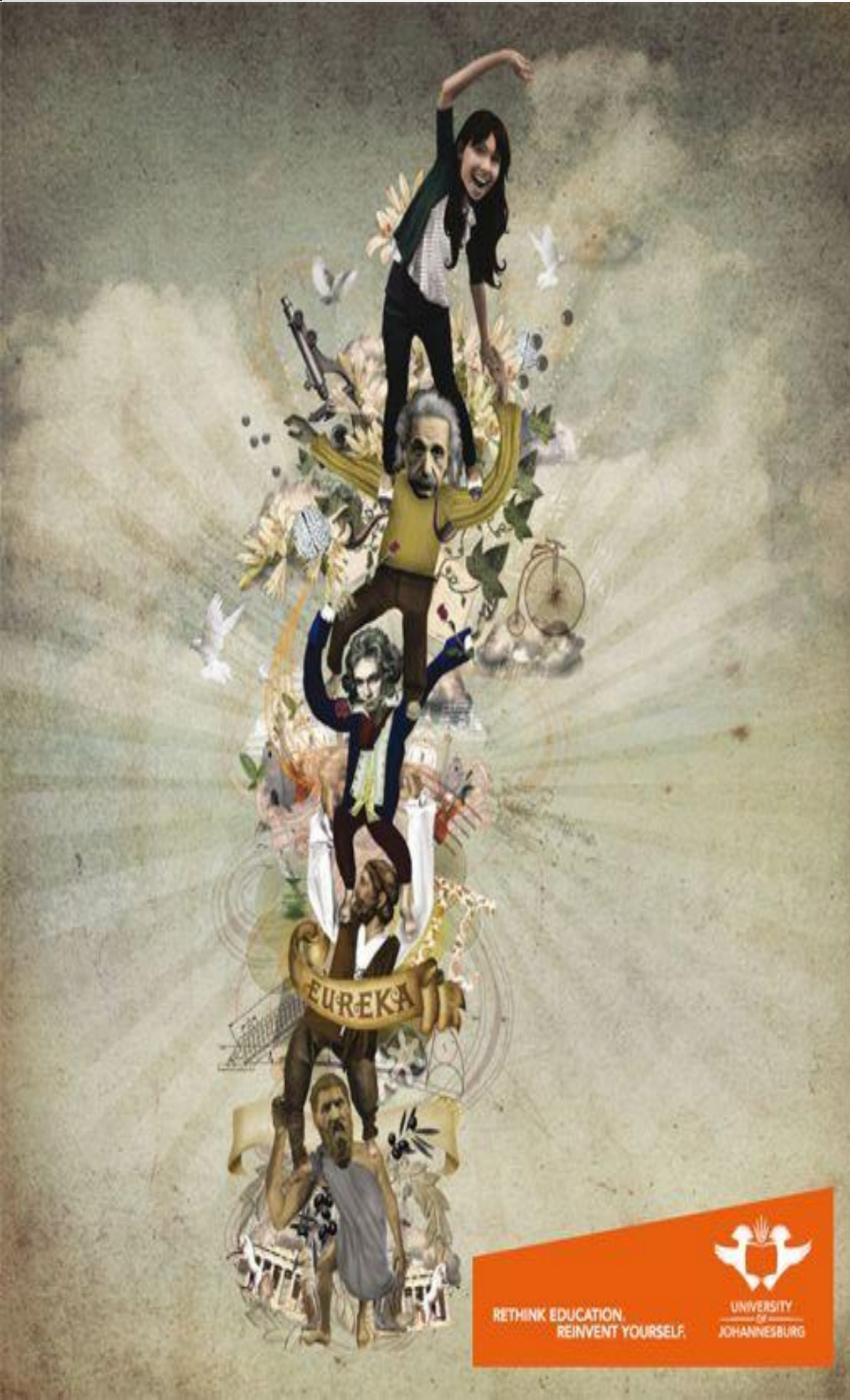
Tensions / "dramatical collisions" / contestations

Tensions / "dramatical collisions" / contestations



Further Analysis...

- Content analysis using AtlasTi software package
- Codes, categories and themes



Any
Questions?