POWER-NET: academic tutoring in Poland as the object of research, institutional policy and reflective practice of tutors

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ABSTRACT

Academic institutions and their professional communities live presently in the times of constant change. Beyond numerous, official amendments within state regulations, also quality and pace of educational change undergo transformations. We observe the change of artefacts and contexts of socio-cultural demands which call for the necessity to reformulate good practices and competencies required in education. The paper is planned to highlight several aspects of change, considered by the author as sensitive to the possibility to personalize academic education: institutional, professional, scientific and simply humane. The intention is to provide a critical look upon academic tutoring and its potentials from the perspective of an academic tutor and tutor's trainer, as well as a researcher on education. The net of arguments, following the title of this paper, shall be outstretched between **research-based**, **policy-based** and the very **practice-based nodal points**, with my full awareness of the limitations that my insight carries due to the qualitative rather than quantitative type of the presented research. Nevertheless, the paper should bring down the picture of a polyphony of powers that make tutoring a very special, demanding, but top quality form of academic education, which should be supported, recommended and popularized among teachers in order for them to reach their academic excellence.

KEYWORDS:

academic tutoring, quality assurance, higher education, quality teaching, academic excellence.

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Introduction

The following paper proposes a critical discussion over one form of change observed recently in Polish education: implementation of academic tutoring in the context of *Quality Teaching* in a higher education institution (Biggs, 2003). As an active tutor, academic teacher, researcher and practitioner who educates pre-service teachers and has coordinated a European project of tutorials' implementation in the Polish public university, I intend to discuss a specific position of tutoring in the net of various powers having poignance in the contemporary academic community. Theoretical grounds for tutoring as top quality education outside Oxbridge shall be briefly introduced, with special reference to the competencies of an academic tutor and challenges faced by him in this process. A few examples of recent implementation of tutoring in its classical form in the academic institutions in Poland shall serve as evidence for the appreciation which tutoring gains as the form of quality education. Although in diversified forms and with various final outcomes, this type of authentic and personalized teaching has already been called a success rather than a 'thorn in the system's flesh'. This level of success is, however, a resultant of not only tutors' training aimed at their practical skills, competence and knowledge expansion, but also of particular institutional policies and support provided by research in situ and research in the field of educational studies. Hence, tutoring as personalized education can be metaphorically nested in a power-network in an institution: a very specific pattern of multifarious impact factors characteristic for each and every university. What is meaningful for the argumentation to follow are also the grounds and reasons why tutoring, not originally rooted in the Polish academic tradition, gains in popularity and calls for the best potentials both in teachers and students. On the other hand, it causes difficulties and controversies on the level of an institution as well. Thus, the context of first constructing and, consequently, continuous reconstructing of this metaphorical power-network has become the ground for the discussion below.

Theoretical framework:
epistemological modeling of tutoring in history and research

Personalized education is not new in the history of pedagogical thought. It dates back to the ancient times of Greek philosophers. Regardless of its ideological conceptualization and theoretical redefinition over the centuries, methodologically it is rooted in the Socratic method of asking questions by the Master and answering them by the Pupil. At the turn of XVIII/XIX centuries, it became an underlying method of teaching at the British universities in Oxford and Cambridge, from where it gradually expanded to other

European and American academies. Although never really gone away since that time, tutoring seems to undergo a specific and quite spectacular come-back in the contemporary reality of overwhelming neoliberal narrative in higher education and turmoil of administrative reforms in Europe, especially in Poland. As it has not been historically encrusted in the Polish academic tradition (which finds its reference rather in the Humboldtian model of a university), it may appear as a 'thorn in the contemporary Polish university's flesh'. There have been, however, attempts made by some institutions to adapt its advantageous features to the Polish institutional conditions. In the 90-ties, right at the birth of Polish democracy, personalized education was included in the official programs of pedagogical studies at the Faculty of Education at the Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa. More structurally, tutorials as forms of tutor-student meetings were proposed also at the Institute of Classical Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1992 (Sarnat-Ciastko, 2015, p. 34). Country-wise, tutoring became a form of studying for hundreds of students at MISH faculties (Inter-faculty Individual Studies in Humanities) at the Universities of Silesia, Warsaw, Poznań, Toruń and Lublin. As the best formula for cross-curricular studying, tutoring has also been the representative methodology at the Artes Liberales Academy by the Warsaw University for the last 20 years. These are all, however, grass-roots initiatives on an institutional scale. Quality of studying was usually the major objective, but as I will try to argue, tutoring stands a real chance to turn gradually into a new quality standard of not only learning, but also teaching, relating, running research and building an academic culture on a national scale.

First, it needs to be admitted that personalized education can be epistemologically defined by several concepts in the humanities and social studies: in pedagogy, semiotics, language pragmatics, sociology, philosophy and psychology. It is enough to mention Erving's Goffman sociological concept of "face-work", Martin Buber's and Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy of a dialogue with the Other, Carl Roger's supportive relationship, Erikson's stages of a human psycho-social development, or even David Kolb's learning through experience and subsequent 'flipped classroom methods' of teaching. Tutoring can be surely labeled as Quality Teaching. It directly corresponds with Quality Learning, which creates for a learner: significance, high intellectual quality of the process and content, and finally quality learning environment (see: Quality Learning and Teaching Framework).

Next to already well-grounded ideas and ontological references, a very compatible model to reflect the character of tutoring as methodology of education appears to be the "3 P" Model of Teaching and Learning by John Biggs (2003). This scholar distinguishes three stages of a learning process, which he called *Presage*, *Process* and *Product*, each of which charging a different party for the success (or failure) of successful learning outcomes. Analogically, he describes three parallel levels of thinking about learning:

- **Presage** is a stage before learning takes place and covers all types of preparation by both parties for the process. For any failures or winnings it is, nevertheless, rather a student who is 'charged';
- **Process** is what happens during learning and covers all learning focused activities. For these teacher is both responsible and 'charged';
- **Product** means the final stage after learning i.e. the learning outcomes. In this phase the whole context of teaching and learning process is 'charged' for its perturbances of achievements;

Supposedly the above stages are taken as levels of thinking about learning, we need to ask a question where and how to locate individual tutoring among them. In fact, tutoring activates and incorporates all the three levels, but they need to be questioned critically and enhanced. In the case of the first stage, it is both tutors and tutees who need to prepare for the tutorials and both take responsibility for its success. Secondly, a process is professionally guided (although not dominated) by the tutor, but the final result of the tutorial's procedure depends equally much on the tutee's readiness to collaborate and inquire. And, finally, for the final outcome of the process it is indeed the whole context that influences the results. Tutorials' regularity, academic honesty, high level of mutual trust, professionalism and knowledge – but equally much outer circumstances such as place of a tutorial, time of the day or even mood – all play their part in the epilogue.

Biggs introduces another concept that allows to explain the essence of tutorial education even better: he talks about a *constructive alignment of teaching to learning*. ***Constructive alignment*** is a sort of a link between a constructivist understanding of the nature of learning and an aligned design for teaching (c.f. D'Andrea, 1999; McMahon & Thakore, 2006) and puts even more charge on the tutors by demanding from them top skills and knowledge, as well as very specific personality traits. Why does tutoring create exceptional space for constructive *alignment* and can be described by its mechanism? Below I enlist the reasons which I consider relevant:

- Tutoring is based on a **true dialogue** set in an epistemological context (tutor and tutee discuss concrete subject matter: knowledge is needed);
- It is technically based on **questions**, **answers and mutual reading of essays** (active listening takes place, as well as following the tutee's mental cycles and supporting their personal mastery: rhetorical skills and psychological knowledge are required);
- Philosophically, it is based on **positive psychology**, **personalistic pedagogy**, **person-centered approach** and, as I strongly argue, **servant leadership** (c.f.

R.K. Greenleaf, 1977)[2], all providing their tips as for what is a priority in a teaching-learning process; again disciplinary knowledge is needed);

- It creates space for **intellectual autonomy** and critical thinking (social competence and adequate approach fully demanded);
- It uses the **language of empowerment** close to **formative assessment** (Karpińska-Musiał, 2017; skills and positive approach are recommended here);
- It makes tutors use **constructive feedback** by means of adequate rhetorical tools (again, rhetorical skills and knowledge of feedback techniques are valued).

The above skills, knowledge and competencies appear as prerequisites of being a tutor. Their development has already been postulated by many different scholars in terms of developing so called *Reflective Practicum* (Schoen, 1983), another theoretical frame adequate for defining the context of tutors' academic teaching. Coined already in the XX century by Schoen, reflective practice drew attention of many other writers. Boud (2001) calls reflection a process of **turning experience into constant learning**, questioning our ways of problem setting, and transforming idea into practice and back. For this, as Bonwell & Eison (1991) remark, **relevant conditions are necessary**: presence of co-learners which enables *collaborative learning*, and recently so called *higher risk activities* (e.g. role-plays, guided lectures, simulations etc.). At the same time Hawe & Dixon (2016) highlight **the importance of a safe environment** and comfort to constantly try and re-try. Such conditions, except for a group collaboration, are provided in a tutorial. And they create space to develop and practice the skills and competencies mentioned as inducive for making tutoring an authentic and valuable experience. Both in tutors and tutees. In this way, what happens in a tutorial meets the criteria of reflective practice.

The onto-didactic perspective on education, as discussed by Anna Karpińska (2017), sheds some light upon the contextual and theoretical prerequisites of a tutorial (why do we do it?) and tutors' preparation (how do we do it?). However, researchers of education are still faced with one more question that deepens this perspective: **what** shall be taught at the university nowadays? Karpińska (2017) and Barnett (2004, 2007) in their works deal with the issues of ontological nature, such as: content of teaching and skills

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2   For more on servant leadership see: R.K. Greenleaf (1977). The scholar already in the 70-ties wrote about the structures of leadership based on first serving the Other and the society. As we read in one of his essays on comparing different types of leaders and the recommended features of a servant-leader: "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?". Retrieved from: https://www.essr.net/~jafundo/mestrado_material_itgjkhnld/IV/Lideran%C3%A7as/The%20Servant%20as%20Leader.pdf (accessed: October 6, 2018).

to be taught to teachers in the world marked by *liquid modernity* (c.f. Bauman, 2000), uncertainty and supercomplexity. As Anna Karpińska remarks, except for the content knowledge, classically viewed as the core in education, the most valuable is to teach the young to read this world and function amid *supercomplexity* and the overabundance of information. Such skills are developed by critical thinking and resilience, both having a chance to be trained and developed in a personalized educational dialogue.

To recapitulate, tutoring boasts a number of references to pedagogical and social theories. Except from that, it has definitely become the object of research. There have already been released quite a few publications in Poland devoted to personalized teaching and all its forms. Due to its specificity dependent on the context, level and participants of education, tutoring has been analyzed separately on the lower stages of education (in primary schools and high schools), and in universities. Detailed and research-based works about tutoring in schools have been authored by Sarnat – Ciastko (2015), Pawlak (2009), Sitko (2011), or by many other individual researchers in monographs edited by Szala, Fingas & Czekierda (2015), Czekierda, Budzyński, Traczyński, Zalewski & Zebrzuska (2009) and Karpińska-Musiał & Panońko (2018) to mention just a few the most recent ones. Academic tutoring in HE institutions in Poland has, in turn, won a great deal of attention – both as practice and object of research – just in the last 5 years. Reasons for this are plentiful and relate, even if indirectly, to the recent ministerial state reforms and regulations. Tutoring has gained recognition alongside other innovations concerning *Quality Assurance*. Policy of QA obviously generates the needs to professionalize also teaching practices. Regardless of the business part of the whole process and the growing number of entrepreneurial training centers offering professional expertise and training for tutors[3], the Polish context of personalization of education, described much earlier mainly in the Anglo-Saxon context and literature, found recently its place in the scholarly works of Bałachowicz & Rowicka (2013), Kowalczuk- Walędziak (2015), Tokarska (2011), Karpińska-Musiał (2016), Dziedziczak- Foltyn (2018), Grzegorczyk (2016), Jendza (2016). A special place on the list of publications can be granted to articles by over 70 authors collected in the three multi-authored monographs released within one of the biggest projects devoted to implementation of tutoring at the Polish public university, called the "IQ Project", of which I had the pleasure and honor to be the author, European grant recipient and leader.[4] In fact, this project has become the ground for my extensive research over tutoring as a didactic formula at the University of Gdańsk. I will mention the assumptions and parts of this

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3   Here belong, for example, the leaders: *Collegium Wratislaviense* and Kolegium Tutorów.

4   „W trosce o jakość w ilości. Projekt interdyscyplinarnego wspierania studenta filologii obcej w oparciu o metodę tutoringu akademickiego w Uniwersytecie Gdańskim" („Ideal Quality in Good Quantity"); project funded by EEA Grants and Norway Grants plus national grant (FRSE) and run in the years 2014–2016 at the University of Gdańsk.

research below in this paper. They are not, however, the major point in my study design presented in chapter 2. As an observer of tutoring for the last five years, especially of the long term effects of my project, I decided to share my first observations based on the latest research on how tutoring expands and gets nested in other institutions. My attention has been focused now on the policies run by the chosen universities in terms of implementing tutorial education as an optional formula of teaching. The methodology, as well as the first general conclusions (it is still research *in statu nascendi*) are to be found further in this paper.

Institutional implementation of tutoring – background and study design

It is impossible to study institutionalization of innovative approaches, methods of academic teaching and professionalization of teachers' competencies without the frame of a contemporary debate between different 'faces' of a university. A dichotomy observed for the recent decades in Europe allows to bring the discussion down to two major options, followed by subsequent ideologies behind the functions, aims and philosophies of education. First is a neoliberal university, with its symbolically capitalistic „knowledge production". In this option the Marxist theory has been transposed onto symbolic meanings (c.f. Smith, 2006, Harvey, 2008). The current 'face' of a neoliberal university is known from grading particular achievements and promoting specific „production areas" hegemonized and dictated by the market forces. Nevertheless, this option is also viewed as progressive and dynamic, developmental and modern. On the other side of the barricade there is a liberal university, presumably more democratic, emancipatory, free from economic dominance and powers. Discursively and politically, liberal academia is fighting for academic freedom and academic ethos, but paradoxically, being a conservative option, also promotes feudalism among the academics and hinders systemic change.

Recently, new voices as for the 'faces' of a university have appeared among the scholars. Next to multifarious patterns and models for the alternative university, it is worth to mention a hybrid structure of a university as the 'common good' (Szadkowski, 2015), the idea of 'multiversity' (Kerr, 2001) or the idea of the 'third mission' of a public university (Laredo, 2007). The 'common good' aspect, as developed for example by Roggero (2011, 2011a), highlighted the processes of individuals' self-learning as inducive for the institutional autonomy of a university. Additionally, this scholar promoted the concept of a 'shared research' (Pol. *współbadanie*), drawing no line between researcher and his research, which was to contribute to the subjectification of an individual in his profession, and thus of the whole institution (Roggero, 2011a, in: Szadkowski, 2015, p. 281–282). Marek Kwiek, in turn, writes about the 'third mission' of a university as of the task to raise

the social awareness of society as a whole for the purpose of serving the common good regionally and state-wise (Kwiek, 2012 in: Szadkowski, 2015, p. 85).

Redefinition of university functions help to see the position and meaning of personalization of education, and allow to clarify the background for my study design. It is unquestionable that serving the common good by creating an academic community can be eased by tutorial education, where an individual contact between students and teachers empower the first and encourage them to run, for instance 'shared research'. Also the very academics take advantage of a chance to share and communicate in order to make their research recognized, publicly useful and transformational for the local community. With this in mind, the implementation of tutoring appears as a very positive and progressive, as well as motivational factor in the process of institutional reforms. And this is why it should, and already has, become a part of institutional polices in several Polish universities, as my research below certifies.

The process, however, as not as easy as it seems. As Marek Kwiek notifies (2015), there are two areas of collision in the debate about the transformation of the university in Poland. They concern: (1) normative elements, which refer to the change in the academics' **perception and attitudes** as for the role of teaching in the academia (i.e. academic ethos), and (2) **practical behavior and working style**, i.e. what we really do to care for the quality teaching. Still, in the context of this collision, my thesis is that tutoring meets this challenge. It meets the criteria of both neoliberal and conservative narratives in terms of normative elements, and it provides a very specific, learnable and doable toolkit to work. As for (1) **perception and attitudes** then, tutorials allow students to develop *generic skills*, *transversal skills*, *critical thinking* needed on a labor market, and at the same time develop their *self-steering skills*, *research skills*, *intellectual self-education* and understanding of the world, which belong to the ethos based narrative. Secondly, as for (2) **practical behavior**, tutorials call for a specific time and place framework and make use of a professional methodology, both of which engrave an exceptional working style to be accepted by both academics, students and an institution.

Taking into account the above assumptions, I designed my research, which has been aimed at the exploration of these two aspects as generally drawn by Kwiek. My **research questions** concerned both the attitudes towards tutoring as a form of teaching as represented by the very teachers, and practical actions undertaken by the authorities in order to implement tutorials in the didactic system. The topic has been researched in two stages separated in time, in two separate research cases, described below. The results achieved in both cases shall be discussed in chapter 'Study results'.[5]

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5   Research run in the Project with its procedure, methodology and results has been described in detail in my book *Edukacja spersonalizowana w uniwersytecie. Ideologia – instytucja – dydaktyka – tutor* (Karpińska-Musiał, 2016). Here I include only general conclusions relevant to the theme of the paper and concomitant with the research in statu nascendi quoted also here.

(I) The first pilot study was run in the **IQ Project** in the years 2014-2016. In short, it included professional training for 29 tutors and two-semester long introduction of tutorials (ca. 1,600 hours) to 220 students of the University of Gdańsk. Action research was methodologically seated in the ethnography of organization aimed at observing the development of three levels of organizational learning in the university (Senge, 1990, Sun & Scott 2003, Argyris & Schoen, 1996). Research questions concerned the following issues:

- How does tutoring change the style of personal (individual) learning process in the academia? (mastery level of an individual – both teachers' and students');
- How does collective (group) learning evolve/transform in the face of a common objective such as the highest quality of teaching, smooth running of project milestones, keeping deadlines? Transferring knowledge to students? (community level);
- In the context of organizational learning: how much the university benefits from the project and how it is ready to incorporate the good practices? (institutional level).

The study was based on participant observation by me as a coordinator, on my talks with tutors and students, their texts (essays) analysis and analysis of questionnaires filled by the project participants during project implementation.

(II) The second research case has been focused already on the **analysis of the IQ Project's long-term effects and goes beyond its direct context and location**. In the last 2–3 years the discussion on tutoring has taken place in many institutions, not only as a repercussion of the IQ Project publicity[6], but also due to the above mentioned state regulations calling for Quality Assurance, internationalization and raising teaching standards. This part of research is also qualitative and based on interviews with representatives of a few Polish HE institutions, leading universities included: deans, vice-deans, a vice-rector and a proxy for tutoring. Interviews were run by me personally from March to May 2017, they were semi-structured and recorded as agreed by the respondents. Questions were grouped into frames corresponding to the focal issues that could help to answer my research questions:

- an institutional frame (questions: if and how the institutions undertake actions to apply tutorials in their system? What disciplines are viewed as the most adequate to teach in tutorials, does there exist any discipline-determined pattern?);
- a local frame (how to create a model most suitable for this particular institution?) and

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6   FRSE award in 2017.

– a personalistic frame (what is the function of a tutor and the model of his/her relationship with a tutee, how to evaluate their work, position, status in an institution?).

Interviews are at the moment of writing this paper still in the process of analysis and their complete and detailed results shall be included in the three-authored monograph planned for 2019. In this paper, only preliminary conclusions and observations shall be presented, in the second row after the IQ Project results.

Study results

(I) Complete results of the **research run in the project** have been fully described in my published monograph (Karpińska-Musiał, 2016). In this paper I present major observations referring to research questions and relevant to the theme of institutionalization of tutoring and growth of reflexivity in teachers. They can be divided into two types: negative and positive ones. As for the negative observations, I could state the following:

• Institutionally, right after project completion, there was observed a rather little transfer between collective learning and organizational learning. This transfer is pointed by Senge, 1990, Sun & Scott, 2003, Argyris & Schoen, 1996 as a prerequisite for setting a learning organization;
• Project participants and project coordinator have reported little support of the institution in the very process; agreeably, it might be due to little recognition of the „grassroots initiatives" in the institution;
• Respondents opinions suggested that there might have occurred a psychological resistance to rapid change in some teachers and decision makers; Witkowski (1986) called it a *mental barrier*.
• With reference to the ideological clash between neoliberal and democratic 'faces' of the university, respondents attitudes and opinions showed a divided approach as for the ideology that lied behind implementing tutoring institutionally (for all or for the best ones?), always with a very positive approach as for the value and quality of this form of teaching and learning on an individual level;
• Respondents showed some skepticism as for the future policies to implement tutoring institutionally or systemically, mainly due to economic barriers and costs it would generate.

It is important to add that these observations and conclusions date back to the very end of the project, which is the year 2016. Organizational learning is a long-term

process and, as it turned out after two years till now, it does take place gradually. And it shows in the positive outcomes, which are as follows:

- All the project participants – students and teachers – reported during the project and after, a very positive, illuminating effect as for the comfort, quality and in-depth effectiveness of teaching and learning in one-to-one tutorials; reflexivity of both teachers and students peaked in the process;
- Tutorials ended up with numerous, shared research-projects developed with students, even beyond the university; also publications followed (students' monograph and tutors' monograph plus additional articles in students' newspapers);
- Continuation of tutorials beyond the Project, financed already by the Faculties of Languages and Oceanography and Geography – two major Faculties at the University of Gdańsk with certified tutors and a high recognition of tutoring;
- Tutors' cooperation within the Tutors' Center (a unit set up and financed for two years by the university Fund for Didactic Initiatives); cooperation with the Office of Quality Assurance (workshops for academic teachers);
- At the threshold of the 2.0 Regulation (state reform of HE), tutoring has been listed as one of the formal didactic forms since the academic year 2017/18 in the university bylaw;
- In line with the state regulations, a Quality Assurance Office has officially included a Unit of Tutoring (this being the first systemically introduced move to enable tutorial education at the University of Gdańsk).

(II) As for results from the interviews run by me in 2017, I can preliminarily conclude that the merits of tutoring are very well known to the decision makers of the universities. Even those who have not yet experienced it before, believe in the highest value of personalized education. Even though, the talks brought me to the following conclusions, showing a high complexity and a potential for controversies around the whole issue:

- Tutoring in order to be authentic should be voluntary and not, in fact, introduced systemically or institutionally; once it becomes a duty, its' character, value and outcomes change;
- Once voluntary, tutoring may easily cause divisions and controversies in the academic milieu;
- Every type of education (ethos-based or neoliberal outcomes-oriented) prepares for the labor market, regardless of ideological mission of the university; didactic formulas (tutorials or lectures) decide basically about the amount of content, dose of reflexivity and level of skills developed;

- Academic affiliation and research discipline of particular academics affect the conceptualization of elitism and egalitarianism at the university, thus consequently affecting the approach towards tutoring as personalized teaching;
- Research discipline affects also the idea of tutor's role and mission, which is one of the most interesting results of my inquiry;
- My respondents had a rather vague vision of tutoring implementation; for the time being, they seemed to focus rather on discussing its perception, conceptualization and ideological paradigms involved;
- My respondents showed a very high awareness of educational needs and, on the other hand, of a difficult financial situation for such qualitative initiatives and changes;
- An open question remained: shall we think of some hybrid type of tutoring, a mixture of an Anglo-Saxon and European academic tradition, which is closer to the Humboldtian vision of the university?

A deep analysis of the achieved results and more detailed conclusions (as well as the target institutions, research tools and procedures) shall be included, as already mentioned above, in the monograph that is presently being written by me and two of my colleagues: Agnieszka Dziedziczak-Foltyn (University of Łódź) and Adrianna Sarnat-Ciastko (Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa), and planned for the 2019. This book shall give an insight into those complexities announced here in the paper, with special focus on both the perception of tutoring among academics, and the reception of it in the form of various forms of adaptation and implementation. Hence, presented part of research of mine constitutes the initial stage of a wider research, with my full awareness of the dynamic nature of the process of institutionalization of tutoring in constantly changing conditions. This interview-based research has, however, revealed a few very important key-points as for the nature of tutoring in the institution and its chances to co-exist with other didactic forms. It has, first and foremost, highlighted the fact that it is truly nested in the 'network of powers'. Powers viewed as both personal attitudes of students, teachers and authorities, but also ideological grounds, institutional options, research results and very much economic possibilities.
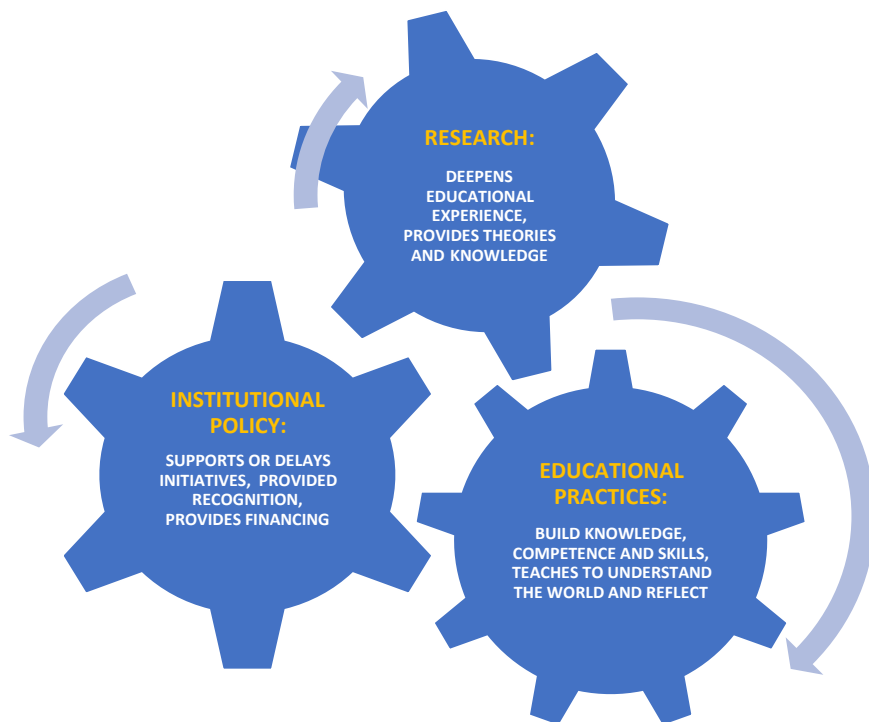
Polyphonously designed POWER-NETWORK
– conclusions and recommendations

In the end, let me get back to the question set in the beginning of this paper: is tutoring rather a success or a thorn in the Polish HE system's flesh? It is my belief that the answer can be positive. Arguments for this can be, among other, the following: (1) the

pilot experience has been gained by several HE institutions and results are dominantly positive, which means that satisfaction of teachers and learners has been regained; (2) research projects have been initiated between students and tutors; (3) academic cooperation developed; (4) tutoring based education has gained recognition nationally; (5) slow institutionalization processes have been launched by the institutions. It is possible to conclude that so far tutoring projects meet the criteria for something that Sowiński (1999) calls a 'real innovation': their grassroots character, differentiation between *status quo* and the new, being a voluntary, additional offer for students, and generating personal growth of teachers and students.

However, there are still some difficulties and obstacles as well. Implementing regular cycles of individual tutorials remains still very expensive for an institution. Secondly, for tutoring to become systemic, more highly qualified tutors are needed. And thirdly, most importantly, there need to be reached an ideological compromise in the face of certain 'barriers of imagination' detectable among groups of people in charge and the very academics with reference to the above mentioned various 'faces' of a university (see: Witkowski, 1986).

Last but not least, tutoring as personalized academic education certainly carries a lot of future potentials in terms of quality assurance and meeting the challenges of the economy. Except for the highest quality of teaching and learning it provides, it also creates space for critical thinking and other generic skills development in students, through which labor market needs can be better satisfied by the future graduates. This is why, although the *net-work of powers* has already affected the **present** condition and position of tutoring, it is still there to activate further the areas of research, educational practice and institutional policies **in the future**. Without their overlapping interdependence and co-existence, tutoring will not advance into a mature and lasting quality education at the university in Poland. A graph of their reciprocal interaction is presented below and serves as a closing word for this paper (see: Figure 1.). As the arrows suggest, institutional policy stays frequently trapped between contradictory movements of the other turbines of the mechanism. Let it remain a metaphorical picture of the obstacles it needs to face and even the risk of getting stuck between powers acting in totally opposite directions. Still, it needs to be there for the meaning and sense of the whole machine. The same type of immobility applies always to the 'third' element while the other two are in motion. Let me thus conclude that while all of them are equally essential for the dynamics of tutoring in the institution, they need to be well recognized and adequately correlated with each other.

Figure 1: Correlation of powers in the mechanism of institutional implementation of tutoring into academic education

Source: own elaboration

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