ACTION RESEARCH

as an Approach in the Execution of the Thesis Advisory Process

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The publication was created as a result of the project "Research for Practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations" (original Polish title "Badania dla praktyki. Wykorzystanie wdrożeniowych prac magisterskich opartych na badaniach w działaniu dla rozwoju organizacji").
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This scientific monograph is one of three publications resulting from the project "Research for practice. The use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations", implemented between 2017 and 2019 by students and employees of the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University in cooperation with public and non-governmental organisations. The monographs are a series of complementary reflections on action research, seen from two different perspectives. Each of the books published as part of the series Action Research in Academic Theory and Practice is directed to a different audience. The monograph, *Action Research as an Approach in the Execution of the Thesis Advisory Process*, describes how to change the diploma seminar, aimed at ensuring that the thesis advisory process allows both to develop students' research competences and create conditions for open learning about organisational reality as is, and also leads to the development of emancipatory attitudes of students. The second monograph, *Action Research. A Handbook for Students*, was created for students undertaking action research and to write a thesis on this basis. It presents a description of the possibilities that the action research approach gives to researchers and, and also shows how a thesis can be created based on action research and what challenges are associated with it.

These books differ not only in terms of intended readers. Their authors tried to show how various theoretical and methodological inspirations can accompany action research. The attractiveness of action research lies, among other things, in the fact that it creates a peculiar frame for researching and transforming reality that is not rigid, but plastic, and can be used in various methodological trends and organisational contexts. The project that results in this publication could have been implemented primarily thanks to the commitment and courage of students of the Institute of Public Affairs and the Institute of Culture who undertook to carry out action research and on its base to create implementation master's theses. They were (in alphabetical order): Katarzyna Adamczyk, Justyna Bołoz, Kamila Brodzińska, Sabina Bulanda, Katarzyna Ciaputa, Brygida Czartoryska, Bartosz Dąbrowski, Natalia Dziurny, Aleksandra Filipowska, Wioleta Gajeska, Jacek Gołąbek, Klaudia Grygierek, Magdalena Iwaniuk, Natalia Jarząbek, Piotr Kamola, Marta Kąsiel, Dorota Kosno, Aleksandra Krystek, Patrycja

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The project team that supervised the implementation of the project and co-implemented the research together with the students and partner organisations included employees of the Jagiellonian University: mgr Monika Antoniuk-Gula, dr hab. Katarzyna Barańska, dr hab. Ewa Bogacz-Wojtanowska, prof. JU, dr Małgorzata Ćwikła, dr Anna Góral, dr Beata Jałocha, prof. dr hab. Piotr Jedynak, dr Jakub Kołodziejczyk, dr hab. Grzegorz Mazurkiewicz, mgr Marcin Mich, dr Anna Pluszyńska, prof. dr hab. Grażyna Prawelska-Skrzypek, mgr Sylwia Wrona, dr Michał Zawadzki.

On behalf of the entire project team, I would like to thank everyone for their great commitment, as a result of which we had the opportunity to understand and implement the idea of action research. I would like to thank the Students for the trust they have placed in us. I am very grateful to the organisations for opening the door for young researchers and giving them a chance to gain priceless experience. I would like to thank the Thesis advisor and the whole Team for two years of wonderful, intensive scientific and didactic work that we have experienced together.

dr Beata Jałocha
Project Manager

INTRODUCTION

A "critical friend" – this is how David Coghlan, professor at Trinity College in Dublin, who is an important figure in the scientific community associated with this perspective, called the advisor of his thesis in the context of action research. This term seemed to us to be extremely accurate and focused on the whole sense of what the seminar leader should be doing in the approach we are discussing. On the one hand, the advisor has a close relationship with their tutees, often much more intense than in the case of studies conducted using traditional research orientations. The advisor becomes a member of a reflexive and exploring community formed around a noticed problem, inspires students and shows them various ways of cognition. On the other hand, such person flags traps that may appear, warns against taking shortcuts, asks, expresses doubts, encourages the student to think his or her own way and knows why it is fundamental for development, both in science and in practice. They feel just like critical friends of students who, in the process of action research, show the possibilities for constructive insight and understanding more.

In this book, based on the example of two years' experience of several advisors from the Faculty of Management and Social Communication of the Jagiellonian University, we want to describe how, using action research with the goal of implementation, it is possible to change the way of conducting a diploma seminar so that the advisory process allows research competences of students to develop, conditions to be created for open learning about organisational reality as it is, its deconstruction at the same time leading to the development of emancipatory attitudes of students. In this process, implemented by three partners: the student, the advisor and the researched organisation (which is represented by the mentor), a specific community of inquiry is created. It is focused on the identification of practical problems important from the point of view of the organisation studied, their consideration by students from the perspective of external research problems as well as joint search and design of solutions with the organisation.

Students work on a living organism of a selected organisation, they want to make positive changes together with its members. The issues addressed are related to real problems and their solution is a result of the needs, aspirations and capabilities of the people involved and the organisation under research.

The process of several years of academic education and student learning is each time a "collective creation" of academic teachers who, using various forms of didactics, implement the educational process in specific (unfortunately still changing) formal conditions, and students following individual strategies. In this book we focus on the perspective of academic teachers in the role of advisors who agreed to supervise master's theses in the context of action research, thus accepting many uncertainties. Such a clearly outlined profile of inquiry results from the construction of the project to which we refer. In addition, in our opinion, a special role in academic teaching, is played by a master's seminar - considered to be the most important, most engaging form of education at this stage of gaining knowledge especially when we look at it through the prism of the confrontation of university graduates with the labour market,. It leads to the creation and defence of a master's thesis which illustrates the competences of the student achieved in the course of learning and is also a proof of the effectiveness of the educational process and the efficiency of the advisor.

In the course of research carried out for the purposes of preparing their diploma thesis, a student crosses the boundary walls of a university and a library full of books, coming into contact with the outside world and its problems. Trying to describe them, break them apart, explain or understand, the student under the supervision of the advisor begins to connect the world of theory with the world of practice. The practical phenomena observed are usually assessed through the knowledge of the theory discovered throughout the whole period of studies and tested during the seminars. The student discovers their autonomy as a researcher, at the same time feeling that they are accompanied by someone more familiar with the intricacies of scientific work, and in the case of action research which we describe here, additionally had the opportunity to consult with representatives of the practical side. We consider the involvement of the organisation's employee playing the role of a student advisor to be a very important factor and suggest that advisors should strive to actively involve practitioners in the process of cooperation with students during their theses writing. In our project, we have created optimal conditions for students to smoothly get out of academic reality and enter the practical world. Therefore, we point out that the process of writing a diploma thesis becomes a kind of a rite of passage from the stage of education to the stage of responsible performance of professional roles. This is accompanied by emancipation and perception of the properties of critical,

creative thinking. Thus, we notice in the action research the performative potential which lies both in the methodological procedure itself, characterised by an open, usually qualitative dimension, as well as in the experience of the students themselves, entering a new stage in life. In this process, the master's student becomes a partner of the advisor. By gaining unique experience, supported by the organisation studied, the student defines their attitude, enters into dialogue and sometimes disputes with the advisor. They begin to have their own opinion as a researcher and analyst of organisational reality. In our opinion, it is precisely this understanding of the emerging relationships and the role of universities in a broader perspective, including the network of connections with the external environment, that determines the essence of learning and may be the response of modern universities to the accusations related to the hermetic character and lack of preparation of graduates for the challenges awaiting them after graduation.

Seminar classes, to which we assign such a great symbolic role, are one of the oldest forms of academic didactics. They were already used in ancient Greek schools. Their character was slightly changed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when a very strong emphasis was placed on shaping research competences of students. The understanding of the seminar as a didactic form and its importance in the educational process have been very clearly expressed and consolidated in the academic culture. Nowadays, when the expectations of university education have changed, the seminar's formula and the way in which the advisory process is carried out are contested. In Poland, at the turn of the century, there was a strong pressure to abolish the seminar as a course leading to the creation and defence of the diploma thesis prepared at the end of the studies under the supervision of a thesis advisor. In the discussions, the most frequent argument was that the theses were not original and *de facto* useless from the point of view of the contribution to learning, the educational process as well as the student's learning. The value of competences acquired was questioned, mainly by showing the discrepancies between the educational objectives during the seminar and the learning outcomes achieved, perceived as inadequate to the needs of the socio-economic environment in which graduates found employment. Our goal is to show how much potential is still hidden in this form of education and how enriching it with innovative methodological approach can influence the development of both the student and the advisor. We prove that students and advisors willingly take up unusual challenges, follow impulses that are conditioned by curiosity and not by the desire to quickly and smoothly complete their studies.

We restore the ethos of the seminar as a platform for creative cooperation and transfer, or even for creating knowledge in an individual and direct way. An

important starting point in such a model of cooperation between an experienced researcher and a student is the orientation towards practice, which is the essence of action research. Today's university teachers often face critical opinions that graduates are unprepared to live in society and, in particular, to fulfil their professional roles responsibly. Often these critical voices are supplemented with an indication that graduates do not understand the organisational reality and the working environment. They function within the categories of idealistic, abstract theories, but are helpless in the face of the simplest practical problems because they lack basic social and communication skills as well as a sense of responsibility. Other accusations relate to graduates' ability to think critically and independently, their low level of creativity, their learned passivity and their low ability to put themselves in problem situations.

Therefore, graduates are subject to numerous requirements which emerge from general discussions on universities, the ethos of scientists' work and the implementation sense of creating knowledge and theory. The real challenge for modern universities, therefore, is to prepare students at university level for tasks in the real world that need to be properly identified, while at the same time creating the relevant theories. That is why the final stage of education is so important, when you work individually with young people who are preparing to enter the labour market soon. Once again, it seems right to emphasise the ritual transformation taking place at the moment in which the advisor is involved.

Therefore, in the approach that we present in this book is completely changed in relation to the traditional one when it comes to the role of advisors in supporting the interactive process of agreeing on meanings and senses, searching for ways to reach them, their interpretation, designing real solutions to real problems and placing research experiences within the achievements of science. The advisory process itself also has a specific character: it ceases to be linear, but becomes interactive, divergent, ontologically unique. As research progresses, new aspects of a selected section of reality emerge that require both practical and theoretical knowledge in a given field as well as agreement on how they are perceived and how they can be solved. The advisor coordinating the process meets the student during the seminar and additional consultations, and also contacts the mentor in the organisation which allows to deepen the understanding of the problems examined and solved.

The cooperation with the student is very intensive and direct, it consists mainly in inspiring, suggesting theoretical "tracks" and useful research tools, maintaining the student's enthusiasm and motivation. The advisory process in this approach resembles tutoring which, despite its intensity, does not have

a monitoring dimension. This, by the way, is a certain hybrid, because the student has two tutors: a research and didactic one – an advisor, and a practical one – a mentor in the organisation[1]. They both support the student, take care of the methodological and practical correctness, suggest ways of exploring and finding solutions, inspire and encourage independence. At the same time, they are in contact with each other, discussing in particular giving sense to the process of identifying problems and the adequacy of the tools used or the solutions designed. However, this does not happen from the position of people who know or understand better. The advisor and the mentor share their opinions, help, but do not decide. In addition, the student also learns from the respondents themselves. In action research, it is acceptable that they suggest how the data will be collected, thereby influencing the methodological design of the research, and they also raise issues that, in their view, deserve to be taken into account in the analysis.

The factors mentioned above, such as high methodological flexibility, the performative character of the research itself and the students' experiences confronted with the educational and professional rite of passage, the symbolic dimension of the seminar as a place of opinion-forming exchange between a university employee and a young man, inspired us to look at the profile of an advisor who takes care of works written in the stream of action research from several perspectives. Firstly, we are discussing a methodological procedure that scientifically constitutes the approach that interests us. This part is of a theoretical nature and provides a background for further discussion. It is not only about writing a thesis but also about the scientific context of the process. Therefore, it also concerns the current problems in the work of advanced researchers for whom action research may be an innovative addition to their own techniques. We strongly emphasise the above-mentioned performative aspect, intentionally introducing interdisciplinary factors influencing the uniqueness of action research. We stress the fact that the set of available research tools is still open and enriched by each successive research project whose authors are scientists together with practitioners. Secondly, we focus on the formal framework outlining the scope of cooperation, bringing closer the sense as well as educational and developmental assumptions of the diploma seminar. Thirdly, we rely on our own metareflection, treating the path we have taken as advisors in research terms. Throughout the project, data was collected and used to illustrate the specific challenges faced by

[1] This is based on the structure of the project which became the basis for writing this book. The presence of a mentor in the organisation analysed is not a methodological requirement for supervising diploma theses in the form of an action research. However, this is certainly a great help.

the advisor[2]. We hope that thanks to this, our thoughts will be strongly consolidated, convincing and encouraging in the supervision of the diploma theses in the spirit of action research. We believe that this is a way of rediscovering the sense of the master-student relationship, which is considered to be a constitutive element of academic education.

Throughout this book, we have used the male gender to unify the analysis, although we are aware that both in the project team and in the group of students participating in the project, representatives of both genders were involved to a similar extent. This is only a result of stylistic simplification.

[2] Data collection was conducted through self-reflection studies of advisors, in-depth interviews with them, questionnaire surveys among students, mentors from organisations and advisors, as well as analysis of materials developed during workshops supporting ongoing advisory processes and analysis of remarks appearing during regular monthly meetings of advisors devoted to the exchange of experiences.

CHAPTER 1.
COGNITIVE AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN ACTION RESEARCH. RESEARCHER/ADVISOR PERSPECTIVE

In recent years, we have seen an increased interest in the action research approach in social sciences, both in research where the emphasis is on participatory and emancipatory elements, as well as in research projects aimed at implementing responses to various types of problems. The applicability of this approach is high, which means that action research appears in consumer research [Perry, Gummesson 2004], organisational counselling [Cunningham 1993], the topic of exclusion or disadvantaged groups [Stoudt, Torre 2014], educational and pedagogical activities [Henlzer 2011] as well as observation of changing urban fabrics [Skórzyńska 2017]. The current popularity of action research, which is an extension of its continued presence in science in recent decades, can be associated with several processes which at the moment shape research and teaching activities at the academic level and condition the diversity of scientists' work. Firstly, action research fits perfectly with the changes in universities, both in terms of research and academic teaching, which leads to the student's active experience of the analysed situations (in accordance with the postulates formulated by Jean Lave and Étienne Wenger in Situated Learning, 1991). The changing social perception of researchers and the search for their new responsibilities and tensions that result from this are based on an attempt to define an optimal balance between theory, practical application and teaching, and thus to define the contemporary role of the academy. Secondly, action research provides a convenient framework for methodological experiments, often justifying solutions which are on the verge of correctness, but may turn out to be breakthroughs. Thirdly, it includes new actors in the research process who, in addition to being participants in the phenomena under analysis, are legitimised as observers and interpreters. This is in line with efforts to establish a knowledge society in which research competences are not exclusively the domain of the scientific community. The combination of these three factors: the profile of contemporary researchers, the tools they use and their place in the community that is being created to expand

science with the perspective of everyday life, creates a network of constitutive elements for the new social significance of universities and the production of knowledge that can actually be used. At the same time, however, the popularity of action research generates various traps because even though the limits of action research are expansive, it does not mean that every action gains research legitimacy, and even less does it justify the use of this term to describe all participatory cognitive activities. This chapter focuses on the issues of methodology in action research and the other two aspects are treated as elements influencing the specificity of this approach, which additionally determine the choice of specific methods and tools. The opportunities and challenges as well as the drawbacks and risks of participatory action research are taken into account in order to ensure a comprehensive view. In addition, examples of scientific projects are presented, whose diversity documents the attractiveness of action research and illustrates its popularity.

THE ESSENCE OF ACTION RESEARCH

The desire to know the real problems of a group, leading to the selection of specific research strategies that are particularly relevant in this chapter, depends on how the role of universities in society is defined, what value is attached to the results of the activities undertaken by the researchers, and how they shape their projects by determining their own position in relation to those who look at reality without a scientific background. Not without significance is also the didactic element – ultimately, our own scientific skills are to be used to continuously improve the educational offer which is based on the results of the latest progressive research and understanding of the environment. As we know, research and teaching work may be theoretical or contain a dominant practical element. By choosing the latter, researchers are less concerned with abstract phenomena, preferring cognition and ultimately overcoming difficulties in the world.

This path is a reaction to the academy's inordinate distance from reality, which does not have to be focused on solving immediate practical problems, but its task is certainly to inspire a critical perception of the phenomena occurring in the environment. Such an accusation has often been made against universities. As Jemielniak and Chrostowski [2008] emphasise, action research may be a cure for this unfavourable phenomenon, which is proven by the didactic and research project described in this book.

Taking these factors into account, it is worthwhile to start by considering the place of researchers in the complex game in which universities are involved

and to explore the possibilities for practical cooperation in scientific projects with representatives of the practical side. Being a researcher is coupled with a sense of responsibility, which manifests itself most clearly in striving to develop implementation solutions, which are the foundation of action research. This leads to a new definition of the task of universities which begin to take on the effort of explaining practical problems, which have a different nature when both the direct participant and the witness-observer from the world of science look at them.

A characteristic feature of action research is the creation of new relationships in which the patterns usually present in university activity are questioned. Firstly, by broadening the perspective of ethnographic research, openness to the environment is required, and thus to its representatives who in the process of initiated and implemented change are equated with the researcher. Anyway, it is difficult to agree on the dimension of this democratisation: is it the researcher who is equated with the participants of a given situation, becoming one of them, or are the participants of practical phenomena becoming the researchers? We are dealing with a complex process in which a unique research community is created. The outlined theme of transfer of research competences, direction of changes and their sustainability has not yet been delved into deeply enough in scientific observation. However, it is not overlooked, as evidenced by a meaningful article by Arjuna Appaduraia *The Right to Research* [2006], in which the author emphasises the value of knowledge present in the consciousness of practitioners, often uneducated. Undoubtedly, it can be said that action research as a research orientation is a prelude to the appreciation of theoretically unencumbered observations and analyses which often allow us to understand the problems of modern times to a greater extent than through scientific considerations.

At the same time, it helps to prevent "double exclusion". Witnesses and participants in social phenomena usually remain absent from research as individuals affected by a particular social problem and are often considered incapable of understanding it scientifically [Liamputtong 2006] or inaccessible to researchers as a hermetic or isolated group [Sałkowska 2011].

This requires a methodological approach based not only on the said openness but also on empathy. It should be remembered, however, that these positively associated factors introduce a certain difficulty, which is why it is so important to understand the specificity of action research and the certain traps that this approach generates. There is often bias resulting from the fact that, as Sałkowska notes when discussing Howard Becker's book *Whose side are we on?,* "almost all the topics that are studied by sociologists, especially those that have some connection with social reality, are seen in terms of morality, good and evil"

[Sałkowska 2011, p. 16]. The neutrality of the researcher is not possible, especially when investigating groups experiencing injustice, which leads to a certain ethical attitude that affects judgment. It is therefore all the more important to remember that action research is not only a desire to go outside the academy but also a procedure demanding a methodological framework and scientific legitimacy. This requires an even greater scientific effort than ethnographic research, where roles are defined, precisely because of the sharing of competences between experienced researchers and knowledgeable practitioners. The challenge of action research is to create science from the embodied experience of all participants in the process, not just the researchers themselves. Knowledge emerges from the field, it is located in practice and in the present, and at the same time it demands methods and tools that function in science. It is important to know how practitioners can change them to suit their needs. It should therefore be stressed that the project in the spirit of action research is based on the fusion of unique competences and the complementarity of perspectives as well as a creative and conscious approach to what the methodology offers. The creation of a scientific community is therefore a continuous modelling of the ways of generating knowledge and dialogue. However, these factors should not be perceived only positively. They relate to the shortcomings of this approach, including subjectivity, the length of the process and the lack of guarantee of sustainable impact.

Another type of relationship that is redefined in participatory activities is the cooperation between the advisor and the student. A young researcher has the opportunity to combine their presence in organisations with gaining their first skills as a scientist. Thus, after graduation, such a student knows the research procedures and issues that go beyond textbooks and are more specific in the field.

The role of the advisor is different, such a person becomes an advisor but is not the best expert on a given topic. Here, too, there is a certain equalisation and supplementation; it is the student who decides about the direction of research, being involved in finding a solution to the problem which they explore together with the practitioners on an ongoing basis. The advisor, using the observations of the student, explores other perspectives and enriches their own scientific competence through a new lens. At the same time, they must be able to maintain a distance, encourage and propose the use of various research opportunities, but not impose any of them. All this creates a preliminary framework for developing divergent thinking. As Hana Červinková stresses [2011], the process of developing implementation solutions that use the potential of science begins with reflection, passes through the criticism stage and finally leads to action. What remains important is the reflection which can develop in many ways. Diagnosing a problem, analysing the environment in which it occurs, learning the opinions

of participants in a given situation leads to constant questions and new doubts. There's no proven plan of action. On the contrary, it is the research team that is responsible for creating it. Therefore, there are no clear guidelines on what to do and how to do it. Divergence is an epistemological advantage of this type of research. It also has a particular developmental value when working with students. They are encouraged not only to think critically but also to see discrepancies and ambiguities. Not only is the student thrown in at the deep end but also the advisor has fewer footholds in supervising the thesis than in the case of standard diploma projects.

The essence of action research is therefore openness to atypical power distribution within the scientific procedure and to new methodological solutions the examples of which will be discussed later. Specific relationships with partners active in the practical reality, and with students in the case of the diploma thesis are accepted.

ACTION RESEARCH AS A RESPONSE TO THE MATURITY OF THE SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SYSTEM

Stefan Collini asked a provocative question in the title of his book: "What are universities for?" [2012]. Such an introduction to his analysis is not accidental. Although universities are still being opened, and as a result the number of students is growing, according to many people the idea of education based on critical and creative thinking, or even conducting research of a disobedient, seeking nature, is being lost. Therefore, can negative conclusions be drawn about the commodification of knowledge and the "disappearance of meaning" in research work [Alvesson, Gabriel, Paulsen 2017]? It is difficult to unequivocally answer this question because the discussion is still going on, becoming a research problem itself – research on the conduct of research is being developed, often with polemical implications [Flyvbjerg 2001]. Regardless of this metareflection, we can actually observe disturbing phenomena. The basic point of reference here will be the contemporary striving for quantifiable results of scientists' work [Szadkowski 2015], which translates into the position of universities in various rankings and ultimately into the level of public funding allocated to them. For individual research work, this means the need for increased productivity of scientific publications. University employees have two options: to publish in journals included in reputable databases or to write even more and submit several texts to worse-scoring journals. When analysing various ways of evaluating scientists, Emanuel Kulczycki pays attention to quantitative and qualitative factors.

He defines these two perspectives in the following way: "1) quantitative – based on multidimensional indicators and parameters; 2) qualitative – based on peer review or expert-based assessment" [Kulczycki 2017, p. 64]. He also mentions that the purpose of this assessment is mainly to verify the return on public investment and to measure the impact of scientific activities on the economy. In this neoliberal logic, there is no need to link theory and practice (understood more broadly than the applicability of patents to generate profit), although there is often talk of creativity, innovation and collaboration. However, these terms take on the character of empty slogans. Furthermore, it is not surprising that warning comments of a slightly ironic nature appear, for example in the book *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* [Berg, Seeber 2016], pointing to the disappearance of academic emploi which has had guaranteed freedom of thought, including the luxury of time, for centuries. It can be assumed that such an attitude stems from the conviction that there are no alternatives and that there is a need to implement market mechanisms. Although this is one of the ways of financing science and emphasising its practical dimension, it can be a challenge for social sciences and humanities, whose significance is often encoded in abstract reflection based on feelings, emotions and subjective impressions. As a result, there are few ideas regarding research and development in this area. A damaging relationship therefore emerges: practice requires certain adaptations within universities, but they themselves are often reluctant to react critically. As a result, paradoxical situations may arise in which hierarchical structures are created, enclosed in an ivory tower, where research is mass-produced with little practical problem-solving capacity, copying models that have already failed to prove themselves in the business world. In addition, even publishing in prestigious scientific journals has little social significance [Gayá, Brydon-Miller 2016]. Thus, efforts to carry out high-quality research also seal the boundaries of the microcosm of scientists. Massified didactics suffers from it as well, there is no possibility of deep, individual work with the student because advisors manage several dozen diploma theses at the same time, trying to write (not only articles, but also applications for grants)as many and as quickly as possible . The tensions described above are perceived by researchers, which leads to different strategies. One of them is the development of consulting activity. It is a way out of the academy but without trying to solve its basic problems. This type of "hybrid" does not have a missionary character which should be present in academic activity, but it allows to draw impulses from the environment and translate scientific thought into the language of practice. It can also simply be a tool to ensure financial freedom. Consultants are often closer to practice than researchers in basic research. It happens that the latter are not willing to

cooperate with practitioners [Jemielniak, Chrostowski 2008]. The situation is different in the case of a more radical understanding of the role of universities, the deliberate separation from the business world makes it necessary to look for other ways to build contacts with the environment. They are often linked to a return to the democratic ideal of science and education, or even to radical demands, in the spirit of Henry Giroux. In the context of action research one can observe both models: on the one hand, business-oriented consulting and on the other, missionary nonconformism. Action research is therefore largely marked by the individual attitude of the scientist. This is probably one of the reasons why they often cause ambivalent emotions. Therefore, a proper evaluation of this approach requires knowledge of its advantages and disadvantages as well as awareness of the links with other methodological perspectives.

It is worth remembering that action research can be understood as extending and updating ethnographic research which has been important for social sciences for decades. The central point of this analysis is the reflective and critical researcher who additionally plays the role of didactician and advisor of scientific activities conducted by students. These "reflective" and "critical" terms are not related to a new paradigm of being a scientist, but rather refer to a model based on ethnographic thought that has been proven for decades. The action research context introducing an element of "reality" of problems is largely based on an ethnographic approach, although it is not the same as it will be discussed later. However, it is important to be aware of the extent to which ethnographic tools can be used and the areas in which such approach still offers attractive epistemological opportunities. As examples we can mention renowned publications such as *Space and Society in Central Brazil: A Panará Ethnography* Elizabeth Ewart [2013] or *White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race* by Matthew W. Hughey [2012]. The first one was written in the spirit of classical ethnographic studies based on the pioneering works of Bronisław Malinowski, additionally emphasising individual semantic categories shaping the way research participants perceive reality. The second publication attempts to show the perspective of two different groups on the issue of race, trying to get into specific environments. Lack of humility and a strong need to search for new threads determine ethnographers, although they are still alien to the given problem as external recipients. Certainly, however, the researchers of this trend sanctioned the presence of scientists outside the walls of the academy. However, there is still the aspect of distance and determining the scope of involvement and decision-making of the other side – experts in everyday life, designers of relations, i.e. the participants of specific situations. This is where the opportunities for action research open up. An example that contains elements similar to those that shape the two

studies mentioned in this paragraph is described in the article *Participatory Action Research: From Within and Beyond Prison Bars* [Fine et al. 2003]. The project was based on ethnographic traditions (participatory observation, intensive presence in the field) and several critical additions referring to postcolonial studies and feminist theories, which ensured the character of action research. The most important thing is how the research team was built. The authors of the text are, on one side, researchers beyond prison and, on the other side, equal investigators from within/prisoners. Their analysis is surprisingly consistent and convincing. Polyphony is used here to articulate various observations based on the internal and external perspectives. Only one of them would lead to weaker conclusions. Therefore, we come to the most important element: opening the university staff (and students in their theses in the framework of action research) to cooperation with non-academics who become members of the research community created around a specific phenomenon. The aspects discussed here, which are related to the desire to involve participants of different social situations in the research process, also lead to the question of the limits of practical contribution and the final form of the results. This also applies to selected communication strategies and language. In accordance with the postulates of action research, authenticity is important, which can be enhanced by the introduction of a linguistic convention in a given environment. It resembles a discussion on the standpoint in social research. On the one hand, the *emic* strategy enables studying a given group from the side of its members, on the other hand, the *etic* strategy means external position [Headland, Pike, Harris 1990]. When conducting participatory research, the greatest challenge is to combine both elements in such a way as to preserve authenticity while allowing for elements of the scientific procedure that guarantee correctness. In action research, the point of view of the group members is taken into account and to some extent the traditional scientific perspective is abandoned. However, the methodological subtext does not disappear. It continues to function in the subconscious of researchers who accept that the field determines the nature of their actions. Such a solution must always be redefined depending on the specific situation, so that action research is unique, original and defends itself against standardisation. This type of architecture also makes action research attractive for ambitious students and for advisors who are open to mutually inspiring cooperation. As the aforementioned research carried out together with the prisoners shows, action research may, for example, lead to an interesting move beyond the research framework, mainly ethnographic, which eloquently emphasises the novelty of this perspective. In addition to the equalisation of the research competences of researchers and prisoners, the egalitarian character of the analysis phase has been retained, so that the authors of the

publication are all persons involved. This opens up a new research area oriented towards the place of "natural" language in the scientific debate, which is not the subject of this discussion. Nevertheless, it is worth noting this potential in the introduction of a participatory perspective and the possibility of expanding, for example, the narrative trend in social research to include the issue of the publication co-authorship, and thus the penetration of the field language into scientific communication.

It is not possible to speak from a critical position (and such a position, as is emphasised in the literature, often occurs in the action research) without a proper adjustment of the methodology related procedures. Duhau [2016] points to this paradox in social sciences: often radical, critical voices are accompanied by positivist methodological solutions, which introduces dissonance and may raise concerns about the coherence and value of research. Therefore, in the case of action research, the issue of methodology is so important. In addition to this issue of tool integrity and perspective, this is due to the high flexibility in the choice of research methods and techniques that may not be compatible with each other in different approaches. Here, however, they create a unique collage of techniques combined to understand a specific situation and solve a unique problem, which in the process of learning about it can constantly take on new shades, introducing new complications, but also developmental impulses. The methodological solution also confirms a reliable approach to a given topic in a research project.

A broad methodological approach leads to the fact that that action research is called differently in the literature, which leads to some inaccuracies and linguistic inconsistencies right at the beginning. This fact can be considered one of the weaknesses of the scientific methodological discourse. We can find the term "method" [e.g. Jemielniak, Chrostowski 2008] or the expression "whole family of research methods" [Ćwiklicki, Urbaniak 2015, p. 56]. It seems most reasonable to talk about a research approach which is neutral, allows for a qualitative and quantitative character and allows to modify the initial assumptions already "in action", depending on the needs observed in the field. The term "action research" is therefore a kind of methodological "umbrella", a collective term. At the initial stage of the research process, it offers many solutions, but also constantly extends to new ideas, often submitted by practitioners unaware of epistemological and paradigmatic scientific traditions. For the purposes of the project, which was the prelude to writing this book, defining action research as a methodological approach was the best solution. This allowed for the use of various research methods and the use of many tools and techniques for collecting data in master's theses.

While discussing the issues of the attractiveness of action research in the context of the maturity of other research perspectives that allow for less flexibility,

we may recall an exemplary study described in the article The Action Research Case Study Approach: A Methodology for Complex Challenges Such as Sustainability in Aviation by Peter McManners [2016]. Justifying the choice of the methodological framework, the author emphasises its adjustment to the initiatives looking for balanced, sustainable solutions, respecting grassroots activities, being aware of critical pragmatism and the importance of reflexive practices.

At the same time, it was noted that the earlier, more standard methodological solutions did not allow for a deeper analysis of the identified problem, nor did they allow for a real involvement in the given problem and a perception of its complexity. Action research turned out to be a kind of a set of available options, the use of which gave an opportunity to create an original methodological mosaic based in this research on a modified case study method. As emphasised on the basis of action research, the case study is a combination of "academic rigour and practical application" [McManners 2016, p. 204]. Therefore, it is perfect for activities aimed at developing implementation solutions. From the linguistic point of view, the article also draws attention to another accurate term: "research orientation" proposed by Hilary Bradbury [Reason, Bradbury 2008]. Thus, speaking of action research, it is reasonable to refer to terminological constructs emphasising the "attitude" towards research work, and not to strive for the use of the nomenclature present (though not necessarily stabilised) in science, which should belong to specific levels of analysis (methodology → method(-s) within it → then technique/tool for collecting and grouping data). Therefore, from a practical point of view, the methodology in the context of the action research approach is a field of various types of experiments modernising contemporary science by adding new components to known methods. While in the case of theoretical considerations, it is a grateful point of reference for illustrating current methodological discussions in social sciences which are looking for practical elements.

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES IN ACTION RESEARCH

The search for new solutions in the methodology of social research led to the popularisation of such extravagant techniques as photographic interview or narrative collage. The logical cause and effect relationships that dominate traditional methodologies have proved too simplistic to reflect the enormous complexity of social worlds, nowadays also constructed with the help of technology and non-human actors, to further complicate the paths of scientific cognition. Another difficulty is, according to Alvesson, Gabriel and Paulsen [2017], the

overproduction of negligible research. As these authors claim, most of the published articles and monographs lack the original element, which often occurs due to too much methodological standardisation, or the opposite, the lack of methodological rigour or solid workshop. This is not a new problem anyway. Michael Gibbons and co-authors of *The New Production of Knowledge* [1994] wrote in the early 1990s about the massification of scientific work which has a negative impact on its quality. The absence of autocritical approach of researchers engaged in quantitative multiplication of publications, as well as the disappearance of methodological culture manifesting itself on the one hand in the awareness of what is correct and scientifically sanctioned, and on the other hand in the curiosity and need to discover new ways of research, resulted in the state which John Law in his controversial book *After Method* [2004] called "disorder in social sciences". At the same time, however, he added that science should be able to sort out the mess that dominates in reality and not, due to its own limitations, to additionally obliterate the possibility of understanding what late modernity confronts us with. Therefore, the task facing the researchers is in no way diminished. On the contrary, the challenges they face are multiplying, which reinforces the need to develop procedures that strengthen the feedback between theory and practice. That is also Law's argument. He writes: "the research must be practical: it must be a cognition using methods in practice" [Law 2004, p. 45]. This means that solutions such as surveys, for example, often carried out outside the natural context of the research problem and with a consistent distinction between researchers and respondents, can no longer guarantee full exploration of the problem. Mike Savage and Roger Burrows [2007, p. 8] in their article *The Coming Crisis of Empirical Sociology* clearly emphasise that some traditional research tools have already had their heyday, and that respondents do not feel honoured when asked for their opinions within the framework of standardised procedures. What is more, there is a growing awareness of the value of data and the public do not agree with its commodification, sometimes doubting the sincere intentions of scientists. Researchers must therefore rediscover the balance between scientific correctness, practical orientation and responsibility for the data collected. In addition to switching to other ways of doing science, they are also responsible for designing didactic processes in such a way that future generations of scientists are prepared to consciously enter the world of innovative procedures as early as at the stage of bachelor's and master's studies. Taking these factors into account, it appears that also in this case action research fits well into the ongoing discussions and can serve as an illustration of current processes concerning transformations in contemporary research. Action research is an area of constant tensions between the factors that interest us – practical, theoretical

and didactic ones. A kind of field of creative lack of humility with multi-author provenance, in which the voice of scientists resounds as loudly as the voice of social actors.

The basic feature associated primarily with action research is the need to produce practical knowledge that will be useful in everyday life. At the same time, however, it is important to fight for the scope of intellectual freedom, meaning the possibility of juggling methods and techniques to a much greater extent than in the case of the usual mixed approach (e.g. in the form of triangulation of interviews with questionnaires). As noted by Dariusz Jemielniak and Aleksander Chrostowski [2008, p. 44]: "AR is an approach that (...) is neutral to paradigmatic divisions and to quantitative-qualitative methods (the aim is to solve a practical problem, the researcher uses those tools that will prove useful)". They add that a qualitative approach prevails, which results from the fact that the group is involved in real problems. Tripp [2005] stresses that it is the methodology that is subordinated to practice in action research (not the other way round). Thanks to this, it is not necessary to give up any trail because there is an impression that there is a lack of adequate techniques to investigate it. The field and its hosts – people directly experiencing a problem and authorised to collaborate in a scientific project, therefore, setting the tone for research, broadening the boundaries of methodology, on the one hand allowing the combination of tools that seem necessary, and on the other hand encouraging the discovery of new techniques.

Returning to the raised question of paradigms which are not of a limiting character here, it is worth mentioning that it is not possible to fully locate action research within some particular paradigm. Following the practical trail, the point of reference becomes the understanding of Aristotle who recognises the importance of authentic engagement in real problems only in a participatory and co-experienced form, additionally emphasising the issues of creating value and goodness. *Praxis* is intended to achieve the goal, which is emphasised by the focus on implementation solutions. Although, as noted by William G. Tierney and Margaret W. Sallee [2008], the *poiesis* orientation is methodologically more similar to the traditional understanding of science. Action research disrupts this logic, we notice (not for the first time in science) attempts to shift the thought procedures already established in antiquity, the influence of which still forms the framework of scientific cognition.

Nowadays, by moving towards practice, researchers are trying to define the additional meaning of the academy's work, encoded in an openness to. as Donna Haraway would say [1988], "situated knowledge", which can be discovered through inclusiveness.

The sense of practical research is not, therefore, the rapid collection of data in a natural environment where there is a specific problem, but the readiness to immerse in a process characterised by blurring the boundaries between the researcher and the respondents (there is a fundamental difference with the ethnographic tradition) and the creation of a new value that is not generated by standard methodologies. The scientist can have both a "technical" advantage in this relationship and a better preparation for a critical understanding of social phenomena; at the same time, they also know that it is these attributes that can make them insensitive to the various impulses of the environment. Therefore, the strict division into functionalist, neo-positivist, or interpretative and critical paradigms [Burrell, Morgan 1979] is inadequate and to some extent also insufficient. When pointing out the necessity of referring to several paradigms at the same time, we are not talking about a new phenomenon. As noted, for example, in the context of management sciences which often use action research, the scientific search is multi-paradigmatic [Sułkowski 2016]. This can be considered obvious in the case of social research which, unlike natural sciences, allows for the element of scientific ambiguity. This happens in action research which contains a subjective factor. While looking for additional consolidation of cognitive processes within the approach we are interested in, it is worth remembering about the practical paradigm which makes action research not only a procedure but also an ideology related to understanding the role of researchers as participants of real phenomena.

Apart from the multi-paradigmatic nature which makes it difficult to organise action research according to traditional epistemological procedures, it is also clear that different techniques and tools are combined. Based on a general observation relating to examples of various global studies that are described in the literature, one of the most popular methods in action research is case study which makes it easier to focus on a specific problem while taking into account the unique context in which it occurs[3]. Within this method, apart from interdisciplinarity, we can, however, speak of an unusual phenomenon – a multitude of tools, which manifests itself in the tendency to combine various tools without considering whether they are proven in research or designed for the needs of a single scientific activity. It is also irrelevant whether they will survive in the assortment of instruments accessible to social researchers. The most important are

[3] It should be added that despite the presence of case studies in action research, there are also voices indicating differences between these two ways of working in science. This is due to the lack of precision in the literature discussed above. When considering action research as a method, the case study may actually appear as a separate method. However, assuming that action research is the approach, it is justified to include a case study as one of the available research methods. For more on the differences see Blichfeldt, Andersen 2006.

the current needs, satisfying which can be an important scientific discovery. At the same time, the said over-standardisation of social research encourages progressive researchers to test original solutions, often inspired by what functions as a tool for gathering information in practice, by creating methodological collages. Therefore, action research offers the possibility of continuous improvement of one's own methodological approach. They do not give up relatively common techniques, such as: observation of groups and individuals, use of audio and video recordings, collection of notes from the field, conducting standardised and partially standardised interviews, use of questionnaires[4]. However, the main distinguishing feature is that there is no domination of specific tools and the deprivation of academics of their monopoly on data collection methods. The tools are added by practitioners or designed to meet their needs. An example is photovoice. This technique, used mainly in the case of research into disadvantaged groups and social problems, highlights the participatory element. It has gained great popularity in the pedagogical context, offering the possibility of emancipation of participants by acting and taking responsibility for its shape [Jarosz, Gierczyk 2016]. Participants in the research are the authors of both photos and opinions on them. The researcher takes on the role of a facilitator. They supervise the process, they are a part of it, but do not play a decisive role. It can be said that the researcher has a technical function. This tool is part of a visual trend that has become a permanent part of the repertoire of social research, as exemplified by visual ethnography, both in the form of observation of the real world and the virtual world, created with the use of new media [Pink 2013]. Photovoice, however, has a two-dimensional nature which is a result of the orientation towards the direction of action research. First of all, it connects different matters: photographs with the possibility of discursive comments on them, which already introduces a certain duality, but also gives a chance to encapsulate interactions with additional elements. Here, for example, it will be a variation of the participatory observation again by the participants themselves. Therefore, these evolutions of tools may have a spontaneous and conventional dimension in the action research. When working with students, such a data collection strategy may be an interesting way of referring to their media-adapted awareness. The accessibility of photography and the ability to quickly understand it are characteristics of young people's everyday life which can become part of their research practice.

[4] As the terminological chaos of the methodology is often mentioned, the use of individual terms in this chapter needs to be clarified. Research tools and techniques are understood here as synonyms and their alternate use results only from stylistic issues.

Another tool used is the transect walk used to explore and analyse the space in which the research participants operate. The use of transect walk makes it possible to see how groups and individuals feel in their immediate surroundings, which areas are regularly visited and which are less frequently visited. Often these interactions are a significant indication of where the source of the problems lies or how the everyday life of a community or organisation can be improved through space design. At the same time, "being in the field" and following routes that are permanently inscribed in the rites of research participants opens up the possibility to benefit from other techniques of data collection. The transect walk is not a passive movement in a foreign area as a tourist, but a committed presence involving an attempt to explore a given problem [Opondo et al. 2007]. This means that the researcher, most often accompanied by the participants of the situation determining the problematic scope of the project, conducts participatory observation, interviews, takes photographs and even collects various "props" that appear along the way. Of course, such an approach does not need to automatically mean that we carry out research in the direction that interests us here. Similar procedures may for example, be part of ethnographic research. What is worth emphasising, however, is the question of the legitimacy of the participants as hosts and researchers of the field as well as the repetitiveness. The walks do not have to be a one-off operation. They can be repeated several times, returning to a specific theme, while also discovering new shades of a given problem. Thus, we are dealing here with performative action of a variable ontological status, which is described in the next subchapter.

Other possibilities are offered by "mapping"" which also emphasises the spatial location of social situations. However, this solution is not limited only to the visual placement of problems but also to the search for ephemeral cultural, economic and social bonds, creating a delicate network of dependencies – they influence the way individuals and groups function. Marcin Gierczyk and Dagmara Dobosz write that:

> (...) participatory mapping is an interactive research method/technique based on researching the attitudes and opinions of the local population through the production of visual and non-visual data to diagnose the problems, opportunities and concerns that arise in the studied community. This approach combines elements of cartography (transferring information related to a selected section of space to maps) and social research methods (supplementing information with data from in-depth interviews or surveys) [Gierczyk, Dobosz 2016, pp. 152–153].

The aim is to create analyses that are based on the understanding of social relations. The order of priority shall be determined taking into account the point of view of the research participants. This makes the mapping authentic and original. As the above-mentioned authors emphasise, such an attitude to locating problems both in real spaces and in conventionally emerging areas of a group meeting allows for "creating a wider dialogue and relations" [Gierczyk, Dobosz 2016, p. 153]. It is therefore important to highlight two factors: the individual perspective of each participant as a member of a community or group, which leads to different production and understanding of data, and the consideration of the real context of events. The literature also mentions the lack of linearity in this mode of reasoning. This enables more reflective thinking within scientific proceedings and branching of themes which can then be interpreted in different directions, enhancing cognitive polyphony determining action research [McDonald, Daniels, Harris 2004]. As in the examples mentioned above, mapping is an initial methodological framework, a capacious tool that can be built from various components: visual data, interviews and even surveys. Therefore, the term "method" can be used which, however, as has already been pointed out, has a conventional dimension and follows from the language convention adopted. It is worthwhile to inform students about such solutions, even if they are not mentioned in textbooks. An undoubted, inspiring advantage of action research is the possibility of designing scientific procedures, both by practitioners as well as inexperienced researchers.

The multitude of tools which is considered typical for action research is, therefore, not only the combination of several techniques going beyond the requirements defined by the need for triangulation but also the consent to ambivalence in terms of the tools themselves. Researchers are open-minded and practitioners have the courage and ingenuity to propose procedures that they believe make the most sense.

In the trend of action research there is a need to create new approaches to social problems by using various types of materials from the field and sanctioning them, preferring the practical factor over the theoretical one. At the same time, it is important to be aware that the choice of a specific method affects the processes that take place within a given research project. This fact makes a credible and reliable project not based on "drawing knowledge from everything", but on maturity that incorporates two dimensions. On the one hand, the research dimension, here the scientist plays a leading role, knowing what boundaries should not be crossed in science (despite an alternative understanding of its scope). On the other hand, the practical dimension, where participants of specific social situations make their individual evaluations in the selection of analysed data, thus

bearing part of the responsibility for the shape of the whole process. Therefore, it is worth stressing once again: in the context of working with a student, diploma projects of the action research nature require the creation and acceptance of partnership relations, both at the level of advisor/mentor – student and student –community/individual researched.

Step towards change is how the research procedure for undertaking practical research can be defined. In a much broader perspective, such a statement would fit in with contemporary research in general. Mixing disciplines (which can already be seen in the master's theses conducted as action research, which put the student before the need to develop a high awareness of the boundaries between scientific traditions) and the lack of methodological rigour determine the cognitive search, which is most manifested in today's popularity of interdisciplinary research. This blurring of boundaries gives the possibility of an extremely broad view of social issues, which does not have to be separated from humanistic, natural or legal associations, both in terms of the selected reasoning procedure as well as the tools to improve it. Identifying with trends, traditions and conventions is of little importance. Much more interesting are multidimensional phenomena which are a new challenge for the reflective orientation in science, which motivate the breaking of patterns, and thus create a new value, preferably of a practical dimension. In an interview published on Social Science Space, Richard Sennett said:

> In my opinion, what can be seen in the human sciences is the fact that we have become more focused on the subject, that is, on the body, cities, injustice, and less on the starting point of Kantian character pointing to various forms of knowledge such as "sociology" or "social thought".
> I would say that what was considered anthropology or sociology has practically disappeared from my work [Sennett 2012].

It is similar with most research projects within action research, it is difficult to classify them in only one discipline. This can be illustrated not only by research carried out within the framework of this project but also by a simple example. Let us assume that the problem we are dealing with is the lack of participation of older people in the cultural life of a small town. Involving representatives of the appropriate age group to actively influence our analysis, we can get impulses leading in different directions. There may be a problem related to exclusion, resulting from the financial situation of particular persons, or the spatial location of cultural institutions. Therefore, we are moving towards economic issues and, at the same time, problems typical of urban studies.

At the same time, however, we can highlight the artistic aspects of the programme offered in a given city that make older people feel unwilling to visit museums or theatres. Then we refer to aesthetic factors and social perception of art. Additionally, organisational and even marketing issues related to the strategy of the city authorities or individual cultural institutions may be important. A comprehensive look at this seemingly typical research theme requires a perspective that goes beyond disciplinary divisions. It is also difficult to classify the research project itself within a single tradition, because then a specific mode of thinking and acting would be imposed at the outset. Therefore, the participatory nature of action research includes an interdisciplinary factor that is not the result of choosing a conscious strategy, but has rather the nature of an emerging methodological context. Action research with its methodological freedom, which is however within the scope of scientific cognition, is one of the paths leading academics into the field. However, not only as privileged observers defending their eminent status but also as participants in the social world who are prepared to help others understand reality in their own way and seek to improve it on a micro and, consequently, macro scale. In the next part of the chapter, attention will be paid to the process character of action research as well as to its ontological uniqueness.

PERFORMATIVITY OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS IN ACTION RESEARCH

A noticeable attribute of action research is its attitude towards time, especially in the area of defining stages of research during which the presence of a scientist and repetitiveness of steps are necessary. In the process of solving a given problem, attention is paid to the past witnessed by the employees of the organisation, while the present is brought to the awareness, but the results of the research are aimed at developing scenarios for future development [List 2006], taking into account the introduction of designed changes. However, the combination of these three perspectives is not based on conventional solutions. Everything lasts longer and is reflective, it is not only about formulating conclusions and leaving the group with many recommendations but also about implementing modifications and their evaluation and, if necessary, about changing the assumptions and redoing the intervention and analysis stage. Thus, the standard scheme has been broken and the researcher is engaged in a long-term perspective. They return to the explored area and do not leave it until the change reaches maturity, although the identification of this moment

is of a conventional nature, the situation will continue to evolve even beyond the research project. What is worth emphasising, however, is the cyclical logic that characterises action research. Although the focus is on achieving specific results, which would suggest a linear order, the whole interaction built on the joint work of researchers and practitioners presupposes the repetition of certain elements. This multiple repetition is a bit like a trial and error method, although it has a more sophisticated character resulting from the openness to new impulses and from the conviction that the most important observations can be reported by the participants at any time. Combining theory and practice is done here on the basis of so-called cycles, which in the language layer itself is a meaningful term. Each subsequent cycle is an improved version of the previous one, which is repeated on the basis of new insights and suggestions for improvement. Analysing this element, Jemielniak and Chrostowski write:

> Using AR, it is good to use a cyclic procedure, in later cycles you have the opportunity to compare the collected information and its interpretation with the previous ones (collected data, literature). Without it, you may not be able to continue working properly and efficiently. In this way, the background for your research is created. In conventional research, you start with a precisely defined research question and expect an equally precisely defined answer. In AR, the research question is slightly vague and blurred, mainly due to the nature of the researched system/organisation, and is partly open-ended [Jemielniak, Chrostowski 2008, p. 49].

The methodological effects of this orientation are obvious, the research plan cannot be rigid but organic. Once again, the research perspective is also being diversified. Each time a unique methodological structure is created, taking into account the multifaceted nature of the situation. Considering the described features, it is justified to use performative approach in analysing social phenomena. It allows for a deeper experience of the issue of time, repetitiveness and ontological sense of research work based on a continuous dialogue with practical reality which is characterised by great variability, as well as for the definition of research roles. In the next part of the text, selected elements of the performative approach will be presented, which proved so inspiring in contemporary social-humanistic thought that in the scientific discourse the term "performative turn" has become established. Their presence in action research raises no doubts, especially when one notices the theatrical dimension of "arts" performed by groups of practitioners and researchers who, on the one hand, enter their roles and, on the other, have the right to add new themes.

In recent years, a lot has been written on the subject of performative turn, just to mention the works by Doris Bachmann-Medick, Erika Fischer-Lichte and by Polish authors, Ewa Domańska or Aleksandra Kołtun. Also in the context of organisational activities, related to the issue of action research, there were many interesting opinions, a perfect example of which is Barbara Czarniawska's article *Performativity in Place of Responsibility?* [2011]. The author analyses the actions of groups in response to ecological disasters, emphasising the spontaneity of the reactions and the emergence of new senses when the group enters into a performative process, not sticking to conventional modes of conduct. Czarniawska, like other authors referring to performatics, draws attention to an important feature: action. It is not, therefore, about an organisation itself as an entity, but about organising as a process. This preliminary assumption has many inclinations. The emphasis is on "performing" certain activities in the presence of others, but also on the hidden meaning of everyday rituals, repeated acts, which have a slightly different shape and character each time [Fischer-Lichte 2008]. Domańska [2007, p. 52] even writes about "rebellion against the existing reality and its change", emphasising additionally the problem of agency and active subjects initiating modifications. In a scientific sense, the researcher also points to the revolutionary nature of the performative perspective. She mentions the antidisciplinarity and resistance that arise because of the limitations present in the research work and the possibility of circumventing them both at the stage of conducting the research and presenting its results. Therefore, for action research, the performative component has an impact on two basic layers: theoretical, because it allows greater freedom in the programming of research activities, and practical, because it concentrates on exceptional processes involving groups and individuals, at the same time giving them the feeling of taking responsibility for their own activity.

When analysing the course of an exemplary research in the action research mode, one can clearly show its performative character. Taking the following set of activities as the basic cycle: plan – act – describe – evaluate [Tripp 2005], we are dealing with one "course" of joint work of researchers and practitioners who, depending on the stage, will be involved to a greater or lesser degree[5]. Certainly, however, together they accept a scenario that helps to deal with interaction and organises activities aimed at solving the problem. This scheme

[5] In the literature we may find a different division, e.g.: identification of a problem, development of a plan, implementation of a plan, observation, reflection, repetition. However, regardless of the individual approach of researchers to defining particular stages, the scope of what should happen within them is similar.

is by no means blocking in nature. Rather, it guarantees a certain logic and above all facilitates the creation of conditions for the already mentioned repetitiveness. The process designed in this way is not closed for a long time and you know which stage you should go back to when you find that you need to modify the assumptions. The next cycle (course) can be played again and again like a theatre rehearsal with a democratic dimension, giving all participants a chance to co-create. Each time, however, there are some shifts and changes, the differences are: time of day, condition and mood of the group, something has happened in the meantime. From the ontological point of view, each new cycle is a different event. At the same time, being in a research process, i.e. in a looped repetition of situations and new attempts to understand them, the group is excluded from normal functioning. The researcher's intervention does not have to be significant or their presence pushy. Despite this, an exceptional, unusual situation arises, which is a prelude to change. These features are important in the understanding of performatics, not only is it impossible to repeat the act of playing something in exactly the same form, but also the process towards change cannot be considered part of the standard operating order of an organisation or community.

The emerging crack, breaking out of the routine determines liminality. Being in a performative process, one enters a borderline state in which "something" happens that will change reality. This fact was emphasised by the authors of works fundamental for performative thinking: Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep [Kołtun 2015]. The scheme of the rite of passage is important here, which includes: separation, liminality, and incorporation. Therefore, adjusting the previously mentioned course of action research, we have the following elements of action:

Table 1.1. Schematic flow of action research and performative process

Scheme of action research	Performative scheme	The main "contractor"
Planning	Separation stage	Dominant role of researchers
Action, description	Liminal stage, additionally enclosed in several repetitions	Dominant role of practitioners, with the support of researchers
Evaluation	Incorporation stage	Dominant role of researchers, with the support of practitioners

Source: own study

Going further, we can enrich this table with one more perspective which will additionally strengthen the present considerations on the classic ground of AR.

Table 1.2. Schematic flow of action research, performative process and change management

Scheme of action research	Performative scheme	The main "contractor"	Change management (Kurt Lewin's model)
Planning	Separation stage	Dominant role of researchers	Unfreezing
Action, description, evaluation	Liminal stage, additionally enclosed in several repetitions	Dominant role of practitioners, with the support of researchers	Change
Re-evaluation	Incorporation stage	Dominant role of researchers, with the support of practitioners	Freezing

Source: own study

Such an understanding of action research, however, based on its constitutive features, shows how a relationship is created between taking action and checking what results it brings. In addition, we can observe a systematic relationship between action and play. In this way, conditions are created for practice-oriented research, which additionally take into account the specificity of each, even small or hidden, social situation. Their main stage is the liminal stage (discussed later in the book as an important moment in the didactic process), which is played out in natural organisational conditions, although it takes place in an unusual time – the moment of separation from everyday life. It is a time of intensified action, and therefore a fundamental state, both for action research and for performatics. The researcher does not disappear after observing and describing what they have seen, but stays longer, implements solutions based on their own and others' evaluation, and even at this stage the researcher may be forced to restart the process. It is also worth mentioning that some sources mention the stage of reflection before the change. Although it is a synonym for observation, description and evaluation, it shows in a meaningful way how language reserved for a specific scientific procedure emphasises its attributes. Action research is a constant "wondering", not only what can be done better but also what can be changed for

the better. Moreover, returning to the issue of divergent thinking, it is important to see different possibilities, multiple cognitive options.

Given the community and democratic nature of the action research, the issue of representation and role also needs to be addressed. Each individual involved in the joint work aims to change, which in the context of critical performativity can be understood as micro-emancipation [Spicer, Alvesson, Kärreman 2009][6]. In addition, the individual change remains part of a larger modification process. Practitioners are becoming more aware of the meaning of the activities in which they participate and theoreticians are discovering new perspectives for scientific work. Moreover, they are confronted with very individual experience which does not have to translate into their professional condition. At the same time, it is important to have a deeper perception of one's own identity which was inscribed in the situation that is now being studied. Practitioners still have to be themselves, i.e. represent the members of the organisation/group in order to recreate the real conditions of the problem, but at the same time they distance themselves in some way and look at a specific incident from an external perspective.

The researcher gives up their privileged position as an "all-knowing narrator" and blends into the field, watching over the process, but also not imposing a rigid framework as to what it should look like. The roles played are therefore a construct that combines the representation of one's own self with new competences (in the case of practitioners) or functions (in the case of theorists who entrust their own tasks to others). However, regardless of the role played by the individual participants, all are subject to a similar performative process based on the desire to eliminate some difficulty by playing, repeating and, consequently, better understanding. In their text *Passion and Performance: Suffering and the Carrying of Organizational Roles* [1993], Heather Höpfl and Steve Linstead emphasise that for a long time adopting the role was conditioned by the rhetoric used, which was a permanent characteristic of an individual. At the same time, it became crucial to play the appropriate emotions which were the introduction to defining the character, its spatial and physical representation and relations with the audience. This element is only partly relevant to action research, which highlights the specificity of this approach which also has an alternative dimension in terms of playing organisational roles. There is no artificial effort resulting from the willingness to impersonate some character. It is more important to look for a way to play yourself so that you do not lose the features that may be important for understanding the problem. At the same time, it is essential to be in tune

[6] It is worth noting that the scope of the researcher's involvement in the process of change may distinguish action research from participatory action research. In the latter case, it will be bigger.

with the dynamics of the group which even when performing everyday activities is in an exceptional situation because it is subject to a reflective process of analysis. However, what is invariably connected with the classical understanding of "playing" and "being in a role", is triggering strong emotional processes which have a diagnostic dimension here, not a creative one.

A theoretical extension of the aforementioned issues, which has often appeared in the scientific discourse recently, is to draw attention to the bodily representation of participants in organisational situations. The sense of action research is hidden in the physical meeting, which is connected with the necessity of the researcher's presence in the field. This opens up new perspectives for understanding research in which a real commitment from the researcher is needed. Of course, such a presentation of the problem refers to an ethnographic attitude, but the presence of a performative "particle" requires a scientist to develop a different kind of sensitivity to falsehood resulting from playing and supervising the preservation of authenticity, even when adopting new roles. The increased affectivity of the action research process is also important. Torkild Thanem and Louise Wallenberg in the article *What Can Bodies Do? Reading Spinoza for an Affective Ethics of Organizational Life* [2014] refer to Levinas' and Spinoza's thoughts, suggesting that relations between participants in social situations (not only in a typically organisational sense) depend on bodily interactions between their participants.

These interactions are mainly based on affects, and therefore assume the need to understand emotions, which is part of the reflexive approach that is so important for action research. Further elaboration on this subject would be a far too extensive part of the analysis, so it is worthwhile only to signal the existence of such thinking, and also to point out another interesting source, also emphasising the active, action-based aspect of the presence of bodies in organisations. Wendelin Küpers describes it in his article *Critical Performativity and Embodied Performing as Materio-Socio-Cultural Practices - Phenomenological Perspectives on Performative Bodies at Work* [2017]. This new research orientation, covering the subject of bodies performing tasks, may in the near future enrich action research in an interesting way, because it is part of the progressive practice of humanities and social sciences, for example in a trend such as new materialism. This tendency, which has been present in feminist discourses for several years, has an unusual approach to the issue of active and causal matter, which corresponds to the areas frequently explored in action research. In addition, like action research, it is based on a lack of methodological humility and attempts to broaden the boundaries of scientific cognition [Fox, Alldred 2014], constantly emphasising the changing understanding of physical and conventional presence.

Referring to the context of the application of action research to the work with students in the seminar and the division of roles, it is worth mentioning the absent participant – the advisor who does not take part in the actual interaction taking place in the research area. At the same time, the advisor is, like the student, one of the persons supervising the process. Therefore, what kind of division of competences exists here and who really controls the research process? This is not an easy question, and thus the allocation of roles is not obvious, especially those that involve responsibility. On the one hand, we have a committed researcher, a student gathering first scientific experiences and being part of a group formed, and on the other hand, an advisor who does not appear on the spot but still has a significant influence on the shape of the research, its duration and interpretation of the results. Jemielniak and Chrostowski [2008] emphasise that action research is dominated by a qualitative approach which has long been considered burdensome for the researcher's psyche, prone to losing themselves in scientific work and, as a result, to the blurring of the boundary between personal life and the analysed fragment of social reality. It can be assumed that this is the place for an advisor who does not have to participate in the research itself, but should protect the student from excessive identification with the problem.

The advisor shall therefore ensure that the student exits their role as a researcher and, at the same time, has the scientific awareness and competence to return to it. In addition, it is important to look critically at the repetitiveness of certain activities. The process nature of action research, assuming the playing of successive analytical and reflective cycles, is based on the principle of an open end. At the same time, however, it is necessary and advisable to terminate the research, even if one has an impression of continuous insufficiency and the occurrence of new impulses or threads. Therefore, the advisor is, to some extent, a director who watches over the construction of the action, but not a playwright whose task is to write the last word. In the field of research design, the advisor shares decision-making with the student and transfers some of the competences of care, it is the student who is responsible for the ethical side of interaction with practitioners, but is supported by the advisor. This introduces a new partnership which instead of a hierarchical scheme of cooperation within the university promotes reciprocity of learning. This changes the classic, systemic understanding of "supervision" in research processes. In case of action research, this issue was already noticed. This has led to a distinction between bottom-up and top-down perspectives, which affects the choice of approach introduced into the research and methodological architecture [Law 2007]. It is worth noting that in the discussed project the role of the student's mentor in the research organisation was

important. The mentor supervised the introduction of the young researcher into the specificity of the area and, like the advisor, helped, without imposing ways of understanding the observed phenomena.

To conclude the performative thread, it is worth mentioning the theatrical subtext of action research. As noted earlier, both action research and performative orientation combine an element of revolt and a kind of rebellion against various kinds of mental, methodological or social limitations. Moreover, the ontological status is similar, introducing uniqueness and ephemerality of the situation. Repeatable mode is necessary here in order to be able to see more clearly the problems that become more specific in the role-playing, and not to duplicate them in the same form over and over again. This leads to an interesting observation as we are dealing with a conscious negation of two classical theatrical principles: the rule of the three unities and *decorum*. New threads are being deliberately introduced, inconsistencies and surprises of various kinds are being accepted, which reshape the initial research scenario. Time, place and action are understood in a multi-layered way; these components can be manipulated if it is necessary to understand the problem, which undermines the legitimacy of the early choice of a rigid methodology. Moreover, there is no conformity of the content and form. Although scientific proceedings are carried out, they do not have a typically academic dimension, they can also be shaped by the "language of the field", an authentic way of perceiving reality which is used to discuss various problems, regardless of the requirements of scientific discourse. In spite of this, action research still contains clear prerequisites of theatricality which additionally enrich this approach, opening the world of science to inspirations from the field of art. A clear example is the thought of Augusto Boal. As Catherine Etmanski writes in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research* [2014, p. 80] edited by David Coghlan and Mary Brydon-Miller: "Augusto Boal's work is directly connected with the creative approach to AR through the constitutive assumption that people confronted with difficulties have the ability not only to name them but also to address them creatively in a theatrical form." The Brazilian creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed developed a method of analysing social problems using performative tools, guided by the principle of forum theatre, in which the active involvement of participants/witnesses/subjects of difficult situation is important. They become spect-actors. In this dual role they are not only specialists who know the problem best but also external analysts who observe a particular situation in a new way, which is made possible by referring to the world of theatre. The method of forum theatre, apart from its use in a social context, is one of the foundations of current consulting in commercial reality which also uses action research [Gibb 2004].

SPECIFICITY OF ACTION RESEARCH AND DIFFERENCES FROM OTHER APPROACHES

The reference to performatics in making attempts to better understand the phenomenon of action research is based on the primary distinguishing feature of this research attitude – action. Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska [2007] unequivocally pointed out that the sense of performative orientation in contemporary science is the abandonment of the perspective focused on the interpretation of the world through the prism of text, which was the main point of reference in the times of the strong domination of the postmodern discourse, in favour of the agency, manifested through activation and process understanding of phenomena affecting an individual and a group. Given the current complexity of social issues, conditioned by demographic, economic, political, climatic and technological crises, it is difficult to argue that the solutions to diagnosed problems can be "read" by closely observing the environment and interpreting it on the basis of known patterns, including beaten methodological tracks. The complexity of modernity can be solved (and probably only partially) by taking into account many aspects, voices and factors, the most important of which seems to be the openness to impulses coming from the practical environment. Action research, by promoting a shift towards agency and enforcing a dynamic nature of research, which logically refers to the problem of change, creates a framework for combining theory and practice. It is therefore not only a matter of identifying problems but also of finding solutions that affect everyday life. This intervention in non-academic reality sets a hierarchy of values: a practical goal is often more important than a scientific goal. Therefore, action research moves away from methodological rigour and allows the use of tools to facilitate the exploration of unique relationships arising in specific environments. The researcher works in the ecosystem of people affected by a given situation, and their presence in a different way than in the case of, e.g. ethnographic research, legitimises all participants in the process as co-authors of implementation solutions.

Such an outline of the action research profile requires further clarification in relation to the subject matter typical for this approach. The first associations with action research, well established in the literature, connect them with "difficult issues" – exclusion, helplessness, despair. Of course, this is not the only area where action research is applied, as it is also widely used in consulting. Most research, however, attempts to explore phenomena, often hidden in the shadow of understatements, aimed at marginalising some individuals or entire groups whose voices are worth hearing because it is they who are best aware of the difficulties they face. Such situations may occur in dynamically developing organisations or

groups that seem to function without reservations. Therefore, the methodological set of action research includes tools for the study of sensitive aspects, which distinguishes this approach from others, shaping its research specificity. Pranee Liamputtong in her book *Researching the Vulnerable: A Guide to Sensitive Research Methods* stresses that it is important to focus on emotions, values and beliefs in the study of sensitive issues. She thus proposes feminist methodologies which, like action research, combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, focusing on issues related to oppression, diversity, power relations, social and political engagement[7]. Generally speaking, the author notes that the main goal is to "give voice to disadvantaged groups" [Liamputtong 2006, p. 12], which is achieved by blurring the differences between researchers and respondents. Thus, it can be said that the discussed orientation is very similar to feminist methodology, mainly due to the increased reflectiveness and the use of techniques that allow for the exploration of a given problem to the greatest extent, even if they do not fit into the research tools of a given discipline. Therefore, it is essential to identify the needs of the group, which is only possible with a high degree of openness and empathy [Renzetti, Lee 1993] and "releasing the method" [DeVault 1999] at the same time.

Apart from similarities to other approaches, action research also shows many significant differences from both classical research traditions and innovative constructions emerging from social reality and epistemological research. As Jemielniak and Chrostowski [2008, p. 48] emphasise, the very course of the study is specific. In the case of action research, it covers both the research process and the analytical and implementation phases, while in most research projects a distinction is made between the research and interpretation phases. In the meantime, the defined objectives may change many times, which resembles a well-established theory, however, as the aforementioned authors note, in a well-established theory there is no need to identify the problem quickly, while in action research it is important to determine what needs to be repaired. Due to the dominance of quality solutions and the necessity to go out into the field of action research, they resemble an ethnographic method. However, significant differences can also be seen here. Firstly, in the case of ethnographic research, the researcher is an observer of the group, not a member of the group, in the same way as the others. Even in the context of participant or unobtrusive observation,

[7] Feminist methodologies are understood here as specific research approaches that can use tools found in different types of research (e.g. content analysis, qualitative interviews, surveys). It is important to pay attention to the specific sensitivity and ability to look at the problem from a niche perspective rather than from a mainstream perspective. More in: Reinharz 1992.

there is a different division of tasks. The researcher can play a dual role, trying to get as close as possible to the people affected by the problem. This does not mean that participants in practical situations thus acquire analytical and interpretative powers. The researcher is still the person who decides about the course of scientific proceedings, selects methods and defines reference points, recognising the signals coming from the environment in their own way. In the case of action research, these factors do not occur. It is also worth noting the differences between action research, participatory research and participatory action research. They all have common features which are based on the orientation towards group creation of knowledge or new solutions with social application. However, it is difficult to consider them as identical because of several important factors[8]. Firstly, the degree of participation, which will be the lowest in the case of action research, is important. Here, the researcher takes on the role of a facilitator, watches over the course of the research, but will be little involved in the process of the provoked change. The case is different for PAR, the change is part of the whole research and can actively involve the researcher. Then the researcher loses their advisory and expert function. Together with practitioners, they look for creative solutions to the problem which do not have to be based on general knowledge, but rather show features of knowledge rooted in a given context or, according to Donna Haraway, knowledge situated here in the experiences of the participants of a scientific project. In the case of participatory research without the emphasised aspect of activity, it is important to get to know oneself and create knowledge about phenomena that directly affect the participants of the research. The researcher is not an expert, but a co-worker who accepts decisions made by others. There is a cognitive synergy that does not need to be consciously channelled to eliminate specific difficulties.

It should also be noted that the fact that action research is often identified with a qualitative attitude does not mean that these two research approaches are the same. Martí [2016] highlights two fundamental differences. The first one is epistemological and refers to group production of knowledge. Typical qualitative research requires the researcher to be competent in listening, observing and interpreting the collected data. In the case of action research, there

[8] The borders between two varieties of practical research, action research and PAR, despite the indicated discrepancies, are fluid. For example, the photovoice technique mentioned above is rather within the scope of PAR, although in literature, by way of simplification, it is included in the instruments of causal research, including action research. It is therefore difficult to use precise definitions and to categorically define the differences between them. In this fragment, therefore, only the basic differences are indicated, but the general methodological reflections described in the whole chapter concern both action research and PAR.

is an important participatory and performative element, the researcher learns together with others and does not play a dominant role. The second aspect is the matter of the tools used. Qualitative research is associated with methodological consistency and appropriate selection of techniques. Action research allows for freedom manifested by combining different tools (including quantitative) and even discovering new ones. The author of the article also draws attention to additional possibilities resulting from the use of quantitative techniques in action research. These are: improvement of the reflection process by relying on evidence, monitoring of changes and providing data for evaluation, support of decision-making process, improvement of observations [ibid., p. 172]. It is also possible to use computer programmes for statistical analysis which help to map noticed relations and visualise problems which are mentioned by the participants in the interviews. The use of quantitative elements requires additional skills from the researcher supervising the whole process, but it may have a significant impact on the research results and complement the reflective element, implied by the qualitative approach, with reliable analyses based on statistical data. Action research is therefore an indirect way, a strategy resulting from the combination of different research traditions. It is important to be aware, when deciding on this approach, of its methodological involvement in qualitative and quantitative proceedings which determines the uniqueness of action research and is one of the factors determining its popularity in the study of complex social problems. The authors of the article *Transforming Inquiry and Action: Interweaving 27 Flavors of Action Research* drew attention to these wide possibilities of application and positive cognitive effects related to it. Chandler and Torbert [2003] proposed a concept of 27 types of action research, the application of which allows for a completely new orientation in social sciences. They focused on elements such as "voice", "practice" and "time", the factors that make action research unique in terms of its ontological nature, its deep community subtext and interventional use.

To illustrate the differences between traditional methodologies in social sciences and action-oriented approach, basic information has been gathered in Table 1.3. This summary is intended to provide an initial orientation, since there are other indirect ways in modern science, such as the feminist methodologies mentioned above. The aim, however, is not to place action research against all possible cognitive solutions, but to show their particularly bright features, which in different proportions may occur in other research, especially qualitative research. Working with action research orientation, we operate within a specific cognitive framework. However, the term "action research" should not be misused and treated as a custom promoted by researchers proposing innovative

Table 1.3. Selected elements of traditional methodologies and action research

Traditional methodologies	***Action research***
Generalised nature of the results.	No desire for generalisation.
Developing a theory.	Looking for practical solutions.
The orientation towards cognition.	The orientation towards change.
Striving for reliability, often supported by quantitative material.	Finding a solution to a problem is more important than scientific goals.
Research on a representative group.	Research located in a specific environment.
Division into specific stages of research and analytical work. Lack of involvement in implementation processes (if any).	Specific time logic, including the stage of change and verification of its results.
Clearly defined roles for the people involved.	No division into researchers and subjects.
Using proven research tools.	Reaching for techniques that may be useful and testing new ways of collecting and interpreting data.
Division into qualitative and quantitative methodologies or conscious use of mixed solutions.	No initial methodological assumptions. Spontaneous choice of methodology.

Source: own study

methodological approaches. This is particularly important in times of popularity of interdisciplinary research and discussion about who the contemporary researcher should be as a representative of a socially oriented academy. Speaking of action research, it is important to always remember about the issue of participation, the specific understanding of time and research itself as a process based on repetitiveness, the performative approach to collaboration within the group and in understanding the ontology of cognition and practical inclination. Therefore, not every participatory or impulse-oriented research will be located within action research. In addition, there is an important intervention component related to change. The problems described above, constituting the background for a deeper discussion of action research from the methodological point of view, concern primarily the condition of the academy, the researcher's profile and the social role they play (or should play) in contemporary society. An important aspect was the openness to the outside world, readiness to enter into partnership relations and professional humility which made it possible to appreciate the

scientific initiative of participants in the analysed events and students in the case of theses written in the spirit of action research. Therefore, the distinguishing factor of this type of perspective is the orientation on values in research processes, conditioned by respect for participants from outside the academy whose knowledge and experience are equated with the competences of professional researchers. As Brydon-Miller, Greenwood and Maguire [2003] point out, this approach rejects the Cartesian ideal of science, according to which theory is separated from practice and science has a typically objective character not marked by emotions. However, emotions are inevitable in human relationships characterising an inclusive approach in which affects can help to understand the problem and, above all, are part of the formation of a research community. It is also obvious that undertaking action research is a kind of manifestation of one's own attitude as a university employee. Engaging in collaborative projects with increased reflectiveness at every stage is a democratic signal from structures that are often associated with domination and hermeticism. Such a gesture can often be surprising both for the environment and for the scientific community itself. Perhaps this is the reason for its ambivalent assessment which appears in discussions on action research [Day 2004]. For all participants in the process, it also means accepting uncertainty. There is no guarantee as to the direction in which the project will develop or how long it will take to go into the group in order to gain its trust. At the same time, it should be added that trying something new determines the progress in science, and more specifically, it gives great opportunities to use the non-standard approach, which is action research (both those aimed at cooperation with various social groups and business). Action research is therefore critical, anti-hierarchical, reflective and pluralistic. They lead to legitimisation and activation, consequently creating a model of participatory research based on a collective synchronisation of actions and searches. First of all, they are a response to current environmental problems and are essential for the understanding of missionary activity within the universities. The teaching process, both in working with students and with project groups, can be influenced by activism and lead to the testing of new solutions in pedagogy or to a new role for universities as pioneers of flat relationship education [Amsler 2014]. It should be noted that this methodological approach, despite the many advantages highlighted here, has some drawbacks that will be discussed later.

The issues discussed so far lead to several conclusions. Firstly, research in social sciences can continue to develop in new directions and benefit from practical impulses and even previously unknown research tools that are proposed and developed by the environment. Secondly, the relationships of researchers themselves with practitioners and students continue to evolve, opening up new

perspectives. Thirdly and finally, participation inaction research is also important in the context of the attitude towards the current condition of the academy. It proves that it is possible to move away from a model in which points for publications and grants count, regardless of whether these activities translate into social benefit [Amsler 2014]. All the aspects raised are of great importance for the contours of the research process itself. As mentioned above, inclusive character translates into the construction of a research team and the formulation of research objectives which should have an implementation dimension aimed at solving a specific problem. Above all, from the perspective of the university representative, this affects the foundations of scientific work, the methodological solutions applied, which can vary according to the scope of research and, most importantly, enter the world of science from the practical reality, thereby enriching it.

CONCLUSION

Orientation, approach, attitude, method, methodology. Action research has many names in literature, which shows that it is itself in the process of scientific definition, attracting the attention of scientists from different disciplines and traditions of practicing science as well as talking about it. Such diversity introduces differently distributed accents and expectations. For example, an action research project can be expected to be a reconnaissance of an issue that touches upon a practical activity, or a fundamental foundation for cognition that then turns into theories and conclusions. As is well illustrated by management sciences, social demand for solving multidimensional problems means that a particular focus in research or teaching often relates to a pragmatic dimension; at the same time, this still young discipline is developed and enriched by inspirations from other sciences and practice. High flexibility of application, no burden of anachronistic research instruments and openness to new impulses, both from the environment and from authorised research participants, influence the popularity of action research which, as indicated in the introduction, go into various areas of activity, offering an interesting procedure for finding implementation solutions and proving effective, especially in the case of complex problems requiring extended standpoint. This also includes the discussed aspect of cooperation with students and the shaping of an advisor's approach that takes on a democratic character. Therefore, action research is a search for contact with the real world and an attempt to understand its relations, practising practical science, showing students ways to proceed that give them both research experience and insight

into real social and organisational problems. The research is also a performative process in which research attitudes manifest themselves and its participants take on new roles by writing their own ideas of understanding and solving situations that affect them. The researcher becomes a member of the community, using the suggestions of practitioners, also in the difficult context of methodology which is the backbone of scientific activities, sanctioning their correctness and meaning. Also for the student, the need to find oneself in a specific network of interactions with the subjects and the advisor gives an opportunity for intensive scientific experience which is not offered by other methodologies. Thus, the fact of being engaged in projects of this type, which are connected with uncertainty and community-related, non-hierarchical activity, has the character of academic activism and willingness to participate in phenomena of reflective and often missionary nature (unless they have a defined commercial purpose and action research is only a methodological basis). Not only are the research steps included in the logic of conduct collective in nature, but it also applies to the sharing of results. They are addressed not only to other scientists but also to practitioners. This makes the results of projects conducted within this approach present in the non-academic reality as implemented recommendations, own and group experiences, performative effects of change. The reasons for the popularity of action research can be easily mentioned by focusing on an extended spectrum of looking at practical phenomena from many equivalent perspectives and by emphasising epistemological innovation and openness to environmental impulses. It should be remembered, however, that there are certain risks and problems in applying this research orientation, which paradoxically originate from its strengths.

The fact that practitioners are involved in and admitted to the scientific procedure, as has been pointed out earlier, introduces risk factors. First of all, you can lose yourself in the field, not recognise the moment when you need to end the research (here, as already mentioned, a lot of responsibility rests with the advisor).

Non-scientific voices may start to dominate and even intra-organisational pressures may appear as to how the research process should be carried out, or in an extreme case, what conclusions should be drawn from it. This is mentioned by Magdalena Dudkiewicz:

> Action research also includes a risk of distorting the image of the examined reality. There is a danger that research results will be contaminated not by the subjectivity of the researcher but by the subjectivity of the respondents, and that the researcher, through too close contact with the respondents (often simply by taking joint actions), will be influenced by

> them. This is also fostered by a much lower rigour of the research process: the lack of clearly defined time and content-related limits causes, on the one hand, a threat of losing control over what is actually being studied, and on the other hand, it may lead to a specific methodological nihilism and temptation to easily justify each methodological decision [Dudkiewicz 2011, p. 6].

Proposing scientific solutions and tools must, therefore, be verified by the researcher. This imposes additional responsibility on them and requires vigilance not only in terms of methodological correctness but also in terms of evaluating the ideas of others who are ultimately to be co-authors of the action. The very selection of action research as a cognitive indicator does not always need to be accurate. Like any other tool for diagnosing and solving problems, action research is not a universal remedy. The elements discussed in this chapter, such as increased reflectiveness and openness, are preliminary research properties that require the selection or creation of appropriate methods. Already at this stage, it may be difficult to define the appropriate scope of analysis and the wrong methodological framework. In addition, action research is time-consuming. The complexity of the research process means that it is necessary to follow different threads, to think critically and, if necessary, to change the direction of the analysis if such an idea emerges during the course of the research. When working with a student who writes a paper based on this perspective, the time factor is also significant. The deadlines imposed are not conducive to smooth research. It is therefore sometimes the case that the action research process is interrupted too early or not sufficiently deepened. For example, it stops at the implementation phase, but without further monitoring of changes or attempts to translate its own experiences and conclusions into science. Therefore, research awareness, a sense of ownership of the process in its entirety and knowledge of the limits of one's own competence remain important. This applies to all parties involved, including the advisor who may, for example, be tempted to suggest ways of interpreting a given situation to a student, unnecessarily interfering in a process which they do not control but only supervise. Nobody knows whether the mere fact of initiating a change through research will lead to positive modifications. Research intervention in the living social tissue may be a threat to the prevailing relations, and breaching them does not necessarily mean implementing sustainable, effective and, above all, adequate solutions. At every stage it should be remembered that the mere fact of immersing oneself in real phenomena that influence the research behaviour is not a magical factor that transforms every consideration into a scientific discourse. The following table summarises the

most important advantages and disadvantages of this approach in the context of the advisor's work with students during the seminar.

Table 1.4. Main advantages and disadvantages of supervising the diploma thesis in the context of action research

Advantages	Disadvantages
Methodological flexibility.	Lengthy duration of the research process.
Encouraging a critical, reflective approach.	No guarantee of introducing permanent, positive changes.
Simultaneous familiarisation of the student with the research tools and the practical reality.	High responsibility for raising the problems of specific groups.
Teaching research independence.	The challenge of providing a scientific framework for analysis.
Possibility to create a partnership between the advisor and the student.	

Source: own study

To sum up, we can return to the cognitive and methodological challenges in conducting action research indicated in the title of this chapter. The specificity of this approach refers mainly to the collective dimension of research, validation of its participants and practical orientation which means going beyond the walls of the academy, both literally and metaphorically. Science is practiced here in close contact with the environment, which gives rise to different opportunities and difficulties. There is a considerable complexity, both in team building and in understanding the problem, as well as ambivalence directing attention to the question of who actually has the right to change the way groups and organisations operate and, above all, who has been given the appropriate tools to do so. Action research suggests that the competences necessary to understand social phenomena are shared between researchers and practitioners. Unique solutions are hidden in their cooperation and synchronisation of experiences and perspectives. Therefore, the fundamental challenge is the process itself, which requires cognitive openness, research awareness and the ability to reflectively perceive phenomena that build not theories but everything that they relate to in reality.

CHAPTER 2.
GUIDING STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH. PERSPECTIVE OF ACADEMIC TEACHER, MASTER/ADVISOR

The seminar is a unique form of academic activity, combining education and research, and at the same time it is an emanation of the idea of self-regeneration of the university through the master-student relationship that constitutes it. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, especially at the beginning of the 21st century, when the massification of higher education reached its peak, the Polish academic community experienced a stormy discussion about the future of the seminar. At that time, there was a postulate to give up this form of education, and the sense of writing bachelor and master's theses was questioned. To what extent did this result from the massification of education and the inability to realise in the course of the seminar process a direct relationship between the advisor and the student, inscribed in the essence of the seminar, and to what extent was it directed against the self-regeneration of the liberal Humboldt university? In other words, was it a clash between two concepts of university roles focused on this form of education: the traditional (liberal) one which assumes freedom and unity of research and education, and the contrary concept of an entrepreneurial university?

Initially, the liquidation of the seminar was supported mainly by economic arguments: a large number of hours of classes in relatively small groups, huge cost-consumption, but the supporters of this idea started to indicate also the imitative nature of works, their lack of originality. The works created at the end of the seminar were accused of containing mechanically copied fragments of books and articles or source materials. In extreme cases, it was pointed out that students did not learn anything, but copied the texts of other authors. On the wave of criticism, radical anti-plagiarism activities were initiated and disseminated. Undoubtedly, this fact is connected with a symbolic systemic change in the understanding of the way students are introduced to scientific work during the seminar. In a traditional university, ethical behaviour was an element of custom, an academic ethos shaped in the seminar process in a master-student

relationship. Today, they are one of the verifiable standards and principles of scientific work. Transposing this into the context of the relation to intellectual property: the contemporary master does not sensitise the student to this issue in the context of the academic ethos, but makes them aware of the legal responsibility for the infringement of intellectual property.

The seminar was also criticised for its excessive focus on theory and the nature of student research, which was supposed to verify the theory and not to understand the environment, social and economic reality, including organisational reality, and did not teach how to improve it. Many universities, especially non-public ones, have resigned from seminars and writing diploma theses, replacing them with final exams. The defenders of the seminar stressed that it is a form reflecting the essence of academic education, combining education and research, allowing education through research. The independent work of the student was also mentioned as an asset. It was shown that most of the accusations formulated by employers (for example, that a graduate cannot speak correctly, cannot write a simple letter, does not know the basic concepts and does not understand the basic phenomena), proving the deficiencies of previous stages of education, were revealed at the seminar and during its course the student also improved these key competences (both knowledge as well as skills and attitude).

In the Polish system of higher education, the breakthrough which ended the above-mentioned discussions was the position of the Polish Accreditation Committee which recognised that master's and bachelor's theses are the most important and in fact the only direct evidence of students' achievement of learning outcomes declared by higher education institutions. This decision calmed down the discussions on the future of the seminar, but at the same time stimulated reflection on how to conduct it. Numerous questions arose: What form should a seminar take in a learning process that opens itself up to contemporary university expectations and concepts? What competences should the advisor have? How should the seminar be conducted? Should it be based on student research? If so, on what research? Is it desirable to move away from an understanding of seminar as an emanation of the idea of university and a form of self-regeneration of this organisation? How to pursue this self-regeneration in the formula of an organisation with various roots: serving the needs of the environment and the development of science, while at the same time supporting the development of humanity?

In this part of the book we focus on the diploma seminar as an environment of scientific development, socialisation and education of reflective researchers. We look at these academic classes from the perspective of education through action research as we want to share such experiences. Thus, we are looking at the

seminar in the changing concepts of the university. Referring to our own experiences, we show the challenges of the advisory process that uses learning through participatory action research. We are also trying to place a new advisory experience within the framework of contemporary paradigms of academic didactics.

SEMINAR AS AN ENVIRONMENT FOR SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

The seminar is considered to be the basic and most important form of university education. According to Kazimierz Denek [2011, p. 177], the seminar "as an organisational form creates necessary conditions for combining education, studying, conducting scientific research with upbringing in a uniform process, leading to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits as well as the development of cognitive abilities by students". Its participants "are a team of mutually learning people" [Ibid., p. 181].

To highlight the sense of the seminar, many authors refer to the source of the word derived from the word *semen*, meaning seed, and indicate that *seminarium* in Latin referred to a seedbed, a nursery of young plants cultivated in the growth process [Denek 2011; Sowa 2014]. Originally, in "ancient Roman and Greek schools", conducting "seminar classes" consisted in combining discussions, papers and statements of young people with comments of teachers [Denek 2011, p. 177].

In the process of academic education, the master's seminar occupies an exceptional place. It is not related to a specific course, however, by involving all competences, provides an opportunity for comprehensive development and the presentation of a wide range of learning outcomes within the completed course of study. The result is the creation of a master's thesis reflecting the competences of a master, i.e. a student completing a master's or second degree studies.

The master-student relationship

In almost every scientific commentary on the seminar it is stressed that it relates to activities during which the learner (student) has a live, direct contact with their master (tutor) and the master's scientific research tools. Being an advisor "means the involvement of an academic teacher in guiding or actively accompanying and supporting the scientific development of the student" [Sajdak 2013, p. 147]. The specificity of the educational situation in which the student supported by the advisor, being in direct relations with them, conducts their first own research and presents its results publicly, is compared to "liberation".

The role of an advisor and tutor is compared to that of a master, and it is sometimes idealised. The advisor is attributed the characteristics of an outstanding and creative mind, scientific passion, high moral competence. The figure of such a scientific authority is shown by Tadeusz Kotarbiński in the person of Kazimierz Twardowski[9], professor at the University of Lviv since 1895:

> It was hard not to fill the great auditorium to the brim early in the morning[10] when wisdom accessible to all and explicitly useful flowed from the teacher's desk. It is widely understood that whatever the intellectual does, he is always thinking and must seriously consider the essence, structure and course of thinking as well as the conditions of thinking leading to knowledge and the development of reason. (…) Having found a fallow land in Poland, overgrown with lush weeds, he rolled up his sleeves and started to rip off the weed, and planted a nutritious vegetable. (…) He began to suppress flashes in the pan, unpunctuality, unreliability in agreements, irregularities, the pursuit of what's most important to us right now; and he forced everyone to knuckle down, respect organisational ties, five-finger exercises, accurate papers, objective summaries… Oh, how grateful are the Master's former students today! With great faith, they are now passing on these values to their pupils! [Kotarbiński 1979, pp. 262–263].

Anna Sajdak [after: Nalaskowski 2002; Witkowski 2007] notes that not every advisor is a master in all dimensions of the master-student relationship.

For this reason, he can, through an intensive direct relationship, both give an opportunity as well as threaten the student's development. Citing L. Witkowski - he stresses that in order for a master to be a source of life-giving power, generating impulses and dynamising student development, they must first be able to cross their own thinking horizons [Sajdak 2013]. Doubts about the possibility of contemporary existence of the classical and idealised master-student relationship in the advisory process result primarily from the massification of higher education and sometimes also from questioning the masters' research, moral and didactic competences. Sajdak writes about the emergence of "voices about anachronism and inadequacy of the model" based on the master-student relationship, especially in relation to education at art schools. She also points

[9] Twardowski studied and worked previously at the University of Vienna under the guidance of Franz Brentan. Then, for a short period of time, he was an assistant professor there.

[10] "Some classes started at five o'clock in the morning, others (seminars) were held on Sunday" (author's footnote based on *Dzienniki* by K. Twardowski).

out, following L. Witkowski, that the emotional bond between a master and a student may become a kind of intellectual bond, blocking the development of a student, or may be the cause of domination and subordination [ibid., p. 146].

The seminar and the master-student relationship, which is a distinguishing feature of this educational form, are assigned important socialisation functions associated with the introduction into the world of science, scientific research (introduction to science) and the upbringing of young scientists. According to A. Sajdak, "the master sets standards, introduces into the arcana of scientific life, shows patterns, norms and principles prevailing in the scientific community" [ibid., p. 150]. Such a personality is perfectly outlined by Kazimierz Sowa on the example of his master, Prof. Paweł Rybicki, by showing what this key, "axial social relationship in science" is all about:

> Paweł Rybicki was an excellent teacher not only because he had great knowledge and intellectual skills but also, or maybe above all, because he was a real authority. An outstanding scholar, a man of great general knowledge, impeccable manners (…), he was kind and smiling, treating everyone seriously and with respect, that is why students admired, respected and liked him [Sowa 2010, p. 32].

However, in the advisory process carried out through action research we put emphasis not only on socialisation to scientific work but also to a creative, open approach to identifying practical problems, deconstructing them and creating solutions to improve the quality of life, solving problems related to the functioning of organisations, performing their tasks and improving organisational and production processes, as well as wider social problems. In other words, it is a process of socialisation also to intellectual and creative work in a non-academic environment. The emphasis is not only on reading meanings but also on transmitting them, which leads to open thinking and emancipation [Bauman 2011].

Features of social relations in the advisory process

The specificity of the seminar is largely due to the relationships between the main partners which are quite personal in nature. This is a timeless feature of this form of academic education. Among the features of social relationships typical for seminar classes, attention is most often paid to: subjectivity, partnership and mutual learning.

The subjectivity of teachers and students is a category that attracts great interest in contemporary science. A. Sajdak [2013] also notes that it is a feature

differentiating various concepts of university and paradigms of education, while remaining the most characteristic of the humanistic and critical-emancipatory paradigm of academic education. She also points out that the category of subject in education refers to the role of teacher, student and other educational actors, which involves recognising their autonomy, agency and responsibility.

The subjectivity of partners is very clearly revealed in the process of participatory action research. We can identify three subjects: student, advisor and mentor on the side of the organisation. The subjectivity of the student and the advisor is not in doubt. However, it is worth noting here the autonomy and subjectivity of the mentor of the student in the organisation (gatekeeper) [Coghlan 2003], in which participatory action research is carried out. Its contributory role at the stage of facilitating the student's entry into the organisation and supporting them in the process of research, development of a solution to the problem and its implementation is indisputable. The gatekeeper takes full responsibility for supporting the process on the part of the organisation.

Partnership relations are very often indicated as a feature, sometimes confused with the subjectivity of partners. According to K. Denek [2011, p. 182], the seminar leader should "act as an intermediary in the pedagogical dialogue between the world of science and technological progress". He also stresses the importance of partnership between the seminar leader and their participants. Jarosław Jendza [2016, p. 34] points to the multilateral nature of relations in the social process of knowledge building. In researching tutoring, he compares it to agora, "where there is a meeting of people around a problem that is considered important, when none of them is fully competent and an educational duo is formed". Speaking of partnership relations, it is worth remembering that cooperation on the principles of partnership changes relations between partners from dependencies based on the ratio of forces or subordination to relations based on mutual complementarity [Brinkerhoff 2002]. Each partner not only has a real influence on decisions but is also responsible for and supports them [Tennyson 1994].

Describing the contemporary transformations of the dominant paradigm of academic didactics, A. Sajdak [2013, p. 291] points, among others, to a change in the character of the dominant role of the academic teacher: "(…) from an instruction-oriented approach to the construction of the learning environment, learning situation and guidance given in the learning process, (…) support for self-organised active learning, taking into account the motivational, voluntary and social aspects of learning (…)". She also notes that this change in approach to education is in line with Wilhelm von Humboldt's idea who "already at the beginning of the 19th century opposed what we can now call »instruction« or guided teaching".

For a seminar carried out through participatory action research, partnership relations between all the actors in the process are a prerequisite for the success of the project. Particularly important is the continuous dialogue between the advisor, the student and the mentor in the organisation, in the process of assigning and agreeing meanings as well as engaging in solving identified problems. In the light of the experiences of our seminars, we perceive participatory action research as a model process of practising partnership relations. In particular, we could see the complementarity demonstrated in investigating the essence of problems and designing their solutions.

Mutual learning is also a frequently emphasised feature of the seminar process. K. Denek [2011] emphasises it in relation to the mutual sharing of experiences of older and younger students, when the seminar is held in a mixed group of students in the final two years of their studies. Beata Karpińska-Musiał [2016, p. 46] focuses on mutual learning in the process of academic education in the student-teacher relationship. The author pays a lot of attention to the teacher's learning in the didactic process perceived as an educational dialogue, writing about the need to overcome "the stereotype of linear, transmittal education and (…) learning also from students", as well as the importance of self-reflexivity of the teacher in the educational process.

An advisory process based on action research is a classic situation conducive to mutual learning of all subjects involved in research. The student directly, and the advisor mainly through the student, by getting to know their experience, find themselves in a situation which Pierre Dominicé [2000] describes as "learning from life", while the mentor from the organisation, by participation in giving meanings, deepens the understanding of the practical problems of the organisation (which are often so commonplace that they are unnoticed or considered chronic) by having the opportunity to look at them from the outside. The process of participatory action research becomes in fact an educational process for all involved partners. Thus, this approach fits perfectly into the paradigmatic change in academic teaching – *from teaching to learning*.

It is worth noting, however, that while conducting an advisory process based on the student's participatory action research, we observed a certain resistance of the students against independence, taking over the initiative, which is the essence of this paradigmatic change. Most of the students want to be guided and cared for. They are easily discouraged when it turns out that it is necessary to deepen practical research, learn about the wider theoretical context, further search for or develop new solutions or methods of their implementation. The advisor in this approach is often faced with the need to find various incentives to maintain motivation and stimulate openness and creative approach to the situation under investigation.

They also have to be sensitive to helping the student to believe in their own abilities and refrain from providing solutions and unnecessary help (overprotection).

SEMINAR IN THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The role assigned to the seminar, which seems to be the oldest form of introduction to scientific work and university education, is largely determined by the dominant concept of the university and the understanding of its social role.

Liberal university

The liberal (Humboldt, classical, traditional) university was distinguished above all by its focus on research activities, to which its other functions were subordinated [Leja 2013]. The emphasis was placed on basic research, with a clear distance from applied research. The main principles of its functioning were: full autonomy, freedom of research and education, unity of science and didactics. In the concept of a liberal university, the main principle of the unity of science and education was implemented through independent, reflective participation of students in scientific research led by a professor. In the classical and liberal interpretations of the university's concepts, researchers emphasise the importance of theoretical education, which, as described by A. Sajdak [2013, p. 127, after: Brzeziński 2004], "is not closing young people in the tight patterns of roles written in order to adapt to the demands of today, but opening their minds to resistance to existing reality, broadening the horizons of cognition". The author also notes the convergence of the contemporary definition of the role of the ideal master with the thought of W. Humboldt who at the beginning of the 19th century claimed that "university education should lead to the »emancipation of true thinking«, and educational processes should be aimed at achieving autonomous maturity, they should be aimed at the self-determination of the learner" [ibid., p. 149].

Understanding the principle of the unity of science and education can be twofold. The first perspective is that:

> (…) professor, presenting the results of their research, introduces the student to the secrets of the research techniques, shares their own experience and dilemmas of a researcher exploring reality. The second perspective is related to the active involvement of students themselves in the research process. Studying becomes a kind of "apprenticeship", practicing with a master, learning a scientific techniques from them [Sajdak 2013, p. 141].

In an attempt to recreate the seminar process at the traditional Humboldt university, especially the research process it was focused on, several of its characteristics can be distinguished: identification of the research process with the education process, the teacher educating the students by enabling them to participate in their research. It is also worth noting that the sources of development of emancipatory attitudes, reflectiveness and critical thinking are seen in good theoretical mastery, fluency in references to theoretical knowledge and good research techniques.

Kazimierz Twardowski, professor at the University of Lviv since 1895, repeatedly mentions in his book *Dzienniki* the seminars he held. His short notes shed light on the principles and approach to their conduct in the Polish university transformed/organised based on the model of the Humboldt University:

> 1920, 18 April, Sunday: In the morning, from eleven o'clock to one o'clock there was a philosophical seminar, instead of yesterday (…). Only Chłędowski, Gunzberg Adela, Pordes Fryderyk, Schifermann Malwina are present. I did not admit the rest of the members from the winter semester because they had not submitted the seminar works. We are reading *An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* by Bergson [Twardowski 1997a, part I, p. 148].

In *Dzienniki* you can find comments about different forms of seminar work. Most often Twardowski mentions joint reading of scientific works (in 1927 twice a week) by such authors as Bergson, Twardowski, Kant, Hume.

> 1926, 21 April, Sunday: Today, from four to six o'clock, the first "exercises" on my work Zur Lehre Inghalt und Gegestand der Vorstellungen were held. Namely, a group of members of my seminar decided to read this work together, and at the same time make a comment and translate it into Polish. They invited me to participate in this, which is a great joy for me [Twardowski 1997a, part I, p. 240].

Other forms mentioned in *Dzienniki* include: joint reading of translations of texts translated by students, independent writing of papers on given topics on which the lecturer provided guidance, presentation of papers prepared by students, discussion of seminar papers, mainly individually (during individual meetings supplementing the seminar classes), but also discussion and reflection on the impressions from the participation of the seminar participants in various scientific events, such as the Congress of Philosophical Circles.

It is also worth noting that the seminar was preceded by a test of the level of intelligence and knowledge of its participants, which was the basis for designing the way of conducting the seminar. The seminars were strongly linked (complementing) with other classes, especially with the *privatissimum*[11] and with the tutorials as well as student life in general.

In 1926, Twardowski wrote:

> 5 February, Friday: (…) It was a nice evening. The members of the tutorial organised a kind of philosophical cabaret: Bleustein, Łuszczewska, Mehlberg and Blumenthal performed satirical and humorous pieces from the life of the philosophical seminar. There were excellent and very witty things. We had a great time [Twardowski 1997a, part I, p. 225].

The seminar classes were accompanied by other forms of social life, such as joint tourist and sightseeing trips or birthday celebrations.

Observing the brief notes on the reality of the advisory process published in *Dzienniki*, it is striking to see the combination of extraordinary reliability in the approach to the conducted seminar, undertaking very ambitious scientific topics and students' independence with personal relations, including support for students in preparing their own works, involvement of the advisor in organising material assistance for students, fighting for appropriate rooms or laboratories for the needs of the seminar.

University in the times of the positivist paradigm's domination in science; in didactics – mainly in the form of behaviourism

From the 1950s to the 1970s, positivist methodology prevailed in science, which was also strongly reflected in the research processes carried out as part of the master's thesis. It is worth recalling here that the positivist methodology was very well suited to Marxist philosophy and had ideological support in the countries of real socialism (it was the basis for the concept of planning in science), as Michael Polanyi (1951) wrote extensively [after: Zmyślony 2011]. In higher education in Poland, this methodological orientation, in harmony with ideological goals, was strongly influenced by the professional and world-view orientation of

[11] These classes brought together selected students and were devoted to discussions at a higher scientific level, for example, in *Dzienniki* from 1927 Twardowski [1997a, p. 327] refers to a discussion on semantic issues. He also mentions the change of the time of *privatissimum* which started at five o'clock in the morning up until then. In 1927, the time was changed to "evening hours" [ibid., pp. 8-9].

education. The methods of managing student development imposed at that time, also at the stage of supervising the conducted research within the framework of the master's seminar, are still present in many universities, being a hybrid of the principles of a liberal university and the times of real socialism. This is partly illustrated by the formalised advisory process with a clear scientistic orientation presented below, which was developed on the basis of K. Denek's book [2011] on academic didactics:

1. Seminars of individual teachers have a specific profile, which allows the student to choose a seminar in accordance with their interests, while at the same time (as emphasised by K. Denek) allows the teacher to accept for the seminar those people who during their studies have shown an interest in accordance with the profile of the seminar.
2. When accepting candidates for the seminar, the teacher conducts preliminary talks with each of them concerning their personal situation, interests and passions[12].
3. The first year of the seminar is devoted to the development of literature (methodological and related to the topic of paper) and research. The second year is devoted to writing the paper, and at the same time "reading the papers prepared by master's students" [Denek 2011, p. 189] during the seminar.
   K. Denek emphasises the pedagogical value of reading master's theses at seminars and their substantive, logical and linguistic analysis. In his opinion, it stimulates "the seminar participants towards more and more effort and creative activity. In addition, the students develop their criticism and sensitivity to mistakes and their prevention" [ibid., p. 188].
4. On the example of a didactic seminar in which experimental research is preferred, K. Denek [after: Mialaret 1984] presents the following research process within the framework of the master's seminar [Denek 2011, p. 185]:
   - Defining the problem of research and defining the research procedure.
   - Situating the experiment in a broader research context.
   - Discussing the experiment against the background of scientific achievements. Formulating hypotheses.
   - Selecting research tools.
   - Preparing a research plan allowing for the verification of hypotheses.

[12] This stage is similar to the rules of conducting a seminar by professor Twardowski mentioned above.

- Implementation of the research, collection and critical analysis of the collected material, its development.
- Analysis of the research problem in the light of the research results.

5. Writing a master's thesis discussing the results of research and prospects for further research.
6. At the end of the seminar, the student should be acquainted with the requirements for the technical side of the work and the evaluation criteria [Denek 2011, p. 189].
7. Positive opinions of the advisor and the reviewer are decisive for the acceptance of the paper. After receiving them, the master's degree student is admitted to the master's examination, presentation and defence of the master's thesis.

According to K. Denek [2011, p. 195] "it is a characteristic feature of the master's seminar to combine efforts for the harmonious realisation of the basic functions of a modern university in the field of didactics, education and scientific research". Seeing the rigidity of this process and the instructive role of the advisor, it is hard to agree with the opinion of the author that seminar classes "are the most effective form of stimulating the independence and activity of students' work. They involve them to the maximum extent possible in the process of education and study, teach them how to think independently and act creatively, how to use existing knowledge, how to critically analyse and compare it" [ibid., p. 195.] This conviction is further reinforced by the opinion on the master's thesis and its role in the educational process, which he quotes after J.S. Knypel [1981], writing that the master's thesis:

> (…) is intended to be a practical test of the ability to use a specific resource of specialist knowledge (…). In addition, the elaboration of the master's thesis is to provide an opportunity to search for relevant literature, to check whether the issue has not already been discussed, to convince sceptics of the need to carry out such research in accordance with the principles of good scientific craftsmanship, to analyse the results, to generalise them, to draw conclusions, to describe them in accordance with current norms and customs. The main goal of the master's thesis is to familiarise its author with the method of scientific cognition [Denek 2011, p. 196].

K. Denek notes that a large proportion of academics expect that the master's thesis will also have practical and professional elements, which is reflected in the following skills:

> building the plan (structure) of the master's thesis, constructing the content of the main text, elaborating strictly on the subject expressed in the title or subtitle of the work, composing proportional parts, chapters and subchapters, quoting the subject literature, ability to clearly mark the content quoted after other authors. The professional elements of the master's thesis are also expressed in the ability to avoid gaps and repetitions, a correct narrative based, among other things, on a logical and linguistically impeccable transition to subsequent content parts [Denek 2011, p. 198].

As it is easy to notice, professionalism and practicality are understood here in the sense of improving mental work techniques. The author does not perceive the environment and practical problems occurring therein. Hence, he concludes that students should be taught at the master's seminar how to:

> (…) plan one's own activities, determine the essential, most significant aspects of the study material, organise classes properly, quickly find the necessary information in books and other sources of information, read, write and count efficiently (…). To this end, students are presented with model outlines of the master's theses plans, their attention is directed to the main problems, facts and conclusions [Denek 2011, p. 200].

The approach to the presented advisory process clearly reflects the behavioural paradigm, characteristic for the positivist approach, with the dominant position of the advisor, leading the strictly planned process. According to Teresa Bauman [2006, after: Sajdak 2013, p. 226] "ideological burden, which contaminated the didactics of higher education, is still weighing on it to this day". Perhaps these past events are the source of difficulties in relations between contemporary universities and the economic environment, the resentment of academic teachers towards the concept of an entrepreneurial university and the stereotypical perception of universities as distancing themselves from the needs of the social and economic environment.

Entrepreneurial University

In recent decades, universities have been confronted with the challenge of becoming entrepreneurial universities, which concerns not only the commercialisation of research but also the way in which students are educated. Three streams of change were conducive to the emergence of the concept of an entrepreneurial university:

(1) the growing economic function of knowledge and education, which is its derivative, (2) the massification of education and (3) the political changes in the world that have enabled the free movement of people, goods and ideas. In this concept of university, justifications for its functioning, both in terms of education and research, were sought in market rationality. As K. Leja writes [2013, p. 55]:

"Professors began to be called knowledge producers and students were called consumers." In the process of education, emphasis was placed on "transferring knowledge and acquiring professional skills in response to social demand, the requirements of economic development and technical progress. (…) the acquired knowledge was to be useful and (…) enable the performance of a specific professional function" [Sajdak 2013, p. 111, after: M. Malewski].

In education, high priority has been given to the development of initiative and entrepreneurship skills. Bob Jessop [2018], referring to Joseph Schumpeter's analyses, notes that entrepreneurial universities can shape them in the same way as schools at lower levels of education, for example by introducing or extending study programmes or new teaching and research methods. This resulted in a postulate for the development of research and development activities, also within the framework of preparing master's theses. With the development of this concept of university and the progressing globalisation processes, expectations as to the nature of the contribution to science, which should also be made in student research, have changed. These were mainly expectations of innovation, with the possibility of commercialisation of results. A desirable competence to be developed during the seminar was, for example, the ability to work in research teams. Unfortunately, these expectations coincided in time with the massification of studies, which made it impossible to build relations in the advisory process that would enable the development of solid research techniques, critical thinking, open approach to cognition and problem solving. This resulted in professionalisation of studies, but the change in attitudes of both researchers and learners is doubtful. A. Sajdak [2013, p. 129] even writes about the erosion of traditional objectives of academic education for the benefit of narrowly specialised professionals "possessing practical knowledge and useful skills", which reduces the role of education only to the adaptive function.

It is worth noting that such a narrow market interpretation of the functions of modern entrepreneurial universities, related to the development of education and science, is an automatic transfer of logic and economic rationality determined by short-term goals to the logic of the development processes of formal education and science aimed at achieving long-term goals, usually impossible to be formulated precisely [Helbing 2016]. The market orientation of higher education does not, in fact, serve either the economy or people, unless they constantly improve their

education (which is the essence of the postulate of lifelong learning). The systemic tension in the concept of education subordinated to satisfying the needs of the economy is clearly visible here: economic organisations pursue short-term goals and expect graduates ready for their implementation, and formal education creates long-lasting resources in people. Focusing education on short-term goals, in fact, does not support the achievement of economic goals, as it makes it impossible for organisations to maintain competitive advantages in the long term.

On the wave of the promoted concept of an entrepreneurial university, there was pressure to build lasting relations between the university and its economic and social environment, to involve practical experience more strongly in the education process, including external stakeholders in the didactic process. The experience related to extending the period of apprenticeship or dual education prove greater effectiveness of development of specialist qualifications and narrow professional qualifications. This leads to petrifaction of the characteristics of human capital, identified since 2010 (i.e. since the beginning of the diagnosis of the characteristics of human capital in Poland), which, in relation to graduates of higher education, denotes an excess of qualifications with a shortage of competences [Human Capital Balance in Poland 2011, p. 157].

This observation underlies the search for an open way of combining academic education with practical experience, which would not limit education for the development of specialist and professional qualifications, but would focus on building a deeper understanding of the socio-economic environment and the reality of non-academic organisations. It would not consist in showing students tried-and-tested, ready-made solutions, , but on the contrary, it would allow them to understand the complexity and often ambiguity of social and organisational problems, the difficulty of finding and choosing a solution, as well as implementing organisational changes and ways of working. Andrew H. Van de Ven [2007] argues that knowledge transfer, as opposed to one-way communication of discoveries, requires conversation, giving meaning and cooperation between producers and users of research knowledge. Such an approach needs open, divergent thinking, including the ability to find many solutions to a specific problem and to implement it in an organisation [Robinson 2011, p. 67].

Socially Responsible University

Despite being critical of the concept of an entrepreneurial university, we cannot ignore the fact noted by K. Leja [2013] that an entrepreneurial university is characterised by a high degree of freedom in obtaining funds and, consequently, in conducting research and teaching activities. Both these possibilities and the scope

of freedom of organisational activities are undoubtedly advantages in a situation of high dynamics of technological, economic (including production processes), social (including lifestyles) changes leading to global changes threatening humanity, to which science and education cannot remain indifferent. In the pedagogical discourse on the concept of an entrepreneurial university, however, there is an accusation that the approach to academic education attributed to this concept is not conducive to its emancipatory function. It is also stressed that the university itself, subjected to strong economic pressure, has in fact lost its autonomy, and that the aforementioned freedom is limited by many formal and economic ties.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, in discussions on an entrepreneurial university, both in terms of research and education, and in particular the university's obligation to support social development, the concept of an entrepreneurial university began to be perceived as an expression of its social responsibility. K. Leja [2013, p. 189] following B. Wawrzyniak [1999] assumes that a "responsibility-oriented university is one that responds positively to the expectations of a diverse environment as well as the institutions and individuals that create it". Many researchers associate the emergence of the concept of a socially responsible university with the development of a knowledge-based economy and knowledge society [Śledzik, Gwizdała 2018] as well as disappointment with the utilitarian narrowing of the perception of the function of an entrepreneurial university.

The concept of social responsibility of public organisations is not clear. Its most frequently emphasised dimension is the accountability of the decisions taken, which is measured primarily in terms of the legality of the actions, their financial dimension or effectiveness in terms of the degree to which the objectives of the political programmes have been achieved. This also applies to universities which have been evaluated, within the framework of the evaluation principles established in the political process, mainly in terms of the degree to which they have achieved their research and education objectives [Prawelska-Skrzypek 2017]. However, as Robert Denhardt [2011] notes, the main principle of responsibility for solving important social issues, which give sense to the functioning of public organisations, should be its focus on the needs of people as well as (according to the authors of this book) the realisation of the common good. Being guided only by the rule of political and legal responsibility or responsibility towards one's superiors may be in conflict with the challenges of global development and individual needs. Following Carl Friedrich and Herman Finer, the author mentions two types of the social responsibility of public organisations: the objective responsibility (accountability) and the subjective responsibility (the feeling that you have to do something this way, not the other way). The subjective responsibility requires a deep understanding of a given problem and a wise

and often difficult judgement of the situation, and consequently a decision that carries many doubts, including those of a moral nature [Denhardt 2011]. On the one hand, modern socially responsible universities are obliged to find themselves in the market principles of research and education financing, to meet the formal requirements of centralised scientific and educational policies, and on the other hand to respond to the complex challenges of modern times and to support the development of humanity.

Awareness of these challenges was an inspiration for the search for new forms/approaches in formal education, allowing for combining humanistic roles of education supporting the development of human skills, indicated by Martha C. Nussbaum [2008], such as: critical thinking, going beyond local egoisms and perceiving the common good on a global scale, empathic feeling of the problems of another person, with the ability to see the practical dimensions of real life as well as to design and implement their solutions. When thinking about how a master's seminar can fit into the concept of a socially responsible university, it is worth following the above guidelines of M.C. Nussbaum who promotes a model of education for development.

Focusing the advisory process around participatory action research gives a chance for the educational process to become a part of the concept of a socially responsible university. It enables the combination of education and action research in the process of academic education. Participatory action research, implemented in the advisory process, through its dialogic character rooted in relations with the thesis advisor, seminar group and researched community or specific organisation, sensitise the student to practical problems in their real environment. They develop a reflective and critical attitude, the ability to understand themselves and others. Learning the broader context of the studied phenomena and problems, leads to the development of critical thinking not only at the stage of theoretical reflection, but also at the stage of designing and implementing a feasible solution. Through identification with the researched community/organisation in the process of action research, the student develops an attitude of responsible participation in the organisational/expert action. Perhaps these features cause that in recent years the interest in action research has increased very much, especially in social sciences, the graduates of which often successfully fulfil their professional aspirations in a rapidly developing consulting industry, nowadays based on the action research approach.

Theoretical basis for integrating this approach into the didactic process, including at the stage of research within the diploma seminar, is provided by the currently developed approaches of academic pedagogy: humanistic, constructivist, and critical-emancipatory.

ACTION RESEARCH AS AN EDUCATIONAL SITUATION. CHALLENGES OF THE ADVISORY PROCESS USING LEARNING BY ACTION RESEARCH

Education through active participation in scientific research was already seen by W. Humboldt as leading to student development, an increase in their critical analysis skills and research autonomy.

Learning through research is widely recognised as providing a realistic basis for the development of emancipatory competences. This part of the chapter is based on research carried out in the course of a project consisting in conducting advisory processes based on action research by a group of academic teachers. It consisted of a collection and analysis of:

- *ex-ante* self-reflection notes by 10 advisors holding master's seminars based on action research;
- notes from the participant observations during monthly meetings of the advisory team during which challenges and current problems related to the advisory processes were presented and discussed;
- notes from the discussions preparing for project workshops bringing together students, representatives of the researched organisations and advisors, whose aim was to discuss problems encountered at particular stages of the seminar work as well as to broaden research and practical skills;
- notes from the participant observations during project workshops;
- materials developed during project workshops;
- self-reflection of the authors of the book who are also advisors of master's theses based on action research within the framework of the project[13].

The project "Research for Practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations"

When we started the project, we had some knowledge about action research: knowledge of literature (deepened in the course of implementation), diverse, usually small own research, consulting and didactic experiences (holding classes during which students learn the approach to action research in theory and

[13] The text of the book was submitted for publication before the advisory process was completed, i.e. before the students submitted their final versions of their master's theses and before their defence.

practice). We were convinced that we wanted to conduct a master's seminar during which students would carry out action research in organisations. However, we did not know what kind of research and didactic adventure we would experience thanks to the research approach of participatory action research, as we did not realise how deeply the educational situation reflected in the advisory process was changing.

We prepared ourselves comprehensively to conduct a seminar based on student research performed through participatory action research; above all, we read literature on this research approach and its application in the didactic process. We also had study visits to University College Dublin and Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, the University of Liverpool School of Management and Liverpool John Moores University in the United Kingdom. During study visits, we had the opportunity to benefit from a variety of experiences of people conducting action research and, above all, holding classes, including seminars (master and doctoral) based on action research. These preparations confirmed our belief in the attractiveness of this approach and enabled students to better understand the organisational reality of the researched public institutions and NGOs[14]. It is worth noting at this point that Dr Caroline Ramsey of the University of Liverpool Management School repeatedly stressed the emancipatory dimension of action research methodology as an approach through which students from her master's seminar carry out their research.

The title of the project "Research for Practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations" clearly indicates that when preparing the project and at the beginning of its implementation, we saw this approach as an emanation of the constructivist trend in higher education didactics. At the same time, we were very open to this new experience and to what might happen in the project. We cooperated within a group of advisors but we did not interfere in individual processes carried out by particular persons. Advisors met regularly to share their experience and to support each other in avoiding risks. We identified various problems appearing at different stages of the advisory process and tried to consider them during joint workshops organised for students, advisors and mentors – representatives of organisations in which students conducted their action research. By adopting an open formula for the seminar, we were able to learn the opinions of students and representatives of organisations, with respect to some emerging issues, which deepened our understanding of the process in which we participated. Individual

[14] Formal requirements of the project excluded the possibility of conducting research in business sector organisations.

advisory processes were carried out by different advisors, with different didactic (including seminar) experience and involved in action research. They also concerned action research carried out by students in various organisations and were of various subjective character. There was one precondition: to work together with the organisation (participatory action research), identify and deal with a practical problem important for the analysed organisation, explore it, design a solution and, given the right conditions, implement it.

It turned out that individual advisory processes were going on in different ways. Some advisors were more inclined towards the humanistic paradigm, others towards the constructivist paradigm and some of them towards the critical-emancipative paradigm. Cooperation with organisations in which students conducted research, especially with student mentors, was also different. In this book we would like to show how the seminar processes related to the preparation of master's theses based on action research were carried out (and what, in the opinion of advisors, didactic effects did they bring?). We would also like to try to present how the attitude of advisors towards the possibility of using action research in their teaching and research practice has changed.

Advisor facing the challenges of a seminar based on action research

As noted in the previous chapter, a researcher who decides to conduct action research consciously chooses an alternative cognitive procedure, which manifests their openness to unusual practices and goes beyond the traditional model of scientific research. The researcher in the role of an advisor caring for students choosing this perspective additionally accepts an unusual course of cooperation with the pupils and as a result is confronted with many challenges. These are: (1) understanding the essence of the chosen research approach, (2) the need to carry out work based on an unpredictable process, (3) the need to find oneself in a situation where different roles are played, (4) supporting the creation of a community of inquiry based on a culture of trust, (5) focusing the advisory process on reflection, (6) learning in the course of the advisory process.

1. Understanding the essence of the research approach chosen in the action research.
   The first challenge is to understand the nature of the research approach and its didactic impact. When deciding to conduct a seminar based on action research, an advisor who has not yet carried out such research should take some time to learn more about this approach in order to realise what an unpredictable, undefined tool they will be using. Action

research is not a uniform method but an approach, a certain philosophy of research activity. It has many varieties that allow the adjustment of the approach to the assumed research objectives, the specificity of the examined subject and the research situation. We will mention only some of them, most frequently used in our processes. You can concentrate on taking action according to some idea and observing the results obtained, and then, on this basis, improving these actions in the next step. This situation places emphasis on organisational or process learning as well as improving the learning/educational process (educational action research) [Coghlan, Brydon-Miller 2014, pp. 285–288]. It is possible to focus on developing actions in cooperation with the studied subjects who are affected by the problem situation, fully respecting their subjectivity in terms of identifying the essence of the problem, giving meaning, searching for solutions and their implementation (participatory action research) [ibid., pp. 583–587]. It may be an emanation of the activities of the research community, the community of sensations and goals connecting the community aiming at introducing change, focused on its development and implementation, based on mutual interactions and benefits (collaborative action research) [ibid., pp. 116-119]. It can combine different approaches and can be pragmatic or systemic[15]. Each of these research activities requires a different organisation of the advisor's work.

2. The necessity of supervising a master's thesis based on an unpredictable research process.

   Supporting the idea of basing advisory processes on participatory action research, we decide on the cyclical logic of the action research process, but at the same time on conducting works based on unpredictable research processes. This feature was highlighted in detail in the previous chapter, especially when discussing the performativity of the research process. In the next research steps, further curtains are raised and the student-researcher increasingly broadens their understanding of the problem. We, as advisors, can only support this process, inspire and encourage reflection that allows students to see the context and think critically. Both the student and the advisor must be ready for the adventure, as it is impossible to plan the goal, the problem to be studied or the

[15] A discussion of the specificity of different approaches to action research can be found in the book addressed to students, which focuses on shaping cooperation between universities and stakeholders, and above all in The SAGE Encyclopedia of Action Research) referred to here.

exact definition of the research methods. All these elements will emerge in the course of the research if we are open, reflective and patient.
Some stages in the action research cycle may be repeated several times before we achieve a result that allows us to take the next step. The most important thing is generating knowledge, giving meanings, raising awareness of specific problems, and also deepening their understanding. The research strengthens the awareness that organisational knowledge is inherently contextual and established in the individuals and groups that operate within the organisation. As noted by Chris Argyris [1993], there may be a significant gap between learning something worth knowing and being able to act in accordance with this new understanding in a given context. Such situations were encountered many times by students of our seminars. When we are immersed in the dynamic, chaotic circumstances of everyday working life, we must benefit from knowledge available to us in a given context. In a dynamic context, this will mean the continuous creation of new knowledge on the basis of individual and group processes of giving meaning and reflection.

3. The need to find oneself in a situation where different roles are played.
The diversity of the roles played can be a serious problem for the advisor, especially since some of them are extremely ambivalent and, therefore, they have to reconcile opposing expectations.
This situation significantly influences the attitude of the advisor as an academic teacher. We have written extensively about the scientific authority of the advisor in the master-student relation, which determines the essence of the seminar as a form of academic didactics. An advisor, a scientific authority, can at the same time be (and indeed our experience has shown that often they are) open to knowledge and ignorant of the practical reality studied by their student. Supporting advisor, as process moderator and coach, "critical friend" [Coghlan, Brydon-Miller 2014], launches a process of reflection, helps and is demanding. The advisor is also an active learner in a seminar process based on action research. Finally, the advisor can use the ambivalence of their roles to inspire critical reflection on the teaching and learning process.
For the success of action research conducted by a master's student, a beginner researcher with little practical experience related to the functioning of an extracurricular organisation, it is extremely important to facilitate access to the organisation – the first contact. It is important to know that there is someone to turn to for help and who will open

the first door for us[16]. Initial conversations may be discouraging and usually involve "demythologising" the researched organisation. It is important that the advisor is in contact with the young researcher. The student should be sensitised to power relations, organisation games that have a strong impact on the climate of any organisation and may come as a surprise to the beginner researcher. The advisor suggests how the seminar participant can use the first contacts to build further relations opening up the possibilities of conducting further conversations. At the same time, the student should be made aware of the need to be open to signals indicating existing problems or their specificity. The selection of interlocutors is important. An important role of an advisor is to motivate the researcher to talk to different people in the organisation because it broadens the perspective and allows them to reach the essence of the problems as well as to realise what processes must be initiated in connection with them. The researcher usually has their own interests connected with the selected organisation, but it is very important that they remain open in conducting conversations and allow the interviewees to indicate, in their opinion, the most important organisational problems in the area of the researcher's interest. The researcher should give themselves a chance to see the organisation and its problems through the eyes of its members, through their experiences and knowledge. Conversations should be supported by other research, for example, own observations of identified problem situations, research of users and other stakeholders. The catalogue of methods is open, provided that they are adequate to the analysed problems.

4. Supporting the creation of a community of inquiries based on a culture of trust. Promotional process involving action research is based on dialogue.

   Dialogue is also the basis for tutoring in relation to which Anna Turula [2018, p. 288] adopted, as a theoretical model, the model of community of inquiry (COI) proposed by Garrison et al. [2000]. "Learning in such a community is based on interaction and is the result of the mutual reinforcement of three types of presence of its members (teachers and

[16] The experiences of the advisory processes described here are related to the seminars conducted within the project. The research was preceded by the signing of agreements with organisations interested in participating in such a project. As a result, in each organisation there was a mentor appointed for students conducting action research in the organisation. We believe that the involvement of a mentor was one of the important factors in the success of student participatory action research.

students): cognitive, social presence and teaching presence." According to the author:

> Cognitive presence means reflection, critical thinking and intellectual contribution of the student to the dialogue conducted in the community of inquiry (…). It is realised in subsequent levels of critical thinking, from impulse to reflection (triggering), through exploration and integration of knowledge, to the development of a resolution to the studied problem (...). Social presence is manifested in the creation of a climate in which questions are asked and there is room for scepticism as well as participation in the development of cognitive consensus [Turula 2018, pp. 288–289].

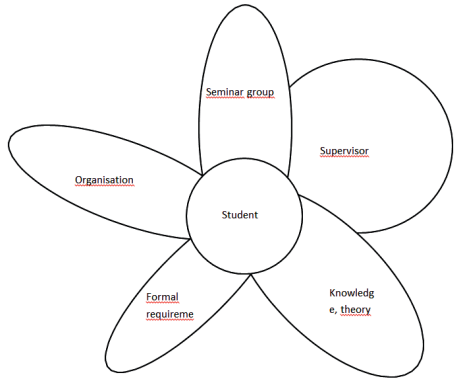
This climate (also conducive to cognitive presence) is created by three different forms of interaction in the community of inquiry: affective, interactive, and cohesive. This is achieved through direct communication, caring for relations, building trust, motivation and a sense of belonging to a group.

The work in the community of inquiry and the community of reflection in the action research is based, on dialogue in which we can identify a greater number of subjects of inquiry as well as other types of presence and their other importance. Apart from the student, the teacher-advisor and other students in the seminar group, the members of this community of inquiry are the representatives of the researched organisation, with particular emphasis on the role of the student's mentor in the organisation. The social presence related not only to the seminar and research situation but also to the seminar-related situation (workshops supporting the development of research skills on the principles of peer learning, mainly by sharing experience) is also important. In action research, cognition is not the primary goal. Cognitive presence is important insofar as it leads to a presence of understanding. It is not about the student identifying a social or an economic or any other problem, but about understanding it in its context and that it could become a basis for initiating the process of solving it. This also requires a critical and reflective presence of the student strengthened by the remarks of colleagues from the seminar group as well as by reflectiveness and supporting influence of the thesis advisor (inspiring, encouraging) and he mentor in the organisation (not only opening the door but also raising awareness of the practical context of the problem and the possibilities of its solution).

Eight critical thinking situations can be identified in a community of inquiry emanating from a master's seminar based on participatory action research: (1) impulse – as a perception of a practical problem (often several problems), (2) initial recognition of the essence of the problem, understanding the context of a practical problem, leading to a deeper understanding and formulation of the problem as a research problem, (4) exploring the essence of the research problem, (5) integrating practical knowledge with theoretical knowledge, (6) developing solutions to practical problem(-s) in interaction with the organisation, (7) implementing a solution and (8) critically reflecting on the process and one's own development.

In this process, an interaction between the researcher and the organisation takes place at each level, the result of which may lead to a different course of the project, cause a return to an earlier stage and, for example, help to address a different practical problem than it was previously decided, or find a completely different solution which had not been previously identified or seemed unattractive. Animating critical thinking at these levels requires discussing with the student-researcher, but not imposing any interpretations on hem, encouraging colleagues from the seminar group to share their thoughts, provoking the student to think outside the box, questioning simple interpretations, not directing the researcher to the solutions that come to our minds as a result of our knowledge and experience. It prompts the seminar participant to think more about where the problems indicated may come from, to enter a wider socio-economic context which will allow the student to deepen their understanding of the essence of the identified problems. Creating an atmosphere conducive to critical reflection and inquiry is mainly the role of the advisor but also, to some extent, an important role of the mentor, a representative of the researched organisation. The advisor is not a researcher in this process, they do not enter the organisation. Similarly, the mentor on the part of the organisation does not participate in seminar relations. The student is the link, they have contact with both the organisation and the mentor as well as with the advisor and the seminar (see Figure 2.1). In fact, the seminar participant has "two tutors" in two different contexts and the student is their "jointer". It is also important for the student to exchange experiences with colleagues from the seminar group who carry out similar projects in other organisations. The sense of uniqueness of one's own position, being a link between different elements of the process is a source of emancipation and a sense of responsibility for the student.

Figure 2.1. Student as a link in the advisory process based on action research



Source: own research

The attitude of the advisor in the process of building a community of inquiry and relationships in this community requires a certain additional detail. The idea of such a community depends on its being based on mutual trust. In participatory action research it is very easy to violate this, for example by persuading a student to choose a problem or adopt solutions that are not entirely consistent with the opinions/expectations of the members of the organisation (people of the organisation studied) or by patronisingly assessing the opinions collected by the student. The advisor, by contacting the student's mentor in the organisation, may be tempted to make arrangements that interfere with the student's subjectivity. Both these situations make it impossible to build a culture of trust. They are a bad, unethical model and a rotting foundation of the community of inquiry. Working in such a community creates a dream situation for the advisor to build ethical attitudes of students, which is always used by the academic teacher "by vocation". The directness of the relationship, the reflectiveness of the process, the initiative and agency of the student in the process make being in such a community of inquiry a very strong formative factor, shaping the ethical attitude of the student, their critical thinking and a sense of autonomy.

On the basis of numerous studies A. Turula concludes that intellectual stimulation largely depends on the qualifications and working style of the tutor.

> Among other things, cognitive presence is strengthened by: gradualisation of difficulty, presentation of models and benchmarks, active listening or so-called mutually-generated dialogue in which

> both sides mutually inspire and stimulate each other intellectually, as well as good quality feedback (…). The social presence is strengthened by a friendly, understanding attitude and openness to the student's needs as well as an interest in their opinion on the tutorials held [Turula 2018, p. 290].

In a seminar process based on participatory action research, the community of inquiry consists of three basic members: a student, an advisor and a mentor in the organisation. They all make an important contribution to the formation of a cognitive and reflective climate, which creates an opportunity to deepen the understanding of problems and to develop emancipatory thinking, initiative and courage of the student.

5. Reflectiveness as the main feature of the seminar process.
   Action research is a process that is dynamically driven by the constant reflection of researchers. The essence of this approach is to combine reflection with action. The key role here is played by reflection in action leading to the reformulation of problems, undertaking further research activities, questioning findings and proposing new ones, on the basis of research and critical reflection on previous studies. The student's entering into a new role, research independence and agency in the process of action research require self-awareness and self-reflection. The new advisory situation, fulfilling not only new roles, different from the previous ones, but also ambivalent roles, makes it very difficult for the advisor to enter into dialogue with the student during the seminar process and to communicate with the student's mentor in the organisation without self-reflection. During the master's seminar based on action research, the student is faced with the task of recognising an authentic, practical, unsatisfactory situation, so that on the basis of this recognition real processes can be started to improve it. Therefore, implementation work requires reflectiveness in relation to practice, a sense of responsibility for the compatibility of actions not only with science but also with the practical situation of the real organisation. In the case of our project, the student's mentor in the organisation was such an anchor of organisational responsibility. The student, entering into a dialogue with them, had the opportunity to understand organisational conditions and develop reflectiveness in relation to organisational practice.
6. Learning of the advisor in the course of a seminar based on student action research.

The independent learning of the advisor in the course of the seminar process is natural and inscribed in this role. However, in the seminar process based on student action research, the field of learning is multiplied, we learn from the student, with the student in the course of action research, from the student's mentor in the organisation, as well as from colleagues who are also advisors on the basis of mutual exchange of experiences. The team included both experienced advisors and persons who for the first time conducted a master's seminar. In this way, the learning aspect of the academic teachers participating in the project has been deepened, as the adopted way of mutual exchange of experiences caused the aforementioned master-student relationship to be partly transferred to them. Thanks to a constant research dialogue, based on a student's reflection inspired by us, and the fact that we support the seminar participant in the research process, cognition of the essence, understanding of practical problems as well as possibilities and ways to solve them, we ourselves broaden the scope of understanding reality, our own field of practical knowledge creation and critical reflection on the state of research. We are subject to strong incentives generated by the synergy of practice and theory. Not only do students engage in open, divergent thinking, but so do we. The observation of students' behaviour in the didactic process and self-reflection of the students as the research progressed was extremely interesting. Some of them went deeper and deeper into the examined reality with great commitment, they experienced a research adventure, got mature "in the blink of an eye" and believed in themselves more and more strongly. Others (most often studying two or three majors or working and studying at the same time) struggled or got discouraged when they realised that in practice there are no simple, explicit problems and their solutions. It is a great challenge for the advisor to maintain the level of motivation and involvement of the student in the research and self-reflection process.

The above-mentioned joint work in the form of regular meetings of advisors devoted to sharing experiences and analysing threats, as well as regular workshops co-managed by advisors, master's students and representatives of student mentors in organisations, devoted to discussing problems encountered at particular stages of work and broadening research and practical skills, were a great support for teachers. Both of these forms functioned as support groups for the subjects involved. This support had the character of an effective community of practice in its classical sense [Lave, Wenger 1991]. Many researchers define

a "community of practitioners" as a group of people who are interested in similar problems or who share a passion for something and want to deepen their understanding and expertise through ongoing interaction [Herranz et al. 2012]. In the academic world, this form of cooperation and mutual learning has been experiencing a renaissance in recent years, which is most often explained by an increase in interdisciplinarity and internationalisation of research. As Paul Summers [2018] shows, the members of the communities of practitioners meet to share their personal experiences in a way that questions current theories and thinking. An open and critical approach to problems enables the creation of new knowledge. New opportunities are being explored, challenges are being overcome and mutually beneficial undertakings are being initiated. At the individual level, learning is facilitated through authentic interaction, coaching, mentoring and developing members as reflective practitioners. For the advisors involved in the project whose results are being discussed here, this form of learning was very important. The support concerned not only the research approach, the didactic process, but also the implementation of non-university organisations' solutions developed in a complex interactive process.

FEATURES OF THESIS ADVISOR'S WORK IN THE LIGHT OF THE MAIN PARADIGMS OF ACADEMIC DIDACTICS

In this part we have tried to deduce, from the characteristics of various paradigms of academic didactics, the main features of the advisor's work and process realised within each of these approaches. In the next stage, through abduction, an attempt was made to indicate contemporary approaches to the academic didactics for which action research is particularly adequate. We do not focus on the characteristics of paradigms, presented in detail by A. Sajdak [2013], but we are inspired by another book of that author entitled *Paradygmaty kształcenia studentów i wspierania rozwoju nauczycieli akademickich. Teoretyczne podstawy dydaktyki akademickiej* (Eng. The Paradigms of Educating Students and Promoting the Development of Academic Teachers. Theoretical Foundations of Academic Didactics) to emphasise the diversity and specificity of approaches to organisation and implementation of the seminar's work and process. We are also aware that in teaching practice, differences between approaches are often blurred. It happens partly because when we carry out didactic tasks we do not think in

paradigmatic categories that define our research attitude, and partly because the way we carry out didactics, and especially the seminar, is characterised by a large inertia. The model for conducting seminar classes is often the personal experience of the advisor concerning the master-student relationship from the time of their own apprenticeship.

The basis for A. Sajdak's recognition of the models of thinking about academic didactics was mainly the way of seeing humans in the process of didactic interactions. Inspiration from the concept of Burrell and Morgan created in the 1970s and then developed and modified by many researchers was also evident. The author has identified four paradigms: behavioural, humanistic, constructivist, and critical-emancipatory. In the following list of features of the advisory processes, the approaches characteristic of modern didactics have been supplemented by the reconstruction of advisory work and process in the classical paradigm, typical of the concept of the liberal, classical, Humboldt university [Leja 2013; Sajdak 2013; Twardowski 1997].

For each of the paradigmatic approaches to academic didactics, a few selected features were identified, considered important for conveying the specificity of the advisor's work, such as: the position of the teacher in the process, the nature of the teacher-student relationship, the degree of formalisation of the advisory process, the relation to external knowledge, to theory and the type of main competences developed in the advisory process (see Table 2.1).

Our advisory experience, which we share in this book, shows that conducting a diploma seminar on the basis of student action research requires specific features from the advisor and their relationship with the student, which we have already pointed out several times. These features can be found in various contemporary, more or less conscious, paradigms of academic didactics, i.e. in the humanistic, constructivist and in the critical-emancipatory paradigms (see Table 2.1). The low level of formalisation of the advisory process, characteristic of action research, makes it similar to a seminar in terms of liberal and classical university education as well as critical and emancipatory approach. The attitude to theoretical knowledge in the seminar process makes action research attractive for constructivist-oriented and critical-emancipatory didactics. Similarly, the main competences shaped in the seminar process of learning by action research can be found mainly in two paradigms of academic didactics: constructivist and critical-emancipatory. While agreeing with the opinion of Jemielniak and Chrostowski [2008, p. 44] that "action research is an approach which (…) is neutral towards paradigmatic divisions", it is worth noting, however, that the analysis of the characteristics of advisory work in terms of different approaches to academic didactics shows that action research is the most adequate to conduct a seminar

oriented towards constructivist and critical-emancipative paradigm. They can also be an attractive proposal for humanistic thinking about academic didactics. It should also be noted that the advisory process carried out on the basis of student action research lacks many features attractive for didactics maintained in the positivist (behavioural) paradigm.

This reflection leads us to the observation, summarising these considerations, that action research is an attractive option for virtually all approaches to thinking about academic didactics, open to contemporary developmental challenges, and especially conducting a master's seminar understood as a kind of bridge between formal learning and learning from life.

CONCLUSION

Our experience has shown that in the advisory process carried out through participatory action research, conditions are created for multifaceted development of emancipatory attitudes. The student becomes an autonomous researcher, they are not subject to thought patterns and imposed processes of conduct. Despite the existence of a general cycle in the process of action research, which consists of evaluation, planning, action and observation, the seminar realities have shown that in each advisory process the actual research had a specific character related, for example, to multiple changes in the organisational problem or its reformulation or redesigning of solutions. The student is open to the organisation and tries to look at it through the eyes of its members in the process of identification and analysis of organisational problems. When confronted with theory, they go beyond the description of an organisation or some part/aspect of its functioning, characteristic of the traditional course of research conducted for the needs of a master's thesis. The seminar participant starts their work by deepening their understanding of the essence of organisational problems, the causes and complexity of real problems as well as their solutions in specific organisational realities. Then the student chooses the problem they want to deal with because it is important for the organisation, interesting for the student, and also creates opportunities for designing and implementing its solution in the short term of the seminar. This is made possible by the student's immersion in organisational reality, which is necessary to understand the essence of emerging problems. Constant cooperation with the advisor also makes these experiences inspire critical thinking about theoretical knowledge, both of the student and the advisor. The observations made and self-reflection shed new light on the theoretical aspects of the functioning of the researched organisations, which allow them to refer to

Table 2.1. Selected features of advisory work and seminar process according to the paradigms of academic didactics

	The role and position of the teacher	Teacher–student relationship	Degree of formalisation of the advisory process	Attitude to external knowledge, to theory	Main competences developed in the advisory process
Classic (Humboldt)	Creates the conditions for participation in the research process. Active joint search for the truth, not providing ready answers. Sharing experience.	Master-student, based on authority. Independent work of the student in the research environment of the professor. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn.	Low. Creating a scientific environment for students to study independently. Education through active participation in research.	Striving for the truth. Knowledge as a result of scientific research. Unity of knowledge, unity of science.	Independence. Creative thinking. Critical analysis. "The emancipation of true thinking". Achieving autonomous maturity. Self-education. Research and interpretative competence. Enlightened and smart people. Rejection of vocational training.
Behavioural (B.F. Skinner)	The dominant position of the teacher. The teacher is the subject of the process. The teacher controls the process, gives instructions.	Asymmetric advisor-student relationship. Distance. Communication and interaction always initiated by the advisor.	High. Strictly planned proceedings, standardised, formalised, according to a model.	Objective, impartial, empirically verifiable external knowledge as a starting point for identification of research issues and verification of research results. Instrumental rationality. Explaining the action in terms of cause and effect.	Ability to correct behaviour according to the model. Instrumental skills. Studying as an acquisition of meanings.
Humanistic (W. Dilthey, C. Rogers, A.H. Maslow)	Teacher as a guide (facilitator). Authenticity of the teacher, unconditional acceptance, empathic understanding. Moderator, coach.	An individualised relationship focused on the development of the student. Facilitation, support, help. Subjectivity of both partners, full trust. Space for personal fulfilment. Professional orientation of the student – advice.	Low, providing conditions for self-realisation, self-actualisation. Specific rules, conditions for an optimal process.	The focus is not on external knowledge, but on the student's potential. Providing the necessary knowledge, learning together, providing feedback. Freedom to choose the subject according to one's interests.	Personal competences, responsibility for oneself, self-awareness, ability of self-realisation, communication competences.

Constructivist (J. Piaget, L.S. Wygotski, J.S. Bruner)	The starting point is the student's activity. Inspiring the student to do their own research and interpretation. Enabling and supporting the learning process understood as constructing meanings. Learning from experience, solving authentic cognitive problems. Moderator, coach.	Student as an autonomous subject of the process. Dialogue, the process of social negotiation of meanings. Cooperation. The teacher starts the process, facilitates, activates, maintains interest, prevents accidental and unsystematic action, directs the cognitive process. Mutual learning.	Medium. Achieving knowledge depends on the existing knowledge, experience and socio-cultural context of the action. Activation of student's knowledge resources. Learning as constructing meanings.	Reality is built, perceived and understood subjectively. Knowledge is a subjective representation of the world, created as a result of constructing meanings, in a situation of solving problems, and leads to the development of action strategy, is of an operational nature. To understand is to be able to interpret a cultural context. Practical knowledge makes it possible to understand social processes.	The ability to be creative and innovative. Self-reliance. The ability to study, think inductively, deductively, creatively, work intellectually, work in teams, solve open divergent problems. Ability to perform social and professional roles responsibly.
Critical-emancipatory (J. Haber- mas, H. Giroux, P. Freire, P. Bourdieu, M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno)	Advisor – a person who is intellectually independent, autonomous, sensitive to threats to freedom and democracy. As a public order officer, but supporting the achievement of independent thinking, intellectual, emotional and moral autonomy. Creation of situations "opening the mind", stimulating intellectual independence, enabling independent search for truth. Triggering a reflective attitude.	Symmetrical relationship between subjects No one dominates either symbolically or intellectually. The principle of dialogue and understanding as a basis for interaction between actors of the advisory process. A relationship focused on forming critical awareness and emancipatory rationality. Readiness to accept the student's right to search independently. Freedom from dogmatic dependencies. Trust, loyalty, openness to conflict, cooperation in conflict resolution. Open communication.	Low. Openness of the process, individual path or negotiated in the process of interaction. Freedom of the learner. Rebellion and resistance as a desirable attitude of striving to break free from domination. Combining reflection with action. A multitude of contents and layers of interpretation. Learning as creating and agreeing on meanings.	Knowledge treated as a tool for exercising power and colonizing human minds. There is no objective knowledge. There is no objective science. Emancipatory knowledge enables a critical approach to reality and its transgressive changing.	The ability to deconstruct reality and emancipate as a critical reaction to perceived oppression and enslavement, also related to one's own life situation. Increase in self-awareness and self-functioning in social roles, increase in autonomy. The ability to think critically.

Source: Own study based on Sajdak 2013, pp. 103–110, 321–467; Leja 2013, pp. 36–43; Twardowski 1997a and 1997b

the existing knowledge in a reflective (often critical) way. Both the student and the advisor confront the acquired experience and practical knowledge with theoretical knowledge. Both these streams of knowledge (practical and theoretical) inspire them towards divergent thinking, which allows them to immerse themselves in the context, specificity, complexity and ambiguity of encountered problems and possible solutions, as well as to design their implementations. Thus, in this process, both the student and the advisor develop the ability to think independently and critically, which is the essence of their emancipation. This is also where the field for implementing the concept of an entrepreneurial and socially responsible university opens up.

CHAPTER 3.
MODEL FOR THE PREPARATION OF IMPLEMENTATION THESES BASED ON ACTION RESEARCH

LEARNING CONCEPTS

University transformations can be seen not only from the perspective of changes in the understanding of their social function and importance for the economy, but also from the perspective of the evolution that has taken place over the years in the understanding of the teaching and learning process. Behind every proposal to organise and implement a didactic process there are more or less conscious convictions of academic teachers about the way in which the minds of students function [Bruner 2006]. Differences in educational philosophies lead to significant differences in educational practices in higher education [Ardalan 2008]. The application of specific pedagogical methodologies as well as the setting of objectives and the shaping of the content of courses are connected with differences in the basic philosophical assumptions of academics. The important issue is how the lecturer perceives their role, whether as a fact provider, master or development supporter [Taatila, Raij 2012]. The reflection on the assumptions concerning the role of the advisor, their relations with the seminar participants and the pedagogical methods used played an important role in the context of the project. The features of the final "product" of student work in the form of a master's thesis containing innovative solutions prepared to be implemented in organisations require a redefinition of traditional assumptions and forms of seminar work. Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen [2004] point to three ways of thinking about gaining new knowledge: acquisition, participation and creation of knowledge that can be present in the minds of lecturers.

The use of such categories is intended to make it easier to focus on general issues that allow the fundamental differences between them to be identified. This is the result of a long-standing discussion between representatives of different perspectives of understanding the nature of knowledge and the way it is learned and taught.

The first way, acquisition of knowledge, is close to a common understanding of the functioning of the mind and learning as a transmission of knowledge. According to this approach, people's behaviour remains determined by their views and desires. The mind is perceived as a reservoir, a container, a board, which can be filled with knowledge to varying degrees. Learning is the process of filling a container or writing knowledge on a board . In this perspective, knowledge is understood as the property or ability of the individual mind, you either have it or you do not. In the mind, learning is about acquiring knowledge. The result of the knowledge possessed is the ability to transfer it from one area to another, i.e. to apply it to new situations. In summary, knowledge acquisition focuses on knowledge and its structure in the process of learning in general or learning by individual minds.

The proponents of the second view, participation, perceive learning as a process of participation in different cultural practices and educational activities carried out together with others. From this perspective, the learning process itself is more important than knowledge as a result or as a product. Knowledge is not the property of the individual mind but a way of participating in cultural practices [Brown, Collins, Duguid 1989]. Cognition and knowledge shall not be separate from the situations in which they are used or from the place in which they occur. In conclusion, participation underlines the importance of social practices and action as a basis for learning.

The view of learning as an acquisition of knowledge has played a significant role in the history of cognition. Traditional schools and universities were built on this assumption. The understanding of learning as participation has also gained great recognition in recent decades. These approaches may be presented as competitive, however, as Sfard [2008] points out, both perspectives are needed, they should not compete but complement each other. In the third perspective, creation of (innovative) knowledge [Paavola, Lipponen, Hakkarainen 2004], an aspect that was not of interest to the creators of the previous two models was highlighted – the creation of collective knowledge in order to develop objects (including knowledge, ideas, practices and material or conceptual artefacts) together with others. In this approach, we should not focus on knowledge certainty (as in the two previous ones), but on how knowledge is used and developed.

Interaction between different forms of knowledge or between knowledge and other activities is perceived as a precondition for innovation in learning and knowledge creation. Learning is understood as a community effort aimed at developing objects (artefacts), understood broadly and encompassing knowledge, ideas, practices and material or conceptual artefacts.

Paavola, Lipponen and Hakkarainen [2004] analysed and compared three models of innovative knowledge communities, looking for links between them: the model of knowledge creation by Ikujirō Nonaki and Hirotaki Takeuchi [1995], the model of expansive learning by Yrjö Engeström [1999, 2001] and the model of knowledge building by Carl Bereiter [2002]. On the basis of their analysis, they identified seven elements common to these models which differ in detail from each other, but which at a certain level of generality touch on the same issues. They include:

1. Searching for innovations. The starting point of the analysed models is the desire to create knowledge and innovations contained in them. This drive gives dynamics to learning processes, which is why innovative learning and knowledge progress are referred to as cyclical and iterative processes in all models.
2. Intermediate elements. In all models, the authors try to avoid the problem of Cartesian dichotomy. This can be achieved by introducing objects that mediate between matter and mind in creating new knowledge. It is important to ask questions and to see the problems that serve as mediators between matter and mind. They also give impetus to the process of knowledge creation.
3. The creation of new knowledge as a social process. This perspective assumes that social interactions provide basic cognitive resources for the creation of new knowledge. Participants in the process of joint problem solving have at least partially different knowledge of the issue being examined. Social interaction between them can lead to a more adequate understanding by the collectivity of the essence of the problem as well as the accompanying processes and mechanisms. Therefore, new knowledge and innovation are created between people, creation is not a feature of individuals, but of the community as a whole.
4. The role of individuals in creating knowledge. Seeing knowledge creation as a social process does not mean ignoring the role of individuals. Knowledge creation always starts with individuals but their role can be described in different ways. First, intuition and tacit knowledge possessed by individuals can bring a lot to the understanding of the problem by the community.

   Secondly, individual subjects may question existing practices, which triggers a learning process. Thirdly, the internal motivation of the individual to solve cognitive problems plays a significant role. Each of these approaches considers the individual not as isolated from the environment, but as part of social activities.

5. Going beyond declaratory and procedural knowledge. All models recognise the importance of procedural knowledge (embedded in skills, difficult to understand and revealed through behaviour) and declarative knowledge (concerning facts, events and processes). However, particular importance is attached to the third type of knowledge which is emphasised in the perspective of creating new knowledge – tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is based on impressions, subjective perceptions, intuitions, premonitions and ideals. The process of creating new knowledge and innovative solutions is not linear, it is more often characterised by uncertainty and risk. In this perspective, tacit knowledge plays a key role.
6. The importance of recognising conceptualisation of conceptual artefacts. Going beyond declarative and procedural knowledge does not mean ignoring the importance of the related conceptualisation of knowledge in the process of its transfer and creation. The ability to conceptualise allows for the externalisation of tacit knowledge, making it accessible to others. The relationship between different types of knowledge is interactive and, therefore, plays an important role in building conceptual models used to create new innovative knowledge in subsequent cycles.
7. Interaction around common objects. The process of creating new knowledge is related to the creation of objects (artefacts), which can be specific products, practices, conceptual artefacts. The work and learning of the community should be organised around these facilities. Therefore, the process of organising and managing individuals and collective practice centred around common objects in long-term processes is of fundamental importance here.

   The assumptions contained in the knowledge creation approach, concerning learning processes (individual and collective), creation of new knowledge and the importance of creating products, services and other artefacts in this process, became a conceptual framework for seminars based on action research conducted within the framework of the project. In this context, the phases of the traditionally understood research process and the writing of seminar papers need to be adapted to this new perspective.

MODEL OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS AND THE PHASES OF WRITING A DIPLOMA THESIS

The model of conducting the diploma seminar presented below is the result of activities undertaken within the framework of the project "Research for Practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations". The project assumed the creation of a new proposal of writing diploma theses characterised by an implementation nature. The conceptual framework of the model used was:

- pragmatic education concepts (Dewey, Peirce) and the "knowledge creation" paradigm [Paavola, Lipponen, Hakkarainen 2004];
- methodology of action research as a tool integrating research and practice [Baskerville, Wood-Harper 1998].

The expected benefits of using this approach in the development of students and organisational practices have been included in the project proposal:

> As the results of the research show (Coghlan, Coghlan 2002; Dick 2002; Sankaran 1999; McNiff, Lomax, Whitehead 2001; Abraham 1994; Easterby-Smith et al. 2001; Kemmis 2014; Sankaran, Boon Hou 2012), action research brings benefits to managers and organisations in a variety of ways, including:
> – supporting managers in improving their workplace practices and professional development by enabling them to reflect critically on their actions;
> – supporting multidisciplinarity and work beyond artificial disciplinary barriers;
> – helping to effectively implement organisational changes;
> – being problem-focused, context-specific and future-oriented;
> – the possibility of being based on very different methods of data collection, adequate to the needs of a given organisation;
> – supporting the development of self-awareness, understanding of one's own practice and criticality;
> – allowing for experiential learning (according to D. Kolb model).
> [Proposal 2017]

The presented model of conducting action research within the framework of the diploma seminar was adopted by a group of advisors working in the project team. It is complemented by the results of activities carried out during the project, which were planned in the project proposal: study visits, meetings of the

project team and workshops. Additionally, important information was provided by questionnaire surveys carried out among advisors, students and students' mentors in organisations.

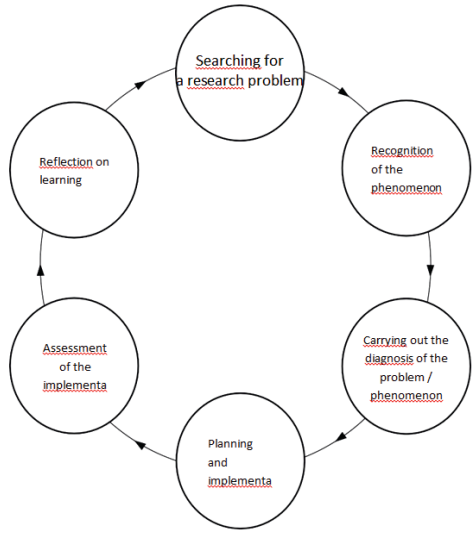
They played a significant role in correcting the activities carried out and implementing those that improved project realisation. The research was also used to formulate expectations related to the role of a student's mentor in the organisation and advisor in the process of conducting action research.

The model of writing diploma papers based on the methodology of action research used in the project consists of six successive stages. The results of the individual stages provide output data for subsequent research. The framework of the model is formulated in general terms, allowing for the inclusion of various methodological approaches to conducting action research in the projects. The model is based on elements characteristic for research projects. The stages of the applied cycle in action research are as follows:

1. The search for a research problem. Getting to know the organisation and its environment as well as search for the phenomenon/problem to be covered by the research/action leading to a new form of organisation, offer or service.
2. Identification of the phenomenon/problem. It starts with learning about the phenomenon/problem and includes describing it in the language of theoretical concepts, leading to an understanding of its essence and mechanisms. This is accompanied by a recognition of the prevalence of the problem/phenomenon in other organisations and environments as well as a review of the solutions applied. Then, research or other activities are designed to diagnose a specific problem/phenomenon in the organisation, among customers or the community.
3. Diagnosis of the problem/phenomenon (implementation of actions/research). Diagnosis is made on the basis of designed research. The result is the collection of data which is analysed and forms the basis for the design of implementations.
4. Planning/implementation of a solution. It is intended to lead to the planning of changes through the introduction of strategies, plans and implementations (services and products) by the student, which will be implemented by organisations.
5. Evaluation of the solution. The designed solutions are evaluated from the perspective of their usefulness and impact of the introduced change. The evaluation involves the student, members of the organisation and the advisor.

6. Reflecting on learning. It takes place at every stage of action research, but an important moment is when it is done at the end of the project, which allows us to look at the learning process from an individual and collective perspective.

Figure 3.1. Model of the research process



Source: own research

It should be stressed that there is no single universally accepted approach to conducting action research (see more in chapter 1 *Cognitive and methodological challenges in action research. Researcher/advisor perspective* and in the book *Action research. A Handbook for Students of Social Sciences*, chapter 1: *The origins of action research. From Lewin to Freire and back*). Therefore, an important assumption was to create a model of writing seminar papers based on action research, characterised by flexibility allowing students to use different methodologies of conducted research.

The research process leading to the preparation of the diploma theses was carried out in a three-semester cycle, as provided for in the second-cycle studies programme. It consisted of four consecutive stages, corresponding to the chronology of the master's thesis[17]:

[17] Source: "Project proposal – Description of a model for the preparation of implementation diploma theses in humanities or social sciences" tested in the framework of the project

STAGE I: semester I year I of the second-cycle studies

- Students choose a master's seminar where they can write an implementation master's thesis based on action research – at least three seminars will be available in each of the two institutes. When being recruited for seminars, students are informed at which seminars it is possible to carry out action research, what such work is all about and what the benefits are.
- Selection of a public, non-governmental or business organisation that will allow the student to conduct action research. The choice is made by the student with the support of the advisor.
- Launching tools supporting the process of theses preparation, including "researcher's diary", on the PEGAZ platform.

STAGE II: semester II year I of the second-cycle studies

- Workshops for representatives of organisations that expressed their willingness to invite the student to conduct an action research project.
- Defining the problems existing in the organisation, making a joint decision with the employees of the organisation and the advisor on the choice of the problem to be researched, analysed and improved. Defining will consist in identifying the causes of the problem in the organisation, determining what students need to know about the problem in order to solve it. At this stage, students will be encouraged to cooperate with other employees of the organisation.
- Preparation of research tools.
- Work on the preparation of the master's thesis.

STAGE III: semester I year II of the second-cycle studies

- Implementation of the research (on their own or together with the members of the organisation, if the student and the organisation decide to adopt the participatory action research model), possible redefinition of the researched problems (if the preliminary research indicates such a necessity).
- Analysis, interpretation of results.
- Developing practical guidelines, indicating ways to solve the problem under research.

"Research for practice. Use of implementation master's theses based on action research for the development of organisations"

- In case of consent and interest on the part of the organisation, possible commencement of implementation of changes in the organisation.
- Work on the preparation of the master's thesis.

STAGE IV: semester II year II of the second-cycle studies
- Observation and evaluation of the changes made (if any).
- Work on the preparation of the diploma thesis and its defence.

Dynamic character of individual research stages

The presented structure of successive stages of action research is static (linear). It does not sufficiently reflect the dynamic processes that may occur during project implementation and the unpredictability of this process. Each step can include repeated cycles before you achieve the results allowing you to move on to the next stage. Some successive stages may be repeated cyclically depending on the choice of the model of action research conducted and the results achieved. For example, if the proposed way of understanding the problem/phenomenon is incomplete, there may be a need to redefine the problem and the accompanying mechanisms, and if the proposed solution gives unsatisfactory results, it is necessary to return to planning new solutions or to repeat research.

Additionally, during the period when students were implementing their own projects, they received support in the form of diploma seminars/consultations and methodological workshops. During the project implementation there was also a need to introduce solutions that provided students with a stable point of reference, giving them an opportunity to imagine the final product – the diploma thesis.

Actions in support of learning and action research

In the project proposal there were also planned activities aimed at supporting the learning process, combining traditional forms of work with students in the process of preparing diploma theses (diploma seminar) with others that can support this process (workshops) both socially and substantively.

Diploma seminars. Seminars were held at a typical frequency, according to the schedule, once a week (for three semesters). They were open to all students, which meant that they were attended by both students who participated in the project and those who did not (they could, therefore, write their theses

based on methodologies other than action research). This made it necessary to set additional dates for seminars/consultations (they were also held once a week) which could be attended only by students participating in the project. The importance of the seminar as a place where the student's development occurs, along with the changes in their role in the historical and social perspective of the university's development, has been widely presented in the second chapter entitled *Directing student development through action research. Perspective of academic teacher, master/advisor.*

Workshops. The project involved six workshops attended by students, promoters and representatives of organisations (students' mentors in organisations). Workshops were held regularly, once a quarter. Their main goal was to integrate the learning community, create a platform for the exchange of experiences and provide knowledge about the methodology of action research. The first workshop, carried out after the recruitment of students to participate in the project, was attended by students, advisors and mentors from the organisation (they were carried out separately for students and employers). The aim of the workshop for mentors from the organisation was to present methodological assumptions of action research, the benefits that this approach may bring for the organisation and learning of students as well as the role of the mentor, advisor and student. The workshop attended by the students involved training methods aimed at integrating and building a community of researchers, while the content of the workshop included (the workshop programme is presented in Appendix 1):

- resources available to students and concerns about entering the organisation;
- experiential learning;
    - individual research interests;
- ethics, communication, the role of the researcher in action research;
    - preparation for the first meeting with the mentor in the organisation.

The next four workshops aimed at creating a platform for the exchange of experiences between students (conducting research in different organisations and participating in seminars led by different advisors), employers and advisors, providing substantive knowledge on the conduct of action research (research methodology) as well as tracking the progress of research.

In the second *world café* workshop, students and advisors selected five themes. They show important issues for both groups in the initial phase of the project:

- How to talk about difficult organisational issues (internal limits of responsibility), assertiveness.

- Differences in status (knowledge, experience), power relations in student-employee dialogue.
    - Ethical aspects of revealing injustice.
    - The role of the researcher – the student's interest, the organisation's interest (co-research, participation).
    - To what extent does theory serve the research practice, what is a good, useful research problem.

A permanent element of the subsequent workshops was the monitoring of the progress of research and the writing of diploma theses. Conclusions were used to plan further methodological workshops. The following problems were addressed:

- the relationship between the diagnosed phenomenon in the organisation and the research problem;
- ethical aspects of action research;
    - generalisation of action research results;
    - success indicators and their measurement;
    - preparation of the action plan.

Methodological workshops were also an opportunity for working meetings and joint consultations of students, advisors and mentors from the organisation.

During the last methodological workshop18, an evaluation will be carried out to summarise the implementation of the project and the tested model of conducting diploma seminars on the basis of the action research methodology and the cycle of reflection on one's own and collective learning will be closed.

The workshops were a planned series of meetings. During the preparation of the subsequent programmes, the current needs of students and suggestions resulting from the reflections made by the advisors and mentors of students in organisations at subsequent stages of implementation of research projects were taken into account. All workshops were attended by students and advisors, while in the most important moments of the project implementation and depending on the diagnosed needs, students' mentors in the organisations were also invited to participate.

Static elements supporting the model

The dynamic character of the action research was complemented by static elements, which are "anchors" giving a stable point of reference and increasing the sense of safety. These elements can be divided into two groups. The first one

[18] The last methodological workshop will take place after the book is submitted for printing. That is why we write here about intentions, not about the action taken.

includes systematic activities planned in the project proposal: diploma seminars and workshops. The second group consisted of additional documents: the draft of the diploma thesis and the draft describing the action (implementation) plan. The necessity to introduce additional elements of stabilisation to the implemented processes resulted from the needs of both students and advisors. Students wanted to know what form the final version of the diploma paper should take (for example, they asked about its volume, sequence of chapters, editing standards). For advisors, it was also an important aspect of developing teamwork leading to the collective conceptualisation of the final results of students' work in the form of a diploma thesis. The answer to these needs were two documents:

- draft of the diploma thesis– containing elements of the structure of the diploma thesis together with suggested content to be included in it, taking the form of a table of contents (Appendix 2. Implementation master's thesis based on action research – draft);
- draft of the description of the action plan – preparation of an action plan is a mandatory appendix to the diploma thesis; this material contains guidelines helpful in its preparation (Appendix 3. Action plan – appendix to the implementation master's thesis).

During the project implementation, there was a tension between the need to accept the flexibility and unpredictability of the process resulting from the immanent characteristics of action research (repeated (micro) cycles at particular stages of the action/research process), and the static and linear nature of the process of creating diploma theses (formal rules) as well as the need expressed by students (and advisors) to know the structure and content of diploma theses.

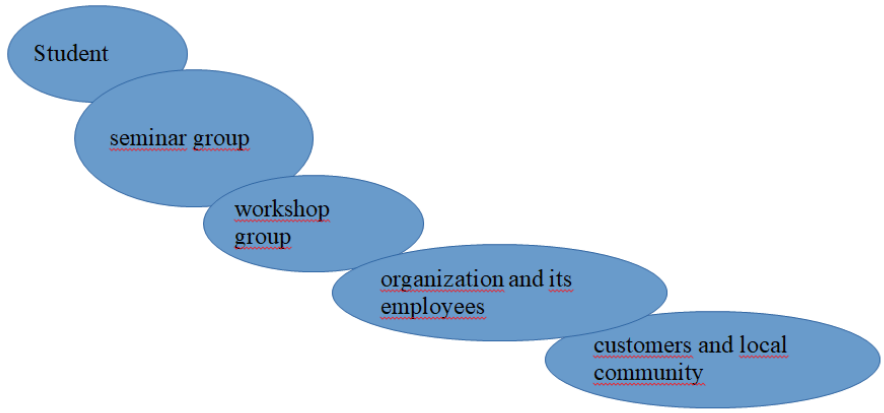
Integration of learning-oriented environments

The preparation of the diploma theses takes place in many environments (cf. Figure 3.2). From the perspective of the diploma seminar, the relationship between the advisor and the student is fundamental and extends to a seminar attended by many students. The advisor and the seminar participants form a learning community in individual and group contexts. The wider community is a group of students and advisors (as well as representatives of organisations) participating in the project, which met regularly during the workshops. These meetings provided an opportunity to broaden the perspective, gather knowledge and discuss the experiences of participants in other seminars and organisations. The next environment is the organisation where the action research is carried out, and the social environment affected by the organisation has the widest reach. The

student's activities and learning process take place in all of these environments. For students, this means increasing their opportunity to learn from others: teachers, peers, employees, organisations, customers and community members. One of the challenges faced by the advisor is the coordination of cooperation between different environments. At the same time, the advisor must ensure that the students and employees of the organisation are able to influence the formation of mutual relations.

Combining many environments in which the process of preparing students' theses is underway is crucial for the concept of creating new knowledge. Integration of environments creates conditions for individual as well as collective learning, benefiting from theory and practice, and evaluating the solutions developed in the context of their organisational and social usefulness.

Figure 3.2. The model of learning environments in the process of writing diploma papers based on action research



Source: own research

Students – their resources and concerns

The workshop was an opportunity to build a community of learners and practise self-reflection as an important element of the learning process. The preparation for the new challenge was to enable reflection on the students' own resources that could be used by them in the course of action research. They also needed to consider what risks they saw and what concerns they had about the new challenge.

During the first workshop, which was attended by all students participating in the project and advisors, students were asked which of their resources could help them to carry out action research and which difficulties they were afraid of. The analysis of the responses shows that they saw three groups of resources that could support them: skills, individual characteristics and organisational support (see Table 3.1). An important resource indicated by students was their skills. They included, first of all, elements related to establishing relations with other people and initiating cooperation as well as analytical skills (logical thinking and problem solving). A large group of resources was related to individual personality traits (e.g. perceptiveness, sensitivity, empathy, creativity), motivation to work and learn, and experience gained from working in organisations.

Table 3.1. Resources available to students to support their research within the organisation

Skills	Own initiative	Assistance from organisations
Communication (conversation with employees, active listening, establishing contacts). Openness (to new experiences, other people, different views, opinions). Interpersonal (openness to people and organisation, easy contact with others). Cooperation with people. The ability to think logically. Identifying solutions to problems.	Ambition, curiosity and willingness to develop. Friendly attitude. Acceptance of own weaknesses and willingness to change them. Ability to maintain distance and critical thinking. Commitment. Experience of working in non-governmental organisations, during apprenticeships and in other workplaces. Previous interest in the sector in which the organisation operates (e.g. someone who often attends performances can find their way in research on the functioning of the theatre). Curiosity. Willingness to develop. Motivation. Organisation, time management skills. Perceptiveness. High commitment, willingness to learn. Looking for inspiration in literature. Sensitivity. Empathy. Creativity.	Trying to see the organisational culture, understanding how the organisation works. Clear and unambiguous criteria for the role played in the organisation. Starting additional apprenticeship in the organisation where the action research will be carried out. Understanding the external and internal environment of the organisation. An acquaintance who works for the organisation. Other employees who will help in difficult moments. Entering an organisation, getting to know it from the inside. Conversation with the employer or employee about how the organisation works.

Source: own study

Students wanted to find the third group of resources in organisations. They hoped to receive support from the organisation's employees in getting to know

the organisation and overcoming difficulties encountered, and they also wished to be helped in determining the role they were to play in the organisation. It should be noted that the students did not indicate the resources related to the conduct of the research process.

During the workshop, students were also asked about their concerns regarding conducting action research in organisations. The analysis of their content allows for the separation of two qualitatively different areas (see Table 3.2)

The first one is related to what students are afraid to experience in the organisation (negative attitudes of employees, difficulties in communication, inadequate expectations of members of the organisation, resistance to changes). The second is related to recognising their own deficits (low motivation, personality traits and low self-esteem). As in the case of resources that could be used by students to conduct action research in organisations, indicating their concerns, they did not mention those that would be associated with conducting the research process.

Table 3.2. Concerns expressed by students about conducting research in the organisation

Concerns related to the organisation	Concerns related to the perception of one's own characteristics
Lack of openness and mistrust of the organisation's members towards students. Difficulties in communicating with employees. Treating young (new) people as worthless and inexperienced people. Too high expectations of employees towards students. Lack of support and willingness to cooperate from the organisation. The reluctance of the organisation to make changes. Difficulty in accessing organisation data and materials. Failure to understand the presented ideas (the organisation and the student have a different views on certain issues).	No specific direction or purpose of action. Sort-lived enthusiasm, giving up too easily. Shyness. Lack of leadership skills. Lack of courage and self-confidence. No experience. Fear of failure. Setting the bar too high for oneself. Burnout in the course of undertaken operations.

Source: own study

Role of the advisor

The advisor's activities can be related to three areas:

- the organisation of seminars and other activities related to the teaching process;
- the supervision of the students;
- the cooperation with the organisation in which the student conducts research.

The advisors' perception of their role towards students is strongly linked to the conceptualisation of their competences and attitudes, which should be shaped by their participation in the diploma seminar based on the methodology of action research. They create a set of attributes of students graduating from a diploma seminar which can be described as a "graduate model" consisting of the following characteristics:

- reflective, prone to in-depth analysis, more open to the new, more willing to experiment;
- open and striving for self-development;
  - learning from one's own mistakes;
- interesting solutions to problems, more involved in the practice of the organisation;
  - independent in a critical perception of reality;
  - having the sense of agency and ability to influence the social/organisational environment;
  - feeling that their knowledge is useful, thinking of solving real organisational problems without fear;
- courageous in expressing their views with respect for the interlocutor;
- feeling confident in management sciences;
  - committed and self-reliant;
  - with methodological competence.

In view of the thus defined attributes of students graduating from a diploma seminar, advisors recognise the need to organise meetings whose frequency goes beyond the framework of the programme of study: *regularly available, flexible consultations during and outside the seminar* [P3]. This is accompanied by the awareness of the importance of the advisor's attitude in contacts with students which affects the functioning and development of their competences and attitudes: *my attitude, positive (optimistic) approach, encouragement and belief that students are prepared to cope with the challenges they face are crucial* [P5]. It is also important for advisors to *give challenges to students according to their abilities* [P7] and support them.

For most advisors, working with students writing their theses based on the methodology of action research required a change in the way of thinking about their role and methods of conducting seminars[19]. The most frequently mentioned

[19] The reconstruction of the advisor role was carried out on the basis of the answers to the questions in the *ex-ante* questionnaire concerning the advisors' intentions related to the conduct of the diploma seminar. Due to the requirements of the publishing process, the analyses did not use material from ex-post questionnaires which were not conducted until the book was submitted for printing.

change concerned a greater emphasis on group learning: *I usually preferred working 1 : 1, with possible additions from the seminar participants, and this was usually the way to start the discussion* [P1], *and to give more responsibility for the learning process to the students: At the moment I intend to give the floor to the team* [students] [P1], *to pay more attention to teamwork, to the exchange of experiences between the participants of the project* [P4]. Advisors are convinced of the need to increase the responsibility of seminar participants for their learning and progress in writing: *Greater self-reliance of students* [P7], which requires a change in current seminar habits: *Avoid speaking for them during the seminar* [P1]. An important task of the advisor is also to create space for students to make their own analyses and deepen reflection on the conducted research: *self-reflection is extremely important, I would like to create a space for my students to reflect on their research* [P3]. Another aspect of the role of the advisors is the creation of conditions for collective learning during the seminar, which involves the need to build a specific type of relationship between all participants in the seminar: *that our relationships be of a high level of mutual trust and willingness to share experiences* [P2], *and to create a community: I want to make it clear to the students from the very beginning that we will go through this process together* [P2]. The intention to increase the emphasis on the learning process of a group does not mean abandoning individual work with students: *I divide the seminar into two parts: team work on understanding the methodology of action research and individual tutoring with each student separately concerning the progress in preparing the paper* [P6].

The next aspect of their role pointed out by the advisors is the coordination of student work, perception of subsequent stages of conducting research and writing the paper in a long-term perspective: *I will set key dates and common goals with them* [P3].

The role of the student's mentor in the organisation

The student's mentor plays a very important role in the organisation's environment. At the subsequent stages of the project, students' mentors in the organisations were asked to fill in the questionnaire.

The questions concerned their understanding of the role played in the project. A few areas of responsibility emerge from the comments of students' mentors in organisations:

- Introducing the student to the culture of organisation and making them familiar with the organisation (*obtaining* [by the student] *a full, unbiased picture of the organisation*);
- enabling contact with other workers (support) (*to pave the organisational way for the student*);

- advising on selection (pointing out leads and paths) and formulation of a research problem/action;
- assistance in the interpretation of research/activities results;
- consulting on solutions proposed by the student and products or services prepared by them.

These areas of mentors' activity extend to all stages of the process of conducting action research and correspond to the expectations expressed by the advisors.

Students' mentors in organisations described their needs concerning the development of good cooperation with the students and advisors. The expectations of mentors towards students are related to such features as:

- a genuine interest in the subject matter under research;
- cognitive and social curiosity;
- commitment;
- openness, patience, kindness, trust;
- sharing knowledge;
- respecting the rules of functioning of the organisation.

The expectations formulated by the mentors towards students in some aspects are connected with many important challenges and objectives of the diploma seminar based on the methodology of action research related to the development of students. This includes, for example, the adoption by students of an open attitude towards the surrounding world, influencing the environment as well as individual and collective learning.

Students' mentors in organisations and advisors were also asked about the most important aspects of their cooperation that influence its success. The analysis of the statements of both groups indicates the same factors that constitute common challenges to the role of the student's advisor as well as their mentor in the organisation:

- direct and frequent contact, important at all stages of the action research;
- clear division of responsibilities and joint definition of objectives;
- choosing a problem/phenomenon important and interesting for the organisation, student and advisor;
- maintaining a balance between the needs of the organisation and those of the diploma thesis (mentor 1: *emphasis on the choice of an appropriate research problem*);
- good communication, willingness to talk, openness;
- motivating the student.

To sum up, the main tasks of the advisor in the process of conducting the diploma seminar based on the methodology of action research are:

- creating opportunities for systematic consultation with students beyond the traditional weekly meetings;
- assistance in gaining substantive knowledge in the field of action research methodology;
- approach of the advisor helping in building a positive attitude of the student and belief in their own abilities;
- giving students tasks that are challenging for them;
- creating a learning community from the seminar group;
- giving students responsibility for the learning process (individual and group);
- assisting students in planning their work (taking into account the tasks and stages of writing the thesis);
- supporting students in learning about the functioning of the organisation;
- maintaining regular contact with the student's mentor in the organisation;
- assistance in overcoming difficult situations that may be encountered by a student in the organisation.

The main tasks of the student's mentor in the organisation include:

- introducing the student into the world of the organisation;
- defining the student's role in the organisation, tasks and expectations that are set for them;
- helping to identify and understand the subject of the research/intervention;
- maintaining systematic contact with the advisor

CONCLUSION

The model of writing diploma theses adopted within the framework of the diploma seminar is a result of the project team's work. Despite the limitations imposed by the general project framework set out in the proposal, the team had sufficient flexibility to discuss, develop and test different solutions. The results of this work in the form of the presented model are discussed in this chapter. From the perspective of the assumed objective and the accepted working method, the

implementation of the project was an action research. However, despite common agreements on the model and method of conducting diploma seminars by advisors, the individual meetings differed from each other due to diverse experiences and didactic methods used so far during the course of the seminar. For each of us, the experience of conducting a seminar in a new form was our own action research.

CHAPTER 4.
ACTION RESEARCH SEMINAR AS A SPECIAL CASE OF THE ACADEMIC RITE OF PASSAGE

Completion of university studies is often treated as a conventional threshold, the crossing of which symbolises entering adulthood. Obtaining a master's degree becomes a moment of almost symbolic significance when a young person, at the end of their education, ceases to be a dependant of their parents and begins an independent life. At the moment of obtaining a bachelor's or master's degree, the graduate enters into the group of active adult citizens whose social status is completely different from that of a student. The consequences of this can be pointed out in many areas of life and although in essence a person, just after graduation, is the same person as they were an hour earlier, the area of their rights, duties and possibilities changes fundamentally.

THE RITE OF PASSAGE

The change in the social status of an individual in probably all societies is connected with special rites, which Arnold van Gennep described as "rites of passage" in his classic book, originally published in 1909.

A French researcher writes that "the life of an individual, regardless of the type of community, is based on a gradual passage from one age group to another, from one type of activity to another" [van Gennep 2006, p. 30]. He continues to note that "the very fact of existence imposes the necessity of a gradual passage from one community to another, from one social situation to another, in such a way that the life of an individual becomes a series of stages, the beginning and the end of which form a closed integrity of unchanging order" [ibid]. Van Gennep makes a structural division of the rites that accompany situations of social status change and, using rich empirical material, illustrates many life situations in the sequence of events he proposes: "birth, social maturity, marriage, parenthood, class advancement, professional specialisation, death" [ibid]. All the rites of passage have an identical pattern which consists in a tripartite

sequence, repetitive in almost every situation. The first stage is the rites of separation, which make the individual isolate themselves from the original group, without being a member of the new community. This will be fully achieved after the integration rites have been completed. In between, there is usually a series of transitional, i.e. liminal rites, during which one acquires the characteristics of both groups, while losing other characteristics belonging to both groups. The transitional rites, described by van Gennep as liminal, have become an area of interest for another anthropologist, Victor Turner.

Half a century later, creatively developing the thought of his learned predecessor, he noted that people, who he described as "liminal beings", at that time had a special kind of social bond, which he called *communitas* [Turner 2010]. *Communitas* appears in the liminal period and is "a community, or even a communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" [ibid., p. 117].Turner discusses in detail the attributes of liminal beings and consequences of the occurrence of their individual characteristics, for the needs of this text it is worth limiting the discussion on his findings to those relating to "wisdom", which alongside power is a component of speech [ibid., p. 122]. This wisdom "transmitted in sacred liminality is not only an accumulation of words and sentences, but it has an ontological value, it transforms the essence of being of a novice", who in this phase "must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank board on which the knowledge and wisdom of the group in the aspect of the new status will be written" [ibid.]. Only by accepting this wisdom, acquiring appropriate skills and attributes may the entrant be included into the next age/social group. Through this, life will continue in the mode established in the archetypical prehistoric times, and the world will not rush to extinction, but to fulfilment.

However, is this kind of understanding of the world and humankind present in the contemporary life of students and advisors? Both van Gennep and Turner illustrated their theses above all with examples from outside the European academic circle. Therefore, what is the point of recalling them in relation to university life? Stephen Muecke's text, which refers to the Aranda people, the Australian Aborigines and their philosophy of life, compares two cases of the rite of passage, which are at the same time a sphere of intensive education. Therefore, he compares the Australian rites, extended over time and often lasting several months, filled with the teachings of the tribal elders, but also with the tests of character, physical and mental fitness, with the process of education in the Western world. According to him, the latter process is like a rite of passage, even more extended in time, usually involving physical, intellectual and psychological effort, which accompanies the achievement of the competences for living

in a society. The philosophy of the Aborigines, like any other, serves to "keep the affairs functioning in their proper place" [Muecke 1999, p. 7], which is particularly true of the various canonical texts of the Aranda people, but also of those studied by students of Western universities. In both cases, the function of exams finishing the academic year can be seen as rites of passage activating collective memory [ibid] important in creating the sense of "serious life". The latter category, proposed by Émile Durkheim, is explored by Eric Rothenbuhler [2003], who deals with the functions and essence of rites in contemporary everyday life. The category of serious life concerns those elements of social reality "which have been brought together by the attention people pay to such things" [ibid., p. 42]. He notes that "(…) rite events refer to serious matters considered by the participants to be secular – political, economic, family matters" [ibid., p. 43], and that the essence of being qualified for this category is "serious goals" [ibid., p. 29]. It is almost impossible to negate the seriousness of the objectives of academic education and it is obvious that graduating from it is at the same time a passage to another social and professional group. It is also easy to see the ritualization of certain parts of academic life, with the diploma examination and the defence of the thesis at the forefront.

What role does the diploma seminar play in this process? Is it only an element of the process, or is it a rite necessary to perform the rite of passage not only formally (which is obvious) but also in a symbolic sense? Does the participation in a particular seminar create a kind of *communitas* that affects other aspects of life? How is it done and can the seminar conducted in the INNOHUMAN project be used in a slightly different way in this respect?

How does the conduct of a seminar and master's thesis in action research methodology cause changes in the traditional understanding of the seminar and also in the perception of the world by advisors and students? Does this mean that there is also a change in understanding of the role of university education and how universities operate in an increasingly demanding environment? In what way is the seminar in this new formula helpful towards the development of advisors and what exactly could they learn, what specific advice could they give to the next advisors conducting master's theses using the methodology of action research?

In search of answers to these questions and curios about any further questions that might have arisen, we decided to hold talks with all advisors of master's theses prepared within the framework of the INNOHUMAN project. The interviews were held in January and February 2019, at the end of the third semester of the project and simultaneously at the end of the second semester of the master's seminar. The students had to complete their research and write down the results in the form provided for in the programme, present their master's

theses to employers for inspection, and to reviewers for evaluation, take the master's exam and defend the thesis. Advisors spent long hours discussing, revising the text and reviewing the papers supervised by their colleagues. Therefore, before the students participating in the project of the Institute of Culture and the Institute of Public Affairs really crossed the threshold of professional maturity, a lot of time had to pass, however, the strict requirements of the project schedule made it necessary to start the research at that time. Therefore, we were not able to obtain distant information that would cover the whole project. However, the value of "seeing the world through the eyes of the native" in the course of their activities had already been repeatedly demonstrated by supporters of interpretative research [cf. e.g. Geertz 2005].

For the purpose of this study, which is to present the perspective of the advisors, the research covered 10 people, all of whom at that moment were conducting master's theses within the framework of the INNOHUMAN project. Some of us are experienced academics who have conducted a lot of master's seminars and supervised many students. Although others held master's seminars for the first time, they had experience in this field from coordinating bachelor's seminars. Some of them did not know the action research approach before, while others were familiar with this way of working "in the field". Each of us is involved in a different research area, we have different interests, different methodological approaches, different achievements, we differ in age, gender, scientific degrees... Advisors in the project were a group of diverse individuals who were connected by the project, but who also shared a common thread in the form of curiosity to discover and implement new methods of getting to know and improving the world as well as the conviction that the university is a good place to pursue their passions.

By presenting our views to the reader on issues related to the role of the university, the seminar and the role of the master's thesis advisor in the didactic process, we will try to maintain the anonymity of the individual authors of the statements. At the same time, we assume that we can present even seemingly contradictory opinions honestly and without the burden of divergent views, believing that we present a fairly comprehensive image of the world presented and that the reader will be able to make their own judgments and, consequently, choices. In order to meet the requirements of anonymisation and preserve the identity of individual members of the advisors team, we assigned letters and numbers according to the order of the cited statements to each of the persons participating in the study . In order to make the text legible, we take a form that deviates from the current political correctness (which, by the way, cannot be binding on us as researchers), but it is strongly rooted in linguistic customs

and as such it temporarily wins over the requirements of the changing reality. Perhaps we should add a separate thread of research resulting from differences in conducting seminars or from a difference in gender of people holding them, perhaps we should also consider how these relations are arranged on the line of advisor–student contact (or in the case of action research: advisor–student–employer), however, in this study it seems unnecessary and does not bring any new content. This would also require separate, extended research, which was not our goal at the moment.

PROFILE OF A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

Taking into account the aforementioned objectives of the undertaken activities as an important factor of serious life, it is necessary to define first of all the objectives of university education and determine what we want to teach students. What should be the model profile of a graduate of studies conducted by both the institutes mentioned? It is very significant that the employees of both university units were almost unanimous on these issues, and although one could probably find many different features and ways of functioning, we were actually in agreement on the development of this model profile. This convergence of views is certainly also the result of the agreement of many opinions and positions during the project, when advisors from both institutes became, as it turned out, a rather harmonious team. The benefits and difficulties of advisors' teamwork will be discussed later in this text.

The feature that most often appeared in this "ideal portrait" was the ability to think critically. One of the advisors, whose opinion can be considered representative of all, formulated it by putting words into the mouth of a hypothetical university graduate: *I know who I am, I can see myself in context, I understand the context, I see the conditions* (…)*, I do not deal with a small piece, I see the whole* (P01). This "vision of the whole" should consist in the ability to distance themselves from the reality in which the graduate functions, and in the course of education they should rather learn the *essence and meta-skills* (P02), which are to serve the *purpose of taking care of the welfare of other people in society* (P03), *the common good* (P04). According to the advisors, this idealistic image can be realised by following two paths: on the one hand, the path of theoreticians, people who will be working academically at universities, and on the other hand, the practical path. Those graduates who devote themselves to theory should first of all have the attitude of a *searcher, someone who is curious and at the same time has the ability to search for knowledge, who knows where, what and how to search* (P05). It should be

noted, however, that the attitude of a searcher should be characteristic not only of the researcher but also of the practitioner and, as emphasised by the advisors, the ability to search and think critically should concern not only the theory but also the practice, graduates *should be critical in the actions they undertake* (P06). In the knowledge society, research is also conducted outside the scientific community, and the action research approach prepares people for research in the environment of life and work. All advisors stressed the importance of understanding the reality in which young learners of cultural management or social policies will find themselves after graduation. Thanks to the fact that during their studies they were equipped with tools necessary to find the sense of the world, both on a micro as well as a macro scale, they will be able to *understand decision-making processes* (P07). Therefore, during education it is not very important to teach these or other specific practical skills. We should not prepare them to look narrowly, but rather to think broadly, to dialogue and to cooperate within the framework of relationships in the environment (P01). It is essential that the graduate should have the ability to *doubt and ask questions* (P04), be characterised by a *lack of belief in a constant and indelible truth, and instead see diversity and understand that every perspective is a construct* (P01).

We prepare students for an *unknown future* (P02) and, in fact, for work in a completely unknown environment. *A university graduate should be able to cope in any working environment, regardless of basic education. Statistics show that only a few graduates work in their professions* (P08), ultimately the goal of education in cultural management should be that the graduate *is not afraid to go to work in an organisation. Any organisation. Students should not be afraid that they will not succeed* (P09). The time of studies, especially writing the thesis, is the time given for *making mistakes in a safe environment* (P06), and the advisor should be a kind of a *safety buffer. In order to learn, you need to have a sense of security* (P06). At the same time, the role of advisors is to *sensitise students to what is happening* (P07) as the point is to *change the world for the better* (P04). Perhaps this is the reason why advisors feel very strongly responsible for the students who have been placed under their supervision for the time of writing their master's theses. In addition to critical thinking, responsibility is a value that advisors most often talked about during interviews. First of all, it was all about responsibility for students. Masters seminars are conducted with the awareness that they are a very important stage in student development, students rely on their advisors and trust that they will help them to overcome difficulties. At the same time, advisors are aware of shaping people who will be responsible for the organisations in which they will find employment (P07), and thus for the environment of these organisations (P04). Responsibility is linked to a second important value that must be conveyed in

the teaching process, i.e. *reliability* (P10). In the process of educating students, the advisors are the last link in a chain, intentionally striving to *teach people who are responsible for the organization, so that there are not many psychopaths, lunatics* (P07). However, it is important to remember that education should be an introduction to the further and sustainable development of graduates – the concept of lifelong learning is applicable (P08).

The fears mentioned by one of the advisors about what awaits graduates after starting their professional career have a chance to disappear in the course of the teaching process. Especially since the students admit to advisors that they *want to have a good job* (P07). However, the main purpose of participating in a seminar is not to gain knowledge since students *do not see a connection between good job and their skills* (P07). Unfortunately, work and getting a job is usually associated with *acquaintances, connections, pulling strings* (P07), but in the future there will be, as one of the advisors described it, *people willing to work*, *intelligent people* (P01). Students are aware, however, that a diploma is the key to opening many doors. Probably that is why their main goal during the seminar is to *get a diploma, a degree* (P10), and as one of the advisors bitterly said, *the idea is to write a paper with as little effort as possible. And forget about it* (P02).

STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Therefore, the expectations of students are usually simply to obtain a master's degree, and they often *expect peace of mind* (P05). They enrol in selected master's seminars on the basis of various criteria. Some of them continue their master's studies at the same institute at which they studied at the bachelor's level. They are usually quite well versed in the seminar themes contained in the programmes available, and generally know the teachers. Some of the advisors admitted, with a personal, totally understandable satisfaction, that some of their seminar participants enrolled in specific seminars solely because of the teacher. Their motivations were clear, they were oriented in the theme of the seminar, but above all they wanted to work with the advisor who they knew had a *positive attitude and flexibility*, and who would provide them with *methodological comfort* (P08) which was a requirement of high priority for students. Such an attitude is usually demonstrated by ambitious students for whom working with an advisor can be a challenge and a pleasure. However, there are also students looking for *the path of least resistance and enrolling with those advisors who are known not to pull their weight* (P04). Fortunately, they are on the margins of the academic world and mentioning them at this point is only to ensure the completeness of the image.

The majority of students, according to the advisors, enrolled in the seminar on the basis of the theme, although some of them found themselves in the seminar by accident, due to the availability of places. Guided by the theme of the seminar, students often *know that they want to write about a given organisation* (P09) or about specific theoretical issues. Unfortunately, very often students who come to masters' seminars are those who are *not prepared for research* (P09), *expect clear plans*, *recommendations* (P01), *need hints* (P05). This is a challenge for advisors, as students come from different social backgrounds, sometimes neglected (P10), and the Bologna system is the reason why people with very different preparations for writing their papers meet in one seminar group. Sometimes the level of students' awareness *is hopeless but the student is like play-dough and if someone is motivated, works hard, then a very good thesis can be produced. This also makes the advisors more active* (P10). What helps students is the *feedback from the advisor, it is the value sought by students* (P06).

Students also expect advisors to communicate *practical ways to solve problems* (P04), however, they often do not understand *that the content they describe as theoretical is of practical importance, they have cause and effect relationships in their minds and expect such solutions* (P03). The lack of such content during the course of studies in cultural management or in the field of social policy is assessed negatively by students.

The shortage (according to students) of practical knowledge during the courses leads to the fact that studies are often assessed as *pointless, which causes frustration, dissatisfaction, impatience* (P06), because students would like to *acquire professional competences instead of striving to understand the world, to acquire wisdom* (P03). Young people's impatience can be the reason why their assessments are categorical and often result from incomprehension rather than reality.

The current seminar, being a pretext and a reason for the discussed research, conducted according to the methodology of action research, was a different proposal, because it gave a greater opportunity to explore the organisation and its problems. During the seminar, students repeatedly expressed their satisfaction, stressing that the *action makes sense, especially appreciating the invention and contribution of lower-level staff to the organisation* (P04).

They were also satisfied with their research, and *the sense of agency and the joy of success in implementing solutions* were the reason for *relief* and confidence in their own capabilities.

It has so happened that students claimed that the advisor *always has more faith in our research than we do* (P06).

Initially, some students enrolled in seminars with the planned action research – *they wanted to be in the project so that it would be easier* (P09). The organisations

were ready to accept them and the students had a guarantee that research would be carried out. In traditionally conducted master's theses it happens that students who are interested in a particular issue of cultural management, social policy or a particular institution encounter resistance from the organisation, inability to carry out research or refusal to provide information. The students participating in the INNOHUMAN project were in a comfortable situation in this respect – all the organisations that joined the project guaranteed assistance and institutional support to the young researchers (P09).

Through participation in the project, *students learn to understand decision-making processes, face the reality… how to be in an organisation, how to behave in an organisation, how to make a career in an organisation* (P07). At the same time, they learned a lot about the organisations they were researching. According to the advisors, some students were astonished by the *organisational culture, the relationships between people* (P04). Conversations with them at seminars proved *that they saw "miracles" there, sometimes terrifying* (P07). The fact of being in an organisation during the research can be a source of frustration, difficulties, misunderstandings... but they are in the organisations, they see this reality (P01). In this respect, it should be noted that *these students are slightly ahead of their peers in terms of practical contacts with organisations* (P08), which, of course, must be seen as a significant value and achievement of learning objectives. In this way, students can more easily avoid the fears mentioned above. As one of the advisors noted(P09), the works prepared within the framework of the INNOHUMAN project, in fact, *prepare for work in an organisation better than the classical master's thesis*. Students *learn organisation and develop various competences in specific conditions* (P02). The possibility of implementing one's own ideas, their applicability, *gave the "wow" effect* (P06).

Graduates must also acquire skills that are not obvious in the course of writing their master's thesis, but that enrich their potential. These are problems that arose in many cases and were sometimes solved only after the intervention of the advisors. Some of the organisations tried to use students as *cheap labour* (P06) by *imposing a scope and way of working* (P04) or, in extreme cases, *writing for the student* (P06). Becoming assertive and self-confident is one of the most important results of the master's seminars conducted under this programme. *These students have become more successful, they are not as afraid as they were at the beginning, many of them can solve problems on their own. They write e-mails, arrange meetings, fight for respondents. I see a leap towards self-reliance* (P03). Sometimes, especially with critical opinions about the relations within the organisation, students had ethical problems resulting from uncertainty and fears; *they asked: can I write that* [critically] *in my thesis?* (P04). This *clash of an idealised image with reality* (P10)

aroused astonishment among students, opened their eyes, made them realise that this reality *is not black and white, but appears in many shades of grey* (P06).

Students often come to the seminar and know that they would like to write a paper about an institution of their choice, as they are interested in the results of its activities or the area in which it operates. However, they are not able to formulate a research problem, indicate a specific space to be explored and described. Action research can *eliminate fictional themes that are repetitions, there is no chance of imitating something that was already there* (P08). This gives advisors greater assurance that they will avoid plagiarism by the seminar participants, which, as is well known, is an area of concern and uncertainty for many of us. Action research gives more self-confidence not only to students but also to advisors. The latter unanimously claimed that supervising master's theses in this mode was more interesting and rewarding for them. Although at the time of the interviews the master's theses were only partially completed, the participation in the research process itself was inspiring for the advisors. For one of them, the self-reflections of the seminar participants found in the researcher's diaries were particularly interesting. The requirement to keep this diary *at first raised difficulties, but in the end it turned out to be very helpful* (P09) when working on the data obtained, discussing the results of the research and seeking solutions together.

SEMINAR AS A *COMMUNITAS*

The work on the master's thesis conducted in the mode of action research was more intensive than during the ordinary master's seminars. The seminar groups included both students taking part in the project and those who were not involved in action research. Time has shown that most of us in practice had to divide the groups and hold separate meetings for each type of students. This was, among other things, due to the fact that the project students were forced to adopt a more interdisciplinary approach to research, they had to *look for something more than what they had obtained during their studies.*

It was also necessary to develop soft skills: communication, negotiation, assertiveness. Invaluable experience! (P05). It could be said that this type of work *prepares for work in an organisation better than the classical master's thesis.* (P09). Combining theoretical knowledge and practice, building better relations between advisors and students, creating a special community of researchers (which we will discuss in more detail), and finally high evaluation of the applied methodology have probably caused one of the advisors to say: (P03). *maybe action research is the Holy Grail of our times*. (P03). In the *ex-ante* exploratory studies carried out at the

start of the seminars, one of the advisors declared *that it would be great if the seminar could be like a support group* (P10). As suggested by Caroline Ramsey, with whom we had the opportunity to meet during our study trip to the University of Liverpool, in action research we should pay special attention to teamwork and exchange of experiences between the participants of the project. The ideal that should be pursued is, therefore, a *group of people who want to learn something together, to strive for something* (P03), to work out solutions, to have the opportunity to discuss their variants. Meanwhile, *we have a serious problem with teamwork, we do not know how to do it and perhaps the seminar is a good time to learn it. The seminar is designed to help* [students] *develop* (P02). A master's seminar may be a good opportunity to develop teamwork skills, and for action research this is almost obligatory. This assumption, which guided most of us, was confirmed in practice. As one of us noticed, students participating in the project are more willing than *others to participate in seminars together (…) usually the seminar participants form a queue behind the door to the office, they do not want to go in together (…), they do not want to listen to each other. While those project students they all go in together. It may result from the fact that they are a bit lost, let's face it, they are a kind of guinea pigs and so are we…*

They share experiences and actually form a kind of support group (P05). The advisors worked towards this, tried to build this community, persuaded them to exchange *ideas and contacts* (P03), taught them how to do it – *exchange literature* (P07), persuaded those who worked in the same organisations to cooperate. Sometimes the seminar is the first opportunity for the students to get to know each other personally: *in the whole group they do not know each other, and at the seminar, as a smaller group, they have a chance to get acquainted with each other* (P08). Students, from at least three seminars, created groups on a social networking site, which became a place for discussing consultation dates, exchanging bibliography (P05), discussing texts or reasons for absence from meetings (P06).

The problem noticed by the advisors during the seminars is the *lack of interest in others, the community is not perceived as a value* (P02) and often an unexpected scenario is played out: *I talk to one person, others sit and the student thinks it is pointless that they have to listen to the discussion on a different topic* (P01). However, the ability to cooperate is not well developed among students, although they have never been malicious to each other or reluctant to help (P06). Sometimes there are animosities between students – *I like him, I don't like her* (P07), but the tendency to build community is noticeable. In one case, the advisor was even informed that the mutual reluctance between the students had been overcome and they started to cooperate with each other (P06).

Most students, however, *are individualists, focused on their work* (P02). This confirms to a large extent the perception of the master's seminar from the perspective of individual development, the stage that needs to be reached in order to pass "from one age group to another". Perhaps this highly individualistic approach to participation in the seminar is not only the result of the education system but also of an internal, probably unconscious, conviction of "true effectiveness", clearer "in the rites of passage and other rites of transformation in which boys become men, girls become women, single persons get married, citizens of one country become citizens of another country, private individuals become public servants or servicemen, and vice versa" [Rothenbuhler 2003, p. 33]. This list could also include a seminar that transforms students whose status in society is sometimes perceived ambivalently into fully-fledged, active members of the community.

Eric Rothenbuhler [2003, p. 45] stresses that rituals must be voluntary and properly designed. The methods of participation in masters' seminars seem to meet these requirements. The criterion of voluntariness is fulfilled by all members of the seminar. Advisors agree to conduct such classes, and in the case of participation in the INNOHUMAN project, this agreement was duplicated. Everyone had to sign project agreements, and the consent to participate in the project was motivated primarily by the belief that action research may enrich the educational process (P01), help students in their development (P04), better prepare future master's graduates to function in an organisation (P09) and arouse curiosity about new methodologies (P10). The aim was also to strengthen both institutions in terms of education (P07, P09). Advisors also had the possibility to refuse to cooperate with some of the seminar participants. The aim of a student applying for a master's degree is to "demonstrate that they have mastered the theoretical basics and the scientific competence of a given field and is able to solve a simple problem using scientific methods, i.e. scientific way of thinking and working" [Brycz, Dudycz 2011, p. 64]. At least one of the advisors was forced by circumstances to resign from cooperation with the student: *I did not give credit to one person, I expelled him from the seminar even though he wanted to continue it* (...)*, he was intellectually unable to meet the requirements, so I decided that I could not give him credit* (P06). Unfortunately, there are people who enrol for studies only to get social benefits, prey on public funds (P06) and they break the trust that the advisors put in them. The responsibility of advisors towards the duties they undertake when participating in the educational process in higher education institutions often makes them face a difficult decision to refuse to move some students to the next group.

In the publishing market, there are a great many studies that can be given a common title for the purposes of this text: "How to write a master's thesis?"

There are so many that it is not necessary to include them in the bibliography, but we have looked at several dozen titles while preparing for this publication. Their readers were supposed to be mainly students, which is why most of them do not include information on how to conduct a seminar, what should be the schedule of meetings, how to manage time divided into semesters, what topics should be addressed. Each of the advisors taking part in the INNOHUMAN project has developed a system of work, the ultimate goal of which is to supervise master's graduates.

In general, most of us devote the first semester of the seminar to group work. In the first semester of the seminar, within the framework of action research, we required students to familiarise themselves with literature on research methodology and discuss these issues. Usually, the first semester of the seminar is also devoted to the theme of the master's thesis, the initial reading of literature and the outline of the research area. It is important to work out the theme in such a way that there is *no room for plagiarism* (P08).

The advisor acts as the leader and coordinator of the discussion: *at the beginning I dominate, and when they get to know the areas they will be dealing with, I try to make sure that this balance changes and the burden of participation is transferred to them* (P02). However, before this happens, the support of the advisor is necessary because students are *afraid of the organisation.* (P09). The most difficult thing is that when students come to a master's seminar, they are *afraid of the first research in their lives* (P06). For many students who start their master's studies in a field other than their bachelor's degree, making up the programme differences would require more time than the first semester after which they must enrol in a seminar and start working on their master's degree. Methodological deficiencies are sometimes very serious. The fact that students start their first research in life and it should be at the master's level is a challenge for advisors who feel responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted thoroughly, according to ethics and methodological standards – *you go to the interview, first I need to see the questions* (P05). The first semester of the seminar often consists of a kind of evening out the knowledge levels of the seminar participants and filling in the deficiencies. In the course of our discussions, the idea of a proseminar, which could compensate for methodological shortcomings, was sometimes mentioned. In this case, differences between the institutes could be observed. The Institute of Public Affairs has been conducting courses on action research for years, so students, at least theoretically, have the opportunity to be better prepared to work in this mode. For the students of the Institute of Culture, these issues were completely new, but the joint effort helped them to catch up. However, the question open to the councils and directors of both institutes is whether a methodological

proseminar should be introduced before a seminar, so that the time of a seminar can be devoted exclusively to the master's degree course and constitutes the true culmination of the studies.

In the first semester some advisors check the presence of students, while others think it does not make sense: *there is no strict requirement that everyone has to attend the classes every week, I like to have some pieces written, thus, I prefer students to come to meetings even once every two weeks, but to have some work done and accepted* (P08). In some cases, the model of meetings is the same as in others, for example, classes for practice exercises, while in others, it seems that the model consists in the lack of model. This lack of discipline is often expressed by the way the seminar participants take their seats in the classroom. I usually *try to make sure that we sit closer together so that we can talk to each other, which is impossible with more people, e.g. during a lecture. However, physical distance determines the type of relationships that are created* (P02). Sometimes, in order to shorten the distance, it is necessary to move the furniture in the classroom: *in the same room, at first there is a lecture and then a seminar is held… and the same students who sit at the desks during the lecture move the desks around during the break so that we sit in a circle. It is not about the size of the group, it is a monographic lecture, it is not attended by many students, sometimes there are more people at the seminar than at the lecture…* (P04). Another advisor says: *I never sit at a desk* (P10). During the seminar, a slightly different atmosphere is introduced: *I have always conducted a kind of tutoring at the seminar, that is, I have tried to get to know people better, to feel what they are good at, and to rely on their strengths* (P10). During the seminar there is a kind of relaxation of the customs which usually prevail in the university classroom: *I allow them to drink; if they buy something during the break, they can bring it into the room* (P10). Some of the advisors also strengthen their relationships with the seminar participants outside the university walls: *I only accept my seminar participants as Facebook friends and usually do not delete them. We have our own closed group where we exchange information* (P07). Another advisor considers his relationship with the students as *friendly* (P03). Classes usually start with an off-topic discussion: *I always ask them: "How are you?", and they usually complain: "Oh, what a terrible weather today, oh, it's too hot, oh, it's too cold..."; we always start with some kind of small talk; if there are any emotions, they have the opportunity to release them…* (P06), *at the beginning we often talk about current events, especially cultural events, what we have watched in a cinema, a theatre…* (P04). Some advisors do not allow private conversations (P08), others, on the contrary, claim that the students *become a bit closer to me than those I see only in a lecture, I know when they get married, I know about pregnancies, husbands, trips, holidays, jobs, and so on...* (P07), *the distance between the advisor and the seminar participant should not be*

excessive, it should rather be a kind of partnership (P08). The result is a special kind of community that Victor Turner described as *communitas*.

On this occasion Turner presents opposing models of interpersonal relations. The first, which he calls a structure, is "society as a structured, differentiated and often hierarchical system of political, legal and economic positions", while the second, "appearing in the liminal period, is a model of a society without structure or with a residual structure and with a relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of ritual elders" [Turner 2010, p. 117]. It is worth noting that in social reality and, as a consequence, in the life of individuals, there is a dialectic of the changeability of the structure *via communitas*, as a case of antistructure, into the structure of the next stage of social and individual development. In this sense, the entire higher education system and related law can be understood in terms of *communitas*, extended over time, with the key role of the "ritual elders", which determines the ways and is an arbitrator in deciding on the legitimacy of border crossing. The seminar plays a ritualistic special role here, examples of which can also be found in a certain reversal of ordinary relations, the anti-structural features of *communitas*: *seminar is a more intimate form of conducting classes, one of the best forms of conducting classes; ideally, there could be more seminar classes and fewer lectures, as it is more advantageous also for the advisor, while lectures not necessarily, the interaction at lectures may be different* (P08). Thus, the differences between who is the receiving party and who is the giving party are blurred. Advisors can benefit equally from seminars. In particular, the action research seminars gave such a possibility because entering the organisation, recognising it as deeply as it happened, the possibility of influencing the course of affairs would be very interesting also for professors. One of them expressed it clearly: *Personally, I envy them* (P05). *I try my best not to build any hierarchical relationship with students, namely that I am a teacher here and I will tell you what to do* (P03). For some advisors, the methodology of action research itself was not very well known, they learned about it together with students: *while the students were conducting this research, I learned for myself how valuable this method was and how much all parties could benefit from it (P04); we do not know how to write about action research, maybe we are guided by intuition here, we need to broaden our knowledge* (P09).

Particular attention should be paid to the way in which statements about the seminar are formulated. One of the advisors, speaking about their work during the seminar, almost all the time used the form "we". The students together with the advisor form a community, and the professor, presenting this work, says: *we want to do something*, he speaks about the common responsibility towards

both the organisation where the research was undertaken and the members of the seminar, and he warns: *but if these cogs fail, these mechanisms will simply stop* (P07). The seminar, metaphorically described by the advisor as a machine, can also be compared to an organism or a community, *communitas*, whose role is to complete the process of studying, to close a chapter in the life of those involved, in order to be able to open a new one. The seminar is the peak moment of *communitas*, after which, with the award of a diploma, the graduate enters a new structural order: full maturity, professionalism, the organisation in which they will take up work, reaches the next stage of "serious life".

It should be stressed, however, that such culmination is not always both a cut-off and a break of ties. *The best thing to do is to keep these relationships open. However, you have to look at it calmly. We have very poorly developed relationships with graduates (…) this is due to several facts, including the fact that the offices for contacts with graduates are not known to students. How can you work with someone you haven't seen before?* (P08). In some areas, however, the *communitas* of the seminar is also transferred to other stages of life. One of the advisors remains in contact with the seminar participants *long after the end of the seminar, it is almost friendly relationship, with some I have a very nice relationship, they invite me to their weddings… It is not common, but indeed, I am very much involved in such a friendly relationship with them* (P10). Such situations can happen as long as a relationship is created that goes slightly beyond the professor–student model, or rather occurs in the human–human context. The relationships created during the seminar have a personalised dimension and nature: *I know them by name, I am not able to name my students in other groups at all, I do not remember them* (P06). The seminar is an opportunity to get to know each other better and it works both ways. This is sometimes expressed in student grades. One of the professors admitted that he was generally perceived as *restrictive* by students, but in the USOS assessment system the seminar participants assessed him as *a pretty relaxed man* (P08). A statement by one of the students from the seminar who described her advisor as her *second mother there in Krakow* (P06), should be treated as a proof of establishing close relations. Another student got pregnant during the project and thought that she had to tell the advisor about it first: *I am expecting a baby and I am so terribly afraid that this research will fail* (P06). The advisor calmed the student down and set a course of action with her, which enabled her to write a good paper.

Seminars conducted within the framework of the INNOHUMAN project, however, require intensive supervision of advisors. In general, advisors in crisis situations *defend their students routinely, they feel obliged to intercede for them* (P09); *you know, I have such a tendency to mother them a little bit, I am a bit of a mother*

hen… (P07). Students *may feel well cared for, we look after and protect them* (P03). However, for the duration of the seminar project, which should be treated as a kind of experiment for both parties, greater contribution is required from the advisor . Throughout the entire course of the master's seminar, additional classes and workshops were conducted, and together with the seminar participants we visited the organisations that were the subject of the papers. The time and energy devoted to this group of students was greater in all cases. Even during foreign trips, advisors used technological devices and worked with students remotely (P03), also via instant messengers: *sometimes messages arrived at 9 p.m., because they had to consult about something quickly* (P05). In a sense, it can be said that participation in these seminars should be seen as a distinction, *a positive element of their studies* (P03).

The conviction that a student should be self-reliant while collecting materials for their master's thesis and writing the text itself was somewhat shaken in the case of action research. Sometimes, while according to the declared principles, these should be occasional situations, the advisors must interfere in students' relations with the organisations studied, especially in conflict-causing situations or in order to help the young researcher to obtain appropriate materials. Master's seminars based on action research inherently broke these standards and advisors were in contact with organisations.

CONTACTS WITH ORGANISATIONS

Students often have problems with obtaining information they need to write their master's thesis. One advisor even described organisations as *hostile* (P01), another speaks about *closed organisations that are mainly interested in themselves* (P04). Difficulties encountered by students were sometimes difficult to overcome: *the inertia of these organisations… they do not come, they cannot make an appointment, then when they arrange a meeting, someone is missing… they use various techniques that make them want to hide something, want to remove something…* (P01). This can be explained by the increasing number of students willing to carry out research in recent years: *there was an avalanche of people coming and asking questions; some organisations said that they should have a few employees who would be busy all the time dealing with students* (P10). As a result of the enormous interest of students in research and internships in organisations, they took some self-defence actions, refused to allow internships, concealed information or used students as a kind of cheap labour to perform activities inconsistent with their education: *for hanging posters, photocopying, making coffee* (P10).

Therefore, the attitude of employers in organisations towards students is sometimes unequal. On the one hand it can be the exploitation of young people, on the other hand it can happen that an organisation focuses on the opportunity to improve something in their company, often thanks to different competences of students resulting from education. However, in standard seminars such situations were rare in the past. After all, *there are no institutions free of imperfections, pathologies are present everywhere* (P08) and, as can be seen, not everyone is immune to criticism. There may be *fear of research results* (P02) in an organisation, and the problem is whether they want to trust young people. At this point, the participation of advisors in the process of working out methods of conduct in the organisations researched, proposed within the framework of the INNOHUMAN project, becomes tantamount to transferring part of their authority to students. All advisors met with employers at the initial stage – research design. In each of the organisations researched there was a designated employee who took an active part in supporting the students on the spot, identifying contact persons appropriate from the point of view of the issues to be addressed, facilitating the establishment of relations, arranging meetings, etc. Some advisors accompanied students in their first relations with the organisation's representatives (we called them "employers" and this definition will be adopted later in the text), while others thought they needed to talk to employers in person: *I met the employer at their headquarters and asked them what they think about this cooperation, how it works, whether and where there are any problems* (P10). Finally, it was often during the first working meetings with employers that the boundaries for students were set, the area in which they were to operate was defined and the ways in which they were supposed to function in organisations were discussed.

Most of the experiences with employers were considered positive by the advisors. Some students made contact with employers very easily, they got onto first-name terms and there was a kind of friendship between them. However, advisors, although having excellent relations with employers, tend to have a rather formal relationship with employers and only in a few cases have these relations been more informal.

Of course, it cannot be said that the cooperation between advisor, student and employer was always smooth. For example, *in one organisation the mentor said that he did not care at all; he was present at workshops, but* told the student: you have to deal with everything yourself. *For her, it was (…) totally unethical* (P07). The advisor confirmed this student's belief that this was an unethical attitude, in the end, it had to be regulated by changing the mentor in the project. The advisor's intervention allowed for the continuation of work in the organisation, and this experience certainly enriched the student. On this occasion, we can say a lot

about the educational role of the university and about the fact that the advisors actually play the role of mentors, whose task is not only to provide substantive supervision.

There were also opposite situations. In one of the organisations the mentor is *very committed, attends all the workshops, asks questions all the time, while the girl does not visit him at all, does not inform him what she will do,* (…) *she did research and did not inform him or other employees of the organisation… a question arises whether this is an action research or not, since there is no participation of the organisation*… (P09). Ultimately, the intervention of the advisor did not help in this case and the student will probably not finish writing her thesis this year.

In another case, the advisor intervened in a situation where a member of the organisation *e-mailed him* that she did not like the way the student conducted the interviews, that she was recording *even though she did not agree*. (…) *it turned out that the student did not record the interview, but made a gesture that was not liked by the respondent, i.e. she left the phone on the table* (…) *I tried to kindly verify this; the student assured me that she absolutely did not record the interview, that she was taking notes; there is nothing left for me to do but believe her* (P05). Eventually, the situation was alleviated, the research was continued and that was the experience for all parties involved – the advisor was faced with such a situation for the first time. Each time it enriches our practice, competences and influences the improvement of advisor's qualifications.

Another moment, mentioned above, requiring intervention from the advisor was when employers were going to solve problems for the students: *there were situations that should not be called conflicts, but rather tensions that had to be eased together with students and the employer* (P03).

One of the employers tried to influence the final theme of the master's thesis very strongly, some student ideas were rejected: *no, do not do that, just do this, because we need it* (P03).

Eventually, thanks to the advisor's actions, the students' original ideas were realised. In general, however, advisors considered that their intervention should only take place in extreme crisis situations, but in general students should be self-reliant. *If I was to talk about the perfect situation, I should stand aside, outside, but when I look through the prism of my personality, I think I would always take the side of the student* (P06).

It should also be pointed out that relations with employers and the possibility of observing seminar participants during their activities could have slightly revised the way advisors think about students.

One of them states that the initial conviction about the attitude of employers towards students as those who *are just learning, do not know anything*

yet, has changed as a result of their contacts with employers. It turned out that organisations treat students differently: *they do not approach them that way. However, I have an impression that at the university we treat students like they are just learning... while they can really help these organisations a lot, first of all they provide a fresh look, very interesting ideas…* (P05). As one of the advisors said: *I look at the perception of our activities on the part of employers and they actually consider student's ideas reasonable* (P08). Thanks to the action research, the advisors could see the students in a different, fuller light, perhaps also ask themselves questions about the ways of working with them. *Now I know that* she [the student – *nomina sunt odiosa*], *when she graduates, will manage in the labour market, I let a creative employee out from under my wings who, even if she has any theoretical shortcomings, will be willing to make up for them and will know how to do it* (P04). It is therefore an element of feedback that teachers can rarely obtain, information that gives satisfaction and is a reward for the effort of educating young people.

It is interesting that on the line of relations between employers and students there was sometimes a mistake of the advisor that consisted in insufficient assessment of the dynamics of the organisation's work as well as the ambitions of students. On the one hand, especially in one of the organisations, *expectations about when something was to appear were not correlated with the project life cycle at all; when something was supposed to be just at the diagnosis stage and then attempts to find solutions were to be made, they were already changing that… it is a good sign that they are not inertial* (P08). However, it was a challenge for the seminar participants because they could not keep up with the organisation and had a problem with the construction of the thesis. The advisor also had some concerns at first, but thanks to the meeting of the advisors' team and the discussion in this forum, thanks to the analysis of the problem, it was decided to describe the changes introduced and *we have such a dilemma that we have to supervise these papers a little differently* (P08). Similar comments were also made by other advisors. It is noteworthy that what happened in the company, the attitude and commitment of employers, was inspiring and stimulating for professors, who otherwise might not have entered some cognitive paths.

The role of the advisor should probably be to stimulate the student's development and manage their relations in the organisation researched. This was most often the case during the seminars conducted in action research. In one case, however, the advisor stated that he should have assessed the student's ambitions differently which were excessive in relation to the student's abilities and responsiveness of the organisation researched.

The student set the bar too high, *he was very ambitious and eventually paid or it by therapy... I could have slowed him down, I could have calmed him down a little,*

I think it would have been good for him. He got excited and so did I (P05). Students do not always cope with stress, they have mental problems, and responsibility combined with an organisation can be overwhelming. This is what happened in the case discussed, as the student finally decided to take sick leave.

Attention should also be paid to another aspect of participation in the INNOHUMAN programme. Well, it seems obvious that the contacts of advisors with employers were oriented primarily towards the development of students. Some of us even thought that, also for the sake of students, they might have had more contacts with the organisations: *I had the feeling that I should have contacted employers more often, that I should have had more frequent conversations with them, that I should not have left students on their own, that I should have conducted conversations at the headquarters of the institution* (P03). This may have been important also due to the fact that the conversations could have been, and were, treated by some advisors as a return to the past. This was because of their previous practical experience: *I had worked in various cultural institutions before and I miss it a little bit, the discussion about their problems is very interesting and it opens up people. It was an interesting experience: to listen and learn* (P05). It should be assumed that many effects of experiences gained in contacts with employers will be more long-term in nature and will become a permanent inspiration in the area of didactics as well as scientific and research work, and they will become a solid part of the scientific biographies of the advisors.

ADVISORS' *COMMUNITAS*

As mentioned earlier, there are no clear rules for conducting a seminar, and many advisors are guided by the experiences of their own studies, intuition or supported by a few texts found in the literature. In principle, when conducting standard seminars, each of us is left alone with a group of students to be supervised. It is sometimes hard work, sometimes unproductive, sometimes thankless. Most often, however, we have moments of joy and pride, when during the defence the reviewers praise the work of our students, and they get a very good grade in the exam.

However, during the INNOHUMAN project, an extraordinary situation occurred. Ten advisors met regularly to talk about the course of research, to report on the progress of seminar participants, to discuss solutions to problems. During our conversations, everyone definitely appreciated the possibility of cooperation between advisors in this project: *I like it very much because I always learn a lot from my colleagues (P07).*

The very fact of starting teamwork was for some of the advisors a new, developmental experience: *in our group there are people who have more or less such experiences, so it can be important for us as well.*

In general, I think that creating a community is a very important thing, a community of learners (...) *INNOHUMAN on the one hand helps us to create such a community among the seminar teachers but also, for example, through workshops, give students an opportunity to experience such a community … I think it is necessary to move it beyond the project, because we will stop working successfully as a university if we cease to be a community* (P02).

The group of advisors is very diverse – we come from three different institutes, we have different interests, approaches to science, research methods, writing styles, each of us has different approaches to many things (P05). *When I listen at these meetings, I see that the style of work of the advisors is very diversified, we differ from each other, and thank God!* (P08). *My vision of conducting a seminar and the vision of other people does not mean that I do something and now everyone will do it the way I do, since each of us is different* (P06). Advisors perceived differences as a value and tried to use them in their thinking and relationships with students: *at different levels, at the logistic, organisational level, how to help students in writing, building tools* (P01). We also used each other's personal experience in the field of organisational practices during seminars. *During one of the meetings, someone said that they checked attendance at the seminars. I have never done this before, but I thought: why not, let's see how it works. It really works! I do not read the attendance list, but I take notes, the students see this and it motivates them to participate in the classes. It also gives them a chance to benefit from the seminar, contribute to the meeting or get something out of it...* (P04). Some of the advisors pointed to the need for *dialogue with students* (P07) and the need for reflection, *development of the social side* (P08).

Community building and its benefits were appreciated in not only a narrow but also in a wider perspective: *we are developing in terms of awareness of cooperation between us. It is a huge success of this project that the representatives of two institutes are sitting here, which have not cooperated with each other so far* (P07).

Above all, however, we supported each other methodologically: *great methodological work, including the systematics in terms of the work's structure, was done together* (P08). Discussion on methodology, joint sharing of opinions from readings in the field of action research, discussing the effects of study visits were mutually enriching. For a few people, the methodology of action research was completely new, we had to get acquainted with extensive literature in this field, we had to recognise the innovativeness of the method.

Therefore, the comments of more experienced colleagues, especially those who had practical experience in this field, were very valuable. It should be noted

that some might even have felt a little unsatisfied with the discussions on methodology: *we, the advisors, could have talked more about methodology, especially in this first semester, when there hadn't been any seminars yet. I think it would have been nice if we had talked more about it* (P09). First of all, for the younger colleagues who had little experience in conducting a master's seminar, the opportunity to benefit from the experience of advisors with more academic achievements was very important: *at our meetings, when we exchanged opinions, I learnt from others, the advisors supported each other* (P06), *undoubtedly I got the most from our joint meetings of advisors* (P05).

The INNOHUMAN project assumed the introduction of methods and tools of scientific work which for some have turned out to be completely new, for example, self-reflection in the form of a researcher's diary, both by students and advisors. The exchange of experiences on how to keep them, how to use Internet tools, how to document field materials was very valuable, at some metalevel the effects of these activities could be assessed as *excellent materials* (P10). Undoubtedly, they could have been an inspiration for further research and scientific development of advisors, and probably time will show that this indeed happened. During the meetings we reported on the progress of our students' work, shared doubts and difficulties, and sometimes tried to find solutions to the problems of individual members of the advisors' team. The fact that we were not left alone with our problems was a strong support for us: *undoubtedly the most important thing was meeting the advisors together, to listen about others' difficulties* (P05); *it turns out that we do not have some of the difficulties and that our situation is not so bad or that we do not notice the problems, and this opens up thinking* (P04). Solving immediate problems as well as learning different approaches to advisor's work from each other, creating a new social reality in the form of *advisors' communitas* became a unique opportunity for us. Let the statement of one of the advisors, which seems representative of all, demonstrate that we will exploit it: *we develop the most, then students, and finally employers* (P07).

The Jagiellonian University, like other universities in Poland, is currently undergoing a process of transformation resulting, on the one hand, from socio-cultural changes inherent in the wider, global environment, and on the other hand, from the ongoing reform of higher education and the implementation of Act 2.0 (Pol. Ustawa 2.0). Both in the environments directly related to universities as well as in the wider economic context, there is an ongoing discussion on what is and what should be the role of the university in the present day [cf. e.g. Sztompka, Matuszek 2015]. The advisors involved in the project, with regard to the part of the university's operation which concerns the education of students, were quite unanimous in their view that it was not possible to identify a single

educational objective. This is because both culture management and social policies *should have a practical dimension, and it is also about searching for the truth, describing, understanding and explaining reality* (P07).

The dual nature of education may also give rise to different paths that our graduates will follow.

However, in the course of education, and especially in the course of the master's seminar, it should be remembered that no distinction can be made between the theoretical world and the practical world, because if these two worlds are separated, it is generally bad for the world... *the point is that they have to intertwine* (P10).

Thus, the master's seminar can be perceived in this respect from the perspective of liminality between theory and practice.

Liminality, as a property of the "betwixt and between" social states, as defined by Turner, concerns human activity, including the conceptual activity present in cognitive processes. This dimension was particularly evident during the seminar in the INNOHUMAN project, action research, which in essence very clearly combines these two dimensions: theory and practice.

Thinking about the role of the university, its mission and importance in the contemporary world is also a search for answers to what extent universities should meet the expectations of the environment and to what extent they should shape them. All the advisors agreed that the university should in no way only adapt to the environment and seek to meet market needs. This was clearly expressed by one of the professors, who reminded us that two decades ago Peter Senge said that those organisations that can adapt to the changing reality will win and survive. However, it is not about competing or chasing... in this sense the university has no chance to win with business if the criteria are better computers, even better buildings, higher wages... adaptation is about cooperation, I adapt to reality in such a way that I shape it (P01). It is certainly not about meeting short-term labour market expectations (P06), but about having an animating role in relations with the environment (P08). According to the advisors, this is also understood by students whose main goal is to change the world for the better (P06). It would certainly be possible to identify various areas and scopes of that changing the world, but it is important not to be stuck in the ivory tower (P06), that the university should teach students critical thinking, already mentioned several times, that university graduates should be citizens of society and adopt an attitude of concern for the welfare of other people… The university should be an emancipatory factor that should actually disagree with society, disagree with what is happening in order to introduce innovations (P03). However, a noticeable difficulty is that the university does not always keep up:

it takes a year and a half to change the studies programme, and for this reason it is difficult to talk about any adaptation, we do not have more flexibility, but certainly the university should be open (P05). If the university were only to meet expectations and adapt to the environment, it would mean that our thinking as scientists would have to be subordinated to the reality that is shaped outside of us, and I believe that with our thinking we are able to shape this reality, or at least to explain the world, rather than being dependent on the rulers, all those who try to shape reality (P07). "Explaining the world", which, in line with the action research approach, should be understood as a deeper understanding of organisational reality and the essence of problems, would mean explaining how it functions, but if we look at this expression a bit metaphorically, we could say that it would mean that the world would be a little bit clearer, maybe more structured, more efficient, at least more collision-free, simply better. The efforts and work undertaken as part of the seminars in the action research methodology have led to many implementations, although these are sometimes only small parts of the repair of the world. In this sense, the liminality of the seminar fulfilled its purpose and we are all in a slightly different, better condition than we were before. Therefore, maybe action research is the Holy Grail of our times?

CONCLUSION

Advisory processes conducted on the basis of student action research, which became the basis for gaining experience presented in this book, were carried out within the framework of a teaching-implementation project. The project context influenced their course and features, introducing various restrictions, but at the same time giving a framework of time and cause-effect logic to the joint work. All advisors conducted seminars on the basis of student action research for the first time, and some of them had never supervised a diploma seminar at the second degree studies before. For us as advisors, this experience had the character of action research, which built a level of conscious self-reflection. Apart from the mainstream activity of didactic dimension, it was an important learning process for us in various forms: individual education (mainly through reading), learning about experiences of other academic teachers (study visits), learning in the seminar process (from students, through students, directly from organisations, through self-reflection), learning in the course of project implementation, in forms supporting action research (joint workshops for students, advisors and mentors from organisations), learning in the process of mutual exchange of experiences between advisors.

Regular monthly meetings of advisors were a form of interpenetration of two types of relations: project and community ones. The pretext for them was to systematically monitor the progress of the project. Their main advantage, however, was that they provided a platform for the exchange of advisors' experiences, identification of threats and design of activities supporting both advisors and students. These activities were then carried out during workshops focused on the development of competences of all persons involved in the project. Moreover, the meetings also became a platform for collegial cooperation between experienced researchers and their young colleagues who usually do not have the opportunity for such direct and democratic exchange, free from university hierarchies.

From the point of view of the subject matter, the action research undertaken within the framework of particular advisory processes was very diverse. Some consisted in searching for improvements in the functioning of one's own organisation, well known to the researcher, others involved entering a completely unknown environment. Some ended with identification of the organisational problem and recommendation of the designed solution, others led to the implementation of the solution, and even the beginning of the next cycle of improvements. While conducting research, students most often made observations, conducted interviews, surveys, and experiments. This element of the whole project demonstrated the methodological freedom of this approach well, confirming what we have presented in this book mainly from the theoretical point of view. At the same time, young researchers managed to see and use the sense of action research in the context of designing unique ways of collecting and analysing data.

The advisory process was clearly different from the traditional model outlined in the book, which was established in the Polish academic practice. First of all, because it was based on action research which, in our opinion, is still an alternative approach in both scientific and didactic work. This meant that it was open to practical knowledge. It was a starting point for the whole research procedure and understanding of identified and solved problems. Moreover, it had a character of dialogue and reflection, based on multiple relations focused around the student. The multitude of social relations entered by students made their sense of autonomy grow, as they were the keystone of various knowledge types. Adequacy of understanding the specificity of the problem to its real attributes determined the possibility of solving it. Awareness of this fact increased the student's sense of responsibility for the whole process of identifying and designing solutions and how to implement them. The awareness of the agency in the process of research and implementation as well as partnership relations in the advisory process strengthened emancipatory attitudes. Students strengthened their research autonomy. In this phenomenon we emphasised the analogy

to the performative process of passage. Young people were moving towards independence from both their own academic tutor and standard research procedures characteristic of the widely written and defended diploma theses devoid of innovative theoretical and practical solutions. Additionally, on an individual scale, the result of the project was the completion of studies, establishing cooperation with the organisation researched and getting to know the representatives of other Krakow institutions that participated in the project.

This created favourable conditions for entering the labour market.

On the one hand, the project framework constituted a significant support for the advisory process (agreement with the organisation for conducting action research, a mentor in the organisation, workshops, mutual exchange of experience between advisors, additional seminars and consultations for students), on the other hand, it was slightly restrictive (model of the process implementation, diploma thesis draft, draft of the action plan), which is contrary to the essence of the approach appropriate for action research. In the cognitive sense, the implementation work can be considered a kind of "pilot project". Together we tested something new, knowing that in the short time available for research and implementation we would not be able to fully develop the potential of action research. At the same time, however, the process of mutual learning was so intense that certain imperfections and limitations were of secondary importance. Moreover, due to the need to comply with the schedules, the project framework was an element of motivation for students and guaranteed that despite deciding to do something unusual and uncertain, the studies would be completed within a set time.

Standardisation of the procedure in the advisory process was not only a result of the project requirements, but also resulted partly from our lack of experience and expectations of the students. Therefore, together with the advisors, we prepared a model and designs based on the Irish and British experiences. It gave us a certain sense of security that by coordinating individual dynamic advisory processes, we would not violate the basic framework of an approach appropriate to action research. However, we did not avoid the tension between the need to accept the flexibility and unpredictability of action research and the linearity of the thesis process and the rigidity of formal requirements. An important tension was also the reconciliation of the requirement of transparency and verifiability of the research process with the ethical requirements of the approach to action research.

To sum up, we can try to find an answer to the question: what are the benefits of the process of writing a diploma paper based on action research for academic teachers and students? First of all, it allows us to see that practical knowledge has many faces, apart from being declarative and procedural, it is also hidden. Identifying the problems encountered and searching for ways to solve

them in interaction with the members of the organisation provides an opportunity to attain tacit knowledge, which enables one to approach the understanding of these problems. Action research is an opportunity to externalise it. The emphasis on practical knowledge does not mean ignoring theoretical knowledge, which creates a broader context and deepens the understanding of practical problems. In the process of deepening the reflection on the examined problems and searching for their solutions, tacit knowledge is connected with other types of organisational and theoretical knowledge. Dynamic relations of the student with the members of the organisation and with the advisor, in the context of the examined problems, make up the process of giving meaning, understanding meanings, leading to the creation of new knowledge. Its authorship can be attributed to both researchers and practitioners. It is created thanks to the efforts of the reflection community which is established for the duration of research and sometimes also for the implementation of recommendations based on its results.

As a result of the gained experience, the advisors involved have acquired the competence to implement the advisory processes leading to the creation of implementation diploma theses. Furthermore, they have improved their ability to manage the development of students in a way that strengthens their autonomy, gives them a sense of agency, but also requires them to take responsibility. The conditions for emancipation and unrestricted critical thinking have been established.

The project has created a suitable framework for students writing their theses based on action research. For the advisors, this experience was a shift towards the participatory orientation via a circuitous route, by supervising students who have taken on a leading research role. From this position of the observer, assistant, "critical friend", the need arose to further enrich the conducted seminars with innovative cognitive elements as well as to apply action research in one's own research practice. As a result, we all learned and the difficulties along the way diversified the relationship between students, advisors and representatives of organisations, forcing us to abandon the usual paths of reasoning. Returning to the level of metareflection, we can say that participation in this project has significantly changed the way of supervising diploma theses at the Institute of Culture of the Jagiellonian University and the Institute of Public Affairs of the Jagiellonian University. We have yet another stage ahead of us, going beyond the framework of the project, the implementation of our own ideas in more reflective and intensive work with students. The process of change triggered by the interest in action research is basically only just beginning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.
SCENARIO OF THE FIRST METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP FOR STUDENTS

Session I. 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.: Integration of the group

Objective	Time	Programme	Materials
Integration of participants	1 hour	Start: Welcoming the participants, workshop objectives, organisation of the workshop (sessions, breaks).	
		In the middle of the room we place about 50 photos. The participants choose one photo which is a metaphor of the research process. Then each participant introduces themselves (name, course, other information), presents a photo and describes how it is associated with the research process.	Photos
		Alternative option: In the middle of the room we place about 50 photos. The participants choose one photo which is a metaphor of the research process. Next, we divide the participants into groups (random selection) in which they prepare a story about the research, combining selected photos. The teams present their members and the story.	

Session II. 10:15 a.m. – 12:00 a.m. Preparation for action research

Objective	Time	Programme	Materials
Reflection on resources and concerns related to entering an organisation	30 minutes	Introduction: Entering an organisation is one of the key moments for the whole research process (relations with the organisation, research problem, etc.). When preparing for this, it is important to answer the following question: How do I understand the organisation in which I will be doing my research?	Sticky notes, flipchart

		Exercise: The participants individually answer two questions (each answer on a separate sticky note): What can help me understand/know the organisation (what do I know, what "resources" do I have)? What difficulties may I face? Then, in groups of six or eight, the participants draw a balloon with a basket on the flipchart: in the balloon they place sticky notes with the answer to question 1, and the "ballast" of the answer to question 2 under the basket. (We ask them to sort the sticky notes into different categories while preparing for the presentation).	
	15 minutes	Discussion: each team presents their work. Then, in the same teams, the participants write down on sticky notes the question they could ask in order to obtain information allowing them to learn about the specificity of the organisation. Who can have important/useful information? Who would they like to talk to? "Talking wall" – Participants walk around the room reading questions prepared by other groups.	Flip-chart paper
Presentation of the experiential learning model	30 minutes	Experiential learning: How to prepare oneself for solving organisational problems (based on Prof. Coghlan's handbook). Exercise based on Kolb's cycle. Students do this exercise individually. Its purpose is to strengthen the feeling that they are able to reflect and develop solutions based on organisational experience. In addition, the exercise prepares them to keep the researcher's diary. Specific experience: describe in a few sentences the specific experience that has taken place in your work or university, what happened, who said what. Be neutral and informative in your description. Reflection: describe your feelings, reactions, observations and evaluation of the event. Maybe you're disappointed, angry or satisfied with your reactions at the time? What caused your reaction? Conceptualisation: relate the relevant assumptions, theories and concepts known to you to the experience you have participated in. Experience: propose actions that can be taken in the future if an event, similar to the one you participated in, occurs.	Exercise template – printed
Identification of one's own research interests	30 minutes	The participants write the answers to the questions on sticky notes: What are my scientific interests? What competences can I develop with AR? Then, in groups, they prepare a poster "How to reconcile our interests with what an organisation may be interested in". The groups present their work.	
Identification of one's own research interests	30 minutes	The participants write the answers to the questions on sticky notes: What are my scientific interests? What competences can I develop with AR? Then, in groups, they prepare a poster "How to reconcile our interests with what an organisation may be interested in". The groups present their work.	

Session III. 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m. Ethics/values/communication/ role of researcher

Objective	Time	Programme	Materials
Reflection on the notions of ethics and value in the researcher's work	15 minutes	Introduction: about values, communication and the role of the researcher in action research. Brief information about the course of this part of the workshop. Exercise: students in pairs/small groups exchange comments on what is most important to them. Students volunteer to share the conclusions of the discussion with the whole group. The workshop leader then comments, showing the differences between life goals, plans, dreams and what is most important and can be considered as values.	
Reflection on the role of values in action research	40 minutes	Students (and employees, if they so wish) in groups of four or five (depending on the number of students and employees) reflect on the importance of the proposed values (from supporting materials plus possible additions) in the conduct of scientific research. The following question may be an inspiration: What does this value mean for us and what will happen if we pursue it while conducting research? What will be noticeable? In the same groups, the participants select three to five key values for research quality and justify their choice. Each group presents one selected value (deliberating the results of the group discussion in the two previous steps).	Values in organisations and action research
Preparation for the first meeting with employers. The role of communication in the success of research	30 minutes	In groups (divided by type of employer), students talk about preparing for a meeting with employers which will include a discussion about the research idea (how to start a discussion about research and my role in the organisation as a researcher? What to talk about? What is/will be my role in the organisation as a researcher? In addition, in this section, a little bit about the researcher's dilemmas: can I record films and conversations in the organisation?; whether and when to inform that the recorded material will be used for research?; what can I use and what can I not?; the question of authorisation of materials, including visual ones, etc.). Individual groups are accompanied by advisors as listeners.	

Session IV. 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. The search for research problems

Objective		Topic	Materials
Reflection on understanding problems in organisation	15 minutes	Problems in the organisation: Introductory presentation – types of problems in the organisation, sources of information about problems in the organisation; Problems in the organisation – types of problems: deviant, optimising, heuristic, cognitive, decision-making, executive, etc.; Methods of diagnosing problems in the organisation.	
Providing knowledge on the formulation of scientific/ research problems	15 minutes	Scientific problem – the beginning of the research process: The "intra-scientific" situation; Social/organisational situation; Motivations and values of the researcher.	
Developing the ability to formulate research objectives	45 minutes	Divide students into four groups. Everyone gets a copy of the case study. Ask them to read it silently and then discuss it in the group. Ask them to: Diagnose the problem in the organisation; Propose solutions; Discuss how to convince decision-makers of the proposed solutions. Present the results.	*case study*

APPENDIX 2.
IMPLEMENTATION MASTER'S THESIS BASED ON ACTION RESEARCH – DRAFT

The volume of the implementation master's thesis should be between 30 and 50 pages (plus bibliography and attachments), Times New Roman font 12 pt., 1.5 pt. spacing. An action plan is a mandatory attachment to the thesis.

The thesis should consist of the following elements:

Abstract

1. Introduction:
   - a general overview of the thesis;
   - the context of the action research (social, organisational, ethical);
   - definitions of the most important terms;
   - the objective of the thesis and the research problem;
   - research approach – action research and type of the undertaken action research;
   - the sources of data and information used;
   - presentation of the structure of the thesis (concise description of the chapters' content).
2. Characteristics of the researched organisation and identified research problem.
3. Review of the literature on the research problem.
4. Description of the process of the performed action research:
   - Recognising the organisation (when, how, with what methods did I find practical problems?).
   - Research design (why did I choose the methods?; how did I ensure that the designed research was ethical?).
   - Process of conducting the research (how was the research conducted?; what were the stages?; what was the challenge?; did I encounter ethical problems during the research?).
   - Result of the research (what was the result of the data analysis?; was the result of the research confronted with the members of the organisation and how?).
   - Implementation design process.
   - Implementation/evaluation of the implementation (optional in case of implementation of the solution in the organisation: how were the results of the implementation confronted with the members of the organisation?).

- Self-reflection on one's own practice (how did the action research change me?; whether the research problem was redefined during the conduct of the research?).

5. Summary: critical reflection on the process and results of research and actions taken.

Bibliography
Appendices

APPENDIX 3.
ACTION PLAN – APPENDIX TO THE IMPLEMENTATION MASTER'S THESIS

Action Plan is a mandatory appendix to the master's thesis. It shall be in the form of a concise document and shall consist of the following elements:

1. Situational description of the proposed change, main conclusions – executive summary of the thesis.
2. Recommendations.
3. What action? – an action plan (its description) with key moments, including possible solutions.
4. Who? – people responsible in the organisation and involved in the implementation.
5. Resources – cost, material, information, technology, stakeholders (potential allies in implementing change), competences.
6. When? – schedule (expected time of implementation, duration, evaluation).
7. Analysis (context) of the factors threatening as well as favouring the implementation project and their consequences, inventory of anticipated barriers in the internal and external environment.
8. Success indicators (how we will know that we have succeeded in implementing change), compliance with the assumed objectives.

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