

مصطلح الوصاية في نظام التعليم العالي: إشارة إلى تجربة المملكة المتحدة
The Concept of Tutoring in Higher Education: a Reference to the
Experience of the United Kingdom

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الملخص	Abstract	
<p>الوصاية هي نشاط إرشادي فردي يميز نظام التعليم العالي، يساهم في تحسين جوانب عديدة من حياة الطالب الشخصية، الأكاديمية والعملية. يتماشى هذا النشاط التربوي مع نظام ال.ل.م.د الجزائري الذي يهدف إلى تحسين استقلالية المتعلم.</p> <p>تهدف هذه المقالة إلى إلقاء الضوء على مفهوم الوصاية من خلال مقارنتها بأدوار بيداغوجية أخرى مماثلة كالإشراف، التدريب والتوجيه إلى جانب تحديد دور الأستاذ الوصي. من خلال هذا المحتوى، قمنا بالإشارة إلى تجربة المملكة المتحدة في مجال الوصاية نظرا لأنها أول وأقدم تجربة في تاريخ التعليم العالي وتطرقنا لإيجابيات الوصاية وتحديات تطبيقها في الجامعات البريطانية. نأمل من خلال هذا التعريف بمفهوم الوصاية في التعليم العالي</p>	<p>Tutoring is a one-to one counselling system in Higher Education significant for improving the student's well-being, academic success and professional goals. This pedagogical activity is in line with the Algerian LMD system's policies for improving learner autonomy. This article aims at shedding light on the concept of tutoring by comparing it to other similar pedagogical roles such as supervising, coaching and mentoring in addition to defining the role of the tutor. It significantly refers to the UK higher educational experience with tutoring, the first and longest experience ever known in the history of Higher Education. The paper also addresses the benefits as well as</p>	

<p>the challenges of implementing tutoring in UK. It is hoped that the present content will contribute in creating some self-reflection among university teachers to help them reshape their own beliefs about tutoring and bring some educational change within the Algerian university context.</p>	<p>إحداث بعضا من التفكير الذاتي لدى أساتذة الجامعة وتمكينهم من إعادة النظر في معتقداتهم حول مفهوم الوصاية وإمكانية تطبيقها في أقسامهم الجامعية.</p>
<p>Keywords :Tutoring; UK higher educational system; Algerian LMD system.</p>	<p>الكلمات المفتاحية: الوصاية; نظام التعليم العالي في المملكة المتحدة; نظام ال.ل.م.د. الجزائري.</p>

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1. Introduction

As a result of the implications of the LMD system in Algeria, teaching and learning in Higher Education has shifted from a traditional teacher-centred orientation to a learner-centred teaching style. In this latter, the students are at the centre of the learning process; teachers are encouraged to develop learners' autonomy to enable them become self-directed. Besides the learner-centred style of instruction, tutoring is another feature practiced in the LMD curriculum. This pastoral role generally consists of supporting the intellectual ability of students and nurturing their emotional well-being.

In the LMD curriculum, tutors act like facilitators and resources for first year license students to help them develop their critical thinking and sense of curiosity (MESRS, 2011). Personal tutoring or simply tutoring is set forth under ministerial circular number 09/03 of the 3rd of January, 2009 and operates in four directions: accompaniment, methodological, technical and professional. What is missing in the ministerial regulations and guides is a description of the exact

mission of each of the four teams. Apparently, it is the responsibility of each university to set up its own official guide to tutors. This is what I observed after visiting the web-sites of some Algerian universities.

Through a doctoral research (Sail, 2019), it was revealed that the real meaning of tutoring was not clear to teachers of the faculty of Arts and Humanities, English Department (Blida 2 University, Algeria) and it was unpractised on ground. Following these findings, I felt motivated to write this paper to shed more light on the definition of tutoring. I additionally sought to refer to the United Kingdom (UK) Higher Education (HE) experience with tutoring since it has a long history rooted in the English Oxbridge tradition. The UK experience is indeed a refferal point since interest and initiatives towards developing tutoring have never stopped ever since. The view of enhancing the culture of guidance and support to UK university students was reinforced by the strong agreement among scholars (Laycock, 2009; Trotter, 2003) upon the benefits of tutoring and its positive impact on learners' progression, achievement and retention.

The present paper is a theoritical review. It is meant to bring the concept of tutoring to surface so that Algerian faculty members gain more insight about it. It differentiates between tutoring and other similar occupations. It defines the models of tutoring in UK Higher Education Institutions (UKHEIs) and explores its benefits with a special emphasis on first year students. It also evaluates the provision of personal tutoring against the literature and the challenges characterizing the UKHEIs climate during the 20's.

2. Tutoring and Other Similar Occupations

Within the higher educational system, there exist several one-to-one relationships that link students with others and support their educational and personal development and tutoring is just one of them. Tutoring, or 'academic advising' as referred to by Americans (Grey et al., 2016), is often confused with other similar pedagogical roles such as supervising, coaching and especially mentoring.

Supervising is probably the easiest relationship to distinguish since it concerns students who undertake a project-work or write a dissertation or thesis. During this process, supervisors watch over and work alongside by their supervisees to assist them in developing their research skills. Coaching, another role similar to tutoring, is about guiding the students in dealing with current situations and considering their specific skills and needs. It involves anyone who

has a sufficient knowledge and experience of coaching methods especially in the domains of art and sport (Wisher et al., 2008).

Mentoring, practiced first in the US, encompasses a more experienced person who empowers and enables others to develop necessary skills to become effective as learners and future employees. Mentoring may involve students in the support of others who are new such as international students or those with disabilities. It may also consist of supplementary instruction and peer-assisted learning (Wisher et al., 2008). Miller (2002) attempts to differentiate between the British tutoring activity and the American mentoring system by arguing that the focus of the former is on subject learning whereas concentration in the latter is on life learning. Following Miller's perspective, tutoring can be seen as one of the several themes included in mentoring. In fact, the exact role of the tutor in Higher Education has often been tackled in the literature.

3. Role of the Tutor

Several attempts have been made to define the role of the tutor in Higher Education. Wootton (2006) considers that tutoring is about encompassing students' personal development and pastoral care, including understanding and addressing a range of students' anxieties. Wisher et al. (2008) expand Wootton's pastoral definition of tutoring by adding the academic role to the mixture. They argue that the tutor should have some knowledge about the tutees' background needs and situations, their progress and achievement or further academic needs. The tutor can then use this knowledge and temper guidance of the students in relation to it.

In the same vein, Wheeler et al. (1993) provide a more elaborate definition of tutoring since they referred to other areas than the pastoral and academic roles where tutees should be sustained in. According to them, in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality, tutors should not only facilitate the personal development of the students and monitor their progress, they have an administrative role, too. They constitute a link between students and university authorities and intervene on their behalf on administrative issues.

In a more recent and practical definition, McFarlane (2016) defines personal tutors as academic members of staff or faculty whose role is to provide support to students to foster their engagement in learning. Responsibilities of the tutor, according to McFarlane, vary but they are likely to include:

- Supporting transition to university and between levels,

- Discussing academic progress,
- Encouraging engagement with extra-curricular opportunities,
- Monitoring attendance,
- Being the first point of contact for academic and personal difficulties,
- Providing guidance to appropriate support services and
- Offering one-to-one or group meetings on a regular basis.

In brief, tutoring refers to a system in Higher Education where students are allocated a personal tutor who has the role to support and react to students if they bring personal problems, exhibit learning difficulties and/or face administrative issues.

The previously described pastoral, academic and administrative roles of the tutor can be performed following different models.

4. Personal Tutoring Models in UK

History of Higher Education in the UK witnessed the emergence of different versions of personal tutoring. The literature (Earwaker, 1992; Laycock, 2009) suggests a chain of models one coming as a reaction to the other. The Pastoral model appeared first and the Professional and Curriculum models followed; these types of tutoring existed across various UKHEIs.

The early development of pastoral tutoring in UK Higher Education is a longstanding tradition particularly strong in England but much less in Scotland, Wales and Ireland. This model is also known as the Oxbridge model as it has its roots in the 16th century practices of Oxford and Cambridge universities. This tradition appeared because students at that time were living far from home and staying in the university's campuses and thus they needed guidance and support. Not only this, they were under the responsibility of their university since they were not considered to become legally adult until the age of 21. As a result, in Oxford and Cambridge and other institutions, moral tutors whose role also constituted of teaching and doing research, were ensuring support to small groups of students. Even in halls of residences, students were provided guidance by a warden who was also a member of the academic staff (Grant, 2006).

During the 1990's, pastoral tutoring was 'under strain'. Students, with their increasing number, faced difficulties meeting their unavailable tutors who had other duties such as research and teaching. This model couldn't remain practical and it was later on criticised as being unsatisfactory because it could not respond

to the needs of the tutees or staff (Grant, 2006). In some institutions, Pastoral tutoring was replaced by the Professional model.

Like Pastoral tutoring, Professional tutoring has a long history, too. It is the result of the emergence of a counselling service known as Earliest Careers Services. These services were established as early as 1892 in Oxford and 1902 in Cambridge. They started in Leicester University in 1946 and spread later on during the 80's and 90's in other institutions across the UK.

These services were first centralized and meant to provide students with more professional advice than could be offered by academic staff or pastoral tutors.

The spread of the above counselling services caused the emergence of a Professional model of tutoring which extended the services' role from professional advice only to financial advice, support for students with disabilities and specific difficulties, academic skills and development (Grant, 2006). Tutors in this system are trained teaching staff who work on a rota system in desks within an office and they are available to respond to students' inquiries especially international students recognising difficulties and those having special needs or feeling in distress. Thus, permanent guidance offices were set up where students could refer to specialists such as counselors, accommodation officers and career advisers (Laycock, 2009). Some instances of the Professional model are the 'Personal Tutoring Unit' at Cardiff School of Management in Wales (Levy et al., 2009)) or the Student Support Officers in the Manchester Metropolitan University in England (Earwaker, 1992).

So far, it has been demonstrated that Professional tutoring differs from Pastoral tutoring in the sense that the former holds more qualified and available staff than the latter. Despite this fact, there seems to be fewer professional tutors in the UK compared to pastoral tutors. This was reported by Grey et al. (2016) when they surveyed 164 UKHEIs in order to learn about the model of tutoring mostly used at university. They argued that the dominance of the Pastoral model was probably due to its popularity as a traditional model.

Although the Pastoral and Professional models differ, both of them are offered in addition or parallel to main stream teaching or what Warren (2002) calls the 'separate' approach of integrating tutoring in Higher Education. Tutoring is not always introduced separately from teaching, it can be 'integrated' or 'semi-integrated' in the curriculum (Warren, 2002). This model of tutoring has been referred to as the Curriculum model.

In a semi-integrated approach, interventions are aligned to the curriculum and meant to facilitate the personal development of the student whereas an integrated approach has a more remedial role so that the guidance and support of the tutor relate to a particular learning experience contextualized within a given discipline (Warren, 2002). For example, tutoring may be linked to a module which comprises skills provision, such as the Didactics module, by providing practical exercises to promote a deep learning of how to teach.

Compared to Pastoral and Professional tutoring, the Curriculum model is less reactive and more proactive in nature since it consists of planning the tutoring sessions and targeting the skills or competencies in which tutees need more assistance and guidance. On ground, this system, as presented by Earwaker (1992), is based on scheduling weekly time-tabled meetings between small groups of students and tutors. These meetings are incorporated within an accredited course, programme or classroom module, often called a tutorial module. In this module, tutees are assisted in acquiring learning skills and personal development planning and they are provided with information about the operation of the university. The Curriculum model existed in some UKHEIs and the pilot study of 'Embedded Personal Tutoring' for tourism students at the University of Westminster in England (Stevenson, 2009) is a good example.

The Curriculum integrated model seems to offer better prospects for helping students to succeed at university than separate provision of tutoring (Warren, 2002). Grey et al. (2018) argue that the use of group tutorial sessions in the Curriculum model 'facilitates the building of peer relationships, creates a sense of belonging, and develops a student's capacity to work with others and learn from their peers'. In the same vein, Thomas (2012) reported that setting tutorial sessions which include small groups of students helped them in sharing feelings and concerns and reducing worries about studies. Owen (2002) also accentuated the significant role of group tutorials in establishing a relationship of trust and confidentiality between tutees and tutor.

After reviewing the three different approaches of integrating tutoring in Higher Education, this leads us to conclude that the three models (Pastoral, Professional and Curriculum) still exist in UKHEIs probably depending on the needs of students and the resources of each university. Nowadays, there seems to be a tendency in many UK institutions to revise their approaches to integrate personal tutoring and a 'hybrid pastoral-professional-curriculum' models are becoming

more common (Grey et al, 2016; Grey et al, 2018). Integrating personal tutoring in UK Higher Education has become evident since it positively contributes in the progression, achievement and retention of students and in shaping the first and most important years of study.

5. Personal Tutoring Benefits: First Year Experience

The first year learning experience at university seems to be the most important in shaping retention, progression and withdrawal decisions among students. Gutteridge (2001) identified the first six weeks after the start of the course as being clearly the most difficult period for new students.

In this context, Laycock (2009) revealed that UK students appeared to be vulnerable especially at the start of their courses; they worried about financing their studies and transitioning from the previous approach of teaching and learning to an approach based on self-reliance. Laycock added that the most frequently cited reasons given for non-completion of studies by students in varied institutions in the UK were financial stress and students' personal experiences. This highlights the importance of early and regular personal tutoring in supporting first year students' transition.

Indeed, the research (Trotter, 2003) into first year undergraduate experiences revealed that programmes with higher retention rates were those providing comprehensive pre-entry information to help students settle-in, make friends and get to know others on their programme. Several good attempts have been made to introduce first year students to personal tutoring and the two following cases from Kingstone University and Bournemouth University in England (Hartwell H. & al., 2006) constitute interesting illustrations to mention.

In Kingstone University, a tutoring programme called First Year Experience Programme was settled in order to help students to transition into Higher Education. These students were supported via a Curriculum model of tutoring which links with first year modules. In this programme, each new student entering the university is given a personal tutor who is a member of staff who will act as their mentor or counsellor throughout their degree course. These groups are managed by a Senior Tutor who ensures that all students receive appropriate support and guidance. Personal tutoring groups ranged from 5 to 8 students. Personal tutors offer time-tabled sessions throughout the first year where students discuss and work on developing their written and oral communication skills and

during the tutorial sessions, exercises related to the first year modules are run through.

In Bournemouth University, personal tutoring was provided to first year students using a web-based resource called Stepping Stones. Like in the previous programme, a Curriculum model of tutoring was adopted. It constitutes of delivering five online sessions that focus on issues related to the administration, career and placement; all integrated in the students' first year programme. This tutoring system proved to help students establish a positive relationship with the university and support their learning outcomes. In Stepping Stones programme, students felt that their university was caring and concerned and this hugely improved their retention.

The above mentioned instances programmes constituted promising and encouraging efforts to offer tutoring of quality to first year university students in UK. Despite this fact, Trotter (2003) notes that 'the reality of practising tutoring and ensuring the students' need with their personal tutors early on in induction is at odds with the university policy statements'. The implementation deficit noted in some universities was caused by a number of factors and some circumstances characterizing the UK higher educational climate during the 20's.

6. Personal Tutoring Challenges in UK

Interest in the quality of personal tutoring remained a priority for the ministry of UK Higher Education. In the year 1997, it had officially raised the issue of quality of personal tutoring by establishing a framework for guidance to tutors which endorsed the underpinning principles of tutoring. This framework comprised the following broad guidelines: guidance should be learner-centred, confidential, impartial and equitable to all students (Harrison, 2007; Laycock, 2009). On ground, making personal tutoring of quality and equitable to each university student was and is still not evident since tutors are witnessing many hindrances.

The main challenge relates to the widening participation and international recruitment policy followed by the government to guarantee social justice and economic competitiveness. These initiatives created a student body diverse in age, background and ethnicity which impacted the quality of tutoring at university. It has become more difficult for tutors to handle with the increased diversity of students and their broad range of issues.

In addition to the diversity issue, a decline in funding for undergraduate teaching has worsened the situation. In most UK universities, there seems to be no clear system to ensure the quality of personal tutoring and reward tutors. This has indirectly affected the motivation of tutors and their will to take the role of personal tutoring seriously. This pastoral activity is generally perceived by academics as having less value than the tasks of teaching and research. All these circumstances and beliefs caused tutors to spend varied amount of time with their tutees across institutions (Grant, 2006; Owen, 2002).

Other additional potential hindrances are linked to the personal tutors' perceived confidence and competence. Most lecturers were not clear about their roles as personal tutors (Myers, 2008; McFarlane, 2016) and this is probably due to a lack of training. According to a survey by Race (2010), many tutors learn through experience and talking to colleagues. To deal with the tutor training concern, some institutions such as the Centre for Recording Achievement in England developed a web-site of materials to be used in the training of personal tutors (Simmonds, 2006).

Tutors' feelings of stress is another factor which negatively affects the quality of tutoring. Busy UK academics were overwhelmed with work and they often felt tensions to balance teaching, research and personal support (McFarlane, 2016; Myers, 2008). In Hertfordshire University in England, tutors were themselves offered some kind of tutoring or counselling to help reduce their increased level of stress and tension. Counselling services took the form of a course which run over ten weeks. It was designed to explore the emotional aspects of learning and teaching with the aim of supporting staff in their day-to-day interactions with students. Half of the session covers set of issues relevant to teaching and learning and the other half is devoted to presentations delivered from course members around current issues related to their work (Simmonds, 2006).

It has been revealed through this last section that applying tutoring in UK Higher Education is intricate and constitutes a real challenge. It does not solely depend on some ministerial decisions but also on the real initiatives of the government to train academics to deal with the diversity of students. Not only this, financial measures to reward the university teachers for acting as personal tutors are important. When tutoring conditions improve, students and faculty members will automatically benefit. Both will avoid or at least reduce feelings of stress and

tensions and tutors' perceptions about their role will be reshaped. By extension, the quality of tutoring will be enhanced.

7. Conclusion

The present paper is a significant theoretical article. It aims at shedding light on the concept of tutoring (also known as personal tutoring or academic advising) and its functioning in the system of Higher Education. This review opens with a section which distinguishes tutoring from other similar occupations. It explores the different models of tutoring witnessed throughout the history of UK Higher Education and considers personal tutoring benefits in UK with a special emphasis on first year students. The article finally closes with a short discussion of the challenges characterizing the UK higher educational climate during the 20's and the factors affecting the quality of tutoring.

Tutoring is different from other counselling jobs characterizing the system of Higher Education. It differs from the tasks of supervising and coaching and it can be considered as a variant of mentoring. Tutoring can be briefly defined as a system in Higher Education where students are allocated a personal tutor who has the role to support and react to students if they bring personal problems, exhibit learning difficulties and/or face administrative issues.

Tutoring can operate within three distinct models. In the separate Pastoral model, a specific member of staff is assigned to each student to provide personal and academic support. The separate Professional model focuses more on trained staff who undertake this role on a full-time basis. In the semi-integrated or integrated Curriculum model, personal tutoring is timetabled and there is, therefore, a requirement for staff and students to attend.

All the three models existed and still exist in UKHEIs and recently some universities are attempting to integrate personal tutoring following the hybrid pastoral-professional-curriculum model.

Tutoring plays a major role in increasing progression, achievement and retention at university. Its benefits are especially significant with first year university students who tend to feel more stressed especially during the first weeks of study. Some instances programmes examined in the present paper constituted encouraging efforts to improve the quality of tutoring for first year university students in UK.

Despite the promising benefits of tutoring, an implementation deficit was noted in a number of universities. Some hindrances are extrinsic in the sense that they

originate from outside the tutor such as lack of training in addition to the government's policy to increase participation among students and reduce funding. Other factors are intrinsic and relate to the tutors' feelings of anxiety and their perceptions about workload and the value of tutoring compared to the tasks of teaching and research.

Referring to the UK higher educational experience with tutoring is noteworthy. It is hoped that the present paper will contribute in causing some self-reflection among university teachers to help them reshape their own beliefs about tutoring and bring some educational change within the Algerian university context. I believe that a real change is possible if practitioners are invited to reflect upon some future possibilities to apply an Algerianized LMD version of tutoring.

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