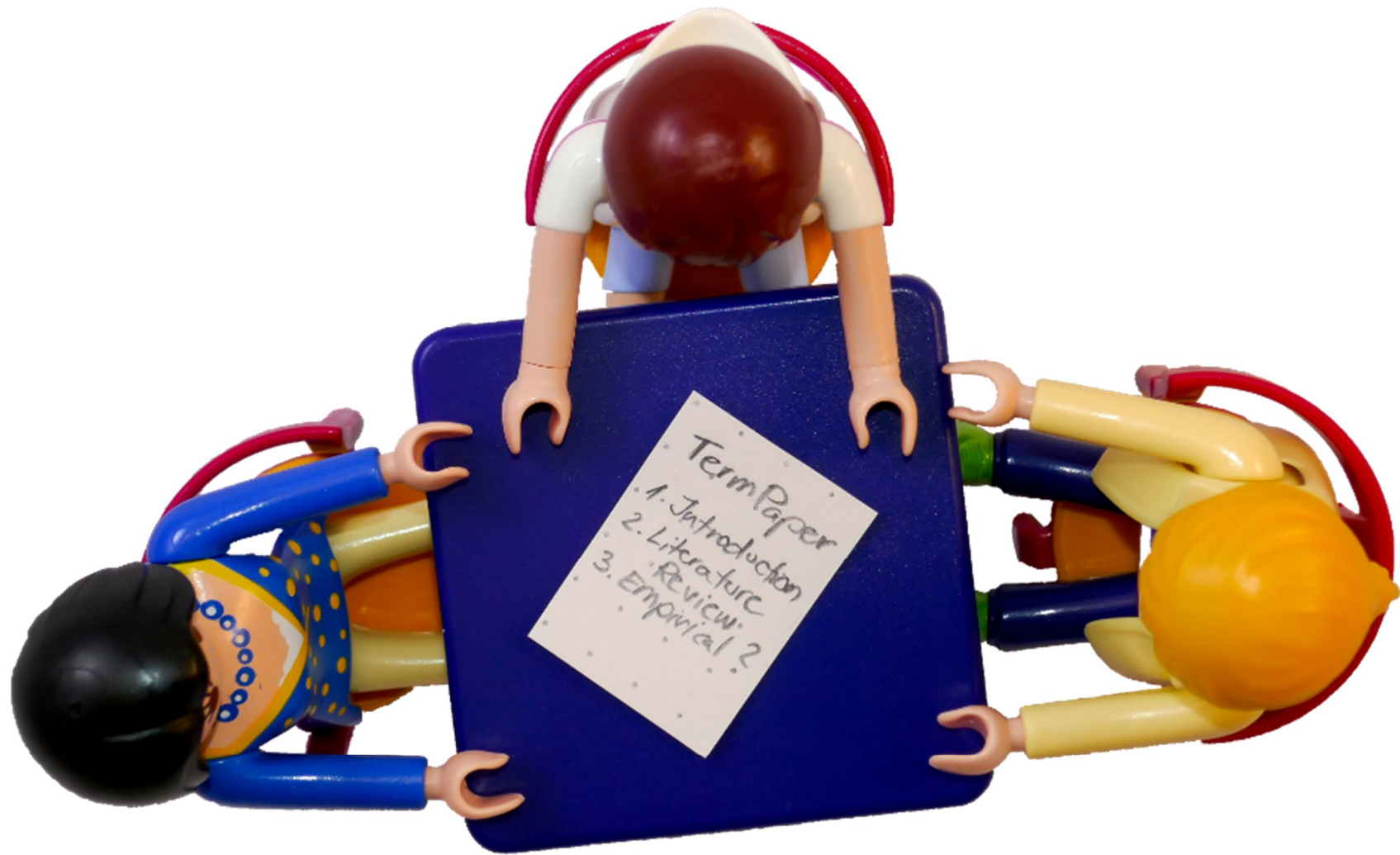# Who am I, who should I be? – Three perspectives on peer tutoring in writing: Student, teaching assistant, teacher

Sarah Lapacz, Inken Mays, Stefanie Pohle

Term Paper
1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Empirical?

INTRODUCTION

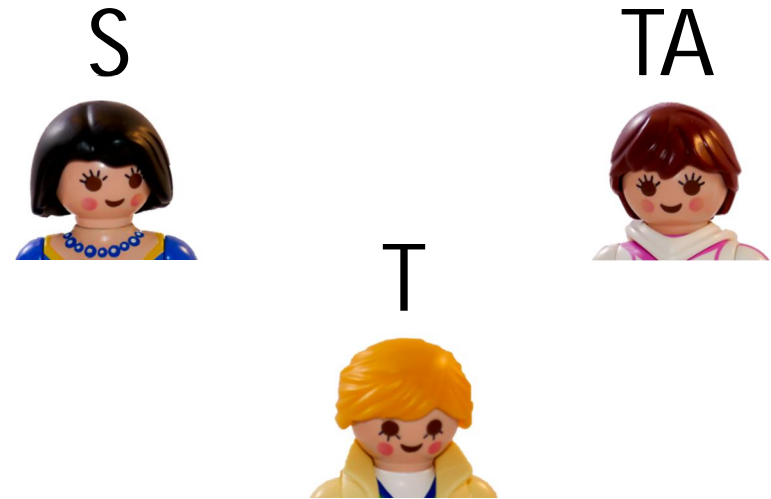# Who we are

Sarah:
'The student'
(S)

Inken:
'The teaching
assistant'
(TA)

Stefanie:
'The teacher'
(T)

Peer writing tutoring

- Three different but
  interrelated perspectives:
  Our primary
  socio-institutional roles

S

TA

T

- Setting

  – In the classroom (outside the institution writing centre)

  – Within one discipline: English Linguistics

  – "Peer writing tutor" [1] insitutionalised role / job title

Aims

- Describe the different roles and roles within roles

- Share our experiences with (potential) role conflicts

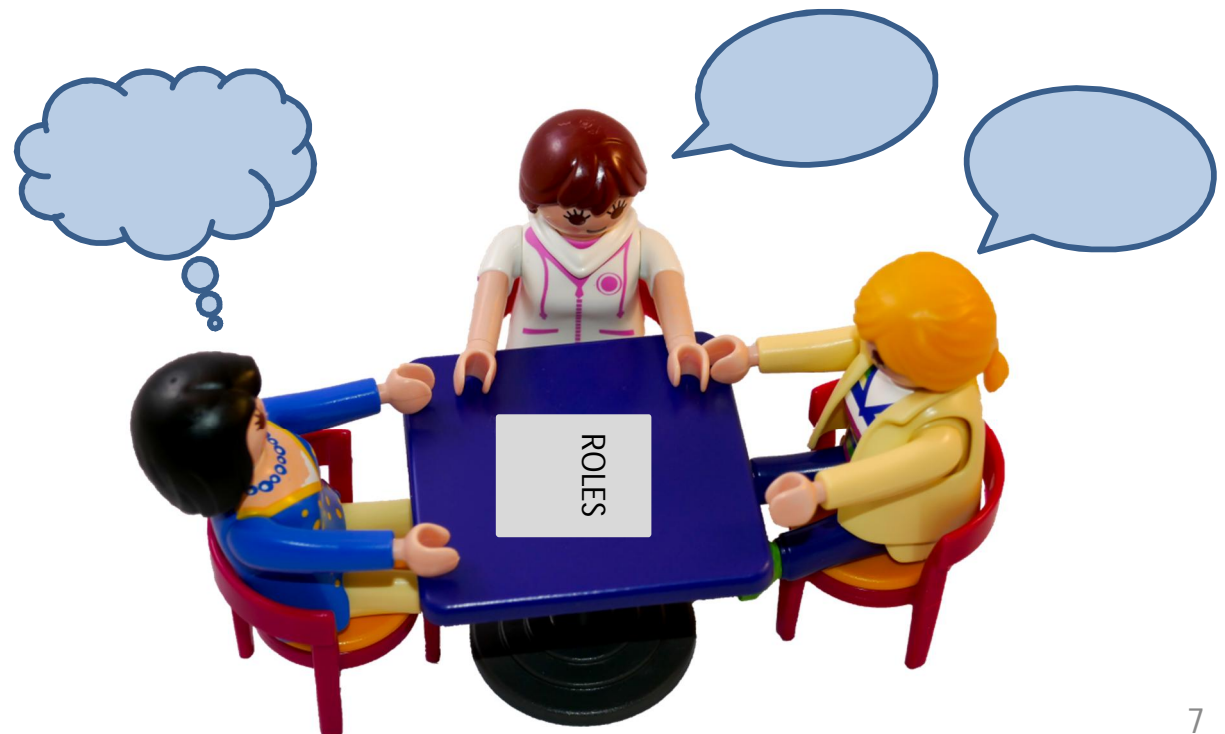- Present our ideas of possible solutions

Guiding questions

- How can we...
  - act appropriately and professionally in the peer tutoring context?
  - feel comfortable in our roles, i.e. be authentic?
  - make sure that everyone involved is aware of their own and the others' role(s)?
  - reconcile our different role perceptions and role expectations?
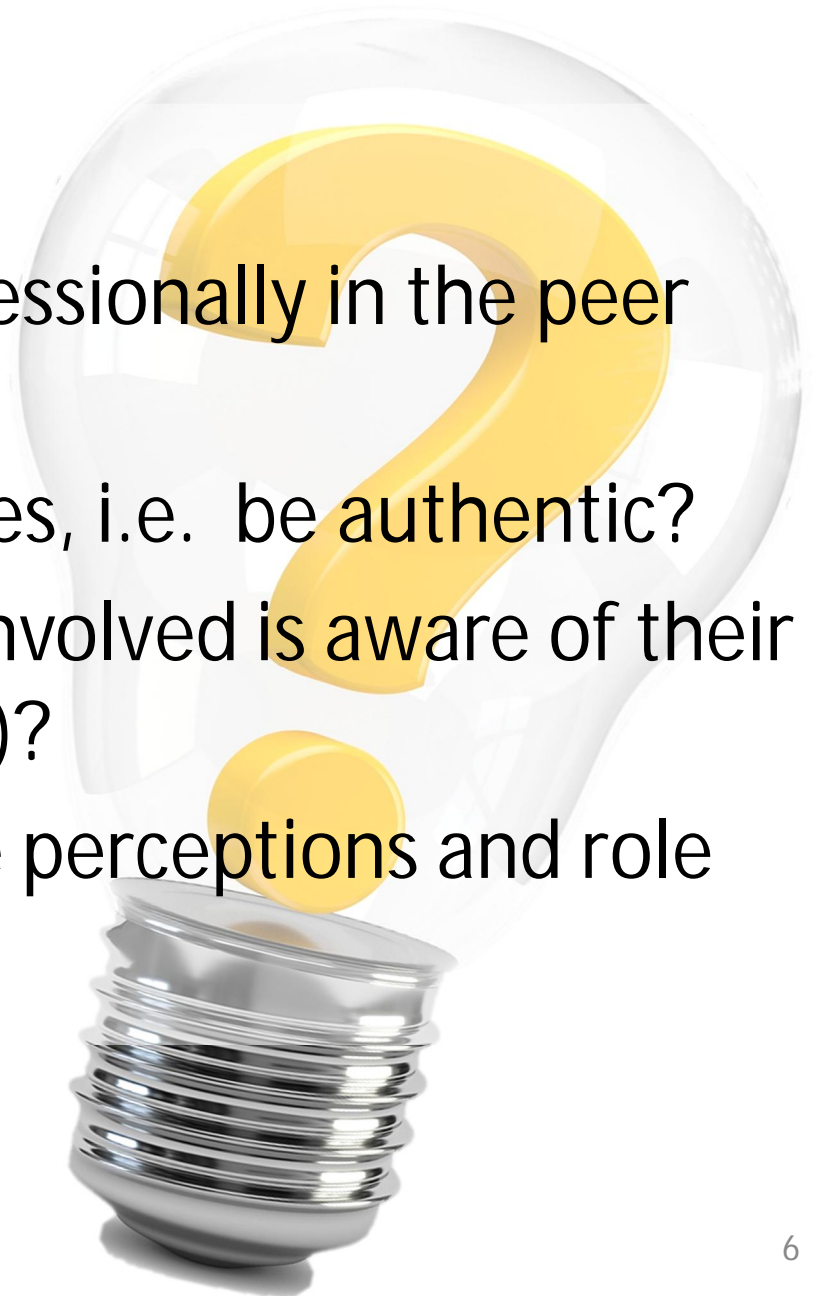
Method

- Reflection on and comparison of our experiences in these socio-institutional roles
- Analysis of this particular structure of relationships
⇨ Field report

OUR ROLES IN FOCUS

– The student –

My roles

Student
representative

Student

Friend

Teaching
assistant

| TUTOR | ⟷ | TUTEE |
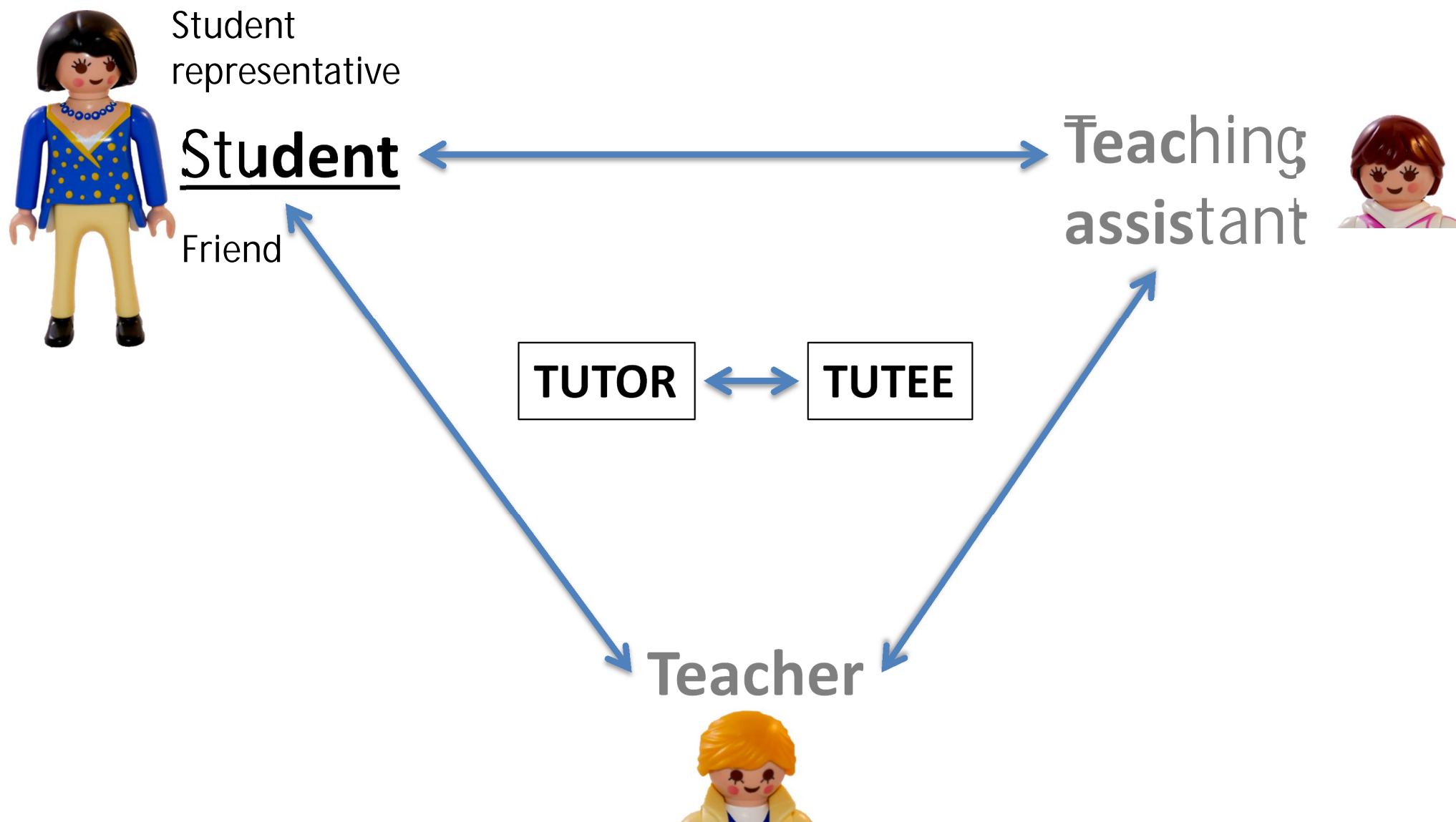
Teacher

– The Teaching Assistant –

My roles

Student
representative

Stud**ent**

Friend

Friend

Student

Teaching
assistant

Mentor

Colleague

| TUTOR | ←→ | TUTEE |

Teacher

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– The Teacher –

My roles

Student
representative

Student   Friend

Stu**dent**

Teac**hing**
assistant

Friend

Colleague

Mentor

| TUTOR | ⟷ | TUTEE |

Teacher

Friend/Wife

Colleague

Student/Learner

Writing consultant/trainer

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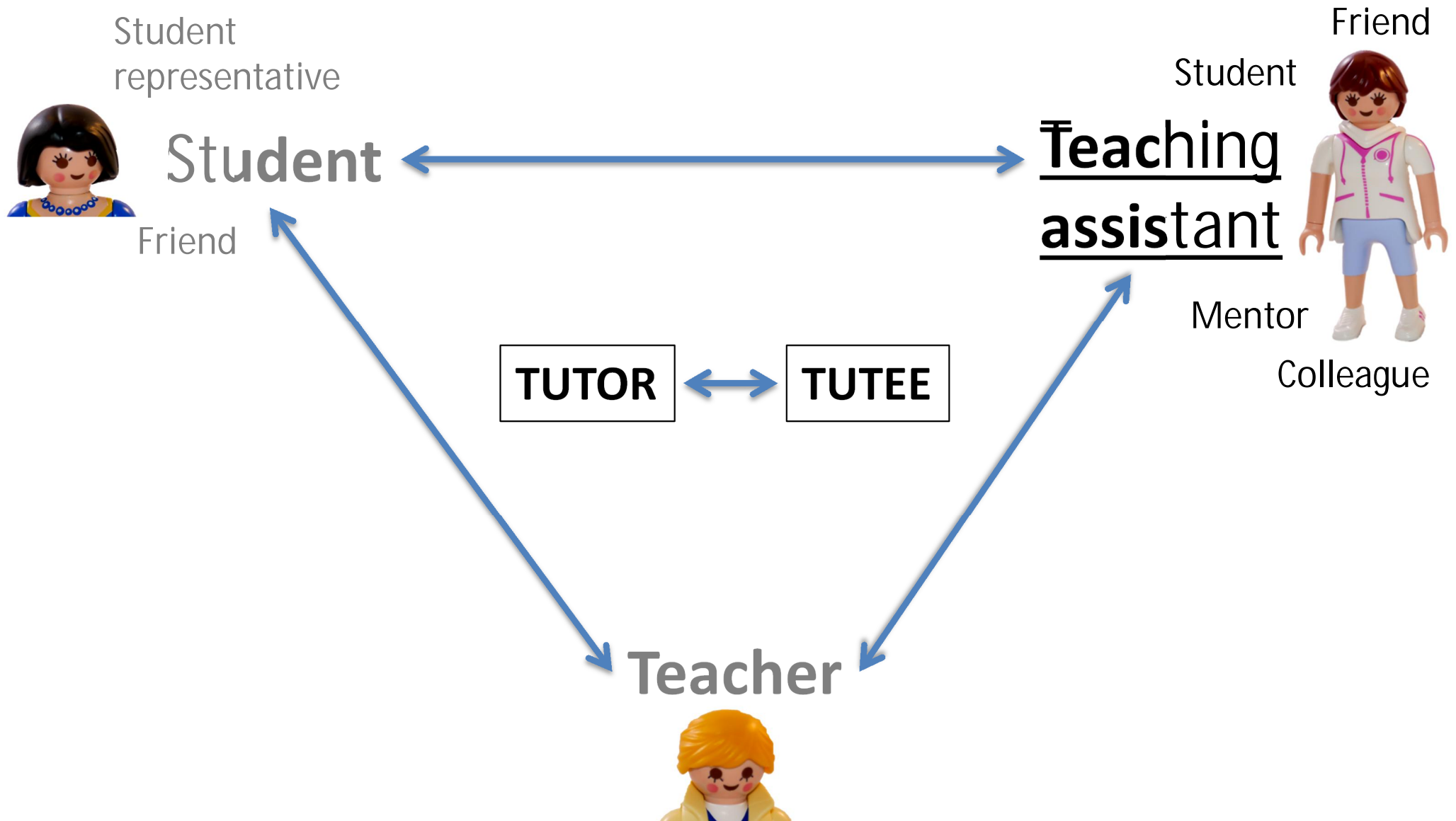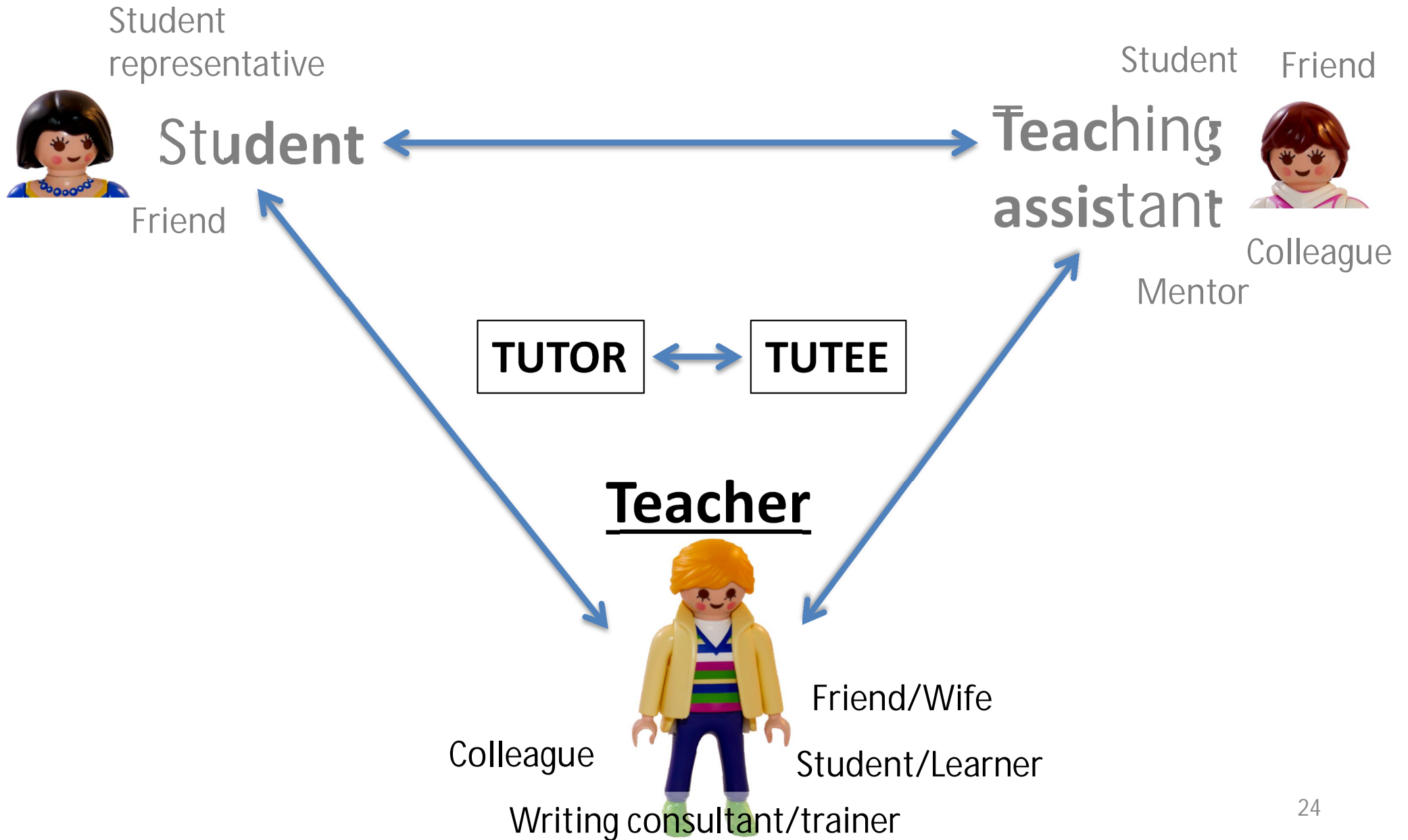
THE COMPLEXITY OF ROLE
RELATIONSHIPS

Complexity of role relationships

Friend

S

Student representative

Student   Friend

TA

Mentor

Colleague

Motivator   Commentator   Overly confident

Learner   Leader   Demander   Procrastinator

Friend   'Dictator'   Unmotivated   Learner

Coach   Collaborator   Overly motivated

Expert | TUTOR | ↔ | TUTEE | Help Seeker

Listener   Advisor   Resistant to advice   Patient

Counselor   Perfectionist

Critic   Editor   Wiseacre

Mediator   Friend

Guide   Denier

Colleague   Friend/Wife

Assessor   Student/Learner

Writing consultant/trainer

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ROLE CONFLICTS
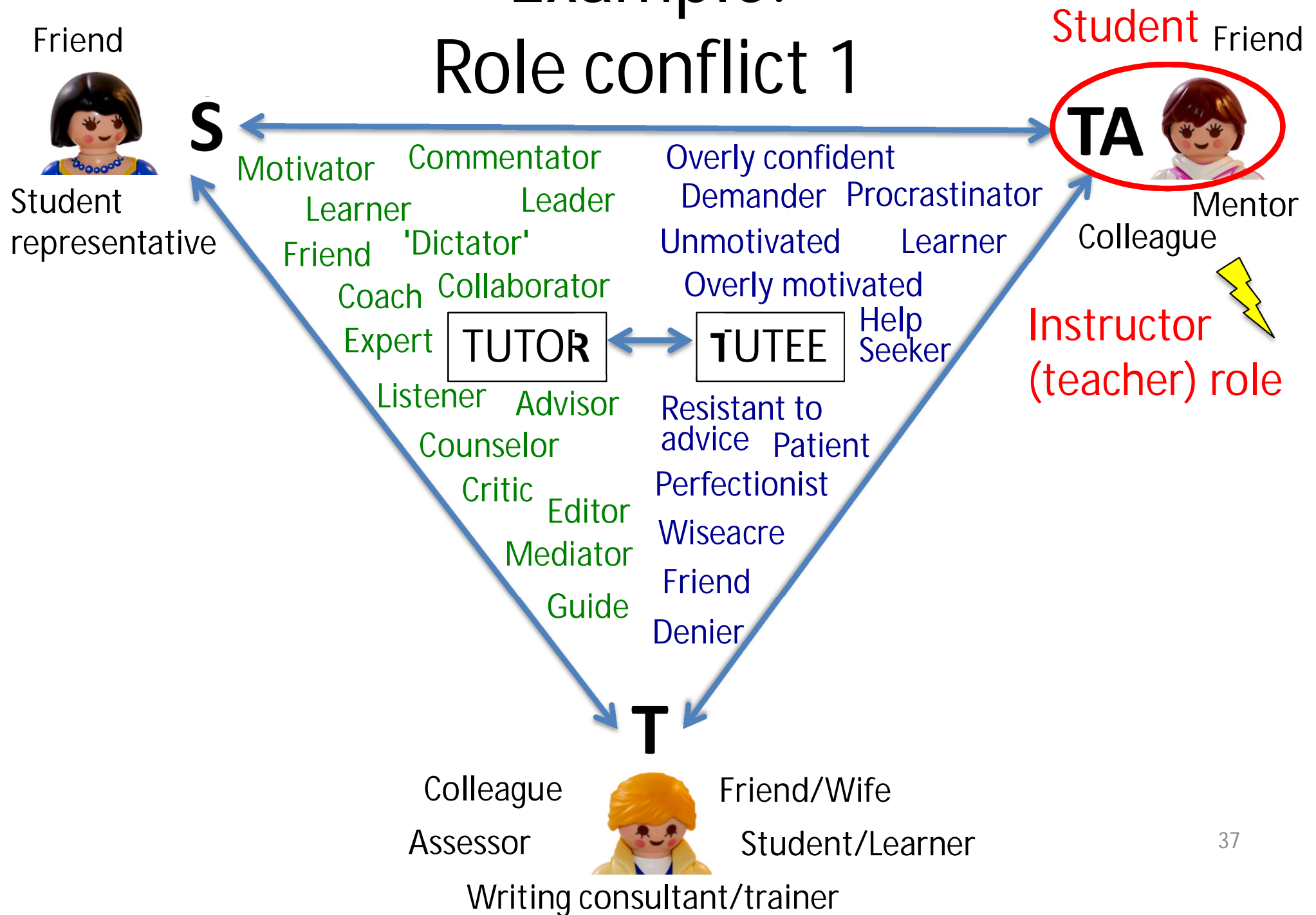
Three possible role conflicts

- Conflict 1: Being in between two conflicting socio-institutional roles

- Conflict 2: Different conflicting aspects within one role

- Conflict 3: Tutee's expectations of tutor's role incompatible with tutor's view of his or her role

(cf. Grieshammer et al. 2013: 265)

Role conflict 1

Being in between two conflicting socio-institutional roles

Example: Role conflict 1

Friend

S

Student representative

Student

Friend

TA

Mentor
Colleague

Instructor (teacher) role

Motivator
Learner
Friend
Coach Collaborator
Expert

Commentator
Leader
'Dictator'

Overly confident
Demander Procrastinator
Unmotivated Learner
Overly motivated
Help Seeker

TUTOR ↔ **TUTEE**

Listener Advisor
Counselor
Critic
Editor
Mediator
Guide

Resistant to advice Patient
Perfectionist
Wiseacre
Friend
Denier

T

Colleague

Assessor

Writing consultant/trainer

Friend/Wife

Student/Learner

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Example: E-Mail

- Conflict:
  - Fellow student and
  - Peer 'instructor' in the classroom at the same time
- Indicator:
  - Students unclear about TA's role and unsure about expected behaviour towards him or her

Example: E-Mail

Tutorium Gruppe 4
An: Inken Mays

Liebe Frau Mays,

auf den Folien des heutigen Plenums in Lang
Tutorium bei Ihnen der Gruppe 4 (von 11 bis
1.11 als ersten Termin angezeigt. Welches D
LG

(Kein Betreff)   Uni Bonn   23. Oktober
An: Inken Mays

Sehr geehrte Frau Mays,

ich war bisher in Ihrem Tutorium montags von 9-10 Uhr. Leider gab es einige
Überschneidungen in meinem Stundenplan, so dass ich das Tutorium wechseln
musste. Aufgrund dessen bin ich nun nicht mehr in Ihrem Tutorium. Das wollte
ich Ihnen nur mitteilen, damit Sie Bescheid wissen, dass ich nicht krank bin
oder ähnliches sondern, dass ich nicht mehr in Ihrem Kurs bin. Bei Basis
wurde bereits alles umgemeldet.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Language&Communication Tutorium
An: Inken Mays

Guten Abend,

ich konnte letzten Donnerstag krankheitsbedingt leider nich
teilnehmen. Ich wollte deshalb auf diesem Weg mal nachfra
andere wichtige Sachen besprochen wurden?
Vielen Dank schonmal für die Antwort.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Morphology Tutorium Hausaufgabe
An: Inken Mays

Liebe Inken,

hier die Hausaufgabe für das Tutorium am nächsten M

Liebe Grüße und ein schönes Wochenende!

Example: Role conflict 2

Different conflicting role aspects within one role à Difference in directivity and/or proximity

Example:
Role conflict 2

Friend

S

Student representative

Student   Friend

TA

Mentor
Colleague

Commentator   Overly confident

Motivator   Leader   Demander   Procrastinator

Learner   'Dictator'   Unmotivated   Learner

Friend   Collaborator   Overly motivated

Coach   Help
Seeker

Expert | TUTOR | ↔ | TUTEE |

Listener   Advisor   Resistant to
advice   Patient

Counselor

Critic   Perfectionist

Editor   Wiseacre

Mediator   Friend

Guide   Denier

T

Colleague   Friend/Wife

Assessor   Student/Learner

Writing consultant/trainer

Example: Feedback (oral and written)

- LaMa blog project last semester: Peer feedback
- Conflict:
  - Motivator, friend, collaborator vs.
  - (Neutral) commentator, critic

à Difference in directivity and/or proximity

Example: Feedback sheet
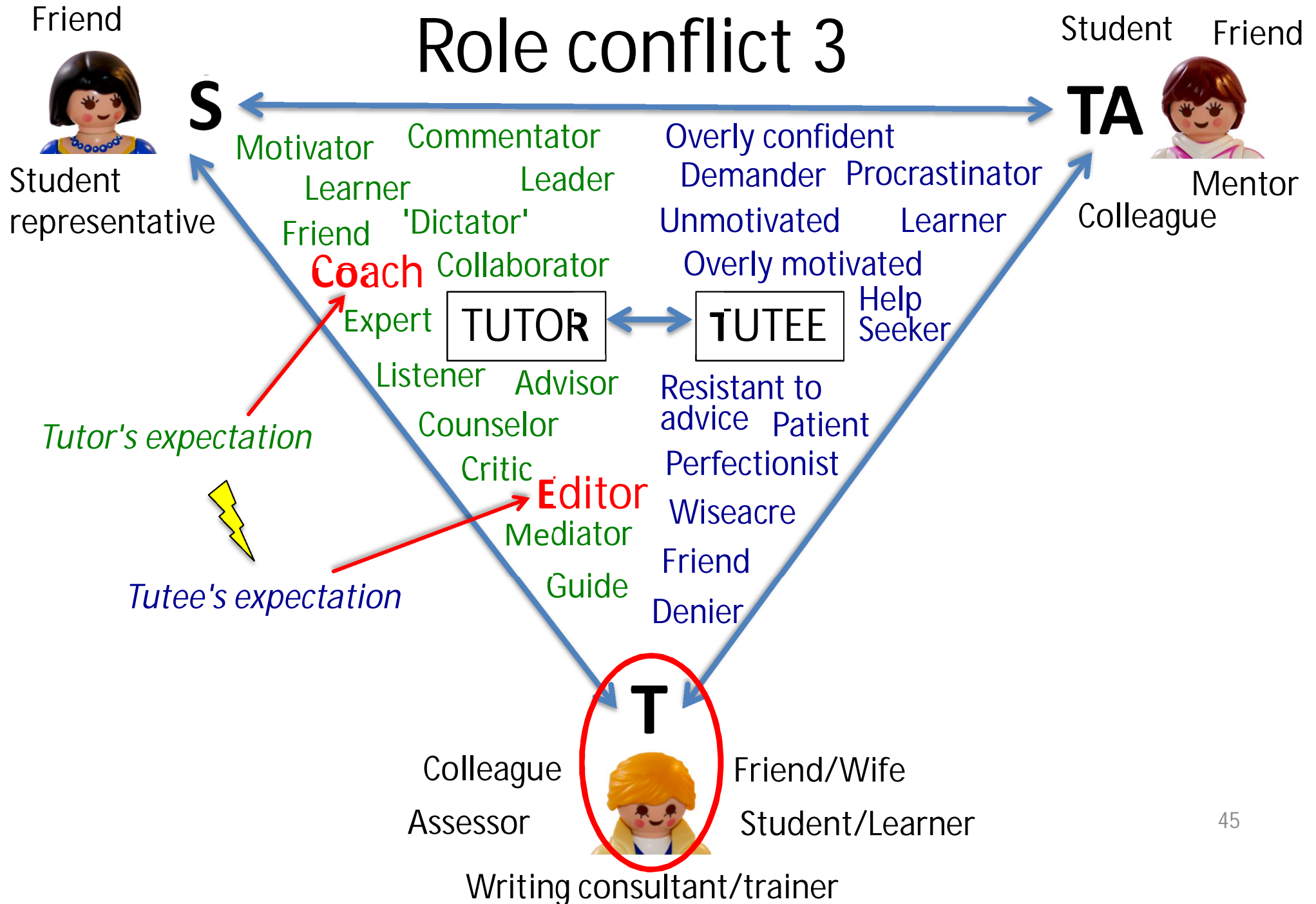
· Is the text coherent on a global, paragraph, sentence level? +++

· Are the underlying linguistic concepts, theories, methods translated into a language understandable by 15-18 year olds (B1 level)? Overall yes ++

· Is the post length appropriate? +++

· Grammar (in particular sentence structure) some mistakes, which we discussed and you wrote down, but nothing major ++

· Word choice "utter" might be a problem

· Spelling see grammar

· Punctuation +++

Role conflict 3

Tutee's expectations of tutor's role incompatible with tutor's view of his or her role

Example:
Role conflict 3

Friend

S

Student representative

Student   Friend

TA

Mentor

Colleague

Motivator   Commentator   Overly confident

Learner   Leader   Demander   Procrastinator

Friend   'Dictator'   Unmotivated   Learner

Coach   Collaborator   Overly motivated

Expert | TUTOR | ↔ | TUTEE | Help Seeker

Listener   Advisor   Resistant to advice   Patient

Counselor   Perfectionist

Critic   Wiseacre

Editor

Mediator   Friend

Guide   Denier

Tutor's expectation

Tutee's expectation

Colleague   Friend/Wife

T

Assessor   Student/Learner

Writing consultant/trainer

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Example: Feedback comments

- Teacher feedback in LaMa blog project
- Conflict:
  - My initial expectation (ideal):
    - Tutoring / coaching
    - Principles of peer tutoring: Act on a level playing field, be non-directive
  - What (I assume) my students expected:
    - Correcting / editing (directive)
    - Assessing and grading (evaluative)

Example: Feedback comments

All the pupils
ybe from the
ight come
. They do not
which might
ototypical
n pupils and
e have about
me vision]

Kommentar [S11]: Why bullet points for these two paragraphs?

Kommentar [S12]: Can you reformulate this? I assume you mean "Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund"? (bear in mind that sometimes these people were born in Germany and may have a German passport, and that is was their parents or grandparents that immigrated to Germany)

Kommentar [S7]: Now it sounds as if „first language acquisition" is acquired easily…"

VS.

Kommentar [S20]: Introduce the example to your readers; provide some context (who? What? when? why?) + reference t... extract.
Why not us... strategies... use of vocab...

. If we
vell

nervous before taking the stage to deliver the talk, but afterwards, they stated that they could hardly believe that they did it.

Apart from Beside the talks, some of the MA fellow students were also presenting their posters on those two days. A poster is…. You can see one example by XX below. His/Her research project was about…

The conference reaped lots of interest and compliments from all attendees, applied linguists and future applied linguists alike. I recalled the statement made by Jo Angouri before we headed our way to the dinner, she said that this was a very good and interesting

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF PEER TUTORING IN THE CLASSROOM?!

Peer tutoring in the classroom

- The role conflicts…
    - cannot be denied and
    - cannot be avoided

   if we want to foster the idea of peer tutoring in the classroom…

    ...BUT...

...Of course it's possible!

- The role conflicts...
  - can be unravelled and
 - can be resolved!

Peer tutoring in the classroom

- Back to guiding questions: How can we...
  - act appropriately and professionally in the peer tutoring context?
  - feel comfortable in our roles, i.e. be authentic?
  - make sure that everyone involved is aware of their own and the others' role(s)?
  - reconcile our different role perceptions and role expectations?
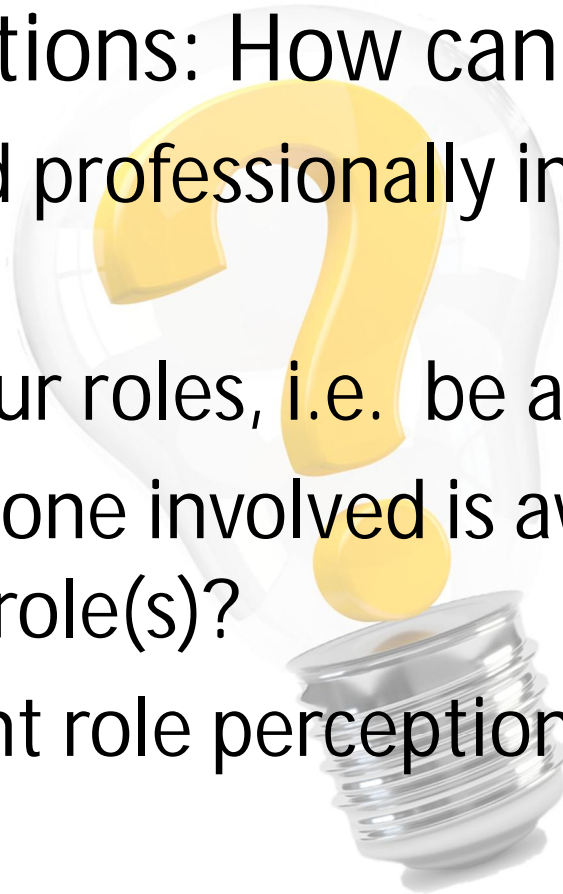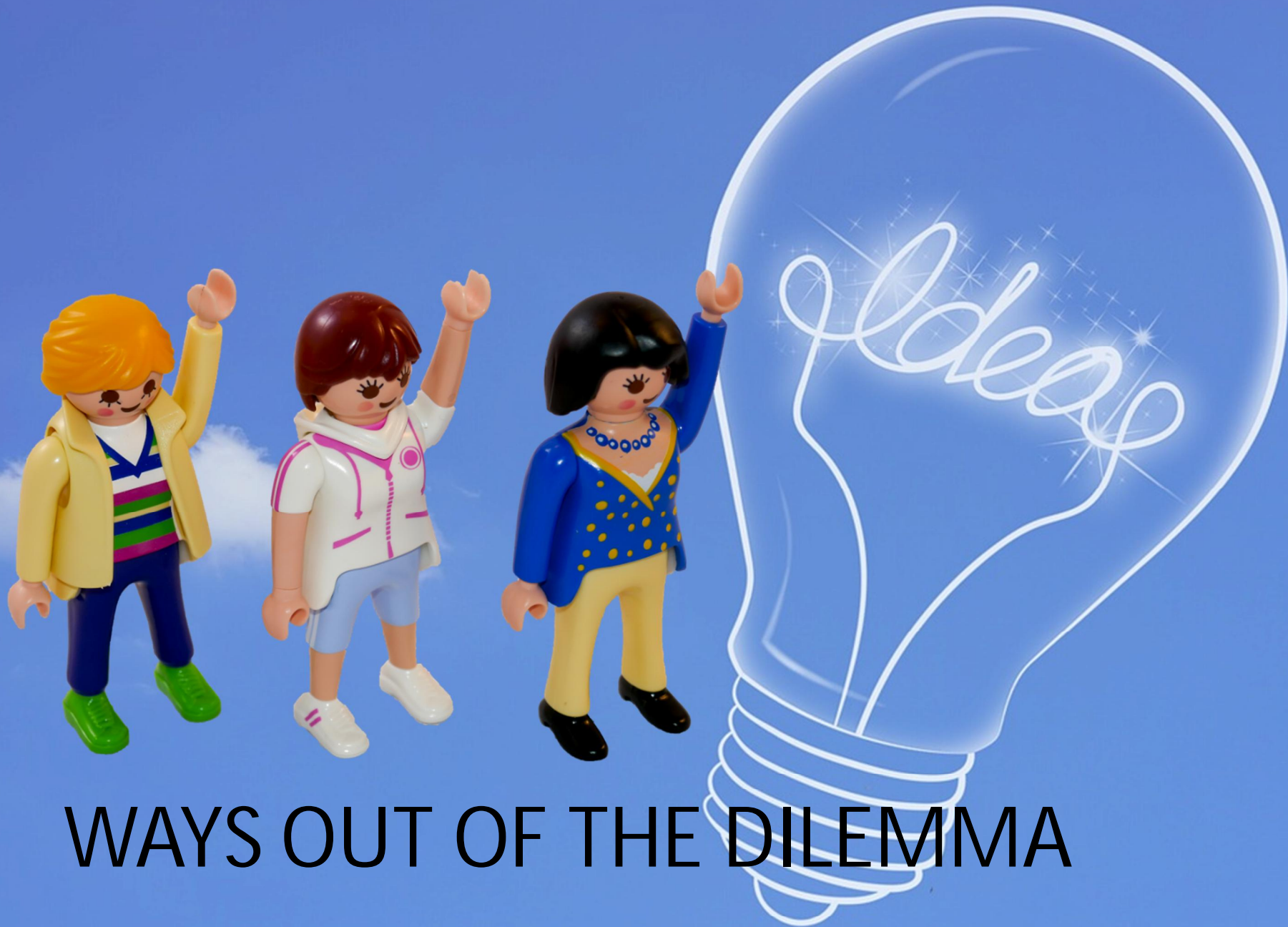
WAYS OUT OF THE DILEMMA

What makes a good peer writing tutor?
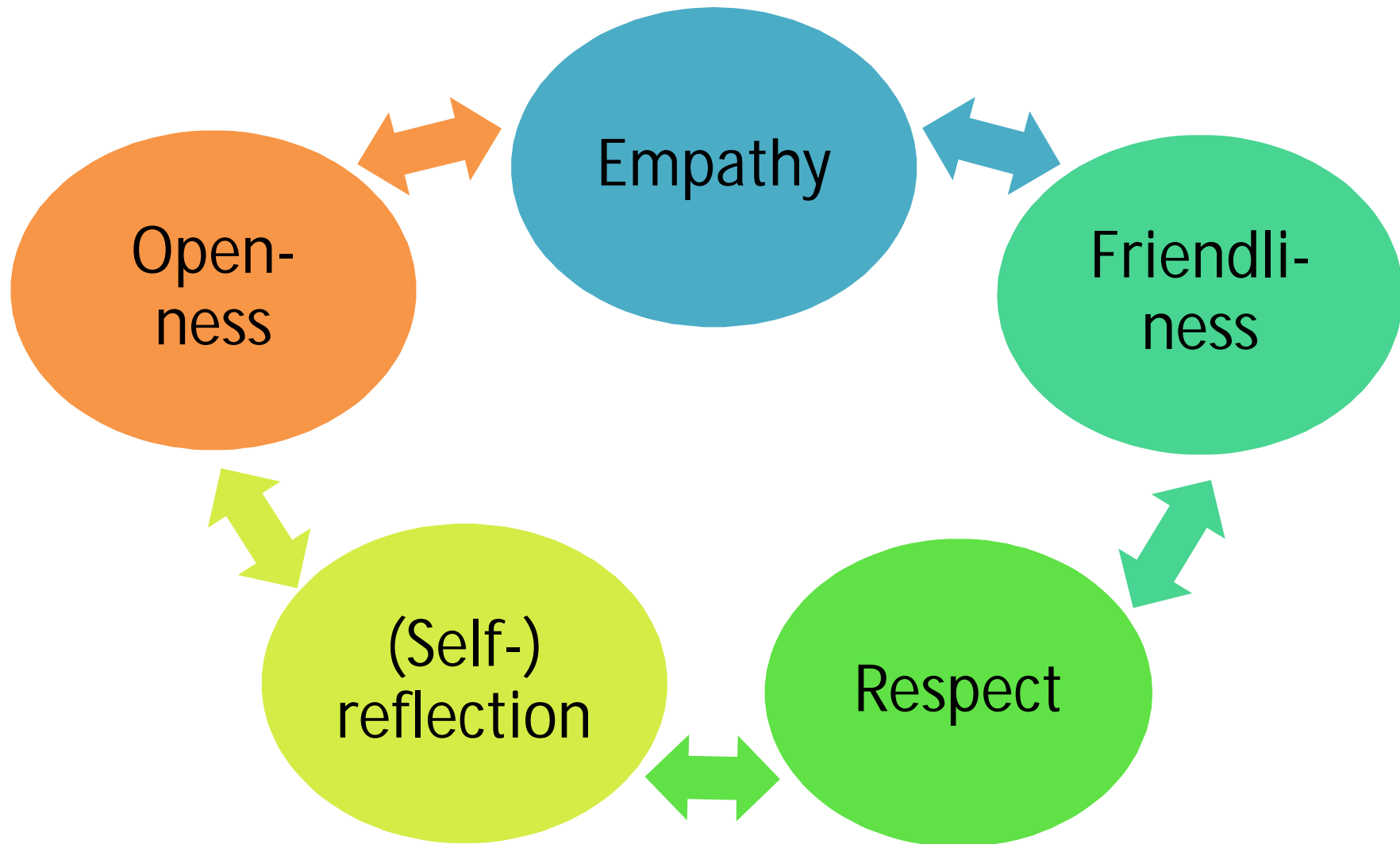
How? – Inner process and personal action

1
- Adopt a role unconsciously

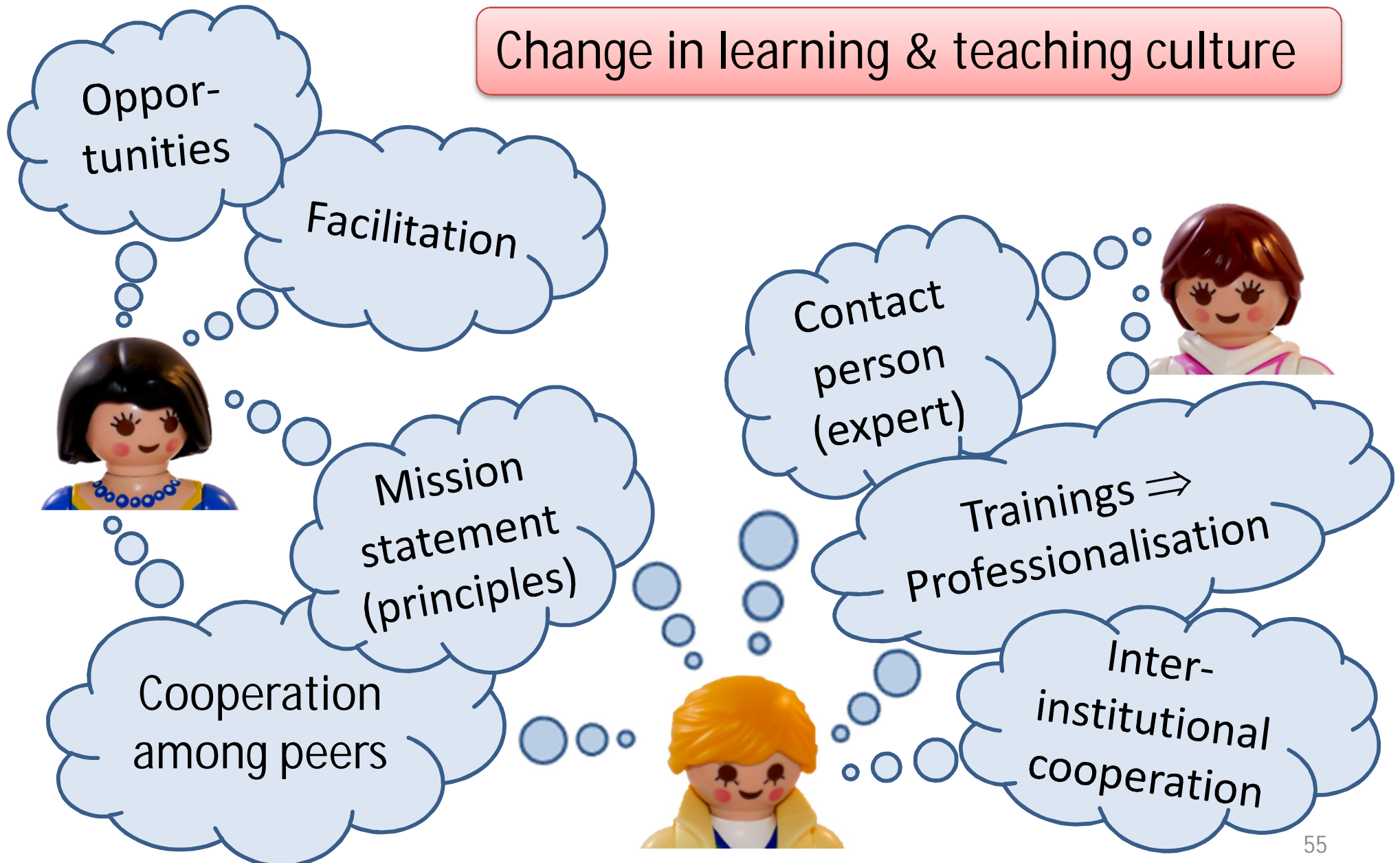**2**
- Observe oneself and the others

3
- Reflect ⇨ Become aware

4
- Control the adoption of roles consciously
  - Learn about possible methods and courses of actions *(theory)*
  - Try them out in a safe space *(training)*
  - Get out in the real world *(practice)*
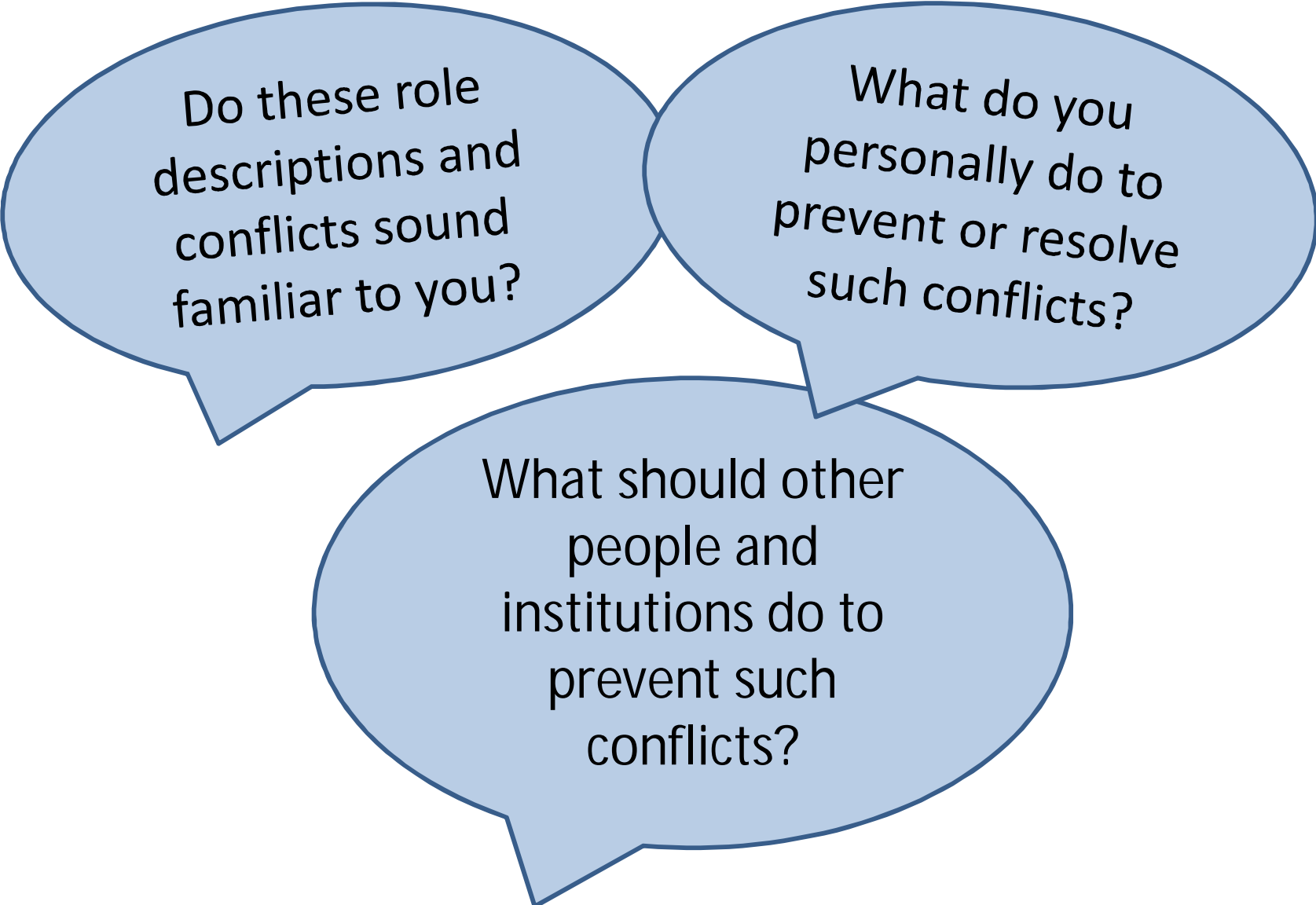
How? – Institutional support: A wish list

Change in learning & teaching culture

Oppor-tunities

Facilitation

Contact person (expert)

Mission statement (principles)

Trainings ⇒ Professionalisation

Cooperation among peers

Inter-institutional cooperation

AND WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Our questions

Do these role descriptions and conflicts sound familiar to you?

What do you personally do to prevent or resolve such conflicts?

What should other people and institutions do to prevent such conflicts?

References

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Blog project: 'Language Matters!' Exciting insights into the realm of Applied Linguistics
https://lama.hypotheses.org/

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