# "Relations that Matter": Novice Researchers' Cooperation with Others for Mutual Support



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## ABSTRACT

Despite that doing research can mean a great deal of work in isolation, successful professionals or student researchers, invariably, rely heavily on the support of others. Indeed, a research aim can never be achieved in social or academic isolation. The need for an environment that suggests lead, gives informed judgements, provides constructive criticism and boosts motivation is vital. This paper attempts to frame the networked variety of informative environmental factors that surround the researchers, notably the novice ones and are capable of assisting their tendencies to shape up the picture of their investigative thoughts. Throughout our personal experience of doing research and teaching the research methodology module to the undergraduate, we have felt and, actually, touched the sustained improvement offered by the continuous communication of personal ideas with others.  Our aim, therefore, is to increase our students' awareness of the number and quality of opportunities granted by the effective and positive interaction with the research environment. Our empirical observation identified some crucial elements about receiving help and support from other students, academics, partners, family, friends and other professionals in the department or research institution. We will highlight some models of the required practices in conjunction with: 1) mutual help and support, 2) advice, feedback and criticism, 3) using help from others, 4) looking after one's intellectual property, 5) getting support from peers, academics and institutions and 6) getting the support of family, friends and colleagues. Ultimately, the widespread belief of the researcher's absolute dependence on the classroom taught and supervised sessions is challenged. Consequently, wider channels are open for relationships that really matter in linking environmental support to researcher's engagement and achievement.

*Keywords*: environmental factors, positive interaction, environmental support.

# *Introduction*

**Very common practices and relations in our research journey may escape attention, but might one day become decisive over its quality at some point of that journey!**

Despite that doing research can mean a great deal of work in isolation, successful professionals or student researchers, invariably, rely heavily on the support of others. In order for the researcher to reach a complete framework of the investigation picture of the research aims, he cannot be the only player in the research field; the existence and the involvement of others is doomed vital.

**Research environment:**

- Give  informed judgements
- Provide constructive criticism
- Boost motivation
- A  strong impact on the research quality and time for its achievement

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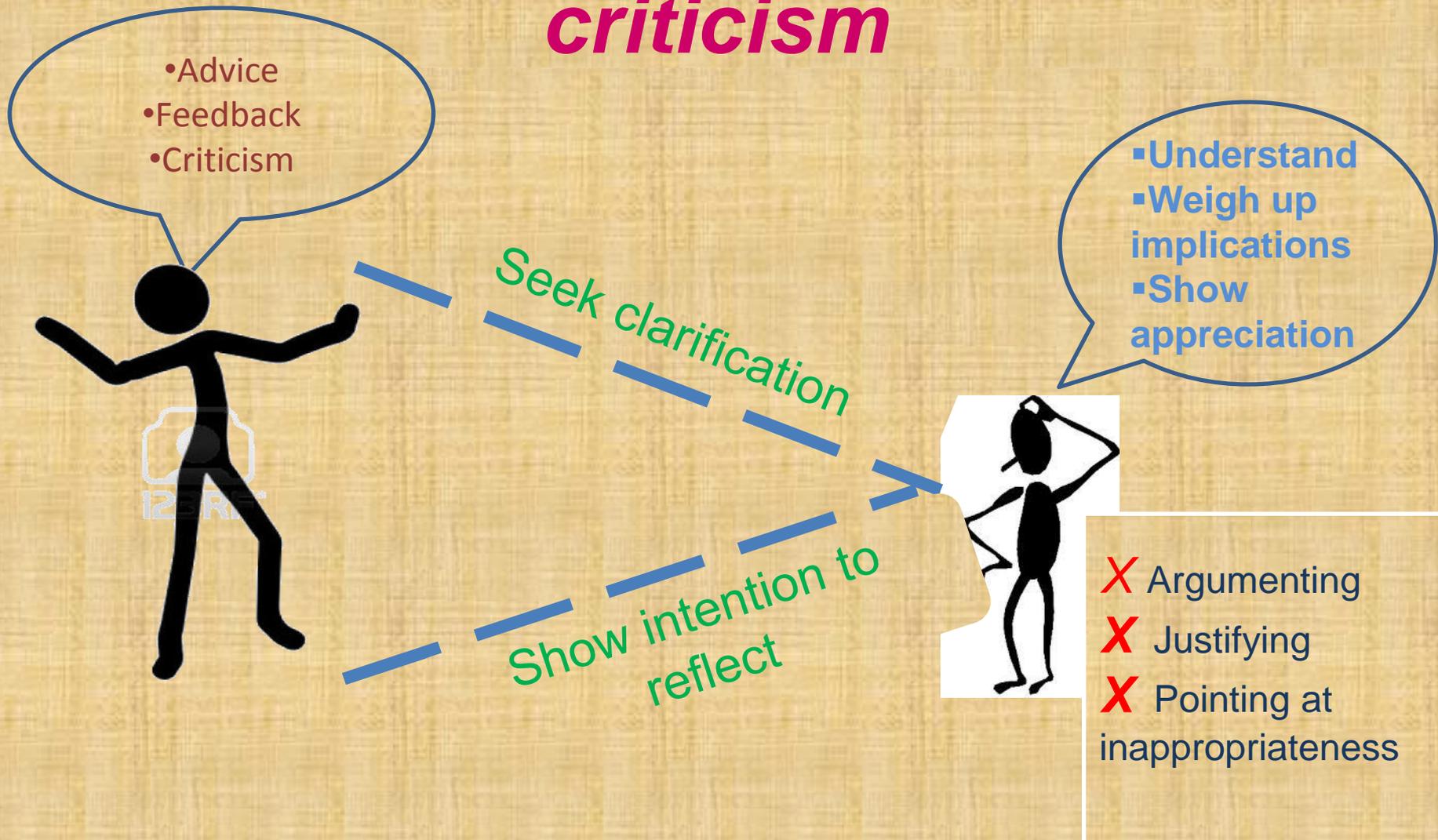
# Receiving advice, feedback and criticism

- Advice
- Feedback
- Criticism

- **Understand**
- **Weigh up implications**
- **Show appreciation**

Seek clarification

Show intention to reflect

✗ Argumenting
✗ Justifying
✗ Pointing at inappropriateness

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# *Accepting or rejecting advice, feedback and criticism*



It is important to recognize suggestions which could detrimental to one's progress. According to alfred and Garvet (2000), they are signs which

- Affect the direction of research
- May affect  the  boundaries of the research  frame
- Are  not being of suitable academic standard
- Tend  to affect the length of research
- Do not really fit within the area of interest
- Negotiate the ideology or the methodology of research despite its validity
- May charge the research with further unnecessary or impossible means.

# *Using help from others*
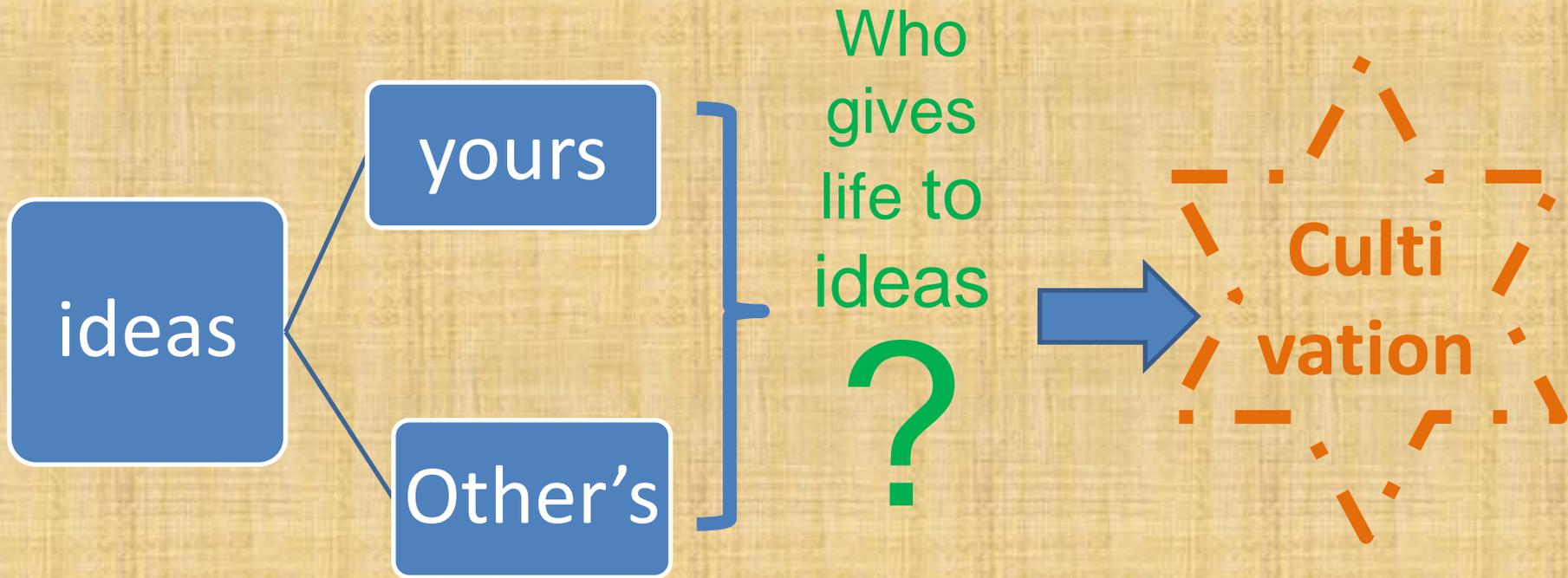
ideas
- yours
- Other's

Who gives life to ideas ?

→ Culti vation

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The academic field is a very rich context, full of ideas, constantly innovative and extremely dynamic, but it does actually lack application. There is no harm for any researcher to try to investyigate the ideas of others and give them life (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989) Turning an inspiration to a concrete value of life is, indeed, the genuine requirement of the scientific field. Therefore, the common wrong idea of 'stolen ideas' has no room in this respect owing the fact that research belongs to those who finish it not the ones who started it.

So, if a researcher turns someone's else idea into a significant part of research, it is him and only him who deserves the credit for making it significant and developing it into something forceful and academically convincing.

# *Mutual Help and Support through Mentoring*
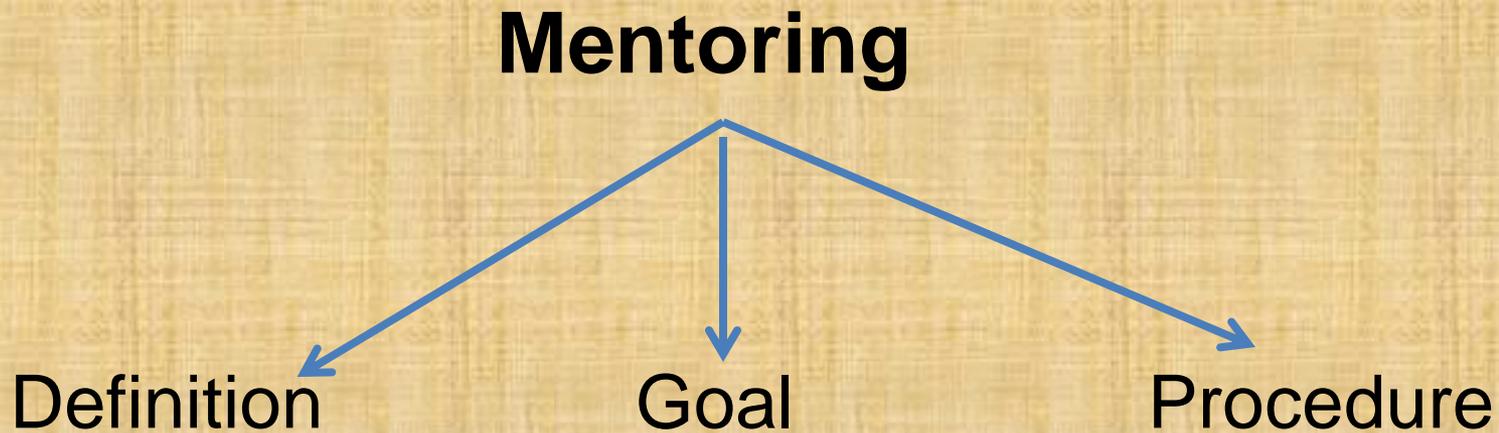
**Mentoring**

Definition            Goal            Procedure

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A big blessing to the novice researcher is living among a research community that comprises varied levels of proficiency and this is an opportunity that has to be seized through mentoring. A good mentor relationship, where an experienced student researcher and a mentee meet regularly for discussions according to the needs of the mentee, is an operation that is built upon openness and confidentiality (Mc Gee, 2001).

# Goal

The mentor is not supposed to be a problem solver or a judge of the mentee's opinions. Instead, the mentor's task is to question the mentee in order to support learning and the reflective process.

# Procedure

Mentoring is usually organized in developed countries; our students can take responsibility for their learning and try to form mentoring groups themselves. It will be very helpfull to advertise the idea through hanging posters everywhere in the department with the permission of the administration. It is not the only means to lead to expertise. a progressive mentoring process should support the development of professional skills such as building relationships, establishing trust and encouraging reflection on others ( Alvrado, 2006).

# *Looking after one's intellectual property when helping others*

- Any student is well placed to give help, as any individual in the world!

Commercial          social                    academic
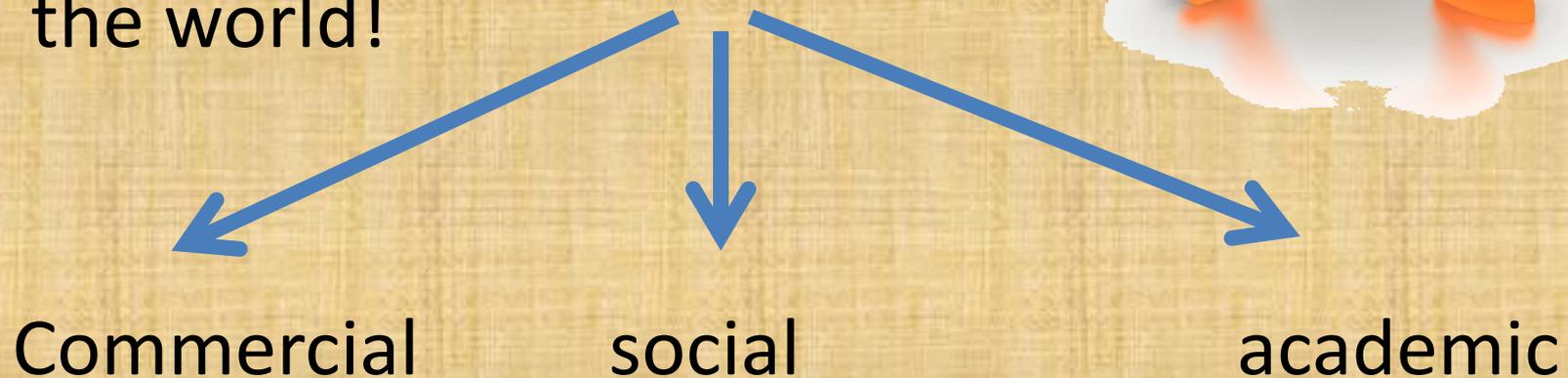
When you want to help and support others, it is entirely reasonable to bat around ideas in informal discussions, however, Whenever somebody wants to develop an idea of yours into something significant, you should be alerted. You would better take measures to protect your intellectual property through the right of being formally named in the work.

**Mutual support between students (student-student Network)**

**Getting support from colleagues in the workplace**

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- Students led events

- Web opportunities

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- Those working on contract or collaborative research.

- Those belonging to research units and labs

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A very basic and rich source for **help** for the novice researcher is peer researchers in the same department. This does mean to exclude others. Students can develop many connections with students and teachers from the departments of French, Arabic and even sociology and psychology .

Students abroad have what is called 'students lead events' where master and PHD students meet in the form of conferences or workshops to discuss their ideas, seek help, get training from peers and so on. In this type of events, the student takes responsibility of organizing, giving talks, helping each other through feedback and even training .

The importance of this is to make students aware of the benefit of students-student network.

# *Getting professional help*

## Academics in the same department

- **Other teachers**

- **Librarians**

- **Research units, labs, etc**
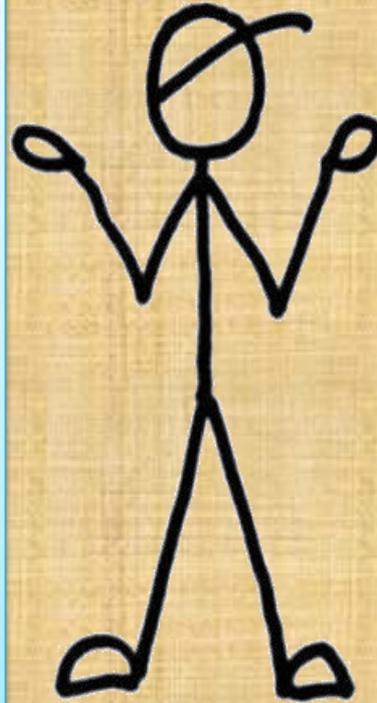
## Experts from foreign institutions

**Why not try**:
- institutional libraries
- Websites

**Consider :**
- Sensibility
- prejudice

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# Giving advice, feedback and criticism

Having a cyclical nature, the process of help and advice in the academic field does not prevent any of the participants to take turn, even the novice ones. The student researcher very often finds himself involved in giving advice.

Do not engage unless you:

✓ Are sure that your ideas are requested

✓ Start with the type of comment you like to make the others feel secure

✓ Are able to suggest alternatives

✓ Are realistic

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# *C o n c l u s i o n*

*Whether through providing and evaluating relevant information, relating personal experiences, listening to and accepting others' comments, providing sympathetic understanding or establishing social networks, mutual support and quite unexpected trajectories for the research opens a wide journey towards a safe successful end.*