

# NON-JUDGEMENTAL COMMUNICATION FOR RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

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# Outline

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- **What is Cooperative Development?**  
(Origins, principles, and skills)
- **Why Cooperative Development?**  
(Value to researcher development)

# What is Cooperative Development?

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- An approach to personal and professional development (started in the area of teacher development)
- Traditions of reflective practice and action research

# What is Cooperative Development?

- Carl Rogers' Person-centered Approach (e.g., 1961)
- Self actualization and forward-moving directional tendency
- An internal growth approach to researcher development

# What is Cooperative Development?

- No single way of becoming a researcher is right for everyone
- Researchers are always in a state of becoming
- Researcher self-development is a social phenomenon

# What is Cooperative Development?

- Learning through the expression of one's ideas
- A specific kind of discourse - neither a discussion nor a conversation (which prevail in academia)
- Working for regular, agreed upon periods with another researcher (or researcher development staff)

# What is Cooperative Development?

- Deliberately abandon elements of argument
- Creating a space in which one researcher's ideas can expand in the search for a discovery
- Roles: Speaker & Understander

# Speaker

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- A non-defensive style of talk
- Purpose -> explore a certain issue or area of interest
- Leads to discovery
- Basis for plan of action



# Understander

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- Non-Judgemental -> Puts aside his/her own set of knowledge, experience, opinions.. etc, with the aim of better Understanding the Speaker
- Facilitates the Speaker's path of exploration - discovery - action, in line with the speaker's own professional development goals

# Understander

- **Respect** - Accepting what the speaker says neither agreeing or disagreeing
- **Empathy** - Tries to see things from the speaker's point of view
- **Sincerity** - with regard to Respect and Empathy
- Understander has a set of agreed moves  
(examples quoted from Edge 2006)

# Reflect

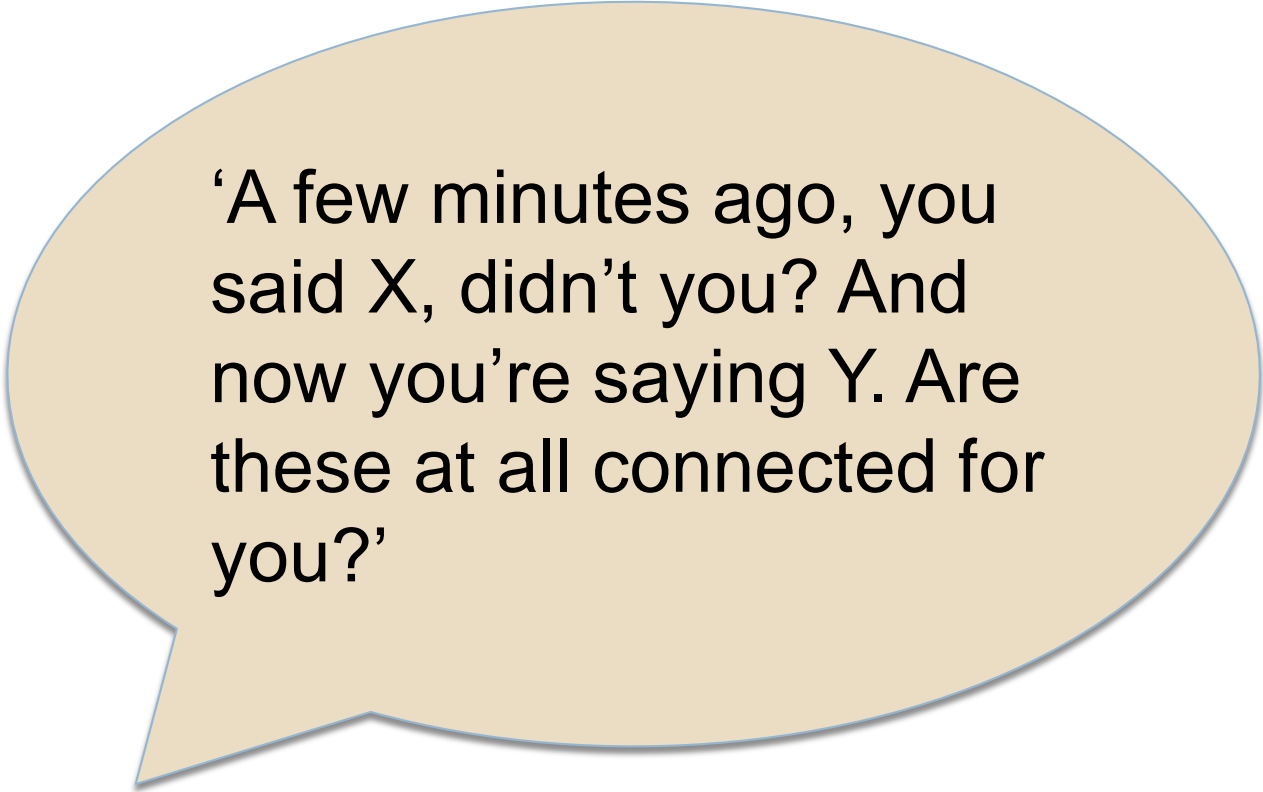
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‘Ok, so if I’ve got this right, what you’re saying is..’

‘Just let me see if I’m with you so far..’

# Relate

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‘A few minutes ago, you said X, didn’t you? And now you’re saying Y. Are these at all connected for you?’

# Focus

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You have spoken about X, Y and Z so far, is that right?' (Pause or confirmation) 'Would it be useful at this point to Focus on one of them in more depth?'

# Set a Goal

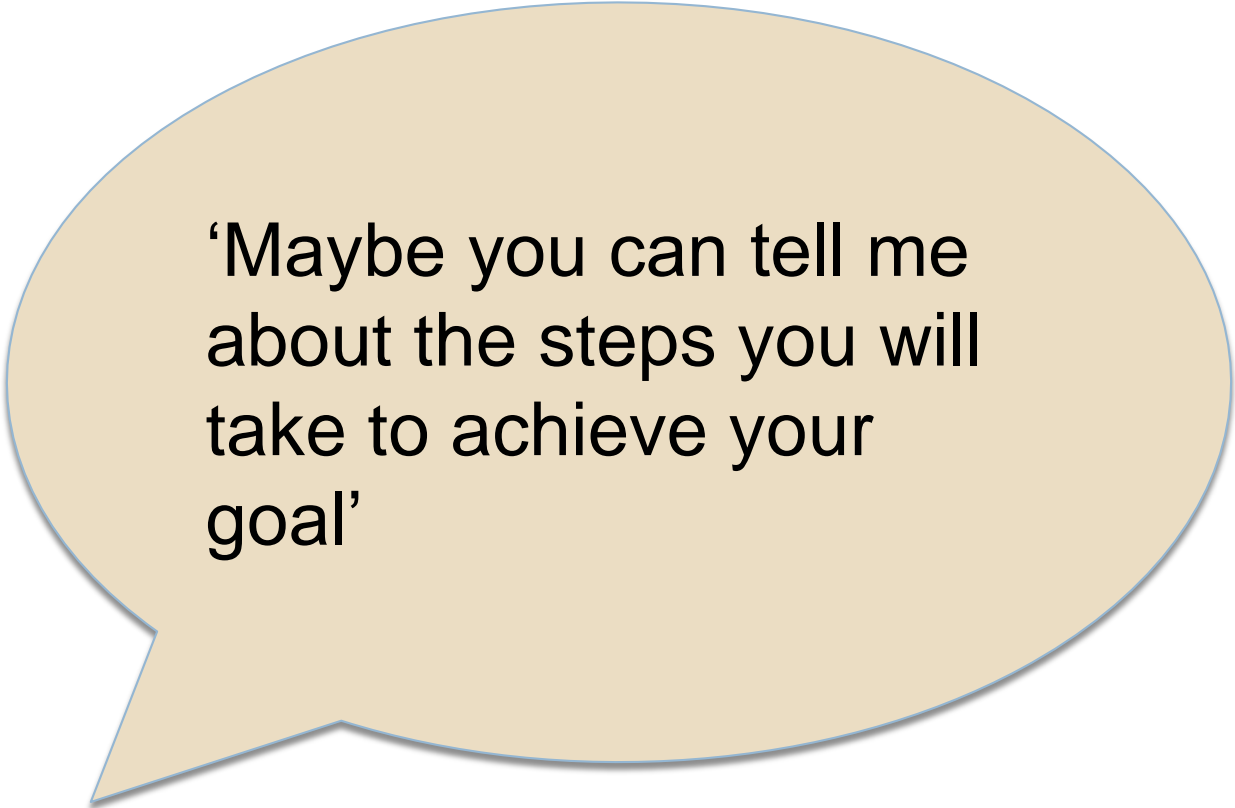
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‘Do you see a goal for yourself arising from what you have said so far?’

‘Am I right in thinking, then, that the goal you see now is ‘X?’

# Trial a Procedure

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‘Maybe you can tell me about the steps you will take to achieve your goal’

# Computer-mediated

Not all researchers have the opportunity to work with colleagues face-to-face





# Why Cooperative Development?

## Researchers:

- Diverse disciplinary backgrounds and research cultures
- Involved in various professional activities (e.g., data collection, analysis, publication, applying for funding, teaching, supervision)
- Many points of transition with multiple foreseeable and unforeseeable challenges
- Context generally characterised by ambiguity

# Why Cooperative Development?

- Our role -> support researchers as they develop personally and professionally into the kind of researcher *they* aspire to be – capacity building
- One form of support -> provide opportunities for researcher collaboration for self and mutual growth

# Why Cooperative Development?

Can be applied to:

- Strictly intellectual issues
- Strategic planning of projects or career progression
- Formulation of publication proposals and/or grant applications
- Other issues of personal or interpersonal significance

Enhances trust and collegiality

# Why Cooperative Development?

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- Perceives development as a life-long process
- One of the greatest assets to any university is a developing researcher

# A taster..

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## **Activity A – Listening**

Please sit next to someone you have not worked with before.

*What is the main item on your researcher development agenda at the moment?*

# A taster..

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## **Activity B – Reflecting**

If you were the Speaker last time, please consider the following:

*What is it that you aspire to achieve in your current researcher development role, and why is that important to you?*

# The Website

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.. Offering resources and a community

<http://www.cooperative-development.com>