Putting your trust in the learner

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Introduction: The prescience of Earl Stevick

In *Memory, Meaning & Method* (1976), Earl Stevick directed our attention to many matters concerning language learning which have since that time engraved themselves on the hearts and minds of a whole spectrum of language teachers, and through them, on their learners. They have become almost axiomatic in their relevance and their impact, so much so that it would be a fair guess that many now would not recognise Stevick as their progenitor. In re-reading now his earliest work, one senses very clearly a scholar practitioner who was able to discern from the richness of educational theory and research ways forward for the teacher, and for the learner, ways which are always couched in terms of principle, not just of emulatable models of practice. This focus on principle is important since it invests his work with a challengeable quality: it urges dialogue, not some blind adoption. From his early contributions to his continuing characterisations of the contexts and cultures of classroom language learning, it is the learner in whom Stevick placed his Trust, as a cognitive, human and social being at the centre of his inquiry.

This focus on the learner is itself merely a metaphor. It may appear at first like a map, merely outlining a territory, offering landmarks for the reader/practitioner: the nature of learner contributions and their differential success as learners; the importance of metacognitive knowledge and learner beliefs; how learners construct themselves, their fellow learners and their teachers; whether learners can be constructed as *people* and as *persons* and in what ways; how the worlds and discourses learners inhabit outside the classroom impinge upon their construction of, and participation in, the worlds and discourses *within* the classroom. But then, when we read Stevick further, we see that the

key message here is something different; that when learning is seen through the lens of the student's experience of the '*world of meaningful action'*, the student is positioned as a bone fide participant in this world – not only in relation to the particular materials, methods or other tropes of language teaching – and that this world is, though not named as such, discursively shaped, and to be viewed through a multi-perspectival lens. For example, as Stevick writes, it

> 'is not a flat, two dimensional thing like a map. Its structure has many dimensions, and some of its parts are much further from the surface than others. If what a student says makes little or no difference to him, it has little "depth", in this sense. But some ways that he says, or hears, or reads, makes a difference to him in many ways. This kind of experience is relatively "deep". It draws more energy from his "world of meaningful action", and in turn it helps to shape that world.' (1980: 9)

There are many such examples in his writings: again in his canonical 1976 book (p.184), his citing of factors likely to build Trust or destroy. There are many such examples in his writings. He cites (Stevick 1976:184) factors likely to build Trust or destroy and speaks of an interactional world which displays an orientation to the social construction of learning, but not one which in any way downplays the very significant contribution of more cognitively focused research to our understanding of how languages are learned.

Central in this focus on the learner is Stevick's emphasis on the interactional order constructed mutually between teacher and student. There is a passage in his 1976 book, which is entitled *Interpersonal Trust*, and it is that among many of his key passages which, in our view, has received least acknowledgement. For us it is the interactional engendering of Trust that goes to the heart of Stevick's philosophy: it speaks to the inter-relationship of teachers and learners, the building of confidence in mutual learning of the group, and the enhancement of the conditions for communication, what he calls "*Voice in Community*". Such a focus on Trust is both an inspiring example of his prescience, and, at the same time, a challenge for current practice. Elaborating on this contemporary significance, in this chapter we explore Trust as an interactional phenomenon in *context*, characterising how Trust may be socially and discursively achieved through interpersonal engagement, how such engagement is principled, how it involves both 'backstage' and 'frontstage' professional activities in the manner of Goffman (1959), how it relies on what Schon refers to as 'discretionary freedom'

backed by professional judgement (Schon,1987), how it may be explored within a multi-perspectived research methodology, and how this may underpin an overarching conceptual framework of a curriculum. It is, of course, that curriculum, in its broadest sense, which is the focus of this research, just as much as it is the learners, and we draw on this curriculum focus in the latter part of this chapter as a means of indicating how Trust can imbue its construction.

Stevick's position, it seems to us, is that language learning and teaching, like language itself, is always a social, cultural and personal act. It is always the product of socially situated participants who operate in environments of affordance and constraint, essentially governed by varying degrees of mutual Trust, in the context of which they make principled communicative choices driven by their own individual investments of energy and commitment. It is of course also true, and Stevick would have underscored this, that the contexts of learning are by no means bound to the classroom, a point we develop below.

In this way, such an approach, beginning as it does with a concern for exploring further Stevick's identification of the key salience of Trust, may prove useful for explanatory accounts of the distinctive and contested interpersonal and instrumental textures of teaching and learning *praxis* more generally. It will do so, especially, in relation to two interconnected foci, both of which are imbued by Trust: that of recognising, honouring and trusting the contributions of learners, and that of constructing curricula for language learning which are trust-bearing and trust-creating.

Highlighting Trust

Trust has become recognised as foundational to people's lives in contemporary societies, a fact sharply highlighted by the recent history of inter-relational practices associated with the financial markets, international security, marketing and public relations, the delivery of health and welfare services, and in the public and private arenas of social, political and religious institutions. Moreover, issues imbued by Trust are central to our understanding human relationships in social life. We live in a world described by Bachmann and Zaheer (2006) as a 'trust society' where, they argue, people's personal and social wellbeing critically depends on the existence and maintenance of trust and trustworthiness. Trust in this foundational sense is associated

with particular interpretive repertoires, in particular social, organizational and professional settings, and, as Luhmann (1979) emphasizes, it will naturally implicate associated and personally, professionally, and organizationally relevant themes such as risk, security and, perhaps especially in an educational context, that of confidence.

Notwithstanding this pervasive significance of Trust, however, there is in the context of language learning, and in the literature in education more generally, still an absence of sociologically, organizationally, and social psychologically-informed studies seeking to define, categorise, and appraise Trust and focusing on how such Trust, distrust, and the ultimate loss of Trust and its potential repair is discursively achieved through interpersonal interaction. To address this gap in research and practice would certainly require more than the prescience of Stevick, critical though that is, and would be, to such an endeavour. Such studies would helpfully draw upon his ideas and his principles, but would reflect our position that Trust (and its loss and potential repair) is a discursive achievement, premised on communication in interaction, and governed by a number of key principles. Among these are that Trust:

- is based on intention and choice, and is socially and contextually located
- is best seen not as an event or state but as a process
- is relational, interpersonal and intersubjective
- is a cultural category
- inheres in systems sustained by natural actors
- is mediated through processes of conscious strategic communication in interaction involving trustors, trustees, and objects or results of Trust
- embodies diversity in its realization and accomplishment, in terms of people, domains and sites
- can be categorized and appraised by means of descriptive, interpretive and explanatory analysis of discursive practices in naturally occurring encounters

Earl Stevick's emphases on Trust

As we suggest above, when we explore Stevick's work, especially through his two key books (Stevick 1976 and 1980), we can discern, despite this general absence in the relevant literature, a key and prescient awareness of the central importance of Trust. It shines through his characteristic concern for estimating the nature and extent of learner contributions to language learning, chiefly premised on the need for Trust to be understood as contingent on interaction. For us to understand this interactional contingency, however, requires us to explore briefly a construct which, for us, is central to Stevick's understanding, namely that of *context.*

Firstly, we need to accept, following Duranti and Goodwin (1992), how this construct of *context* is to be differentially interpreted in different research paradigms. Its meanings are not self-evident. Since classroom interaction and behaviour is one evidence for learning, it is worthwhile being clear whether one is talking about the contexts of talk as might a linguist, where context is a feature of texts, something enduring that belongs to the text-as-entity that linguists seek to describe. In contrast, as Mercer (2000) and Candlin and Mercer (2000) argue, one might be talking about context as *dynamic*, a product of people's thinking, more a configuration of information that people use for making sense of language and communication in particular situations. In this sense, context

'…is more a mental than a physical phenomenon, something dynamic and momentary, but dependent in the classroom on the careful constructing by the teacher of a community of shared understanding with learners.' (Candlin and Mercer, 2000:7)

We note how the above resonates quite clearly with Stevick's (1980) emphasis on the interdependence of the interactional and intersubjective aspects of teaching and learning that make Trust a central concern in his work. For example, he writes that 'success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between people in the classroom.' (p. 4), and that'... a language class is one arena in which a number of private universes intersect one another. Each person is at the center of his or her own universe of perceptions and values, and each is affected by what the others do ...' (pp. 7-8)

This explicit focus on Trust is clearly also present in *Memory, Meaning & Method*, where Stevick (1976, pp. 183-185) foregrounds Trust as being of 'primal importance', and the importance of 'building an atmosphere of mutual trust', together with becoming critically aware of the 'variables that tend to build trust or destroy it' because, in his words, people need to "feel relatively secure with those around them before they will say what is really on their minds… only after a group figures out what its members have on their minds can it figure out what it wants to do; and there is no point in trying to decide how to use the time, energy, and other resources of a group until its goals have become clear.' (p. 184)

Implied by these interdependences are those risks associated with the loss or absence of conditions of Trust, for, as he explains;*"*"each person exposes for public scrutiny and public testing – possibly for intolerable undermining – the one thing that he or she needs most, which is the self evaluation that he or she has so laboriously fashioned. This means that the stakes in any social encounter are incredibly high" (Stevick 1980:7).

Here one might say that the emotional and affective dimensions of context take priority over the social, certainly the linguistic. This would be a position close to that of Vygotsky, with whose work Stevick displays close affiliations. Again, following the work of Wertsch (1991) and of Scollon (1998), we might be talking about context as not talk-centered at all, but more as centered on action, or rather, on *mediated* action, where talk is merely one among several tools that can be appropriated and used by actors in pursuance of their goals. Yet again, we can understand context as not fixed and determined *a priori*, but dynamic, open to be reclassified as the interaction proceeds. Indeed, moving more widely, we may determine context not as particularly event-bound at all, as Duranti and Godwin (1992:3) suggest: "when the issue of context is raised… the focal event cannot be properly understood, interpreted appropriately, or described in a relevant fashion, unless one looks beyond the event itself to other phenomena, (for example cultural setting, speech situation, shared background assumptions) within which the event is embedded".

As they go on to indicate, (and here invoking Goffman), 'the context is thus a frame' (p.3) a position notably adopted by Cicourel, (Cicourel 1992, 2007) and once again, one resonating with Stevick's own position: "Verbal interaction is related to the task in hand. Language and other social practices are interdependent. Knowing something about the ethnographic, the perception of, and characteristics attributed to others, and broader and local organisational conditions, becomes imperative for an understanding of the linguistic and on-linguistic aspects of communicative events." (Cicourel, 1992: 294)

Such an invocation of the "*broader ... organisational conditions'* engages us, as with Stevick, in the historically and structurally constrained conditions of production and reception of talk, the macro context which is crucial for local understandings of contexts of situation. We may note here also how Stevick's emphasis on the language classroom as such a context, in which the interactional and intersubjective conditions for building

and sustaining Trust are constantly in play and at stake, is underscored, for example, by the need for the learner's performance to be continuously evaluated not only from 'outside' but also 'internally'. From outside, as he writes: "we find ourselves in the power of the person who is imposing the new information and evaluating our mastery of it', and associated goals for learning this information, which risk undermining the learners' sense of 'primacy in a world of meaningful action' (Stevick 1980: 10). From inside, and here highlighting the interrelationships of Trust in oneself and others, Stevick (1980: 11) distinguishes in a manner reminiscent of Goffman (1959), the student's '*critical self*' from the '*performing self*'. The critical self may work in ways counterproductive 'for a situation that demands learning and performing', and can lead to intrapersonal conflict for the student and interpersonal conflict for the student and teacher (see also Stevick, 1976: 185).

Thus, for Stevick, Trust is not only a condition in which the learner is herself engaged in relation to her fellows and her teachers, but also a condition which is characteristically influenced, perhaps even governed, by the nature, ideologies and practices of the curriculum, within, and in terms of which, this trusting learning and teaching may be enabled. Such a curriculum constitutes, in a sense, a '*community of practice'* (Lave and Wenger 1991, Scollon 1998) which might serve as yet a further perspective on context, and one which underscores the present salience of Stevick's emphasis on communication being both an individual and an individual-within-a community matter, where both perspectives impact on language learning practices of members, both teachers and learners, and their basis in Trust. Appreciating that learners, as with us all, will belong to a range of such communities, and that our memberships within them may be variously stable or instable, and subject to the exigencies of power and control, as Barton and Tusting (2005) point out, only serves to further emphasise the prescience of Stevick in identifying such interrelationships of members and their mutual inter-dependence on Trust, as a key to understanding interactions which give rise to learning.

There are two further and related dimensions to this focal concern with context which we may derive from Stevick's work as a guide for current and future action: the first is appreciating the *crucial* nature of some learning sites (Candlin 1990), or, in Scollon's terms, (Scollon 1998) *sites of engagement*. We refer here to those encounters, variously identified by particular persons and at particular times and places, as being recognisably

problematic and highly charged, where such persons' identities, face, abilities, are placed, as it were, on the line. Such crucial sites are pervasive across all social encounter types. No less in the classroom; one might identify the language learning classroom of a migrant community as one classic case, where the pervasiveness of Trust could not be more at a premium. A second dimension, and one intimately connected to the first, is that of the occurrence of *critical moments* in such sites. What we have in mind here are those instances where the themes and actions of communication touch most closely on the personalities and ideologies of the participants, such that they, for a moment quite dramatically, may reveal those ideological, social and even political positionings, through their choices of, and responses to language. In a classroom this might involve the correction of a student, or the handling by the teacher of unexpected reactions to stereotypical attitudes thought by the teacher to be innocuous, or more bald-on-record responses by students to what are conceived as racially motivated slurs. The interaction management of such moments, again inferrable from Stevick's writings, critically engages with issues of Trust.

Discoursively constructed identities and trust

Much of what we discuss above on the prescience of Stevick, and on his emphasis on Trust has at its heart issues concerning learner *identity*, and in particular, the extent to which learning and language acquisition can be separated from the contexts of that learning and that acquisition. According to one current orthodoxy, the learner is either conceived of as an individual with various personal attributes (i.e. 'more or less motivated', 'more or less introverted', 'more or less confident'), as if such designations were (or could be) independent of any relationship to the social, or else they are conceived as having some kind of determining group identity ('female outworker from Sri Lanka, 'young upwardly mobile male language learner from Hong Kong') that offers little scope for individual agency. An alternative position, itself deriving very much *inter alia* from Stevick, and now being canvassed strongly especially in communities with considerable ethnic and linguistic diversity, for example in Australia, is to assert that such mainstream and deterministic theories have little explanatory and critical adequacy, based as they are, in any case, on small, largely homogeneous populations in privileged learning circumstances. In this alternative position, as we have seen from Stevick's work , these personality traits (if such they be) are held not to exhaust the identity of the person and not to be fixed but dynamic, changing over time

and space; in this view, the social group labels of orthodoxy serve to mask not reveal differentiation, and they make little if any connection to the socially and historically constituted relationships of power that serve to create, or deny, opportunities for learners to speak, to interact, and, again following Stevick, to learn. What we have, then, is a conflict among the different constructions and interpretations of context and its associated factors.

In sum, for one interpretation, it is not just a matter of some Vygotskyan analysis of the social bases for language learning *within* the classroom, and the construction of learners as *people*; it is necessary to '*reconceptualise the learner'*, in Norton's phrase (Norton 2000), and to display how the opportunities for learning may be constrained by inequalities of power at home, in the workplace, and in the community at large; inequalities marked by inequities of gender, ethnicity and class. Seen this way, as Stevick makes abundantly clear, language learning is not a skill but a complex social practice, closely bound to how we define and place our Trust in learner identities. Learning to communicate in another language is not just a matter of becoming a better and more autonomous language learner, it has to do with making the link between the achievement of access to rights and goods. The road towards exploring the deep and three dimensional topography of Stevick's territory begins with asking the right critical questions about the nature of learner identities and the nature of learner contributions, as Breen (2001) points out so clearly and comprehensively, and about how both of these are constructed and valued, or devalued, in the trusting and distrusting contexts of language use. What then turns out to be crucial is the interplay between communication as both a socially and cognitively strategic act; understanding that communication exists both as a means of asserting identity and as a means of getting things done. It means, too, that we need to grasp that the constructs of *self* and *person* are frequently contested among learners and within each individual, that an individual learner's uses of language serve both as evidence of solidarity with others and as a means of resistant struggle against institutions and their social practices, and that what is at stake here is Trust in both the 'external' and 'internal' senses highlighted by Stevick. Learners, after all, do not act out their language learning lives as if caged in some hermetically sealed communicative compartments. Note in respect of this how Stevick (1980:287) brings into play themes associated with Trust and confidence which imbue this sense of struggle, yet seeks to effect some harmony between tolerance and authority, as here with a particular focus on students:

> Each of us must allow the other some of this uniqueness, and that is what I mean by 'tolerance'. Tolerance allows the pieces of the puzzle, the students in a classroom, the people in society, to fly off, each in its own direction. Authority, the coercive kind certainly, but also the noncoercive kind... is a force that draws the pieces back together. But what will the pattern be, the pattern toward which these pieces will be drawn? This brings us back to the issue of 'what kind of mystery?' The artificial, synthetic, man-made kind of mystery stifles 'uniqueness' – tells a person what to see, and how to label what he sees, and how to run it through his mind. In choosing which man-made mystery to follow, the miracle worker acts for the person, and that is the end of 'freedom'. All of this brings to mind three other terms – Gattegno's – where he speaks of 'independence', 'autonomy', and 'responsibility.

If it is time to hear and listen with Stevick to the voices of learners as individual persons, it is also important, as we have been emphasising, to do so in terms of their discourses and their interactions with others. There is a danger, not entirely avoided, even perhaps in Stevick's work, of the cognitivist emphasis on individuation creeping back in through a side door, so to speak, where learners are seen only as quasi social beings, as it were from their own individualistic perspective, but not in any interaction with others. Actor becomes subsumed in person, just as earlier person was conflated with self. Nor is this blurring avoided in those studied encounters of learner discourse where highly controlled and constrained interactions are constructed, rather like some rigidified enactments of some classic *theatre*, to produce positivistically satisfying results, which are then held to be implicative of the degree of interactionally-engendered learning. Breen (2001) warns against the problems with just such conclusions. In the messy practices, sites and moments of the classroom, as well as in the murky learning worlds outside the classroom, learners collaborate, or not, as well as participate, or not. Their contributions are co-constructed in interaction with others, as is their discourse. As selves, persons and as actors, learners occupy multiple and diversely interconnected social and institutional worlds, where, as we have argued, their contributions are frequently struggled over, realising contradictory and contested discourses, ones not at all limited to classrooms, and worked out through a myriad and not always overtly signalled ways. Stevick well knew that classroom interactions and their discourses, as evidences of learners' contributions to their own learning, are always reflective, - whether supportively or antagonistically, whether accepted or resisted – of discourses outside the classroom. Continually, such discourses index degrees of, and risks to, Trust by signalling interdiscursively either solidarity with, or struggles against, the social practices of the institution and its members. Such practices

within the crucial site of engagement of the classroom are always contested, and provide critical moments for the re- or the disconfirmation of identities. In that sense, we cannot easily talk of *a* learner's contributions since learners are always in themselves plural, and their contributions to learning similarly differentiated and heterogenous. What is perhaps less emphasised are the social and affective conditions surrounding the making of these contributions. Classrooms, like other learning environments, are challenging, risky, and at time personally dangerous places, as Stevick acknowledges in his writings. Hence perhaps his highlighting, like ours, of the importance of the building of Trust as a counterpoint and response to such risk and danger. Note here how his emphases on the concepts and conditions entailed by Trust are captured in two key passages in which he identifies the learner's 'security' as both crucial and dependent on the teacher's 'faith' and 'understanding', what we have identified as the cornerstone of this chapter as '*putting Trust in the learner'*.

> If we, in our zeal to be "humanistic", become too "learner-centered" with regard to "control", we undermine the learner's most basic need, which is for security. We may find that we have imposed our own half-baked anarchy on the class. Absence of structure, or of focus on the teacher, may well be all right in certain kinds of psychological training, but not in our classrooms. In a task-oriented group like a language class, the student's place is at the center of a space which the teacher has structured, with room for him to grow into. In this kind of relationship, there are two essentials for the teacher: faith that the student will in fact grow into that space and understanding of where the student is in that space at any given moment. When both these ingredients are present, there is the possibility of true "humanism" in teaching. (Stevick 1980: 33)

As the above quotation indicates, the management of such risk and danger is as much related to the teacher as it is to the student. As Stevick continues, and now from a teacher's perspective:

> Why then undertake a kind of teaching which is so demanding of skill and at the same time so risky? To risk and lose means among other things to die a little: to see one's ties with the outside world severed by just that much, and within, to feel that Self out of which one's further messages to the world must rise called into question - called into question not only before others but before oneself.... This is what the would-be 'humanistic' teacher sees. But the very seeing is an act – or better, it is a process – which is going on at the deepest, most uniquely human level, inside the teacher. Therefore, to withhold what flows out of this insight – that is, to fail to offer more and deeper 'life' to her students, would be for the teacher a contradiction of her own life process, and a denial of it: therefore a termination of it. So the teacher risks one kind of death for the hope of a different kind of life within herself as well as in her students. (1980:294-295)

The consequences for the teachers' '*professional vision'* (Goodwin, 1966), of this teacher and learner interaction and their co-responsibility are that, while the student is 'central' in the role of learner, student and teacher are co-implicated in the '*world of meaningful action'*, in which, for example, the relationship between learner 'initiative' and teacher 'control' (See van Lier, this volume) is not a zero sum game, nor decided by the teacher or a particular methodology '*in advance'*. Rather, it depends on both interpersonal and instrumental judgements by the teacher (and learner) exercising what Schon refers to as '*discretionary freedom'* backed by professional judgement (Schon,1987) of the conditions pertaining in the interaction at hand and the particular perceptions, goals, relationships and histories of those involved (Stevick, 1976; 1980: 16ff). Such conditions always incur both talk and action, as Stevick summarises, drawing on the construct of *community* his vision of the classroom is of a shared world of interaction geared towards learning and premised on Trust in which:

> 'all members – "teachers" as well as "students" – see that if any one of them is to get ahead, he or she must depend on the other. People who perceive themselves to be in such relationships tend to act in ways that are consistent with that perception. Then, as realities come to be not only experienced individually but also shared, learning becomes more profound for students and teachers alike'. (Stevick 1976: 186)

Both participants, teachers as well as learners, come to learn how to navigate these discourses, as Breen (1998), points out through their actions, linked principally to the discourses of negotiating and making meaning. In this process, it is not only language and learning that is negotiated, but also institutional structures and practices which are consolidated or challenged, and by all manner of semiotic means, which together work to reflect and reinforce their significances to the actors involved. Such processes of meaning-making always embody the negotiation of various forms of capital, often presented in the forms of metaphors that learners in their narratives of experience construct about themselves, their teachers and their learning. Such metaphorically laden narratives in community settings of learning offer powerful semiotic evidence of these processes. Stevick (1976: 187) indicates that in such a community,

> 'a student can in several senses find her "voice"…. She is more likely to use her larynx for purposes other than mimicry… and more important, her unique presence will be felt by those around her, and her personality will express itself in what she says. If the teacher's own ideas about how he ought to act are not too rigid, he too may come to have a voice in this kind of community.'

'*Metaphors we learn by'* may not turn out to be a bad watchword, then, to capture the significance and prescience of Stevick's writings, and to gather together his representation of the contexts of learner contributions to their learning.

As Stevick (1980:283) writes:

> But an event is just one foothold in the rock; a theory is a thin cable that ties events together – that lets us climb from one foothold to another with less risk of falling off the mountain. Theories do not tell us where the trail leads, or why one should try to climb it, or anything about the ethics of being a guide to those who climb.... But it is also true that human life would be impossible without myth, and without metaphor. It is to these that we must turn unless we have decided to ignore issues which have lain just beneath the surface.

We might indeed go on to say that these contexts – however defined – in which learners make their contributions, can be represented by two related but differently charged metaphors that are mutually dependent on contingencies of Trust. The one, *ecological,* emphasises Cicourel's appraisal (Cicourel, 1992, 2007) of the dynamic interconnectedness between local actions within the institution and the governing historical and social structures of the broader formation, in short how learners' contributions are constrained (and also offered affordance) not only by the exigencies of the interaction order but by forces external to it. The other*, economic*, the classroom as a type of marketplace, where, following Bourdieu (1982, 1991), the values of participant contributions are measured against the perceived worth of their owners' varying forms and amounts of capital: economic, cultural, social and symbolic. Here the issue of appraising learner contributions to their learning becomes one of determining who controls and manipulates the rates of exchange, and in terms of which kind and extent of capital. Addressing that question in exploring Stevick's classroom world compels us to forge a link between the metaphors through the notion of Trust: evaluating and accepting the *economy* implies understanding and appreciating the *ecology*, in short working out, and through, how such metaphors can be made to belong to one unifying, rather than two dissenting worlds.

To achieve and sustain such a unifying and metaphorical '*world of meaningful action'*, Trust is indispensable, as Stevick recognised. It is also conditional, as he also emphasised, on the discursive accomplishment of such Trust, in which the learners'

perspective is foregrounded. Given this, the question immediately arises as to how learning and teaching are to be understood so as to underpin curriculum development, and in a way that both addresses the challenge of *context* posed by Duranti and Goodwin (1992), and acknowledges *context,* as in Stevick's account, as precisely not self evident, or answerable in advance, but differentially interpreted in different research paradigms and for different purposes. In short, it needs a principled underpinning to methodology, whether it be focused on research, on practice, or on the development of overarching curriculum structures and processes.

Such a program will require a considerable broadening of the nature of and relationship between research planning, curriculum development and learning and teaching action. It will need to acknowledge and harmonise in a coherent and educationally salient program the analysis of Trust from the different perspectives of learners and teachers, the interactions among them, the social, textual and semiotic resources that they bring, and relevant institutional and historical affordances, risks and constraints. It is that program of research and practice which Stevick's work presages, and which we have been adumbrating in this chapter.

We would argue that such an agenda, targeting research in and on practice (Schon: 19XX), requires a 'multi-perspectival' approach , (Candlin & Crichton, 2011, Candlin & Crichton 2012 (forthcoming), Crichton, 2010) that includes: textual and semiotic analyses of discursive performances of Trust on site; interpretive, ethnographic and grounded studies of learning and teaching practices; accumulated accounts of expertise by ratified members of the communities of practice in question together with first-hand accounts of interpretations of experience by participating members.

Such an approach is represented in Figure 1, below.

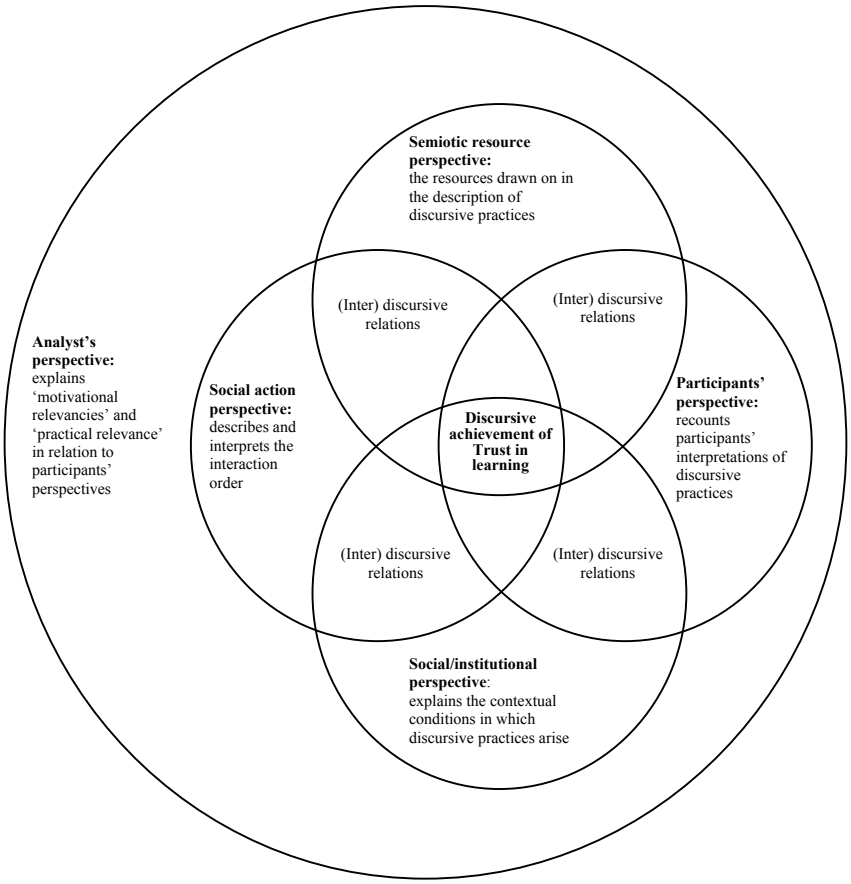

Figure 1: Framing a multi-perspectival program of research, teaching and curriculum design (drawn from Candlin & Crichton (2011) and Crichton (2010))

In this Venn diagram, expressly chosen as a model to reflect the dynamism we have been emphasising, to the left side, the analyst's perspective identifies the motivational relevancies of the analyst and the practical relevance of the study as emerging from collaborative engagement between the analyst and the participants. These are here understood, potentially, to include researchers, teachers, students and other ratified members, brought together in configurations of the roles of analysts and participants and modes of collaboration depending on their relationship to, and engagement in, the research and practice agenda. Each of the overlapping circles represents a distinctive but mutually implicating analytical perspective, all of which are relevant to the investigation of the discursive achievement of Trust at a particular site. The *mutuality* of these perspectives is indicated by their convergence at the centre of the circles. The different perspectives foreground descriptive, interpretive and explanatory modes of analysis that may be brought to bear in the investigation, and the overlaps between them highlight the *interdiscursive nature* of research and practice that seeks to combine these perspectives in the exploration of Trust at a particular discursive site. Entry points to the

analysis and to the research and teaching program will vary in relation to particular sites and their relevant focal themes (Roberts and Sarangi, 2005), say issues surrounding learning autonomy, or Trust building, and to the particular research questions that are being addressed, but no perspective is prime. What is central is that all perspectives are necessary and mutually informing.

Trust and curriculum design

Stevick's emphases on the concepts and conditions entailed by Trust and, their implications for curriculum design are captured in a key passage in *Teaching Languages* (1980:33) in which he identifies the learner's 'security' as both crucial and dependent on the teacher's 'faith' and 'understanding' - what we identify as '*putting Trust in the learner'*. He writes

> If we, in our zeal to be "humanistic", become too "learner-centered" with regard to "control", we undermine the learner's most basic need, which is for security. We may find that we have imposed our own half-baked anarchy on the class. Absence of structure, or of focus on the teacher, may well be all right in certain kinds of psychological training, but not in our classrooms. In a task-oriented group like a language class, the student's place is at the center of a space which the teacher has structured, with room for him to grow into. In this kind of relationship, there are two essentials for the teacher: faith that the student will in fact grow into that space and understanding of where the student is in that space at any given moment. When both these ingredients are present, there is the possibility of true "humanism" in teaching.

To set this statement into its curriculum context it may be useful to begin by offering some account of alternative paradigms for curriculum development, drawing in particular on the work into '*experiential* l*earning*' of Kohonen and his colleagues at Tampere University in Finland (Kohonen et al 2001, Kohonen, 2001) (see also Candlin, 2003[1]), and to indicate by this means how a language learning curriculum imbued by Trust might be formulated.

Kohonen and his colleagues argue that learning and teaching curricula have traditionally oriented themselves towards one of three paradigmatic models: positivistic, constructivist, and critical (See Figure 2). Similar distinctions have been drawn in

[1] Note: Much of the argument in this final section derives from Candlin, 2003, but which has not yet been available in easily accessible form, and draws on a decade of curriculum development of colleagues at the English Language Institute, Kanda University of International Studies, Tokyo, where he acts as research consultant.)

relation to language education in earlier work on communicative curricula (Breen and Candlin, 1981, Candlin, 1984), and, more recently, in the context of re-emphasising the contributions of learners to the language learning process (Breen, 2000). Much of the work of van Lier (van Lier, 1996, 2000, 2001) provides a similar analysis of these competing models, and a collection of invited papers edited by Kramsch (2002), focusing on ecological aspects of language acquisition, seeks to integrate the constructivist with the critical (in her terms, the ecological), arguing that any curriculum which is responsive to context and is socially constructed, necessarily highlights the hermeneutic and the interactive.

1. *Positivistic:* context-free
2. *Constructivist*: created hermeneutically
3. *Critical*: socially constructed, dialogic and ecological

Figure 2 Three orientations towards curriculum design

These paradigm metaphors suggest particular stances towards the conduct of teaching and learning in the classroom, the roles of teachers and learners, the privileging of particular kinds of interaction, and, indirectly, can serve as criteria establishing the yardsticks by which classroom performance of both teachers and learners is to be measured and evaluated. They have, thus, quite significant practical relevance and consequences.

Following Kohonen et al's distinctions, (although there is much in the early work of Douglas Barnes in the 1960's and 1970's as an underpinning for this connection between paradigm and practice; see in particular, Barnes, 1976) the *positivist paradigm* is oriented towards a *transmissive* pedagogy, essentially teacher-centered and didactic, where the responsibility for learning lies squarely with the teacher, but where, however, the learner is nonetheless evaluated against learning for which he or she is essentially not responsible. Like Dickens' Mr Gradgrind, in such a pedagogy the emphasis is on the factual and the cumulative, - *("the facts, boy, nothing but the facts")* - and these are to be sharply distinguished from the value-laden, the hermeneutic and the interdependent. Moreover, such an orientation finds a ready correlate in a view of language learning as essentially unit-based, linear, synchretic and readily measurable.

In a *constructivist paradigm*, the orientation in pedagogy is interpretive, hermeneutic and, as Barnes defined it almost thirty years ago, *negotiative* (Barnes, 1976), built out of

teacher and learner dialogue. Here the emphasis is on problem-solving skills, with the task of teachers *and* of learners directed at co-constructing knowledge through interaction. The focus in such a pedagogy is on a shared responsibility between teachers and learners for helping learners to be more skilled and strategic at learning, enabling them to achieve that degree of communicative competence which will enable them to participate in both meaning negotiation and in curriculum-building. Such a paradigm resonates closely with the work of Stevick, as we have seen, and with recent concerns with Vygotskyan theories of the social construction of learning (see Lantolf, 2000, Mercer, 2001) where language acquisition is seen as process-oriented, targeted at meaning, and where the processes of learning become a major focus of research attention.

Finally, in a *critical paradigm,* the orientation in pedagogy is more challenging still, in that here the objective is not just the co-construction and mastery of knowledge, and the refining of meaning negotiation strategies and skills, but is directed towards the reconstruction of the learner's social world, inside and outside the classroom (for some examples from different contexts internationally, see Auerbach, 1995, 2000; Candlin, 1984, Canagarajah, 1993, and Lantolf and Genung, 2002). For Kohonen and his colleagues this critical reconstructive process is more specifically aimed at developing inter-cultural competence, but one can readily construct other specific reconstructive goals, for example ones directed at addressing imbalances in the social order of the institution, or achieving more overtly and external socio-political goals, such as redressing linguistic inequalities in multilingual communities. The focus in such a pedagogy is on *transformation* and on self-actualization of the learner, linked not only to personal, but, above all, to social and institutional change. The objective of such a curriculum would be to make plain and understand how practices of learning and teaching are intimately and ecologically interconnected with broader social, cultural and historical forces in contexts of action (Kramsch, 2002). Typically, such understanding develops within a critical and collaborative inquiry process in the classroom where teachers and learners are more involved in a trusting environment of problem-posing than in problem-solving, challenging fellow teachers and fellow learners to explain, not just to describe and interpret. The values and beliefs required and on the line here are at the heart of such a trustworthy inquiry process, with language learning intimately linked to understanding attitudes and addressing issues of identity of self and other.

What would then be the implications of the selection of such a critical and multi-perspectival curriculum paradigm? We identify here just one particular aspect, one which is inherent in Stevick's work,and which is currently of pervasive concern in discussions of language teaching and learning, namely that of *autonomy.*

As all writing on this topic has made plain (see as examples, Benson and Voller 1997; Benson, 2000, 2011; Little, Ridley and Ushioda, 2003) autonomy is both a construct and an action plan. It is also a process rather than some objective which once achieved requires no further encouragement or development. It is also, although here there has been some confusion, not to be construed as a private, *independent* exercise of individualism. Autonomy is essentially *interdependent,* both in its manner of achievement and in the exercise of its potential in relation to language learning in the classroom and in the world outside the institution. In short, it is collaborative, co-constructed, and critically to be deployed when challenges to learning and to communicative competence arise – and, above all, dependent on the exercise of Trust in and between the participants concerned. As such, autonomy sits easily within a constructivist-critical curriculum paradigm, w and in a real sense may be seen as one measure of the success of such a curriculum.

In the spirit of this interdependence, it is important to emphasise, as does Stevick, that learner autonomy and learner "ownership" need not, and in any given *institutional* context cannot, imply the withdrawal of teacher responsibility for helping to create the contexts and conditions for learning, any more than teacher "ownership" completely eclipses the learner. The emphasis on co-construction characteristic of the constructivist paradigm explicitly enjoins *co*-ownership. This co-ownership is, of course, to be variously balanced in different contexts, even in different classrooms; it will be variably distributed in relation to participant knowledge, experience, responsibility and authority. We are not speaking here of some percentaged equivalence. Nor are we arguing that achieving some workable *modus operandi* implies any diminution in, say, teacher status. What may be less realized is that language and communication – the subject-matter of this curriculum – offers a powerful opportunity for the initiation of such a process of trusting and trustworthy co-ownership. For example, legitimation by the teacher (and indirectly by the teaching resources being used) of the power of learners to make their own meanings from texts, rather than merely to supply (or not) pre-supposed responses for which they the learners are not responsible, is a step towards such co-

ownership of language and language learning. The same is true in relation to the recognition of learner language not as some signal of deficit but rather as a valued stage towards communicative proficiency. Most significantly, co-ownership can be recognized and promoted by teacher recognition of the learners' modes of conceptualizing his or her world, within the classroom and outside. Where such a commitment to co-ownership is innovative is where it sets these ownership contributions of teacher and learner in a dynamic, creative and interdependent relationship. The challenge for the curriculum, both in terms of design and delivery, is to so structure the process that these ownerships are held in a creative and productive tension, achieving as we indicate earlier an ecological/economical balance.

It may be useful, to reflect a little more deeply on the relationship between autonomy, language learning and Trust. As we argue earlier in this chapter, learning to communicate in another language is not just a matter of becoming a better and more autonomous language learner. Nor has it to do only with what takes place within the classroom. Autonomous language learning has a critical dimension. In particular, it should ask the sometime uncomfortable question of what is this autonomous language learning actually *for*? Addressing that question takes us beyond the classroom, and compels us to review the links between the achievement of linguistic competence *per se* and the gaining of intercultural understanding through enhanced communicative (not merely linguistic) competence. Further, it raises the social question of the relationship between the achievement of that competence and the achievement by the learner of access to opportunities, rights and goods. Seen this way, a constructivist-critical curriculum is clearly more than a language curriculum; it is rather a curriculum for social life where language learning is not a skill but a complex social and real-world practice, closely bound up with learner identities, opportunities, facilitations and constraints. We may say, then, that language learning is not autonomous in any independent sense, but interdependently engaged with the demands of the social world.

As in any curriculum, such autonomy is not achieved as some finished product; it is rather a journey towards Stevick's multi-dimensional and deep territory which begins with asking the critical questions about the nature of learner identities, the nature of learner contributions, and how both are constructed and valued in the contexts of learning and the contexts of language use. As we have emphasized throughout this chapter, to describe such communicative behaviour simply in terms of language offers

little *explanation.* If we are to understand even partially the behaviour of learners in class we need to explore how the communicative practices in the crucial sites of classrooms relate to learners' practices in the equally crucial sites of the street, the home, and the community. In short, their whole communicative identity and its validation becomes relevant to the particularly focused practices of the classroom. What learners prefer to perform, or not, what meanings they provide, what values they bring to bear, what participation they see as comfortable, are not products of the classroom. They are part and parcel of their contributions to learning; some facilitative, as we say earlier, others inhibitive.

For the curriculum, both in terms of design and delivery, this presents some unaccustomed challenges. If it is time to hear and listen more to the voices of the learners as individual selves and as representative persons, then even more so is this true of teachers. How far does the curriculum serve to develop this interdependent autonomy among teachers? After all they are partners, co-owners in the process. How well does the curriculum in design and delivery enable teachers to adjust and accommodate to this perhaps unaccustomed set of roles? What new skills and, perhaps even more importantly, what new mind-sets, are required? After all, shifting curriculum paradigms can bring considerable personal challenges to teachers. Most immediately, proclaiming interdependent autonomy as a mutual goal of teachers and learners compels participants to recognize that in the sites, practices and moments of this critical and transformative classroom they are continually involved in processes of contestation for position and validation as well as in collaboration.

These processes are characteristically mediated through discourse and interaction (Breen, 2000 ,1997); accordingly, for autonomy to be achieved, participants, especially learners, need to be enabled and trusted to communicate about the curriculum, especially its delivery, but also, indirectly perhaps, its design. Enabling language learners to reach that necessary discursive participation is perhaps the greatest challenge an autonomy-focused language learning curriculum has to face.. How can learners with limited target language resources make credible contributions? What can teachers do to facilitate such contributions? How can resources be designed in an open learning way so that participation can be encouraged and enhanced? What surrogates for linguistic competence can be introduced so that autonomy does not become inaccessible? How can the considerable *capital* of learners be brought to bear? In a similar way, we may

ask of teachers how can we go beyond the typical goings-on of the classroom so as to focus more on the relationships that exist between teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, and their instructional practices. Indeed, as we suggest earlier, exploring these beliefs through the fundamental metaphors that encapsulate them might be an effective way of understanding any curriculum.

The emphasis on autonomy as a goal for a constructivist and critical curriculum carries with it a particular research implication; if achieving autonomy is an interdependent process, then what is required to monitor the process is a research model which is essentially formative, multi-perspectival and integrative of different sets of data. Above all, it should be one whose findings can exercise influence on the direction of the curriculum, and which can suggest appropriate actions to its actors. What would be the parameters of a research model for teaching and learning language and communication that would be in harmony with, and do justice to, this constructivist and critical curriculum? We suggest that our multi-perspectival model for research and practice might well serve as an enabling mechanism for such a challenging process and as one example focus we might adopt *action research* as an engine by which means the distinctive perspectives of our model can be set in motion.

The British educational researcher Lawrence Stenhouse laid out the nature of this challenge in his influential book *An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development* (Stenhouse, 1975). His response to what he there called the challenges of a *process-oriented* curriculum was to advocate action research by teachers in collaboration with learners as a key to developing the curriculum, but also as a means of evaluating its design features and applications in practice. Stenhouse's arguments were widely regarded as revolutionary at the time, although they provided a basis for much of the innovative orientations in language teaching towards a communicative approach in the late 1970's, (see Breen and Candlin, 1980) and more recent work directed at action research in English language teaching (Burns, 1999, 2009). Such action research is targeted at *change,* whether in terms of attitude and belief, or in terms of pedagogic goals, or in terms of classroom practice, or in terms of post-instructional activity outside the institution.

Why might such an approach to classroom and setting specific curriculum research be appropriate in the context of developing a constructivist/critical language learning and teaching curriculum imbued by Stevick's writings? Principally, we believe, because it makes explicit and recordable the links between practices – what participants do – and the discourses in which these practices are realized – how these practices are occasioned in interaction and coded in language and communication. It involves the study of how participants perform using all manner of semiotic means, but also the study of how they account for their actions through seen through the perspective of their own reflective narratives of experience. It locates the communicative activities of participants within the institution, but does so against the broader social, historical and structural framework of the organizational and societal conditions within which the institution is placed and draws its *raison d'être*. The practical actions of teachers and learners that are being collaboratively researched are thus doubly reflective: they are directed at the sites of learning and teaching whose conditions they (and the processes of action research) must analyse and explain so as to authenticate their own practices and validate each other as learners and as teachers, but, more curriculum-focused, they are aimed at the critical evaluation of the learning and teaching practices themselves. Addressing this *ecology and economy* of reflexive and interdependent research and practice, and its mediation by Trust in and between participants, is the challenge facing such a constructivist-critical curriculum. At the same time, any responsiveness to the need for change is not restricted to curriculum content and pedagogic practice; it extends to the redefining of learner and teacher roles in the direction of *both* participants becoming increasingly critically reflective practitioners in language learning and teaching.

How can such an action-research-based autonomous curriculum be achieved? At base lies the need to construct all pedagogy as essentially a process of problem-raising and problem-posing in which teaching is seen as a *researchable* activity. Here we firmly draw upon Stevick's position.. In practical terms it implies a change in mind-set in which issues, questions, even disturbances in the classroom process are weighed in terms of their potential significance for adjustments, following an action research cycle, to the teaching-learning process, and, where significant enough, to the overall curriculum guidelines. The first principle, then, for achieving a research-based curriculum intent on practice is to make the research and the practice problem-based and issue-driven.

Now, of course, judgement as to significance is the key; no teacher can regard her or his actions as continually researchable in terms of relevance. Nonetheless, unless there is some corporate or group sharing of these issues of potential relevance, backed up by informal teacher accounts, the basis for curriculum adjustment and development towards autonomy will be constrained. Accordingly, the second principle for achievement has to be the deriving of an agenda for research from discussion and critical reflection. Such an agenda cannot simply be wished; it depends on creating a trusting climate in the curriculum process where critical reflection becomes a typical mode of teacher behaviour, and at all stages of the pedagogic process: in the design of tasks ensuring that they contain elements for learner and teacher consideration of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the tasks, in the monitoring of the process of the tasks, and in the evaluation of task outcomes. For this to happen, the third principle needs to be invoked; that of capitalizing on teachers' skills, interests and involvement, and, equally, convincing and enabling learners to take part in this reflective research process. This collaboration in planning, executing and evaluating pedagogic activity is not just reflective teaching and learning, it *is* research. Indeed, as we have argued earlier, such research lies at the heart of the constructivist-critical curriculum. Finally, the fourth key principle is that of establishing an interdisciplinary, multi-perspectived research, teaching, and curriculum development agenda of the kind we have outlined above, where a range of methodologies associated with distinctive, yet mutually influencing, perspectives are combined so as to provide a rich and grounded explanation of those issues, challenges and problems that arise. Such a principle allows ample scope for individual and group research initiatives within a broadly action-research based program centered on exploring learning events. Descriptions of learner language, small-scale or corpus-based; evaluations of learner motivation in relation to particular task types and task modes; interactional analyses of learner-learner and teacher-learner engagements in particular pedagogic practices, for example say, the posing and addressing of questions and responses; studies of teachers' (and learners') beliefs about language teaching and learning and the relationship between these beliefs and performance; utilization and usability studies of particular learning resources; performances of learners under particular task conditions; assessments of learner potential in relation to novel communicative demands; experimental studies of learner communicative competence, for example say in relation to responses to grammaticality or lexicality; longitudinal studies of post-instructional language behaviour of learners outside the classroom framework, *inter alia.*

Ultimately, as is always the case, everything hangs on the professional development of teacher researchers so as to enable them to undertake this action research, the provision of expert support, the identifying of teaching with research, and the need to facilitate the research program with effective resources. At the root of all such endeavour as we have argued, and the premise and condition of such an undertaking, remains 'Putting your Trust in the learner.

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