

Towards a New Definition of Trust for Teaching in Higher Education

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Questions about trust between tutors in tertiary education and their students have not received much treatment in comparison to those of institutional trustworthiness or trust in the public education system. This reflective paper reviews and critically evaluates existing literature from the fields of SoTL, education and other relevant research domains in order to understand the nature of trust in higher education teaching; for, an understanding of the nature of trust allows tertiary educators and administrators to foster such trust, which has been shown to be a crucial ingredient for teaching effectiveness. The second half of this paper raises a set of sceptical challenges to the dominant understanding of trust in SoTL and in education (i.e. the ‘service-management’ conception of trust). It will be argued that the service-management conception of trust may not be practically helpful, contains vague prescriptions, is explanatorily deficient, amongst other worries. This paper then proceeds to recommend not so much a jettisoning of the service-management conception as the need to complement it with an alternative model of trust for higher education teaching. On the supplementary conception of trust (i.e. the ‘network model’), the potential for trust is to be found in common social environments, institutions or spaces where individuals form the expectation that others may be relied on to behave in acceptable ways. Trust is not so much a relation between two individuals (who already know each other) but exists as a potentiality between individuals insofar as they share and interact in a common social environment, institution or space. What the network model of trust implies, then, is that trust between students and their teachers can be strengthened when they participate in co-engagement activities that aim at meaningful pedagogical ends. Our findings will have implications for the measurement of trust in future scholarship as well as, and more importantly, how it is that tutors in university and colleges and seek to foster trusting relationships between themselves and their students.

INTRODUCTION

Questions about trust between tutors and students in higher education have not received much treatment in comparison to those of institutional trustworthiness or trust in the public education system (Bryk and Schneider 2002; Hoy and Tschannen-Moran 1999; Gibbs 2004; but, see Macfarlane 2009 for a notable exception). The study of trust becomes important when students are increasingly playing the role of “customers” in an increasingly marketized higher education landscape, where notions such as customer satisfaction, university branding, brand attachment and service quality influence a university’s forward trajectory (Sultan and Wong 2012; Dennis et al. 2016; Guilbault 2018). Yet, it is not at all obvious how best to understand the notion of trust understood as a form interpersonal relation between teachers and students (Frymier and Houser 2000; Chory 2007, p. 100). Having a pedagogically justifiable and practicable conception of trust is important because the notion of trust and its putative components figure prominently in other associated concepts that scholars of SoTL and education have theorized about: namely, those of tutor-student “rapport” (Catt et al. 2007; Faranda and Clark, 2004; Gremier and Gwinner, 2000),¹ tutor “credibility” (Frymier and Thompson 1992; McCroskey 1998; Thweatt and McCroskey 1998; McCroskey and Teven 1999), and so forth. In addition, it has been observed by Gibbs (2002; 2007; 2011) that the increased commodification of the higher education landscape may have led to students (or their parents) seeking assurance that they are getting what they have signed up for, and that this phenomenon of the student-as-customer raises the further question of what it takes to trust institutions of higher education (and the claims such institutions make about securing future job opportunities, etc.). The demand to know whether a university (and, presumably

its faculty) is trustworthy is, therefore, a reaction that possibly bespeaks of student vulnerability or anxiety.

This paper reviews existing literature—mainly from the fields of SoTL and educational research—in order to understand the nature of trust in higher education teaching. A set of sceptical worries will be raised against the dominant understanding of trust that this literature review uncovers; this paper, then, proceeds to formulate an alternative understanding of trust—or what I will be calling the “network” model of trust—that, it will be argued, is more suitable for teaching in higher education. Our findings will have implications for the measurement of trust in future scholarship as well as, and more importantly, how it is that tutors in university and colleges can seek to foster trusting relationships between students and themselves. To look ahead, section 2 offers a detailed characterisation of the definition of trust that is presently dominant or widely assumed by writers in SoTL and in education; section 3 proceeds to problematise this dominant definition of trust. Section 4, on the other, hand, offers a sketch of a different model of trust from that found in the extant literature. This reflective paper, in other words, can be read as two separate treatises: readers interested *only* in the current state of the debate on trust in higher education can choose to focus on sections 2 and 3, while those interested in a fuller discussion of the topic at hand can continue pressing on with section 4.

TRUST IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

An understanding of the nature of trust between tutor and student in higher education is important for the following reasons. First, since evidence of the success of higher education is not immediately observable, students, it seems, *have* to trust their

university or college tutors and professors (Macfarlane 2009, p. 223). Second, trust is needed when students “discover a mismatch or a ‘gap’ between their expectations of a university education and their perception of the reality” (Macfarlane 2009, p. 224). For instance, students may come to observe that the ability of faculty to teach effectively varies considerably from tutor to tutor. Third, and relatedly, trust is also needed when “what students expect from the university is not what academic managers or, indeed, faculty believe they want” (Macfarlane 2009, p. 225). For instance, as Macfarlane elaborates, students transitioning from their pre-tertiary institutions may be socialized to expect more faculty support than the latter is willing to offer insofar as some tutors place much store on the value of independent learning. In the latter two scenarios, it can be argued that, despite the gaps described, it remains *instrumentally* useful for students to continue to trust their tutors because doing so confers benefits. For instance, just as it is instrumentally useful for an injured patient to trust her physiotherapist because following the latter’s advice offers hope of a faster recovery, so too it is instrumentally useful for students to trust their tutors because doing so creates a more conducive environment for improved student learning.²

In this section, I present four salient themes from what we know about trust from researchers of SoTL and educational research across tertiary and pre-tertiary levels of education. The methodology with which I conducted the review of the literature is influenced by the following policy: there exists a paucity of research that investigates the nature of trust between tutor and student in higher education.³ Also, it is important to first determine what exactly is being studied when authors use the term “trust”; this is because doing so minimises the confusion that may arise as a result of an overlap between the notion of trust and related concepts (e.g. rapport, tutor credibility). Such conceptual confusion is undesirable because it compromises the comparability of research findings (this we learn from analogous research inquiries into the notion of “empathy.” See Brown, Harkins and Beech, 2012; Gerdes, Segal and Lietz, 2010). So, in order to determine precisely what is being studied and given the paucity of research on the topic efforts should be made to draw on as wide a range of different viewpoints or scholarly domains as possible (the “snowball sampling” method helps in this), with an end to bringing together knowledge that hopefully improves our understanding of the concept or, at the very least, reduces confusion in the field (the use of “content-analysis” helps in this).

I have undertaken the following steps in order to capture as many definitions of “trust” across as wide a range of different viewpoints and scholarly domains as possible. With that end in mind, I consulted a multiplicity of sources (e.g. those about student perception as well as faculty perception), sources with varying bases of evidence (e.g. fixed-response or quantitative and open-ended or qualitative). In addition, my selection of publications draws largely but not exclusively from the fields of SoTL and education written in English over the past three decades (1990 to 2020). I do not discriminate between methodological approaches in that I have included works that are theoretical, empirical, critical and pedagogical/applied. I have reported findings mainly from publications that specialize in higher education studies (e.g. *The Journal of Higher Education*), but I have also included a small handful of those from the pre-tertiary level (e.g. *The Elementary School Journal*); I have also included works from publications that specialize in educational leadership (e.g. *Journal of School Leadership*), the

marketing of higher education (e.g. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*), and even with specializations that overlap between education and communication (e.g. *Communication Studies*; *Communication Quarterly*).

In my review of the literature I select research material partly in accordance with what is known as the “snowball” sampling method—having picked out discussions that feature words such as “trust” or “trustworthy” as key-terms from a sampling of publications that have been indexed, I proceed to review the works cited by these publications in order to gather a greater number of definitions or conceptual summaries. Not all authors put forth a formal definition of trust; some authors have couched their conceptualizations about the nature of trust in a broader discussion of other topics (e.g. fairness in the classroom, teacher credibility). These informal accounts were also reviewed alongside the more formal definitions of trust.

Finally, in order to locate certain salient themes in discussions of trust, I engaged in what is known as “content analysis” in which themes or meaningful connections can be discerned across a wide body of qualitative data (Krippendorff 2004). To systematize my findings, I have, following Maietta et al. (2021) and Saldaña (2014), attempted to use an iterative, inductive open coding process to determine several salient themes in the extant discussion of trust in education. I attempted to break down definitions or discussions of trust into smaller clauses, and I then proceeded to determine similarities and differences among these. This process yielded the following four themes (how trust is understood; the value of trust; ways to foster trust; and, ways that promote distrust), which I will now proceed to layout.

How Scholars Understand Trust

Trust, by definition, involves a person (the “trustor”) trusting in another (the “trustee”) often for some favourable outcome. Most importantly, there is consensus gathering amongst researchers of SoTL and in education that trust—or more specifically, the trustworthiness of a teacher—requires the possession of four components: benevolence; honesty or integrity; competence or expertise; and, reliability or predictability (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran 1999; Bryk and Schneider, 2002; Smith, Hoy and Sweetland 2001; Macfarlane 2009).⁴ Benevolence is closely associated with the expressing of care or “love” for one’s students (Ballantyne et al. 1991; Rowland 2000), and to do so in a manner that is consistent with students being independent learners responsible for their own welfare and intellectual growth (Macfarlane 2009, p. 229). Honesty or integrity, on the other hand, is expressed, amongst other things, by the keeping of promises (such as the prompt returning of student feedback), the promotion learning environments that are characterized by open debate and the formulation of assessments or assignments that are fair and well-conceived (Macfarlane 2009, pp. 230-231). Tutors are honest or possess integrity when they are able to manage confidential information related to their students—especially on matters of mental or physical health—the sharing of which may undermine the academic or career prospects of students if not the causing of embarrassment. The third component of trust is that of competence or expertise; as, the name suggests, this refers to a tutor’s possession of domain knowledge or skills. But, as many SoTL scholars have rightly noted (Chickering and Gamson 1987; Glassick et al 1997; Felton 2013; Gleason and Sanger 2018; citation deleted for blind review), domain expertise remains inert knowledge without teach-

ing effectiveness, which refers to things such as lesson clarity and organization, delivery techniques, student engagement, amongst other things. It, therefore, can be argued that competence or expertise related to trust is a function of teaching effectiveness, broadly construed. Finally, reliability or predictability refers generally to how consistent a tutor's behaviour is, the irregularity of which may give rise to student anxiety. Macfarlane (2009) makes an interesting observation about how novel teaching pedagogies can be in tension with what students are comfortable with; he observes that "[t]he importance of predictability can be overlooked in well-intentioned efforts to introduce innovative teaching and learning methods in higher education which can inadvertently damage the 'safety' or 'security' students find in conventional classroom environments where their role is relatively passive" (p. 233). That some students insist on safe, secure or conventional methods of teaching may be partly motivated by the phenomenon of students as the paying customers, where a premium is placed on the predictability of the "service" offered, and the passive uptake of easy information (Macfarlane 2009, p. 233).

The Value of Trust

It is widely acknowledged that trust provides for a more accommodating or "intimate" climate for student learning to occur (Durnford 2010; Ennis and McCauley 2002; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Dobransky and Frymier, 2004); trust between teachers and students increases student achievement (Goddard et al. 2001; Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 1999), encourages alienated or marginalised groups of students (Ennis and McCauley 2002), reduces student resistance and allows for a smoother transition between different schools and levels of learning (Van Petegen et al. 2008; Baker et al. 2008). Relatedly, when students perceive their teachers to be trustworthy, communication between teacher and student increases, and this correlates with an increase in student learning (Dobransky and Frymier 2004). As explained by Wooten and McCroskey:

A student's trust of a teacher is seen as an important factor in determining the degree to which that student will be open to being taught by that teacher. Trust, then, is seen as a necessary component of a student-teacher relationship for maximal learning to occur. (1996, p. 94)

Students who perceive their teachers to be trustworthy also see them as being fair and professionally credible; it has been found that such students are consequently less likely to engage in forms of behaviour that are perceived by teachers to be disruptive or anti-social (Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad and Paulsel, 2004ab).⁵ Finally, insofar as trust is a form of interpersonal relationship, the fostering of trust, as is the fostering of other forms of student-teacher relationship (e.g. rapport, credibility, immediacy), can give rise to greater teacher job satisfaction (Graham, West and Schaller 1992).

More Ways to Foster Trust

It has been found that teachers who are assertive and responsive are more likely to be perceived as trustworthy (Wooten and McCroskey 1996). Trustworthy teachers express their care or benevolence with the exercise of "ego-supportive skills" whereby "teachers never embarrass students or verbally abuse them, and caring instructors communicate their concern for students and relate well to them" (Teven and Hanson 2004; Chory 2007, p. 91). In addition, trustworthy teachers are found to be fair when

assigning grades and adopt classroom procedures or modes of interaction that do not express favouritism (Chory 2007, p. 100). Interestingly, the means of fostering trust between teacher and student overlap with that of teacher credibility. This is because researchers have also noted that credible teachers foster rapport and affinity (Frymier and Thompson 1992), are adept at engaging or involving students (McCroskey, Valencic and Richmond 2004; Teven 2001; Thweatt and McCroskey 1998), are assertive and responsive (Martin, Chesebro and Mottet 1997; Teven 2001). In the penultimate section of this paper I intend to return to this issue of definitional overlap between forms of teacher-student interpersonal relationships, and how it might affect the training of teachers.

Ways to Undermine Trust

On the basis of the fourfold definition of trust described by McKnight and Chervany, Macfarlane (2009, p. 227-229) offers examples of actions that tutors in higher education settings might do that result in the undermining of trust between students and themselves.⁶ The following contains a summary of his findings (note that some of these pieces of behaviour fall into more than one category):

Behaviour of tutor that undermines "benevolence"

1. Losing or mislaying student assignments.
2. Being generally unavailable or unprepared to give tutorial support.
3. Refusing to mediate in disputes between students arising from group projects.
4. Failing to grade and return assignments within a reasonable time.
5. Not updating teaching materials.
6. Providing unclear or insufficient feedback on assignments.
7. Telling students that research is more important than teaching them.
8. Providing insufficient guidance on use of independent learning time.
9. Demonstrating indifference to student evaluation.
10. Cancelling or re-scheduling classes or lectures without good reason.

Behaviour of tutor that undermines "honesty" or "integrity"

1. Granting assignment extensions to students on an inconsistent basis.
2. Criticizing a student in the presence of other students or teachers.
3. Allowing a few students to dominate class discussion or other activities.
4. Providing additional tutorial support to some students without explanation.
5. Loss of temper or making disrespectful remarks.
6. Not teaching or covering the curriculum as promised.
7. Imposing penalties/criticizing lack of referencing in student work while failing to model this behaviour in presenting lecturing and other teaching materials.
8. Sharing information or opinions about student progress with third parties, such as employers or parents, without student consent.

Behaviour of tutor that undermines “competence” or “expertise”

1. Failing to demonstrate a command of subject knowledge.
2. Allowing a few students to dominate class discussion or other activities.
3. Teaching uninformed by personal scholarly activities.
4. Not updating teaching materials.
5. Providing unclear or insufficient feedback on assignments.
6. Providing insufficient guidance on use of independent learning time.

Behaviour of tutor that undermines “reliability” or “predictability”

1. Granting assignment extensions to students on an inconsistent basis.
2. Changing a course assignment or assessment criteria mid-course.
3. Losing or mislaying student assignment.
4. Loss of temper or making disrespectful remarks.
5. Not teaching or covering the curriculum as promised.
6. Inconsistency in the start or end time of classes.
7. Changing established seating patterns.
8. Insufficient planning of teaching.

The above examples of actions that may undermine trust is not meant to be exhaustive; but, they do suffice to illustrate what in Macfarlane’s opinion erode trust between tutor and student. Against Macfarlane’s list of actions that erode trust, two things can be said. First, it is not at all obvious why some actions by tutors belong to one category as opposed to another (e.g., Macfarlane thinks that tutors who lose their temper or make disrespectful remarks have their “competence” eroded; but, I am inclined to think that such tutors have their “benevolence” eroded!). Second, as has been pointed out by moral philosophers, the notions of trust and distrust are not contradictories, but contraries (Hawley 2014, p. 3; Jones 1996, p. 16; Krishnamurthy 2015; Ullmann-Margalit 2004): just as an object that is *not* red need not necessarily be blue in colour; a tutor who is *not* distrusted by students need not necessarily be trusted by students; in other words, there can be tutors who are neither distrusted nor trusted by students (just as an object can be neither blue nor red in colour—it is green!). Macfarlane’s discussion leaves readers with the impression that just as long as tutors avoid those pieces of behaviour that elicit distrust they will be trusted. But, this may be mistaken.

This fourfold definition of trust—which Macfarlane (2009), amongst many others have adopted—appears to be heavily influenced by research in the disciplines of business psychology, management and organization studies (where research into trust was a fecund field that predated similar inquiries in SoTL and education studies). For instance, just as the “openness, friendliness to students, genuineness, and truthfulness” are components of trust that a university or college is expected to possess, the very same ingredients are, as Ghosh et al. (2001) noted, expected of the *paying customer*. Further, scholars of management studies have commonly posited that trust involves a “relationship of mutual confidence in *contractual* performance, honest communication, *expected* competence, and a capacity for unguarded interaction” (Reina and Reina 1999, p. 10, my emphasis). In other words, managers are perceived to be trustworthy when they keep meet

their professional obligations, possess the capacity and knowledge to perform a given role and are honest in their communication (which includes being forthcoming in admitting mistakes and not misrepresenting information). Further, in a widely cited article that analyses the many definitions of trust across the fields of marketing, business psychology, management and organization studies, McKnight and Chervany (2001) found that the four components in question—namely, benevolence, integrity, competence and predictability—are highly salient in the extensive literature being studied. The authors proceed to describe the four elements of trust in more details as follow:

Benevolence means caring and being motivated to act in one’s interest rather than acting opportunistically. Integrity means making good faith agreements, telling the truth, and fulfilling promises. Competence means having the ability or power to do for one what one needs done. Predictability means trustee actions (good or bad) that are consistent enough to be forecasted in a given situation. Predictability is a characteristic of the trustee that may positively affect willingness to depend on the trustee regardless of other trustee attributes. In our categorizations of definitions, goodwill, responsiveness, and caring fell into the benevolence category, while honesty and morality were categorized as integrity, and expertness was classified as competence. (2001, p. 31, references deleted)

Now, let us call the above fourfold definition of trust—which has been adopted by researchers in SoTL and education—the “service-management” definition of trust insofar as this definition was primarily formulated for purposes of the service industry and managerial roles. Macfarlane, for instance, whose work on the topic of trust in higher education made it explicit that his study “reflect[s] on the implications of concepts derived from service management and marketing in relation to teaching in higher education. It will also apply four meta-categories of trust... benevolence, integrity, competence and predictability... in understanding the meaning of ‘good’ teaching” (Macfarlane 2009, p. 222). To repeat, what I am christening here as the “service-management” definition of trust is so-called because of its being the intellectual descendant of a widely held definition of trust by researchers into management studies, business psychology, etc. In the next section, contra Macfarlane, I raise some sceptical worries about the service-management definition of trust in relation to its wholesale adoption for teaching in higher education.

PROBLEMS WITH THE SERVICE-MANAGEMENT DEFINITION OF TRUST

Not Very Helpful Pedagogically

In my review of the literature on trust, we saw that some means of fostering trust involve tutors possessing “ego-supportive skills,” being fair in grading assignments, and allowing for open classroom debate. Yet, these techniques, though no doubt important, are not always easy for tutors—especially the novice ones—to engage in successfully.⁷ To complicate matters, what are considered to be the hallmarks of effective teaching (e.g. organization of lesson, quality of classroom interaction or student-tutor rapport) have been found to be context sensitive—different disciplines or domains of intellectual inquiry value what counts as effective teaching differently (Hativa, Barak and Simhi 2001; Neumann 2001; Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2006; Devlin and Samarwickrema

2010). In addition, knowing what the actions are that elicit distrust does not mean that a tutor necessarily knows what the actions are that foster trust. This is because, as I pointed out above, the notions of trust and distrust are contraries: as one author points out, “[d]istrust is not just the absence of trust since it is possible to neither distrust nor trust someone” (McLeod 2021, Section 1.3). The third reason why the service-management definition of trust may not be very helpful pedagogically is that the reasons why we come to trust (or distrust) a person may be the result of highly nuanced and subtle mix of body language and stereotypes engendered by socio-historical forces not always at the forefronts of our mind. As one author points out, “[f]actors like these can influence trustors without them knowing it, sometimes making their trust irrational (e.g., because it is informed by oppressive biases)” (McLeod 2021, Section 2.2). The last, and quite possibly most important reason why the service-management definition of trust may not be very helpful pedagogically is that its requirement of tutor predictability is, as Macfarlane notes, in tension with teaching practices that aim at active learning. Macfarlane’s remark deserves to be reproduced in full:

The importance of predictability can be overlooked in well-intentioned efforts to introduce innovative teaching and learning methods in higher education which can inadvertently damage the “safety” or “security” students find in conventional classroom environments where their role is relatively passive. A possible indicator of the importance of predictability is that despite attempts to introduce more interactive approaches to teaching and learning students still often express a preference for lecture formats... Student preferences for conventional methods of teaching can be a source of frustration to some educators and researchers committed to more innovative and active styles of learning... When asked, students tend to express preference for university teachers who are organized and communicate well using the lecture method... This preference is probably related, at least in part, to the importance placed by students, and indeed any “customer,” on predictability. Students least like lecturers who expect them to adopt an independent and self-regulating approach to learning despite the fact that this is supported by constructivist learning theory. (p. 233, in-text citation deleted)

The requirement by the service-management definition of trust for tutor predictability may discourage some tutors in higher education to avoid adopting more innovative though no less effective means of teaching. Although conventional teaching methods are not necessarily always ineffective (and novel teaching methods not necessarily always effective), what may result is a phenomenon in higher education where teaching styles uniformly err on the side on over-conservatism with the further possible effect that the learning experience of students is not being maximally enriched.

The Vagueness of “Benevolence”

One component of the service-management definition of trust is that of “benevolence” required of the tutor. There are two worries with this particular ingredient. First, as McLeod points out,

One final criticism... concerns how “goodwill” [or benevolence] should be interpreted. In much of the discussion above, it is narrowly conceived so that it involves friendly feeling or personal liking. [One author] urges us in her early work on trust to understand goodwill more broadly, so that

it could amount to benevolence, conscientiousness, or the like, or friendly feeling. (McLeod 2021, section 2.1, emphasis in original)

McLeod continues to point out that if we understand the ingredient of benevolence (or “goodwill”) so broadly, we run the risk of turning this ingredient into a “meaningless catchall that merely reports the presence of some positive motive, and one that may or may not even be directed toward the trustor [i.e. student].” And, a deeper problem ensues: when this ingredient in question becomes a meaningless catchall, it becomes methodologically unhelpful since it is unclear how it is that researchers can deliberate meaningfully about, let alone conduct inquiries to measure, the resulting vague definition of trust (McKnight and Chervany 2001, p. 30).

A second worry with the ingredient of benevolence is, as McLeod observes, that definitions of trust containing such an element “moralize trust inappropriately by demanding that the trustworthy person have a moral motive” (2021, section 2.1, my emphasis). This moralization of trust runs the risk of collapsing what is normatively valuable (i.e. what characteristics, in an ideal scenario, teachers *ought* to have) with that which is descriptively true (i.e. what characteristics, in reality, do teachers actually possess). Perhaps, some teachers who are *perceived* to be trustworthy do not, in fact, possess the virtue of benevolence (whatever this might mean) or do not possess such a virtue to a sufficient degree so as to be trustworthy in accordance with the service-management definition of trust. *But*, if we wish to maintain that some teachers in higher education *are* in fact trustworthy *regardless* of whether they possess the virtue of benevolence (whether or not to a sufficient degree), then the service-management definition of trust needs to be modified or rejected. Further, it is not impossible for a small handful of students to trust their teachers but for reasons that are morally suspect (e.g. they trust their teachers to ignore their anti-social classroom behaviour or to overlook instances of academic dishonesty, say). A moralized definition of trust—which, to recall, *requires* the feature of benevolence on the part of tutors—may, therefore, be grist for the mill of morally inappropriate ends.⁸

A third and final worry with the ingredient of benevolence is as follows. Even if “benevolence” can be fleshed out in an informative manner, it is not at all obvious that trustworthy persons need be motivated to do what they are trusted to do on the basis of some *moral* motive (such as benevolence) all the time such persons are depended on. For, why can’t it be that tutors are trustworthy because they are *committed* or have *committed* themselves to do what it is that their professional roles or duties require them to do? In other words, trustworthy persons need not be motivated by moral motives (at least not all the time); rather, it might well be that trustworthy persons find themselves propelled by their commitments which “can be implicit or explicit, weighty or trivial, conferred by roles and external circumstances, default or acquired, welcome or unwelcome” (Hawley 2014, p. 11). The service-management definition of trust may, then, be too restrictive in requiring the presence of a moral motive that motivates the trustworthy individual in all instances where that individual is relied on.

The Paradox of Trust

The service-management definition of trust assumes that students be able to discern how benevolent, reliable or predictable their

tutors are. But, *in practice*, a judgment of reliability or predictability requires *repeated* and *regular* interactions between tutor and student. But, it is not clear how such repeated and regular interactions is at all possible at the start of a semester, never mind the fact that higher education in some quarters see the presence of large class sizes and lessons that are increasingly “blended” which may lead to the impoverishment of teacher-student interaction. In such context, students may, therefore, come to believe that their tutor is trustworthy on the basis of inadequate evidence or reasons. If so, such ventures or acts of “trust” are more akin to faith (interestingly, in the theistic sense) where the trustor comes to trust the trustee on the basis of evidence that is inaccessible to her. If, however, research is right to suggest that students do trust their tutors even at the outset of a semester (Ghosh 2001; Van Maele and Van Houtte 2011),⁹ then, *given the service-management definition of trust*, we are forced to conclude that the trust afforded by such students to their teachers is misplaced or irrational, which is an undesirable upshot of cleaving to this definition. So, something has to give: we either seek to modify the service-management definition of trust for higher education teaching or infer that some students (despite their sincere avowals) are mistaken to have too readily trusted their teachers. The horn of the dilemma may be too hasty because to infer that the trust students have towards their tutors are is misplaced or irrational appears to be a denial or dismissal of their agency or first-personal reports. Fortunately, I think that a middle-ground can be had: that is, one can supplement the service-management definition of trust such that becomes pedagogically more helpful if not conceptually more defensible. But, more on this in the next section of this paper.

Not Fit for Purpose for Higher Education?

In the fields of business, management and organizational studies, trust is important for so-called “transformational leadership”¹⁰ (Tschannen-Moran 2003), the resolution of workplace conflict (Deutsch 1973) and for general cooperative endeavours in the context of professional organizations (Gambetta 1988). Workplaces or institutions that adopt procedures that distribute resources fairly are perceived to be trustworthy (Hubbell and Chory-Assad 2005); and, business and political leaders who employ “communication strategies” that suggest trustworthiness are able to foster and sustain employee commitment and institutional loyalty (Mayfield and Mayfield 2002). In the domain of psychology, researchers have similarly found that trust is important for social cooperative life (Rotter 1971). Trust has been defined as a cognitive bias towards other (Cook and Cooper 2001), an expectation of certain behaviours (Hardin 2001) or a belief in the good intentions (i.e. “benevolence”) of others. Perception of shared social group and, thus, the identifying with those in one’s social group enhances trust; accordingly, this reinforces a disposition to trust those already in one’s social group (so-called “in-group bias”) (Hogg et al. 2004; Brewer 1979; Yamagishi and Kiyonari 2000; Tanis and Postmes 2005).

Now, it is arguable that the service-management definition of trust fits the purpose of, for instance, engaging in “transformational leadership” which,¹¹ as scholars of business, management and organizational tell us, involves the setting of “visions,” employee efficacy, the “bottom-line” or, simply, hard profits (Avolio et al. 1988; Holladay and Coombs 1994)—i.e. that which is highly outcome oriented; indeed, it is the *raison d’être* of organizational leaders to articulate a “strategic” or an “inspirational vision”

with the intention of fostering “an impression that they and their mission are extraordinary,” and be agents of change (Bolkan and Goodboy 2011, pp. 4-5; see also Conger and Kanungo 1994; Conger 1999). But, here is where the crack between these disciplines and that of education begins to show itself: even if one makes the (not uncontroversial) assumption that the service-management definition of trust fits the purpose of the domains or industries it is meant to serve, it remains problematic to claim that the kind of trusting relationship between students and their teachers should be *similarly* construed. This is not to say that the field of education or that of tertiary teaching is not “outcome oriented,” but only that those outcomes differ in kind and degree from those associated with the service-management industry or, more broadly, business and politics (for instance, that of *caring* about a student’s *learning achievements*—as opposed to organizational success—is widely regarded as important in education (Bledsoe et al. 2021)). An example of an undesirable upshot of the wholesale transplant of the service-management definition of trust onto the domain of higher education is, as I described above, that the requirement of tutor predictability may be in tension with teaching practices that aim at active learning. The student-as-customer is one who seeks assurance (Gibbs 2004) and demands that his or her needs and expectations be continually met as opposed to being challenged.

The wholesale transplant of one definition of trust to another may be downstream from the larger phenomenon that some scholars have dubbed the “marketisation” of higher education (Gibbs 2002, 2011; Nixon et al. 2010; Hemsley-Brown 2011). Gibbs summarises this phenomenon thus:

Marketisation... has put at risk the nature of education as a distinctive transformative process of the human condition by treating it, for the most part, as undifferentiated consumption. Universities have drawn their marketing from consumer markets best suited to selling chocolate bars, aspirins and supermarket discounts, albeit highly sophisticated and technical... These activities run the danger of displaying overwhelming consumerism... With consumerism changing students into customers and tutors into service providers, and with ever more vulnerable and naïve students being encouraged to enrol, the higher education market’s ethos has become competition rather than sector collaboration. (Gibbs 2004, chapter 21, in-text citations deleted)

Although the phenomenon of marketisation described by Gibbs is troubling, whether or not such a phenomenon is indeed occurring is a task for a separate paper. In the preceding paragraphs I have offered four objections—of varying levels of strength—that point to certain tensions within the service-management definition of trust. While these worries do not justify a jettisoning of the service-management definition, they do suggest a need to complement such a model with one that is more aligned with the nature and aims of higher education. In the following section, I develop what I will be calling the “network model” of trust which is a definition that can serve to supplement the dominant service-management definition when it comes to understanding the nature of trust in higher education teaching.

CONSIDERATIONS TOWARD THE BUILDING OF TRUST IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING

In the previous section I have offered reasons to be sceptical of what I am calling the service-management definition of trust for higher education teaching. The service-management definition of trust, in general, emphasizes the value of the affective and the cognitive: when tutors are benevolent, trust is thought to provoke a psychological or affective response in students—a feeling of assurance, confidence or goodwill by students towards their tutor; in addition, when tutors display their competence or benevolence predictably, trust is also thought to lead to a student's *knowing* that her tutor is competent, predictable, benevolent, etc. Scholars, it appears, tend to assume that trust is largely a matter of such affective and cognitive components. I wish to venture an alternative model of trust in this section—one that holds that trust is a *processive action or activity that involves assent and continued engagement over time*. This engagement refers a multitude of teacher-student activities: from activities that define what SoTL scholars have called the model of a “community of inquirers” to those that encourage the constructive reliance of a student on her tutor, and a reliance that is made good by a continuous discharge of a tutor's professional or pedagogical commitments.¹² While the service-management definition sees trust as a *static property* of the trustee (or, in this case, that of the teacher); what I wish to call the “network model” of trust understand trust as a *processive relation* between trustor (student) and trustee (teacher) and one that is strengthened by sustained co-engagement. I elaborate more in what follows.

There are two goals in this section. First, I wish to develop what I call the network model of trust for higher education teaching. I do not seek to defend it in any robust manner; rather, my wish is to describe what a relational model of trust might look like. My second goal of this section, which is related to the first, is to suggest how it is that the goods that scholars commonly associate with trust (as summarised in my introductory remarks)—i.e. goods such as greater student learning and decreased student alienation—may be had by engaging in what some philosophers of cognitive science have called “interaction theory.”

An Introduction to the “Network Model” of Trust

I now proceed to sketch a model of trust for higher education teaching that, I believe, can serve to supplement the dominant service-management model. Margaret Urban Walker, who specialises in ethical theory and moral relations, has developed what she calls the model or framework of “diffuse default trust” (2006). A unique feature of Walker's theory of trust is that it allows for relationships of trust to exist or develop between persons who have never met; this is because on Walker's theory, the potential for trust is to be found in *common social environments, institutions or spaces* where individuals form the (not necessarily conscious) expectation that “strangers or unknown others may be relied upon to behave in acceptable ways” given that our reliance on the “good and tolerable behaviour of others” is a social given (p. 85; see Tavani and Zimmer 2020, section 4.3 for a summary of Walker's theory of trust). In other words, on Walker's theory, trust is not so much a relation between two individuals (who know each other) but exists as a potentiality between individuals insofar as

they share and may possibly come to interact in a common social environment, institution or space. Another interesting feature of Walker's definition of trust is that it allows for individuals to trust not simply other individuals but also institutions, corporations, social groups (or, more broadly, non-human entities). According to Walker, the fact that one can be disappointed at or resent the bad service of, for instance, a commercial airline company (as opposed to any particular airline staff) shows that relations of trust can exist and develop between individuals and non-human entities.¹³ In sum, on Walker's view, trust or the potential for trust is “diffused” or spread across individuals and non-human entities and made possible by shared spaces, environments or institutions. Let us christen this model of trust as the “network model” of trust in relation to higher education teaching.

A theoretical benefit of the network model of trust is that it accounts for why it is that students can come to trust teachers they have never met (at the start of a semester, say). So, why is it that students may be willing to trust their tutor even though evidence of the latter's trustworthiness is in short shrift (at least of a tutor whom they have not met at the start of a school term)? The network model of trust offers us the conceptual wherewithal to posit that students trust their tutors insofar as both groups share a common educational institution and perhaps even social environment. In addition, it can also be posited that perhaps some students *already* trust the tertiary institution to which they belong (perhaps as a result of the existing reputation or brand-name of their college or university); such students may, then, form the associated belief that faculty of that institution are more likely to be trustworthy than not. Students do not simply trust a particular tutor (at least at the outset of their interaction); instead, students trust a diffused network of individuals and institutions directly or indirectly related to that particular tutor in question, e.g. the local tertiary education system, teachers from their pre-tertiary institutions. And, this manner of understanding trust is captured by the network model.

The “Network Model” of Trust and its Relation to SoTL's “Community of Inquiry” Framework

But, the network model of trust is largely silent on what *exactly* it is about the sharing of common social environments, institutions or spaces which, on the network model, gives rise to the potential for trust (even between strangers). In this subsection, I seek to answer this question because doing so allows tutors in high education to know what it is that they can do to foster trust between students and themselves (the answer, to look ahead, is that of co-engagement activities).

An answer to the foregoing question is hinted at by what SoTL researchers have called the “community of inquiry framework” or “learning communities” (Garrison, Anderson and Archer 2001; see also Kuh 1996; Barkley, Cross and Major 2014; Benjamin 2015) according to which effective learning occurs on the basis of three kinds of interactional relations, specifically, what Garrison et al. calls “teaching, cognitive and social presence.” Two of these—i.e. teaching and social presence—in particular, will be relevant for our present purpose of elaborating on the network model of trust. First, “teaching presence” refers to the contributions of a tutor not only in course design but also in classroom or lecture facilitation and instruction. “Social presence,” on the other hand, refers to the interactional processes where students and teachers develop relations of trust and ever increasingly open

and honest communication. Social presence, according to Garrison et al., is instrumental in building group cohesion or collaboration and, indeed, for the discovering of one's social identity. (More tangentially, cognitive presence refers to ways by which a teacher fosters critical thinking in her students). The authors sum up by positing that the value of a teaching philosophy described by the community of inquiry model is such that the operations of all three types of presences lead to "a worthwhile educational experience" (Garrison, Anderson and Archer, 2000).

Clearly, the notions teaching and social presence bear a similarity with the social or shared aspect of the network model of trust we sketched in the previous subsection. In other words, a fundamental feature of the network model of trust—namely, its the social or shared aspect—is not altogether an unfamiliar construct for SoTL researchers. I now wish to show how this the social or shared aspect of the network model can be fleshed out by what philosophers of cognitive science and phenomenology have called "interaction theory." And, I wish to suggest that it is interaction theory that creates the condition for trust as described in the network model.

There basic tenet of interaction theory developed by authors like Gallagher (2008), Krueger (2011), Fuchs (2010), Ratcliffe (2008) and others is this: an understanding of the thoughts and emotions of another develops as a result of interactions, co-presence or a "being-with" one another (see Slaby 2014 for a summary). The mental world of another is not hidden from us, as commonly assumed; rather, such mental states can be directly perceived when individuals engage in joint, collaborative activities (Gallagher 2008). It is fallacious, in other words, to assume that one needs to "get into the head of another" to understand one another; instead, such mental worlds are plain for all to see when we engage in "forms of joint agency, and joint active world-orientations make up the background against which a smooth interactive relatedness unfolds" (Slaby 2014, p. 255). Slaby sums up interaction theory eloquently as follows:

the only way to meaningfully engage with another person's mentality without imposition is by engaging with her on the level of action—establishing a kind of co-engagement, as it were, for example by jointly striving toward some goal or by jointly enacting a project. "Participatory sense-making" has been one helpful concept developed for this purpose (de Jaegher and di Paolo 2007), another is the phenomenological concept of a "we-space" (Krueger 2011)—a realm of co-presence, of lived mutuality... Within this shared perspective, experiential responses to intentions, desires, thoughts, feelings and, above actions of the partner are enacted, albeit not in the form of a succession of discrete mental states but in the manner of a seamless relating inextricable from the ongoing unfolding of the joint activity. Importantly, what is operative in these situations is an active, constructive and forward-looking orientation. It is this shared "looking ahead" towards goals, a shared anticipation of likely developments and events which constitutes the joint perspective and lets an experiential "we space" open up. (Slaby 2014, p. 255)

The service-management definition of trust—which requires fore-knowledge of a tutor's benevolence, reliability, etc. in order for trusting relationships to develop—assumes that the emotions and thoughts of tutors and students are elliptically closed-off from each other. But, interaction theory turns this assumption on its head—we are more transparent to each other than commonly

assumed: and, the more meaningful joint-engagements we participate in whilst aiming at common goals, the more porous we become to each other.

There are, to be sure, many kinds of co-engagement activities that aim at meaningful pedagogical ends. I can scratch only the surface here with my following examples that are motivated by two influential educational philosophies. Let me start by offering examples of how co-engagement activities can be developed in the spirit of an educational philosophy known as "active learning" in which instructional methods emphasise the autonomy of students to take charge of their own learning process (Bonwell and Eison 1991). In seminars or tutorials that enjoy smaller class sizes students can be taught to practice the formulation, articulation and refinement of critical questions with the end of coming to a deeper understanding of what they have learned from lectures and course readings (Christenbury and Kelly 1983; Finley 2013). Students can be encouraged not so much to present to their classmates as assume the role of the tutor in *leading* seminar or tutorial discussions. The traditional mode of the one-way presentation, in other words, can transform into a co-engagement activity with students assuming a role traditionally belonging to that of their tutors. Indeed, technology has made it possible for co-engagement activities to occur in virtual or online domains. Lectures can be made more interactive and collaborative through the use of software such as "Poll Anywhere" which collects and presents student responses to questions raised by lecturers; such software, then, makes co-engagement activities a possibility in traditional large class formats. Further, when off-campus, collaborative learning software such as Google Drive allows students to collaborate, edit and refine the same piece of work.

Not only are co-engagement activities consistent with the fundamental tenet of active learning, such activities can also be motivated in the spirit of a different but no less influential educational philosophy known as "experiential learning." Briefly, according to such an educational philosophy, effective learning takes place in situations or settings that approximate real-world conditions (Kolb 2015). Tutors or mentors coordinating such situations or settings can organise co-engagement activities that encourage in students the application of theory or concept to problems or tasks thrown up by such circumstances as well as those that promote student self-reflection; and, to do so in environments that downplay the negative consequences that might otherwise be experienced should a mistake be committed in real-world settings. For instance, students taking a major in art history can collaboratively curate exhibitions for their peers and university faculty that are based on themes introduced in the classroom (e.g. Fauvism or Early Christian art). Economics majors or students enrolled in a business module can collaboratively organise financial literacy workshops for peers outside of business school. Indeed, cross-disciplinary collaborations between students of sociology, psychology and social work (on topics such as social inequality, say) can also occur as examples of co-engagement activities in the spirit of experiential learning.

And across the examples of co-engagement activities sketched in the two paragraphs above, teachers can participate actively by setting the ground-rules for such learning to occur, i.e. by emphasizing the value of mutual respect and turn taking, by learning the names of students so as to address them as equals (Griffiths 2010), and so forth; finally, beyond the classroom, even school alumni can participate by sharing their learning experi-

ences and the relevance of these to the professional workplace. In sum, I have offered an argument for how it is that interaction theory can form the theoretical basis of the community of inquiry model; and, this model, in turn, explains why students can come to trust their tutors as described in the network model of trust.¹⁴

CONCLUDING REMARKS: SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS

In this paper, I have sought to raise a series of sceptical challenges to the reigning theory of trust in higher education teaching, namely what I have dubbed the service-management definition of trust. I argued that unlike the service-management definition, the proposed network model of trust locates trust or the potential for trust in shared common social environments, institutions or spaces, where trust is fostered through the participation meaningful joint-engagements between tutors and students. With the traditional service-management definition of trust, trust is understood simply as a linear relation between student and tutor. The network model of trust, in contrast, resembles a set of concentric circles, with larger circles encapsulating those smaller in diameter; and where each circle can be thought to represent a community, social or institutional domain with the student in the epicenter. Trust, on the network model, is a function of goings-on in the circles nearer to the student epicenter (e.g. the quality of co-engagement activities with tutors and peers) as well as those concentric circles far from the student epicenter (e.g. a school's ignoring of faculty misbehavior or the mismanagement of the educational policy of a state all may indirectly erode trust between tutor and student). I submit that the network model of trust can be a useful supplement to the service-management model that is dominant in SoTL and education research. I wish to conclude this paper by considering two pieces of unfinished business. First, some scholars have carved a distinction between so-called "specific trustworthiness" and "general trustworthiness" (McLeod 2021, section 1.1): while specific trustworthiness specifies the conditions for which someone, *S*, is trustworthy *for me*, general trustworthiness specifies the conditions for which that person, *S*, is trustworthy for me as well as others in general. It seems that current discussions about trustworthy teachers presuppose the notion of general trustworthiness, i.e. a teacher being trustworthy for her students *in general*. So, the first piece of unfinished business concerns the question what value there is, if any, of the narrower notion of specific trustworthiness. Consider, for instance, a tutor (whose academic background is in the humanities) who happens to teach a general education module that is enrolled in by freshmen from all across the university (e.g. from science and engineering). It is not implausible to think that this tutor may enjoy an easier rapport with students from his or her area of specialization and, as a result, come to invest more effort (perhaps unintentionally so!) in the teaching of those students at the expense of others. This scenario, which is by no means far-fetched, is an instance where the two forms of trustworthiness come apart: the tutor is *specifically* trustworthy for students whose academic interests align with his or hers, but not *generally* trustworthy for all students regardless of their majors. Yet, if behavioural change starts from self-reflection, then perhaps this tutor in question would benefit from learning about the patterns of selective trustworthiness in his or her behaviour.

The second piece of unfinished business concerns the manifest overlap between the interpersonal notions of trust, credibility,

rapport and so-called immediacy.¹⁵ There are, as I noted in the introductory section of this paper, conceptual overlaps between these commonly cited pedagogical forms of inter-relations. For instance, just as honesty, competence and benevolence are ingredients of teacher trustworthiness, so too they are, according to some studies, for teacher credibility (Frymier and Thompson 1992; McCroskey 1998; Chory 2007, pp. 90-91). Another example related to the notion of teacher credibility is that "teachers who misbehave in the classroom (Thweatt and McCroskey, 1998) and are verbally aggressive (Myers, 2001; Schrodt, 2003; Teven, 2001) tend to be perceived as less credible" (2007, p. 91); clearly, actions that erode teacher credibility appear similar to those that are corrosive of trust (see section 2 above). Is it, then, helpful to separate these pedagogical notions—of trust, rapport, credibility and immediacy—when conducting formal training in teacher education? I think that the answer is highly context-sensitive, and does not admit of a unique one-size-fits-all pedagogy. For instance, a tutor whose first language does not mark a lexical or semantic distinction between the notions of trust, rapport, credibility and immediacy may find it useful to undergo teacher training in which these pieces of terminology are separated (a consequence of which, at the very least, socialises that tutor into the vocabulary that characterises his or her profession as an instructor in higher education in English). On the other hand, a tutor whose first language does carve a distinction between the overlapping notions in question may find it insightful to learn that these terms, which he or she once unreflectively assumed to be cleanly distinct from one another, enjoy much semantic overlap. This tutor, in other words, may find it helpful to realise that colleagues whose teaching philosophy hitherto differs from his or hers (e.g. "I'm all for the fostering of trust but you're all for the building of rapport") may, in the end, be gesturing toward the same pedagogical good, as climbers arriving at the top of a mountain but from different sides.

In this paper I sketched an alternative conception of trust for higher education teaching or what I have called the network model of trust which I believe can supplement the dominant service-management model of trust. I argued that the network model of trust is presupposed in a popular teaching philosophy called the community of inquiry model sketched by Garrison et al, amongst other advocates of learning communities. I then proceeded to develop the network model of trust with what is called interaction theory, according to which an understanding of the thoughts and emotions of another develops as a result of interactions, co-presence or a "being-with" one another. I suggested that such interactions foster what it is that trust theorists find value in with respect to the service-management definition of trust (without, of course, the attending problems of the latter model). Interaction theory encourages students and teachers to transcend their own partial and solipsistic perspectives by involving the self in larger collaborative activities that are directed at common and meaningful ends (e.g. finding a solution to a given task). In such activities, which are not uncommon in highly engaging classrooms, the closed-off mental dimension of a student is handed-over to a larger space where shifts of perspectives and the challenging of one's biases or assumptions can occur. And, in such a mutually porous space of joint agency and of collaborative meaning-making, trusting relations develop, sometimes perhaps even unbeknownst to its participants.

NOTES

1. Analogously, with respect to the interpersonal trait of “rapport,” it is been similarly observed that teacher-student rapport is believed by students to be an essential component of tutor effectiveness (Catt et al. 2007; Faranda and Clarke 2004; McLaughlin and Erickson 1981; Perkins et al. 1995; Frisby and Martin 2010).
2. In the literature, this kind of trust is known as “therapeutic trust” (Nickel 2007; McGeer 2008).
3. Macfarlane posits that the relative neglect of the notion of trust in higher education research is the result of a narrow focus by commentators on student learning styles, which takes the spotlight away from *relational* aspects of a student’s learning environment (Macfarlane 2009, p. 222). And, since trust is a relation between tutor and student, not much is therefore known about such a relation with respect to higher education research.
4. Some researchers make the additional claim that when students trust their teachers the former adopts a “willingness to be vulnerable to another party” (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran 1999, p. 189). The “riskiness” of trust is a feature commonly noted by philosophers. Swinburne, for instance, notes that “[t]o trust someone is to act on the assumption that she will do for you what she knows that you want or need, when the evidence gives some reason for supposing that she may not and where there will be bad consequences if the assumption is false” (2005, 143, my emphasis). Another commentator writes, “[f]or we often lack adequate—or even, any—evidence of a trustee’s trustworthiness in advance of our venture, yet in many such cases we suppose that our trust is reasonable (see, for example, Adams 1987). But, if adequate evidence of trustworthiness is *not* required for reasonable trust, how is reasonable trust different from ‘blind trust?’” (Bishop and McKaughan 2022, section 6).
5. It is worthwhile to note that the benefits of a trusting teacher-student relationship resemble those of tutors who are perceived to be credible. For instance, perception of credible teachers correlates with, increased frequency of out-of-class teacher-student communication, increased willingness of students to participate in class discussions (Myers 2004), better evaluations by students of their teachers and increased student learning (Teven and McCroskey 1997; Chory 2007).
6. In what follows, I will be drawing liberally from Macfarlane’s 2009 paper. I have two reasons for doing so. First, the paper, unlike many others cited here, focuses on trust between *students and tutors* and does so within the context of *higher education teaching*. Second, Macfarlane’s paper is also important to study closely because it explicitly adopts the service-management definition of trust from the seminal work by McKnight and Chervany (2001), who themselves marshalled material from an extensive list of definitions of trust across the fields of marketing, business psychology, management and organization studies. It could, therefore, be said that the article by McKnight and Chervany constitutes a locus classicus in the trust literature. What follows from this, then, is that the 2009 paper by Macfarlane should be seen as fairly authoritative (at least juxtaposed against a paucity of research into trust in higher education teaching). But, although this paper cites the work of Macfarlane, it seeks to extend beyond what the latter has argued for by way of offering a model of trust distinct from the service-conception definition.
7. Ego-supportive skills are a form of communication skills alongside referential skills and those of conflict management. It has been found that such skills are integral to the teacher-student relationship (Burlinson and Samter 1990). But, there are studies that show that women or female teachers tend to possess a wider repertoire of these skills or are able to display such skills to a greater degree than male teachers (Frymier and Houser 2000; Aylor 2003). In addition, there is research that purports to show that students from the humanities or social sciences tend to value the tutor-student relationship (which includes ego-supportive skills) more than students from the natural sciences (Alhija 2017).
8. Indeed, in these instances, one precisely requires that tutors being trusted on for such unsavoury ends *not* to be trustworthy in the service-management sense of the term. What this shows is that a better definition or model of trust should be sensitive to the so-called Golden Mean: i.e. that a teacher who is trustworthy in this more qualified understanding of trust is ‘one who can be counted on, as a matter of the sort of person he or she is, to take care of those things that others entrust to one and (following the Doctrine of the Mean) whose ways of caring are neither excessive nor deficient’ (Potter 2002, p. 16).
9. From the reverse direction, teachers who trusted their students positively correlate with and predictive of academic achievement (Goddard et al. 2001).
10. “Transformational leadership” is often defined as a manner of leadership that is related to systematic institutional change in numerous industries.
11. I say “not unproblematically” because it is controversial to claim that the fourfold definition of trust is normatively valuable for fields such as business or the service industries. It is not my intention to endorse the service-management definition of trust as expressed in these fields; my claim, rather, is that we *can understand why* trust in SoTL and education is theorized the way it is, namely, because it has inherited its understanding from domains outside of itself.
12. Conversely, for a student to trust her tutor that student needs to possess a disposition to respond to her tutor in a manner that discharges her obligations and commitments as a student.
13. Tavani and Zimmer 2020 (section 4.3) extend Walker’s theory to explain why it is that we can come to trust or distrust search engine operators such as Google. See also Buechner and Tavani (2011).
14. If the network model of trust is plausible, then one might further posit that the erosion of trust or the occurrence of *distrust* between tutors and students results from a breakdown of the network model or, more specifically, a lack of meaningful co-engagement as described by interaction theory.
15. In relation to the notion of teacher credibility, Chory observes that “teachers who misbehave in the classroom (Thweatt and McCroskey, 1998) and are verbally aggressive (Myers, 2001; Schrodt, 2003; Teven, 2001) tend to be perceived as less credible” (2007, p. 91).

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