

Graphing Trust

Overview

In this activity, students will gain an understanding of how their actions build either trust or distrust in their relationships.

Grades

5-8

Activity Type

Small group

Individual

Materials

Trust Graphs, attached

Duration

Two 20 minute sessions, one week apart.

Instructions

Session One

1. Divide the class into small groups. In their groups, ask students to:
 - Discuss what trust means to you.
 - List different ways to gain another person's trust.
 - List ways to lose someone's trust.
2. Bring students back to the whole group and ask:
 - Why is it important to be able to trust someone?
 - During what important moments and situations throughout your life will trust be important? (Encourage students to consider friendships, parents, fellow athletes on sports teams, college roommates, marriage, employment, etc.)
 - Why is it important that we all be able to trust one another, as members of this classroom community?
 - From your discussions, do you think it's easier to create trust or distrust? Explain.
 - Can one instance of creating trust make up for several occasions of breaking trust? Explain.
3. Explain that this is going to be a weeklong project in which students explore and hopefully improve their own trustworthiness. Ask students to create a T-chart on a piece of notebook paper. Have student's brainstorm examples from the past week when they did something to gain trust (+) on one side of the chart and when they did something to lose trust (-) on the other. (For example, under "trust" a student might note having kept a friend's secret. Under "distrust" a student might note having asked for a bathroom pass, only to have ventured to the cafeteria to see a friend.) Explain to students that these acts may be very simple and might have entailed only a

brief moment. (Saying something mean to a friend can happen in just seconds, as can offering a supportive hug to someone having a bad day.) Tell students that their charts will be kept private and that it will be for their reference only, thus it is important they be honest in order to learn something about themselves.

4. Once students have brainstormed their lists, distribute the attached trust charts to students and have them plot their list on the left hand side marked for “last week.” They can choose where to plot their points based on the severity of their actions. Actions plotted towards the top of the chart the students see as “good” or positive actions that built trust. Items students plot in the bottom half of the chart are ones they see as “bad” or negative actions that cause a loss in trust. [For lower grade students, consider projecting the chart to the entire class and working through an example together. Upper grades students should be able to plot points on their own.]
5. Help students with the calculations at the bottom of the page as necessary and ask them to reflect on these questions:
 - Based on the data you have, are you being a trustworthy person, or are you causing people you encounter to distrust you?
 - Is it important to demonstrate that you can be trusted? Why?
 - In what various situations in life will trust be important? Meaning, what type of people will you encounter that will want to be able to trust you? (Facilitate student recognition of marriage, employment, etc.)
 - What are some things that happen when others do not trust you?
 - Once you have broken someone’s trust, do you think it is easy to repair mistrust? Why or why not?
 - What are some ways you think you could repair distrust?
6. Challenge students to focus on building trust through their words and actions during the next week. Have each student make an action plan listing three ways they will work to build trust in the next week. The group will revisit the trust charts next week.

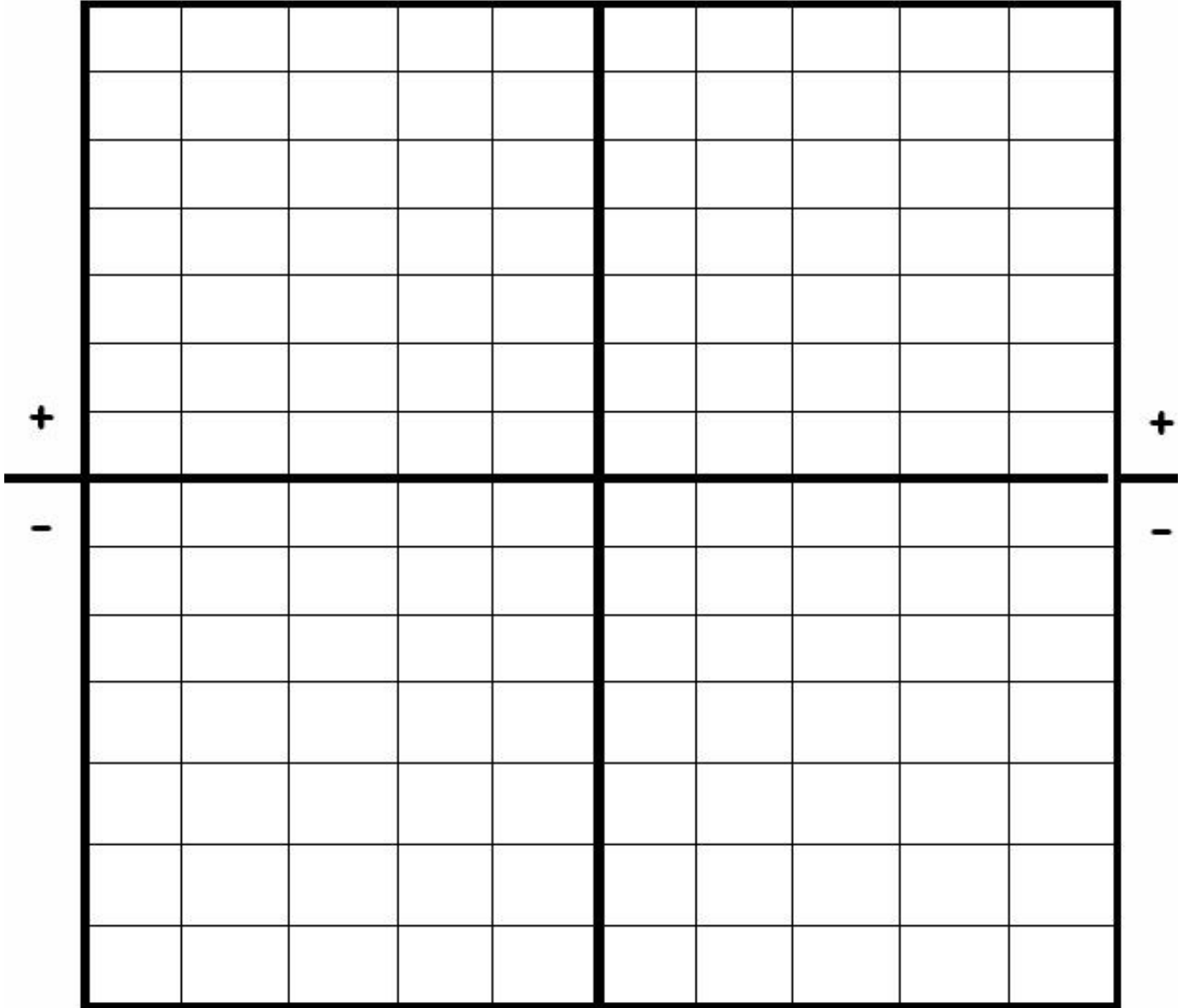
Session Two

1. Revisit steps 4-5 from Session One.
2. Ask students to reflect on:
 - How successful were you in building trust last week?
 - What were challenges in implementing your action plan?
 - What’s the value in building trust with your parents? Friends? Teachers?
 - What relationships in your life do you need to focus on building trust in?
3. Culminate by discussing with students how if they want to be able to do things on their own, they must be able to demonstrate to people in their lives that they can be responsible and respectful. One’s freedom increases as others begin to trust you, but to enjoy these freedoms you must continue to build trust and act responsibly. Encourage students to remind themselves that the more responsible and respectful they are, the more freedom they will enjoy.

My Trust Graph

Last Week

This Week



Times I created TRUST _____

Times I created DISTRUST _____

% TRUST _____
 % DISTRUST _____

Times I created TRUST _____

Times I created DISTRUST _____

% TRUST _____
 % DISTRUST _____