







# Triggering Team Trust

Stimulating students to improve the level of trust in a team

COLLABORATING | Trust

## → What you will need:

-  3-6
-  Group & individual
-  30 mins preparation
-  4.5 hrs execution

## → Menu:

- I. Overview
- II. Learning Activity
- III. Assessment
- IV. Key Advice
- V. References



“For lecturers, it is incredibly rewarding to work with student teams that excel. That is exactly what this tool strives for, as it encourages students to form strong teams by fostering trust.

—Bram Kuijken





## I. Overview

Trust is one of the key factors in a successful team. When team members trust each other, they are more likely to communicate openly and honestly, collaborate effectively and support one another. This, in turn, can lead to better outcomes and increased productivity.

There are three fundamental elements that need to be in place before trust can exist:

- (1) positive relationships: the extent to which a team can form positive relationships;
- (2) good judgment or expertise: the extent to which team members can inform each other and are competent;
- (3) consistency/integrity: the extent to which team members walk their talk and do what they say they will do.

Even though most students know the preconditions for trust, in practice, it often turns out to be difficult to create and comply with team trust. By translating several preconditions with the group into a trust manifesto that all students agree to, there is an opportunity to address each other about impeded behaviour and the group becomes responsible for monitoring team trust. By making agreements about desirable and undesirable behavior explicit in advance, the group can monitor and correct itself.

### Learning outcome

- ✓ The student is able to show trust and create and maintain trusting relationships





## II. Learning Activity

Teams that have a high level of trust among team members perform better. This tool allows teams to work towards trust within the team.



### 1. Trust Manifesto Unveiled 30 mins

Commence the activity by emphasising the significance of crafting meaningful statements and the potential benefits it holds for teamwork. Explain that the objective is to co-create 10 statements known as “The Trust Manifesto”.

Clarify that these statements should be in alignment with the three fundamental elements of trust: positivity, competence and consistency/integrity, as identified by Zenger and Folkman (2019).

**Tip:** we recommend dedicating time to establish a safe and inclusive learning environment to foster collective learning and make students feel respected and understood.



### 2. Collective Trust Manifesto Statements 1 hr

Invite each student to write two statements for each element of trust that they consider crucial for establishing trust within the team. To promote a sense of unity and collective responsibility, encourage students to use the inclusive ‘we’ form, such as “We will...” or “We aim to...”

**Tip:** for inspiration, you can provide a list of example statements.





### 3. Unifying Trust Manifesto 1 hr

The team members discuss all statements and select 10 to put in the trust manifesto, at least 3 per element. All team members sign the manifesto.



### 4. Trust in Action 1 hr

On a weekly basis, the team evaluates in an open discussion session the extent to which they have adhered to the Trust Manifesto, and whether any statements need to be abolished, modified or added. Students also reflect individually, at least once after the first week, using the Trust Scale.

Using this iterative approach to reflecting on the manifesto, the team can consistently foster the growth of trust among its members.

At the end of the discussion, summarise the key points that were raised and highlight agreements made regarding adjustments to the Trust Manifesto.



### 5. Reflecting on Trust 1 hr

To reflect on displaying trust and creating and maintaining trusting relationships, the Trust Scale is used. Each team member individually completes the Trust Scale halfway and at the end of the course.

At the end of the course, invite each team member to complete the Trust Scale once again individually. Subsequently, prompt each student to reflect upon any changes they observe between their initial and subsequent completions of the Trust Scale, and what significance these changes hold for them.





### III. Assessment

In order to determine the students' capacity to demonstrate trust and establish and sustain trusting relationships, their progress on the Trust Scale is assessed. In Step 4, students complete the Trust Scale individually, and in Step 5, they repeat this process individually. Afterwards, they reflect on trust by evaluating, comparing and discussing the changes in the Trust Scale within their team.



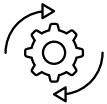
#### **Purpose**

Assessment *as* learning aims to strengthen the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.



#### **Roles**

Self-assessment



#### **Characteristics**

Self-regulated learning



#### **Materials**

The Team Trust Scale





## Team Trust Scale

All items are measured on a 5-point response scale (ranging from 1 “completely disagree”, 5 “completely agree”):

Positivity	In this team, we work in a climate of cooperation.	
	In this team, we can rely on each other.	
	In this team, we discuss and deal with issues or problems openly.	
	While taking a decision we take each other’s opinion into consideration.	
	In this team, we resolve conflicts with others.	
	In this team, we give and receive feedback in a helpful way.	
Competence	In this team, we trust each other ideas and opinions.	
	In this team, we have complete confidence in each other’s ability to perform tasks.	
	In this team, we use other people’s knowledge and skills to achieve results.	
	In this team, we use good judgement when making decisions.	
Consistency/Integrity	In this team, we walk the talk.	
	In this team, we honour commitments and keep promises.	
	In this team, we follow through on commitments.	
	In this team, we stand behind their convictions.	
	In this team, we usually tell the truth, even when we know we will be better off by lying.	





## IV. Key Advice

**Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment** (Step 1) and **examples of statements** to provide to the students (Step 2) can be downloaded below.

Success factors: the assignment or project in which students work together is essential for success. In the assignment, students must have a positive interdependence to achieve the goal. Since students cannot achieve their set goals without the other group members, they must work together and this requires trust within the team. Instructions for a good work plan may help the students in making a success of the team assignment and building trusting relationships.





## Key Advice

### **Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment**

Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment is an ongoing process. By implementing these guidelines, you can foster open communication, a sense of belonging and collective learning:

#### **1. Set clear expectations**

Clearly communicate your expectations and routines from the beginning. Ensure that students understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Encourage them to participate in creating these expectations, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

#### **2. Build trust**

Establish a trustworthy and secure environment by emphasising that anything shared within the group should remain confidential. Encourage students to make their own decisions about sharing personal experiences and respect their individual levels of comfort.

#### **3. Foster active listening**

Emphasise the importance of truly listening and understanding. Foster an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism and discourage interruptions. Strengthen active listening skills by teaching non-verbal cues and using prompts.

#### **4. Encourage empathy**

Encourage students to consider the feelings and experiences of others and to respond with kindness, acceptance and understanding, even when perspectives differ from their own. Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where empathy is valued and embraced as an essential aspect of communication and mutual understanding.

#### **5. Be a role model**

Lead by example and embody the behaviour you expect from your students. Treat all students with respect, fairness and kindness, and appreciate their diverse backgrounds, individual strengths and contributions. Ensure the safety and well-being of all students by promptly and decisively addressing any form of harassment or discrimination. Reflect on mistakes and offer apologies when necessary.







## **6. Adapt the pace and intensity**

Recognise when emotions escalate and become overwhelming, adjusting the pace or intensity of the activity as necessary. For example, implement the "five-minute rule", where each student can express their controversial view in a respectful manner, or offer a short break for students to journal and reflect on their emotions, enabling them to regulate their feelings.

## **7. Follow up and check-in**

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves as well as the group. Provide individual or group follow-up and inquire about the well-being of students. Offer the opportunity for further discussion or support if needed. If you believe that the emotional intensity or well-being of the students exceeds your expertise, do not hesitate to seek advice from a student advisor, mental health professional or the appropriate support services provided by your institution.





## Key Advice

### Examples of statements

#### Positive

We stay in touch on the issues and concerns of others.

We balance results with concern for others.

We generate cooperation between others.

We resolve conflicts with others.

We give honest feedback in a helpful way.

#### Competence

We trust each other ideas and opinions.

We use each other's knowledge and skills to achieve results.

We use good judgement when making decisions.

#### Consistency/integrity

We are role models and set a good example.

We walk the talk.

We honor commitments and keep promises.

We follow through on commitments.

We are willing to go above and beyond what needs to be done.





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