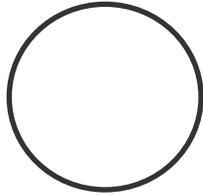


# Creating Space for Learning

*A routine to foster a disposition toward selfunderstanding,  
self-direction and mindful and compassionate concentration*



Draw a circle on a blank piece of paper.

- **Breathe** Find a comfortable posture and take your time to breathe three times deeply.
- **Notice** What is on your mind and in your heart at this moment? Write or draw your inner thoughts and feelings inside the circle.
- **Set aside** What feelings and thoughts might you need to set aside for now to learn today? Gently “move” these to the margin of the page.
- **Keep at the center** What feelings and thoughts might you want to keep or bring to your mind and heart as you prepare to learn today? Gently bring them to the center.

With these thoughts and feelings in mind, take a few final deep breaths and slowly turn to your learning.

## **Purpose: What kind of socio-emotional learning and thinking does this routine encourage?**

Creating Space for Learning is designed to foster a disposition toward selfunderstanding, self-direction and mindful, compassionate concentration. Through consistent use, students are likely to develop a greater awareness and capacity to talk about their thoughts and feelings. They are likely to develop greater agency in selfregulating their emotions and attention. In addition, students might experience a greater sense of well-being and an appreciation for full engagement in learning.

## **Application: When and where can I use it?**

Creating Space for Learning can be used at the start of a school day, or before transitioning into a learning experience that would especially benefit from student presence and concentration. When preparing to use this routine, you may consider inviting students to stand, shake out their legs and arms, and stretch for a moment. Afterwards, students can settle into a seated place, draw a circle in their notebook, and begin taking a few deep breathes. During the breathing and notice phase, students might find it helpful to close their eyes initially, before jotting down their initial notices. Facilitators may also choose to join students in taking deep breathes and checking in internally.

## **Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?**

Throughout the routine, facilitators can create a calm environment through the use of relaxed tone of voice and unhurried pace. Providing learners with a few extra seconds before, during and after each step can deepen students' experience and add a sense of tranquility. When facilitators use this routine over time students are likely to become more comfortable with the process. Ideally facilitators encourage students to utilize these embodied self-reflective practices in their lives outside of school. Sometimes facilitators can invite a few students to share a thought or feeling that will help them learn or that they set aside, thus creating an atmosphere of trust, inspiration and community. Depending on needs facilitators can experiment in modifying the routine for example focusing only on “breath – notice - keep at the center.”

Share your experience with this thinking routine on social media using the hashtags #PZThinkingRoutines and #CreatingSpaceForLearning.



This thinking routine was developed as part of the ID Global, Reimagining Migration project at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Explore more Thinking Routines at [pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines](https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines)