

Using Restorative Circles for Math Discourse and Content

A Restorative Circle (related to the Socratic seminar, originated in Aboriginal communities) is a structure that can support students in developing the productive community relationships that lay the groundwork for meaningful mathematics discourse practices.

Why Use Restorative Circles

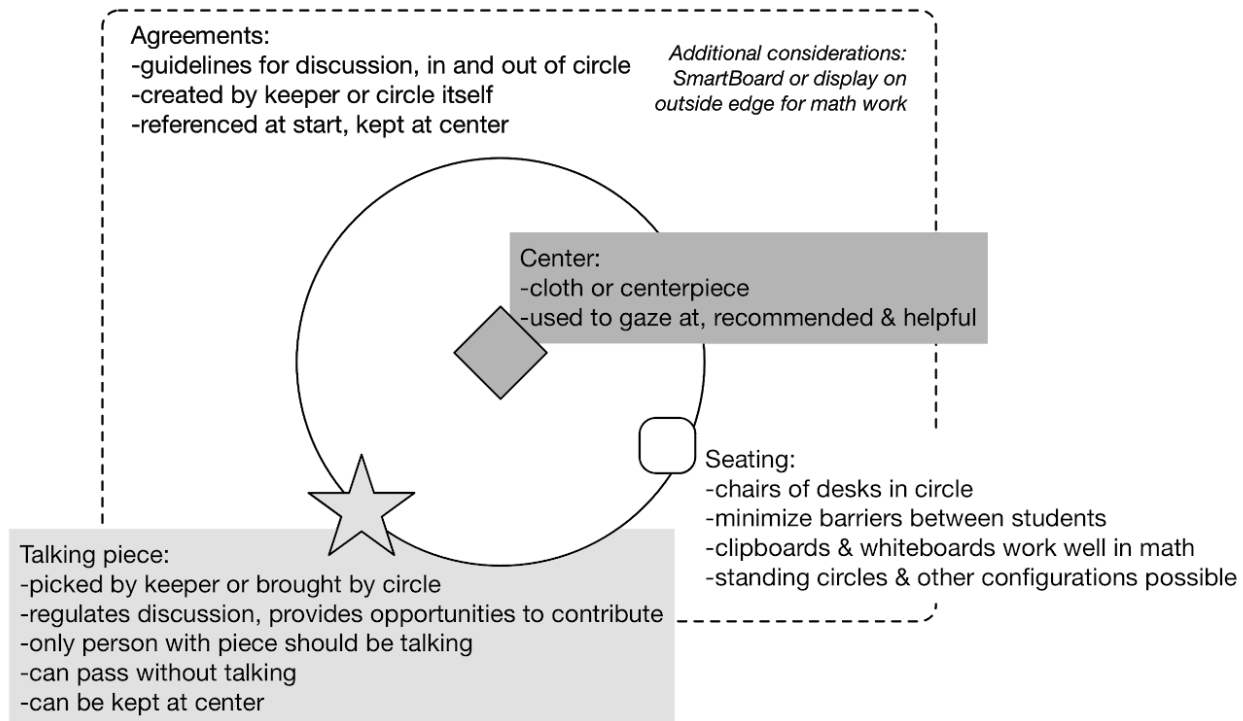
1. Student-centered teaching requires us to engage students in discourse, reasoning, & argumentation (Standard for Mathematical Practice 3)
2. Math talk is only effective for all when there is an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable to share ideas and justifications
3. Meaningful mathematics discourse needs to be scaffolded and fostered, particularly at the secondary level
4. Promotes a culture of caring, trust, and community in the classroom

[When] students are held responsible for justifying their reasoning, [they are] increasing their mathematical knowledge and understanding. (Rawding and Wills 2012)

Circles give people an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum and equality. (IIRP 2017)

How To Use Restorative Circles

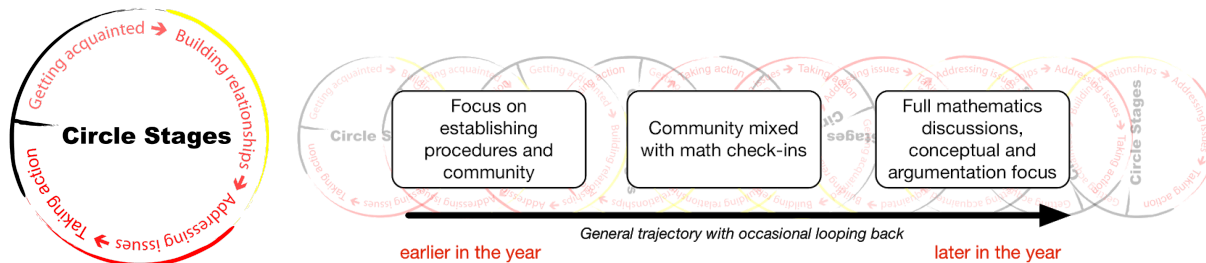
Circle Environment Essentials



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Format, Process, and Progressions from Community to Content



There is a simple way to tell how trust is developing: observe the level of participation in the circle (Clifford)

- **Purpose** Early in the circle process, the purpose might be building procedures and community. Later, it may focus more on the mathematics. Add check-ins on math content as the level of trust increases, for longer durations and with a progression of more procedural to more conceptual. Math Practice 1 and 3 as good goals for circle process. Purpose of the circle is explicitly considered at each stage of a circle.
- **Opening** Circle agreements reviewed, purpose of circle given and circle opened. Possible openings: quotes, things to consider during circle, mantra.
- **Scaled check-in on current state** (day, week, semester, etc.) Using a 1-5 scale, assess (and reset if necessary) the community and build trust as community members to get to know each other better. Encourage comments on why that number, with a reasonable limitation to length (e.g., one sentence, one word).
- **Community building question(s)** A strong community building question has the potential to increase the trust level in the community without placing community members at a unnecessary place of vulnerability, including the circle keeper. Different questions may be sensitive for different communities.
- **Bridging to Math check-in/Self Scoring** Using a 1-5 scale, have students self-assess their current state with respect to the mathematics.
- **Content** Mathematics work include boardwork (placing whiteboard or projector at the edge of the circle), discussion of problems, engaging in a cognitively demanding task, examining student work, launching a lesson
- **Check-out** Use a scale or a response-limiting method (one sentence, one word) to reflect on the content of the circle.
- **Closing** Marks the end of the circle process. Examples: passing a high five or “I appreciate you” around, quote, reflection on purpose of circle, story link-up (one students starts a story, other students link up to continue and then finish story)

Clifford, A. (n.d.) Teaching Restorative Practices Using Classroom Circles.

<http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/RP%20Curriculum%20and%20Scripts%20and%20PowerPoints/Classroom%20Curriculum/Teaching%20Restorative%20Practices%20in%20the%20Classroom%207%20lesson%20Curriculum.pdf>

Nathanson, D. (1997b). From empathy to community. *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 25, 125-143.

Rawding, M. R., & Wills, T. (2012). Discourse: Simple moves that work. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School* 18, 46–51.

Staff, I. (n.d.). Home. Retrieved January 2017, from

<http://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/what-is-restorative-practices/defining-restorative/21-5-2-circles>

Miner, K. (2010, April 18). Stages of a Talking Circle. Retrieved November 2, 2017, from

<http://www.circle-space.org/2010/04/18/restorative-justice-training-for-circle-facilitators-requires-4-elements>

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Observation Rubric for Restorative Circles

Date: _____ Total in Class: _____ Total Time: _____

<u>Question Description *</u>	<u>Meaningful Response Tally:</u> Time: _____	Observations:
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*Options for Question Type: Community Building, Restorative, Bridging to Math, Mathematical Content