Diamond Ranking

Diamond Ranking can be used to rank concepts, statements, questions or other items into order of significance in a quick and visual way.

The most important idea goes at the top of the diamond, then the next two most important, then the next three, and so on down to the single least important idea.

This “bunches” ideas in a way that can be more meaningful than putting them in rank order and encourages students to think critically and carefully about the ideas, and to commit them to a position.

Hints & Tips

- Consider how you are going to use the information before you start - as a quick, temporary focus for discussion or to provide quantitative data that will need analysis.

- Decide how you are going to ask the students to perform the ranking exercise. You could use paper copies of the diamond template and print cards for the students to manually place on the sheet; or as an electronic version and students drag text-boxes to the correct position; or have a large laminated template that students write on with non-permanent pens.

- Decide how the content of the nine boxes is generated - by the students, yourself or a combination. This depends on what information you are trying to gather and how you intend to analyse or use it (see the worked example). You may wish to have blank cards for students to add their own ideas - or more than 9 cards, so students have to actively reject certain cards.

Pros

- Quick and simple technique
- Can be applied to many scenarios
- Can be used by individuals, pairs or small groups depending on level of collaboration or discussion desired
- The activity itself can lead to discussions about which skills students used to create their diamonds

Cons

- Takes time to analyse quantitatively
Diamond Ranking

Worked example

In the UK, we used diamond ranking at the start of an outdoor learning programme to ascertain which outdoor activities the students would most like to undertake (see Exercise 1) - and at the end of the programme to discover why the students enjoyed the course (see Exercise 2).

The nine statements shown in Figure 2 were developed from students’ own comments made to the researcher either in general conversation or during other surveys, eg Well-Being Measure. Students were also given blank cards to add their own reasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercise 1 Activities students had to rank (not all included here)</th>
<th>Exercise 2 “Why I enjoyed the outdoor learning course”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Climbing activities</td>
<td>A. I’m trusted to get on with things and given responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Outwimming activities</td>
<td>B. I’m given learning opportunities relevant to my career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Kayaking activities</td>
<td>C. I get to make choices about what and how I learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Making a garden for boat and veg</td>
<td>D. I can learn from my mistakes without being laughed at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Building a “Gnome Garden” for school/school for our</td>
<td>E. It’s helped me gain confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Improving our school grounds for wildlife</td>
<td>F. I feel more relaxed learning with less people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>G. I feel better working outside the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. The outdoor learning teacher understands my needs better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. I focus better in the calmer environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Quantitative analysis & presentation

Exercise 2 was designed to discover which aspects of the outdoor learning course were most important to the students’ enjoyment. For each statement, we tallied how many students ranked it in top position, ie most significant, and produced a pie chart to represent the findings.

The top four factors:

1) 34% of the group ranked being given trust and responsibility as the most significant factor.

2) 25% ranked “improved their self-confidence” as the top factor (by product of small group size, self-differentiated tasks, quieter working and sharing environment).

3) 25% ranked the small group size as top factor - there were only ever 9 people or less in each group.

4) 16% ranked the outside influence as a significant factor, making them feel “better” and a calm place to learn. This supports research that indicates the strong correlation of fresh air and contact with nature with personal well-being.

The findings of Exercise 2 were used to determine the structure, pace and organisation of the next outdoor learning programme at the school.