

Arriving & entering: Entrance situations in the kindergarten Tool: Diamond Ranking

Context:

Pre-School location	German-language kindergarten Oswald von Wolkenstein Seis, South Tyrol Italy
Details about students	Age: 2 to 7 years 70 children (3 groups), 11 pedagogical staff (with part-time staff) Inclusive kindergarten with the concept of the opening
School premises	approx. 250 sqm, built in 1976, renovation planned. The ground floor and the 1st floor are used in the day-to-day running of the kindergarten. On the ground floor there are three group rooms, a movement room, kitchen and dining area. On the first floor, studios have been set up in a former flat. The kindergarten building is part of a larger structure that is used for cultural purposes by the community.
School context:	Rural character; everyday language: German
Type of activity	Workshops with the participation of the pedagogical team and two children's groups
Stage in design process	in use reflection/POE



Tool: Diamond Ranking

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/cored/tools/diamond-ranking/>

The instrument is first tested with the pedagogical staff and then carried out with the children on specific design issues concerning the use of space.

Dates of implementation:

- October 2021 with pedagogical staff
- February 2022 with two groups of children
- March 2022 Discussion of results with the pedagogical staff

Rationale for activity and tool adopted

In the kindergarten district of Brixen, space and room design have long been a topic in the pedagogical work and are actively supported by the kindergarten district management. As the pedagogical concept of opening is basically applied, themes and functions are assigned to the individual rooms or parts of rooms. Thus, in all kindergartens of the district there is a room for language education, a room for science and/or mathematics education, a movement room and studios for artistic work. The design of the rooms in each kindergarten is adapted to the structural conditions.

In the pedagogical concept of opening up, the children have the opportunity to use the rooms throughout the kindergarten according to their needs during free play time. In doing so, they are accompanied by the pedagogical staff and encouraged to deal with different topics and play ideas.

In the Seis kindergarten, the thematic assignments and the corresponding room design are more or less completed and are adapted annually to the needs of the children and the team. The entrance area and the access routes as well as the outdoor area have great potential for development. Here, the pedagogical staff would like to have suggestions and discussions on how these areas can be used. For this reason, photos of these areas are used for the "Diamond Ranking" tool. Due to the diversity of the areas, two sets of photos (indoor and outdoor) are compiled and two Diamond Rankings are created in the discussions with the pedagogical staff.

Case study description: Process

Participants: Kindergarten management, team and a representative of the district management.

In a preparatory meeting with the kindergarten management and a representative of the kindergarten district management, the steps of the joint work with the instrument were determined and photographs of the kindergarten (the interior and exterior) were taken by the researcher from the CoReD project. Ideas of the room design as a whole were discussed, but also the special framework conditions of the pedagogical work due to the regulations during the pandemic.

In a second meeting, the instrument was tested. In the run-up to the meeting, the project staff selected photographs corresponding to the impressions and agreements from the preparatory meeting. This resulted in two overarching themes for the Diamond Ranking: Indoor and outdoor areas of the kindergarten and their design possibilities. The central question for the Diamond Ranking is where the greatest development potential of a space is seen. Or which room should be changed immediately.

After the team had tested the Diamond Ranking in the presence of the researcher, an educator also carried out a Diamond Ranking with preschool children aged five to six. Here, the team was interested in the perspective of girls and boys on the room situation in the kindergarten. The question here is: Which room do you not like at all?

The work of the pedagogical team and the kindergarten children with the Diamond Ranking was recorded, transcribed and used for the results of the use of the instrument. The posters with the Diamond Rankings were also photographed.

In another pedagogical workshop, the results of the Diamond Rankings were discussed and validated with the team. Based on the results of the Diamond Rankings, an observation task was formulated for the researcher, which was implemented with the instrument of cartographic observation.

Photo * documentation - Diamond Ranking Selection

Inndoors



Fig. 1: entrance



Fig. 2: play hallway



Fig. 3: movement area



Fig. 4: dining area



Fig. 5: small inner courtyard



Fig. 6: cloakroom



Fig. 7: yellow room



Fig. 8: blue room

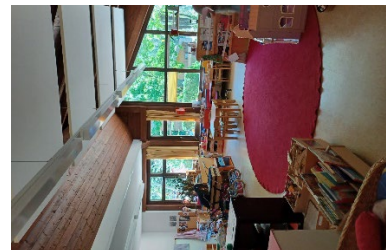


Fig. 9: red room

Außengelände (rund um den Kindergarten)



Fig. 1: access to the kindergarten

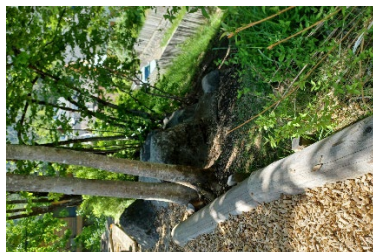


Fig. 2: flowerbed

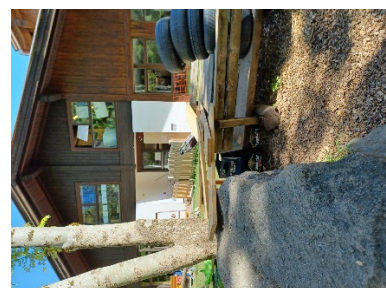


Fig. 3: construction corner



Fig. 4: slope



Fig. 5: play area with sand

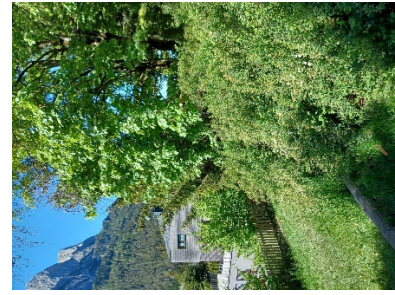


Fig. 6: open garden space



Fig. 7: hammock



Fig. 8: vehicles

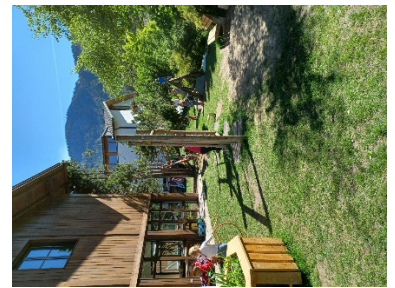


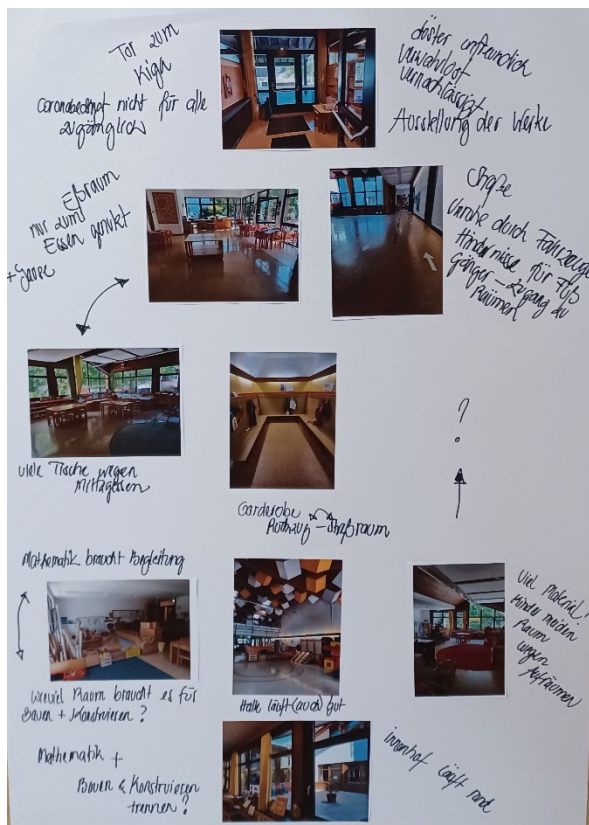
Fig. 9: swing

Case study description: Outcomes

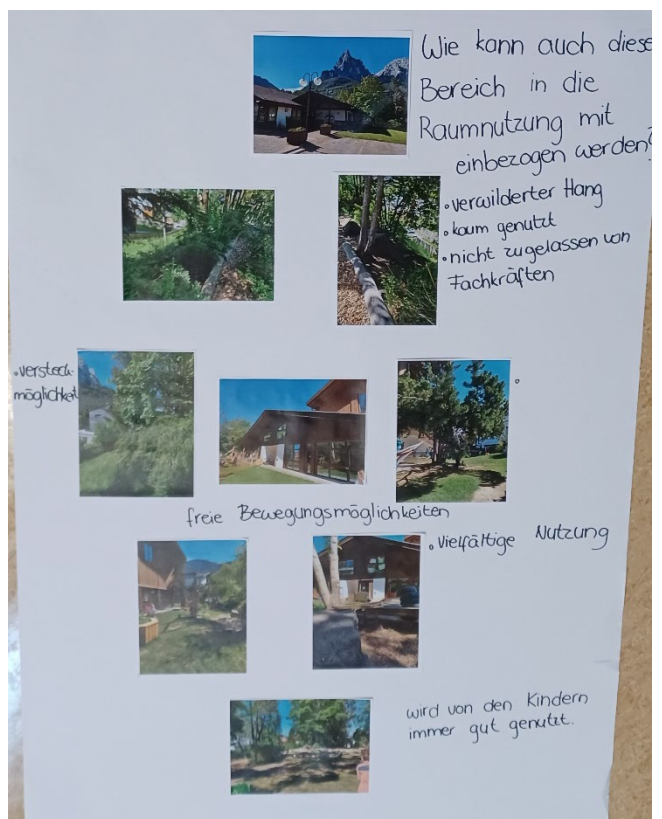
Results on the work of the pedagogical team with Diamond Ranking

The aim of this workshop with the pedagogical staff was to get to know the Diamond Ranking instrument and to plan further cooperation in the project. For this purpose, the pedagogical staff of the kindergarten created a Diamond Ranking themselves. The task was to put the room situation at the top of the Diamond Ranking, which absolutely has to be changed. In other words, the greatest potential for change was to be defined. In order to document and subsequently analyse the discussion and the decision-making process, the conversations of the educational professionals were recorded and transcribed. In addition to the discussion of the content, the pedagogical professionals were also asked about their impression of the use of the tool. This feedback was also recorded and transcribed.

In the Seis kindergarten, a total of 8 pedagogical professionals, including the kindergarten management and a representative of the kindergarten board, took part in the workshop as part of the project. The results are these two Diamond Rankings:



(1) Diamond Ranking: indoors



(2) Diamond Ranking: outdoors

It turned out that in both groups the entrance area was defined as the area that urgently needs to be changed. In front of the entrance there is a large covered area that is not used, and inside the entrance it is dark and uninviting.

From the joint work came the team's desire to also conduct a Diamond Ranking with the kindergarten children. For this, two groups of pre-school children (5 to 6 years old) were selected. The girls worked in one group, the boys in another. Both groups were asked which rooms in the kindergarten they did not like at all. The illustrations of the interior rooms were used (interior rooms Fig. 1 - 9).



Boys' diamond ranking



Girls' diamond ranking

On the basis of the Diamond Rankings of the children, the team derived the observation task for the instrument of cartographic observation: the teacher should be observed in the red and yellow group rooms. Attention should also be paid to the extent to which the room is used by the girls or boys (see Case study: Colours & Richness: Gender-specific Use of Space in the kindergarten).