

Diamond Ranking

Description of Tool (what is it for and why?)

Diamond ranking is a thinking skills tool designed to facilitate talk and encourage people to consider their values on a given topic. Traditionally this activity involves the ranking of nine written statements according to a range of criteria (e.g. most important, most interesting etc.), but asking people to rank photographs also opens up discussion and can build shared understanding. Ranking photographs when thinking about school space has particular resonance, encouraging people to think about their relationship to the physical space and how this in turn relates to their beliefs about learning and teaching. The same images and activity can be used to facilitate discussion between diverse groups within the school.

Diamond ranking can be used in two distinct ways, either to establish people's existing experiences and understandings of the learning environment, or to begin to explore alternatives. The method has been used across a number of cultures and countries by academic researchers and teachers interested in school users' views of learning environments and practices, sometimes to inform the redesign of space.







Tool instructions (how to do it)

The first step is to organise a set of nine images representing a range of learning environments. If you want to support school users to discover what they know about their existing setting then the photographs should be of the participants' actual physical environment – create a set that includes a range of spaces relevant to the ranking criterion. Alternatively, to help participants to discuss less tangible aspects, including their beliefs about learning and physical space, and to consider changes, use photographs of a range of different spaces that will stimulate more general discussion.

Sets of images to use for this activity can be found on this page or if you want to create some bespoke sets, you can find a variety of images in our library.

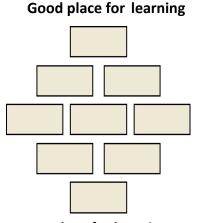
Tool instructions

Using diamond ranking in this way will enable the exploration of existing beliefs about pedagogy and space, but also facilitates discussion exploring possibilities and alternatives.

To facilitate the activity, set up tables each with a set of nine photographs, numbered 1-9, printed on paper, a large sheet of paper, scissors, glue and pens. Ask your participants to work in small groups (pairs can work well, but so can 3-4 per group), to cut out the photographs and then rank them according to criteria such as 'good place for learning','poor place for learning'.

Remind participants that the ranking should be discussed, and no gluing should take place until there is a consensus on the positioning of the photographs. Once the photographs are stuck down, ask the participants to annotate the photographs with comments that explain the positioning.

A facilitator can sit with each group doing the ranking to record the interaction that takes place in writing or via audio/video recording. Alternatively, or in addition, the completed diamonds can displayed or used with the wider group to stimulate discussion.



Poor place for learning



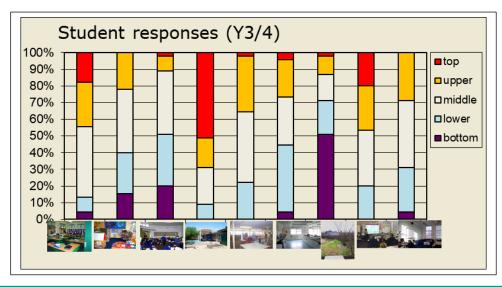
Tool instructions (how to analyse it)

Facilitator notes and annotations made on the diamonds can be collated and any recurring themes noted. In addition, a complementary quantitative analysis can be undertaken to highlight overall preferences or to compare opinions between groups of participants (e.g. staff and students). Complete the frequency table below (use tallying for ease) and then use a spreadsheet programme to display the results.

Positioning	Photograph								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
bottom									
lower									
middle									
upper									
Тор									
Total (should be the same for each photo)									

Tool instructions (how to analyse it)

The downloadable Excel spreadsheet on this page will create the stacked bar chart seen here:



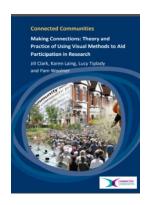
Additional resources

A 'how-to' guide to using visual methods, including diamond ranking, to widen participation in research:

https://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/cflat/files/making-connections.pdf

Short piece on the benefits of user participation in school design: https://theconversation.com/pupils-and-teachers-should-get-a-say-in-how-to-spend-2bn-for-building-new-schools-27357

Academic article describing changing pedagogy and space in two UK schools: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10833-018-9317-4



Project web link: coming soon

Social media: @PamWoolner on Twitter #CollaborativeReDesignwithSchools #DiamondRank

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Profile: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/staff/profile/pamelawoolner.html#background

