

DIAMOND RANKING



MAIN FEATURES

Strengthened skills	CONSTRUCT
Suitable for	Teachers, students
Difficulty level	Low
Setting	Group
Minimum number of participants	2
Average duration	60 - 90 minutes
Special equipment/materials	No
Online version	Yes



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1. DESCRIPTION

This exercise for couples and groups helps to explore and clarify positions of value and feelings towards a particular theme or problem.

Diamond sorting (a technique known as "Diamond ranking" or "Diamond 9") is a practice that allows for the fair and inclusive participation of a diverse group of internal and external members. It helps to explore and clarify positions of value, feelings and thoughts regarding a particular theme, problem or idea. The exercise is usually carried out through the writing and ordering (or classification) of nine statements/conceptual nuclei expressed in the form of short texts or drawings, photographs or small objects in the case of activities with younger students.

While the resulting ranking already provides a source of data, annotations, explanations, and dialogue during ranking interpretation provides an even richer source of interpretation and meaning. Once again, stories will emerge. The practice can also be used as a preparation to draw a problem tree (see exercise [sheet](#)), to analyse the causes and effects of a particular problem and how they relate to each other.

2. PURPOSE/BENEFITS

Diamond sorting helps extract constructs and facilitate conversation around a specific topic, challenge, or problem. It can also help explore (and "classify") potential solutions.

By classifying elements, statements, objects or images, students discuss the ranking and express why they consider this particular element, statement, object or image to be more or less important or overridden.

By discussing their choices with others, students are forced to make explicit and obvious to group members the general relationships with which they organise knowledge, thus expressing their understanding of the topic or problem so that it can be analysed and made the object of comparison with others.

The method can be used in a wide variety of contexts, with students of all ages and levels of education. The possibility of using images, photographs or even objects allows you to conduct the exercise even with people with low levels of language proficiency (e.g. students with migration status).

3. RELATED SKILLS CLUSTERS

Diamond sorting is a flexible technique that allows you to address a wide range of topics and can serve to understand students' values, thoughts, and feelings toward a specific problem, challenge, or solution. The technique can be used for:

- conduct any activity for which it is important to have a view of a student's values, thoughts, and feelings;
- gain a better common understanding of the other person, or to gain insights into a student's values, thoughts, and feelings, regarding a particular set of solutions.

This practice is, therefore closely related to the dimension of BUILDING and in particular, to the relationship as a co-construction of meaning and as a process of mutual influence.

4. HOW TO DO THE EXERCISE

Step 1 / Preparation

The first step is to explain how to prepare and introduce the exercise to participants (e.g., students).

The facilitator (e.g., the teacher) introduces the theme that will be the topic of the exercise. The topic may take the form of a document or a statement and may be presented with additional contextual material, e.g. newspaper clippings.

The facilitator explains the purpose of the exercise and instructs participants to classify a series of nine statements/statements and arrange them according to a nine-pane structure called a "diamond" structure. The criterion for classification can be simple and general as "importance, relevance, meaning" or detailed and specific in content.

If the group defines the declarations, the facilitator gives instructions on how to prepare the statements.

The rules of the game are presented with regard to the discussions, and the emphasis is placed on whether the order of the pairs should reach a consensus regarding the ranking.

Step 2 / Definition of declarations

At this stage, you must define the statements you want the group to think about. Statements can be defined by the facilitator or by the participants themselves. As an alternative to written statements, drawings, photographs or (small) objects can also be used.



If the participants have to define the statements, each of them should be given sticky notes (or post-its) and asked to write a maximum number of essential problems and explanations/motivations related to the situation or theme proposed.

When identifying statements to be used in the leaderboard, when working in small groups, it is recommended to have a maximum of 3-5 statements per participant to reduce the time it takes for the facilitator to review and analyze these statements and decide which ones to include in the next steps (depending on the size of the group). Keeping in mind the topic or problem for which the exercise is designed. In this case, the facilitator will group them into nine groups or return them to nine general statements before moving on to the next step. If you work with pairs or groups of three, you should ask for up to nine statements.

Each declaration, photograph, drawing or object is then assigned a short title or number to facilitate consultation. Each statement must be provided on a single sheet or a post-it note and kept in an envelope.

Step 3 / Sorting Declarations

The facilitator separates the participants into pairs or groups of three and asks them to place the statements in a "diamond" structure consisting of nine panels (see diagram below). Participants must agree on the ranking and the reasons behind the ranking. After the ranking, they have to explain why a certain statement was ranked as one of the most important.

The criteria used for sorting are significantly related to the topic that the facilitator (e.g., the teacher) wants to address, but the top line refers to the item considered "more"; the descriptor to be used can therefore be "interesting" (ie "more interesting"; "most important"; "more meaningful" or even "better"). The top row allows only a single statement, drawing, photograph or object to be classified.

The next line (the second) contains two boxes and reflects positions (expressed in statements, drawings, photographs or objects) considered interesting, meaningful, and significative at the same level. The third line repeats this but reflects those three elements considered "less important" than the second line. This line typically represents the elements considered more "neutral", i.e. not so essential, of medium importance. The fourth row includes two even "less important" elements, and the fifth and last line represents the least essential/significant element.

Once the pairs (or groups of three) have agreed on the ranking, they are asked to write down their "diamond" with the comments and explanations that emerged from the discussions.

Final step / Presentation

At the end of the diamond sorting exercise, the facilitator can ask the working groups to present and share what has been produced with the whole group, without however providing explanations; alternatively, it will be possible to use the work for internal analysis of the individual working groups (pairs or trio) without the need for sharing in plenary.



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The main sources of analysis and discussion are the sorts completed with notes and notes taken from the conversation between the participants. What is produced can also be analyzed successively through the generated structure and the positioning of the statements (or drawings, photographs and objects) within it.

5. FINAL REFLECTION

After the session, the results can be analyzed:

- At the level of individual pairs or trios;
- At the level of the whole group.

The facilitator himself can analyze the annotations and reflect on them then ask the participants to add their own reflections; this can be done both at the level of individual pairs/trios and at the level of the whole group.

Another option when working in a small group is to ask the pairs/trio to present the ranking to the group and explain their rankings and annotations. In this case the facilitator can reflect first and ask the group to do it later, or first ask the group their reflections, thoughts and feelings and then analyze the ranking and reflections, thoughts and feelings of the group himself.

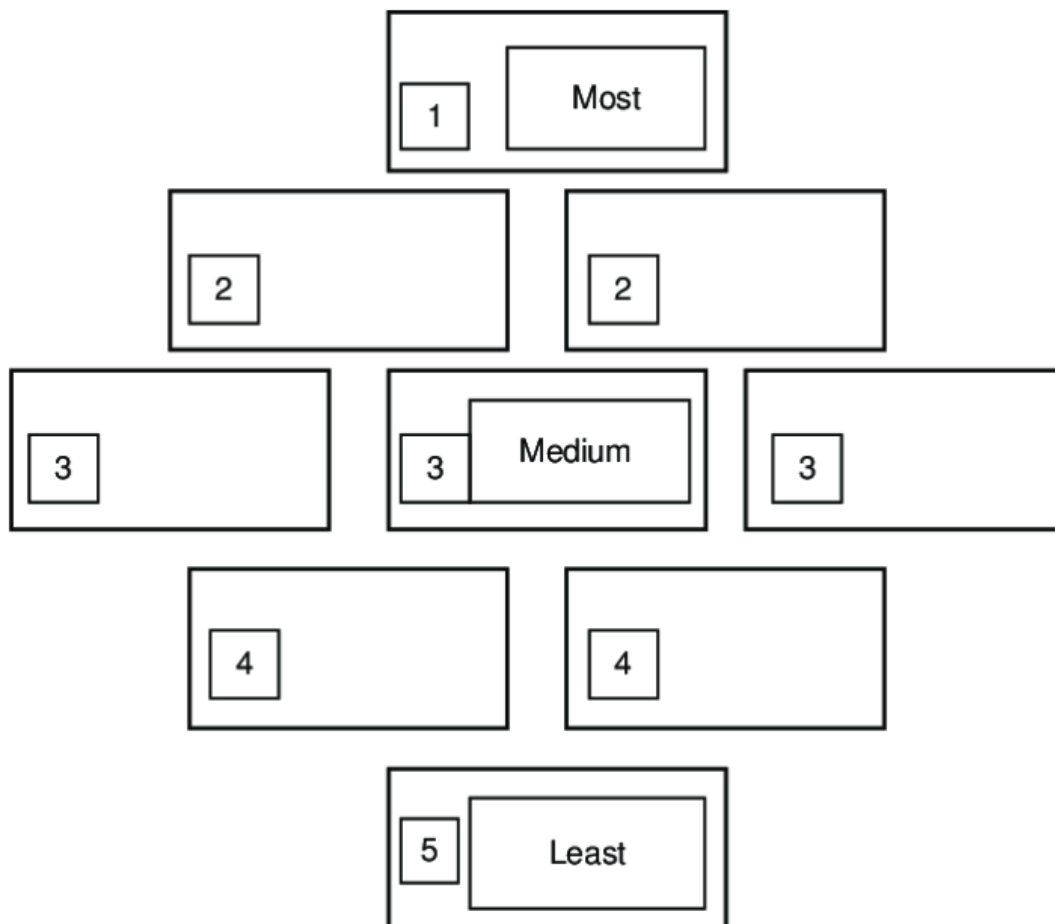
The questions that are relevant in this process are:

- Why have decades, drawings, photographs or objects been classified in this way? What are the reasons?
- What ideas/thoughts/feelings do you have after reaching an agreement on the ranking?
- Has the process changed your ideas/thoughts/feelings about the topic, problem, challenge, or solution?
- What did you learn from this process?

6. SPECIFIC MATERIALS

You will need:

- A3 sheets
- Sticky notes/post it
- Pencil/pen
- Nine-pane outline templates, such as the one shown below, that can be drawn or printed on sheets:



7. TIPS AND TRICKS

- Adapt the use of written statements, photographs, drawings or objects according to the type of people (e.g. students) you will be working with: if you are working with a heterogeneous group with low levels of knowledge of the Italian language, the use of objects or images is more appropriate. However, if you work with people from different cultures, be aware of the interpretations that different images can have for different cultures and keep this in mind when selecting them;
- Participants should be reminded that statements, drawings, photographs or objects should not be classified in numerical order in the second or third lines of the fourth line.



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8. ONLINE VERSION

The exercise can be done online and basically follows the same steps as for the offline version. In this case, a videoconferencing tool should allow participants to discuss and compare. While in a physical environment, the facilitator can monitor and interact with multiple groups simultaneously (and guide them in the process), in the online version, this can only be done with a video conferencing app (e.g., Zoom) that allows the use of breakout rooms to divide participants into groups and allow them to compare with each other. Breakout options are unnecessary for a group of two or three participants.

To use the diamond construction model and to ensure that all participants can interact with it, it is recommended to use tools that allow brainstorming and collaborative work (e.g., Google documents and presentations, [Miro Board](#), [Lino](#)). The only thing the facilitator needs to make sure to do is to create the model.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY - SITOGRAPHY

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