Diamond Ranking

Summary

This activity is used to help learners prioritise key factors, aspects or issues relating to a topic or question and to discuss justifications for their choices.

The activity requires learners to rank 9 or more factors (answers/reasons/aspects/elements) in the shape of a diamond. The most important factors are ranked towards the top of the diamond and the least important towards the bottom. Factors of equal importance are placed on the same row.

The aim is to build a consensus through group discussion and negotiation; it is not about finding a correct answer.

Materials required

Set of ranking cards on the specific topic, e.g. climate justice, causes of inequality.

Diamond template or empty desks with space for ranking cards.

Steps

1. Divide the class into groups of 3, 4 or 5 learners. Give each group a set of ranking cards.
2. Instruct learners to rank the factors in order of importance, placing the most important factor at the top and the least important at the bottom. The other cards should be positioned in between. Depending on your class and the size of your groups, this can be a group activity from the outset, or alternatively you can give some time for learners to individually think about the ranking at this point.
3. Allow time for debate, discussion and negotiation within the groups. Encourage learners to justify or give a reason for their placement of factors on the diamond.
4. When consensus has been reached, groups move around the room to compare and contrast their ranking with other groups. Allow more time for discussion on the placement of factors and the justification for that.
5. Groups can report their highest and lowest ranked factors to the whole class and a tally can be created.
6. Final 'diamonds' can be recorded as photographs or written out and used for future reference or for display. The diamond can also be returned to as part of a reflection exercise at the end of a topic or theme to identify how or if learning has changed.

Variations:

- Start the activity with 12 factors. The first task for learners is to strike out 3 answers before they begin ranking the other 9.
- Provide learners with blank cards to identify their own factors to add to the ranking.
- Learners spend 3-5 minutes at their home group and then go to the next group, compare and then renegotiate.
- Incorporate role-play into the ranking. For example when ranking issues relating to land rights, take on the perspective of a landlord, a homeless person, a climate migrant etc.
- Add some new information or a new scenario which has implications for the ranking: for example, government policies change or new funds become available.

More information

- How the World Works: Financial Justice Ireland (2C, p.34). A lesson plan with 12 ranking cards to explore the root causes of poverty and inequality.