

Prioritizing by Dots

Type: Organizing Ideas



What Is It?

A way to collectively agree on the priorities from a list of ideas or tasks.

Why Use It?

Gives each participant an equal voice in prioritizing ideas or tasks

Can be used as a quick needs assessment to identify priority topics to cover during a lesson / workshop

Can be used to prioritize the most important ideas to discuss when participants have raised many ideas

How to Use It

1. Write (or brainstorm) a list of concepts or tasks on the flip chart at the front of the room.
2. Allow the group to add anything that is missing from the list.
3. Give each participant the same number of stickers (dots). Three dots per person usually works well for groups of 5-15 participants.
4. Ask each participant to put their dots next to the items on the list that they want to prioritize. They can place each dot next to a different item, or they can put all three dots next to the same item (if there is one topic they think is the most important).
5. After all participants have placed their dots, discuss which topics have the most dots and why. Circle the top three-five topics.

Trainer Notes

Depending on the group and topic, it may be important to discuss criteria to use when prioritizing before participants begin placing their dots next to items on the list.

In some cases, there may be a task / topic that you know is critical to discuss, but participants may not have ranked it as the highest priority. Be prepared to discuss this and give people an opportunity to move their dots if there was something they did not consider during their initial priorities.