

Alternate Ranking for Flexible Grouping

The purpose of Alternate Ranking is to help educators analyze student performance and create flexible groups for differentiated instruction. The big idea is to rank the students in an alternating fashion from highest to lowest performance to form temporary groups for targeted instruction.

First Step: Alternate Ranking

1. Look at the results of an assessment to identify the student with the highest score. Place this student's name on line #1 of the Alternate Ranking Sheet.
2. Identify the student with the lowest score and place this student's name on the bottom line of the Alternate Ranking Sheet.
3. Return to the class roster and locate the student who had the second highest score and place this name on line #2 of the Alternate Ranking Sheet.
4. Return to the class roster and identify the next lowest score and place this name in the second from the bottom.

Here is an example of alternate ranking for a small sample of classroom assessment data so far:

Sample Classroom Data

| Class Roster | Score |
|--------------|-------|
| Deshaun | 80% |
| Dora | 90% |
| Eric | 30% |
| Ian | 40% |
| Juan | 100% |
| Jessica | 50% |

| Alternate Ranking Sheet | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. | Juan |
| 2 | Dora |
| 3 | |
| 4 | |
| 5 | Ian |
| 6 | Eric |

5. Continue this procedure in an "alternating" fashion, bouncing from the upper portion of the sheet to the lower portion until the entire class roster is ranked.

Second Step: Grouping Students by Their Needs

1. Beginning at the top of the Alternate Ranking Sheet, look at each student's name and ask yourself, "Is this student making adequate progress toward grade-level goals with regular classroom instruction?" If your answer is "yes," move to the next student on the sheet and ask the same question.
2. When you come to a student and your answer is, "This student currently requires extra help in the classroom to meet expectations," draw a line above the student's name.
3. Go to the bottom of the Alternate Ranking Sheet and look at each student's name and ask yourself, "Is this student consistently struggling to such a degree that extensive scaffolding is necessary?" If your answer is "yes," move up to the next student on the sheet and ask the same question.
4. When you come to a student who just needs extra classroom help, but is not in critical need, draw a line below this student's name.
5. You now have three groups of students with three different levels of need.

Third Step: Determining Learning Gaps and Instructional Needs

Dig deeper into the data to determine specific skills and/or knowledge that need support. Use an item analysis method, student self-reflection, etc.

PLC Opportunity, Collaborative Flexible Grouping: Combine the results of a common formative assessment. Use Alternate Ranking to create temporary groups for which you teach the same subject during the same period. Decide what differentiated instruction is needed (re-teaching to extended learning) for each group and which teacher is best at providing that instruction. How long will your flexible groups last before students return to their assigned teachers?