

## SIX THINKING HATS Edward De Bono – Penguin, 1987



The six thinking hats is designed to switch thinking from the normal argument style to a map making style.

THINKING is then a two-stage process.

1. Make the map
2. Choose a route on the map

If the map is good enough the **best** route will be obvious.

The advantage of thinking hats is to unscramble thinking so that one thinking mode can be used at a time, not all at once.

The artificiality of thinking hats provides a formality and a convenience for requesting a certain type of thinking either of oneself or of others. They establish the rules of the game. They provide THINKING ROLES – a CONTROL system for our thinking.

### SIX THINKING HATS

<b>WHITE</b>	-	Facts, Figures, Information
<b>RED</b>	-	Seeing Red, Emotions and Feelings, Hunches and Insights, Intuition
<b>BLACK</b>	-	Negative Judgement, Devil's Advocate, Criticism
<b>YELLOW</b>	-	Sunshine, Brightness, Optimism, Positive, Constructive, Opportunity
<b>GREEN</b>	-	Fertile, Creative, Generative, Movement
<b>BLUE</b>	-	Cool, Control, The Overview

## WHITE HAT

### **NEUTRALITY** (Absence of colour)

- Neutral objective
- No interpretations or opinions
- Imitative of a computer
- Use focusing questions to obtain information
- Checked facts – proven believed facts – believed to be true
- Discipline and direction

## RED HAT

### **EMOTIONS** (How I feel about this)

- Legitimise emotions and feelings as an important part of thinking
- Makes feelings visible
- Identifies the value systems
- Can switch in and out of “feelings”
- Can explore the feelings of others
- **NEVER** justify feelings or intuition
- Allows for gut reactions, hunches

## BLACK HAT

### **NEGATIVE ASSESSMENT**

- What is wrong, incorrect, in error
- How it does not fit with experience or knowledge
- Why it won't work
- Risks and dangers, faults
- This is **NOT** an argument. It is putting in the negative elements
- May judge an idea against the past
- Can ask negative questions (but not negative feelings)

## YELLOW HAT

### **POSITIVE / CONSECUTIVE**

- Brightness, Optimism
- Positive assessment
- Ranges from the logical and practical to dreams, visions and hopes
- Probes for value and benefits
- Generative
- Makes things happen
- Aim is effectiveness
- Speculative, opportunistic
- Not just positive in euphoric sense (red) or purely creative (green) but positive in value

## GREEN HAT

### **CREATIVE THINKING**

- Search for alternatives
- Brainstorming
- Lateral ideas
- Beyond the known and obvious
- Idiom of movement replaces that of judgement
- Moving forward
- Provocation
- Random thoughts
- Asymmetric patterning

## BLUE

### **CONTROL HAT**

- Thinking about the thinking needed to explore the subject
- Like the conductor of an orchestra
- Defines the subject
- Sets the focus
- Defines the problems and shapes the questions
- Determines the thinking tasks
- Summaries, overviews and conclusions
- Monitors the thinking
- Ensures the rules of the game are observed
- Stops arguments and insists on "map" type thinking
- Enforces the discipline of thinking
- Thinking about the thinking needed to explore the subject