

Six Thinking Hats Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing

Adapted from: <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/english/sixhats.htm>

What is it?

Six Thinking Hats is a strategy devised by Edward de Bono which requires students (and teachers), to extend their way of thinking about a topic by wearing a range of different “thinking hats:”

White hat thinking focuses on the information available and needed.

Black hat thinking examines the difficulties and problems associated with a topic.

Yellow hat thinking focuses on benefits and values.

Red hat thinking looks at a topic from the point of view of emotions, feelings and hunches.

Green hat thinking requires imaginative, creative and lateral thinking about a topic.

Blue hat thinking focuses on reflection, metacognition (thinking about the thinking that is required), and the need to manage the thinking process.

The colours help students to visualise six separate modes of thinking and to convey something of the meaning of that thinking, for example, red as pertaining to matters of the heart, white as neutral and objective.

What is its purpose?

Students learn to reflect on their thinking and to recognise that different thinking is required in different learning situations.

How do I do it?

Consider an issue or topic which you would like your students to explore, for example, in Radio Program A, the influence of a particular speaker or singer on its listening audience; or, in Television Program B, the influence of a particular show on a young audience.

Explain what thinking is required for each of the hats. Have students working in small groups to ask themselves a range of questions:

White hat: What are the facts about the radio or television program?

Black hat : What are some of the negatives about the program?

Yellow hat: What do people gain from listening to or watching the program?

Red hat: How does the program make us feel?

Green hat: What could be changed to make the program more accessible or more appealing?

Blue hat: How does mass media in general affect our youth culture?

Groups report back to the whole class about the types of ideas generated using the six hats. The teacher points to the breadth of views and thoughts, and explains that this is as a result of making ourselves apply a range of different types of “thinking.”

How can I adapt it?

Six Hat Thinking can be applied to many situations in which brainstorming, problem solving, creative and lateral thinking are required. This strategy can be a very useful tool in reviewing a range of texts or even creating a character profile.

You can further simplify the activity by reducing the number of colors (hats).

How can it be used to evaluate students' language learning?

There is a range of possible assessment outcomes in using Six Hat Thinking including:

- * Understands and interprets the task.
- * Uses strategies to assist or facilitate discussion.
- * Contributes to discussion.
- * Comprehends and applies the six ways of thinking.

Where can I get more information?

See the de Bono Institute for further information: <http://www.debono.org/>

See also a summary of Six Hats Thinking [PDF]:

<http://wwwfp.education.tas.gov.au/english/pdf/six%20hats%20teachers%20summaries.pdf>

Six Hats Thinking is also explained in many texts, including Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats for Schools, which is widely available through online book retailers such as Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com>).