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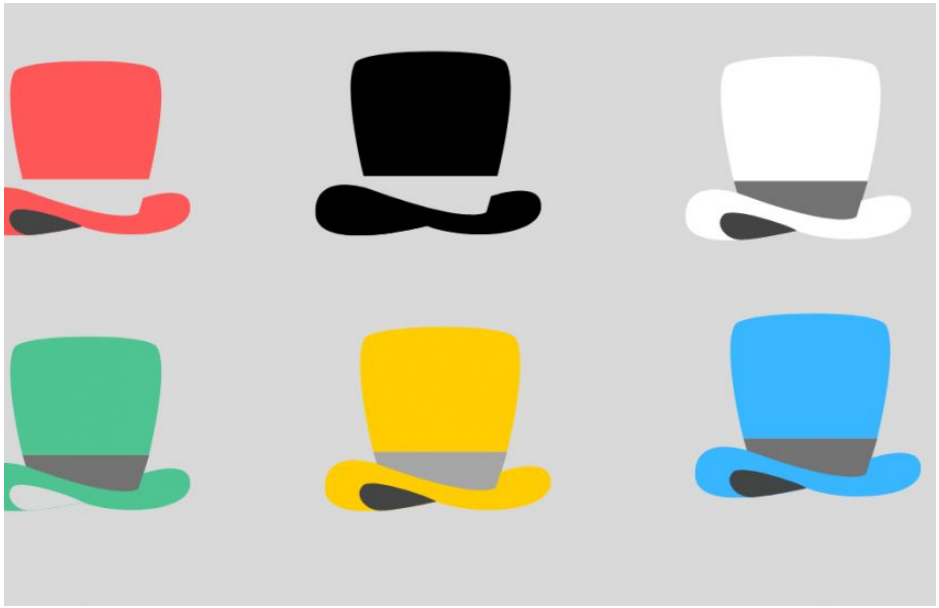

Six Thinking Hats

By Deepak Bharara

LEVERAGING PEOPLE FOR TOMORROW...

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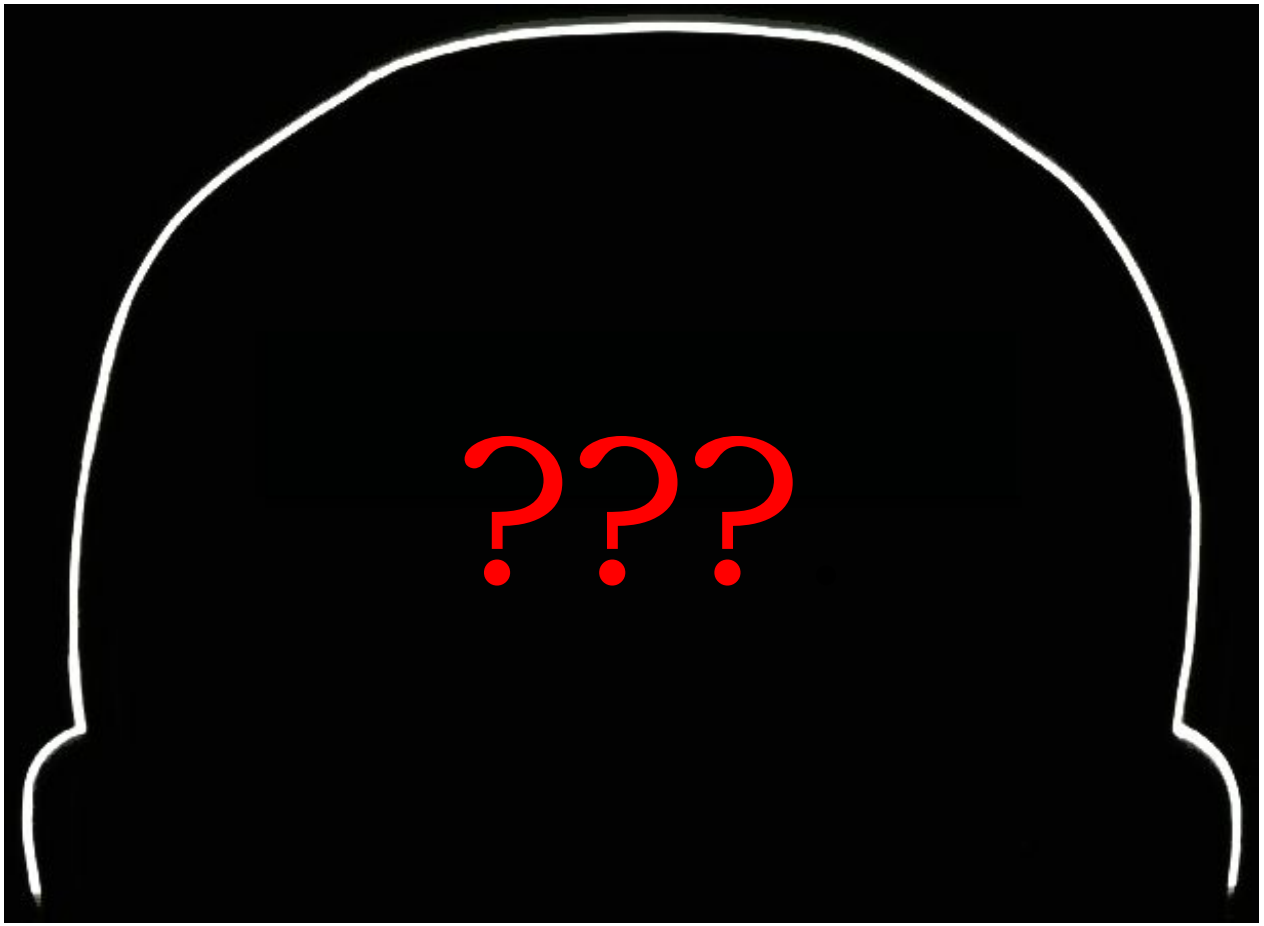
What comes to your mind about Six Thinking Hats as Problem Solving Tool …



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The Basics of Six Thinking Hats

There are six different imaginary hats that you can put on or take off

Think of the “hats” as thinking icons

Each hat is a different color and represents a different type or mode of thinking

Members in the group all wear the same hat (do the same type of thinking) at the same time

When members change hats - they change their thinking

Concept of Six Thinking Hats

The coloured hats are used as metaphors for the various states of mind. Switching to a certain type of thinking is symbolized by wearing a coloured hat, literally or metaphorically

These six thinking hats metaphors provide a more complete and comprehensive segregation of the types of thinking than the prejudices that are inherent to the immediate thoughts of people. All these thinking hats help people to think more deeply about a certain topic

What is Six Thinking Hat Tool?

Six Thinking Hats or Edward de Bono's Six Hats is a good decision-making technique & method for group discussions & individual thinking

Combined with the parallel thinking process, this technique helps groups to think more effectively

It is a means to organize thinking processes in detailed & cohesive Manner

About Edward de Bono

Edward de Bono is the founding father of this six thinking hats technique and wrote a book about this called the *Six Thinking Hats* in 1985

A thinking hat is a metaphor for a certain way of thinking. By mentally wearing different thinking hats people are forced to look at a problem from different perspectives. Thus, a one-sided way of thinking is excluded and new insights are created.

He distinguishes six different frames of mind in which the brain can become sensitive. Each of these frames of mind can be found in the brain and create conscious thoughts for certain aspects of the issues that are being discussed, (e.g. gut feeling, pessimistic views, neutral facts).

What is Six Thinking Hat Tool?

Six Thinking Hats is a way of investigating an issue from a variety of perspective, but in a clear, conflict free way.

It can be used by individuals or groups to move outside habitual ways of thinking, try out different approaches and then thinking constructively about how to move forward…

What is Six Thinking Hat Tool?

It serves as a team-based problem solving & brainstorming technique that can be used to explore problems through various perspectives in order to uncover options that might otherwise can be overlooked …

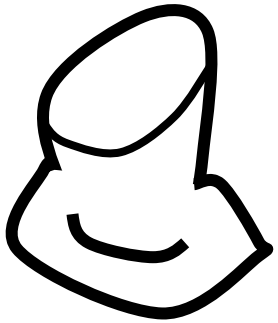
Brain Storming

Brainstorming is one of the most effective and widely used methods to kick-start innovation. Brainstorming sessions can be organised anywhere from the office/workspace/home. However, the sessions are not always equally effective. This is usually due to a lack of leadership or because of conflicts

Edward de Bono, a pioneer in **creative thinking**, has developed six thinking hats to eliminate most of these disadvantages
The technique enables the user to think in six different directions
By only wearing one hat at a time, a synergy can be created between the people participating in the brainstorming session. And on top of that, brainstorming and lateral thinking also stimulate creativity and expand the scope of solution-based thinking

Six Thinking Hats

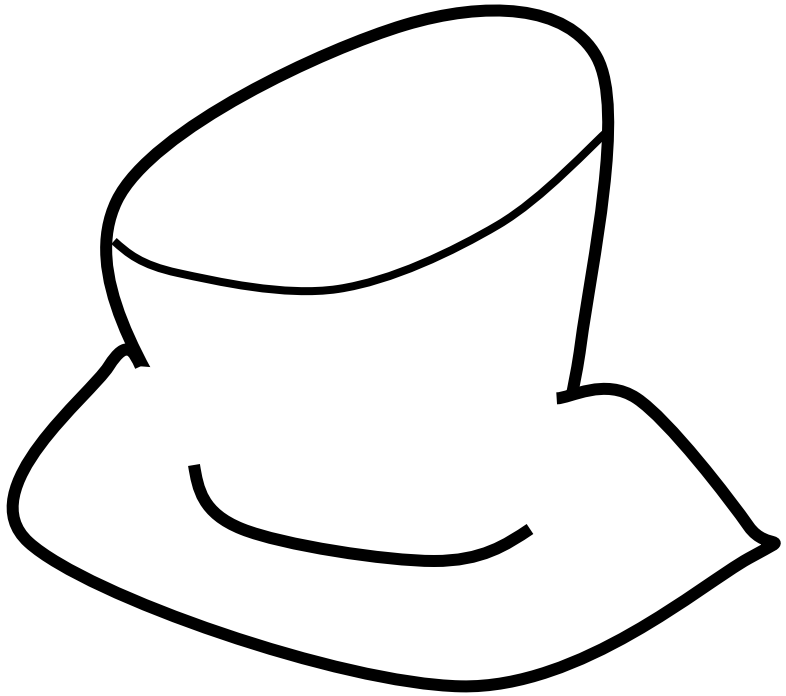
White Hat



Information: Consider only information that is available, what are the facts? The white hat pushes all available information and data to be considered forward. This includes information both from within and outside the scope of the discussion or brainstorming session

It is important to be clear and specific when it comes to data so that any ambiguity can be prevented. The general goal is to better understand the concept or subject that is up for discussion, which is easier when the data is being managed in a neutral way

The White Hat



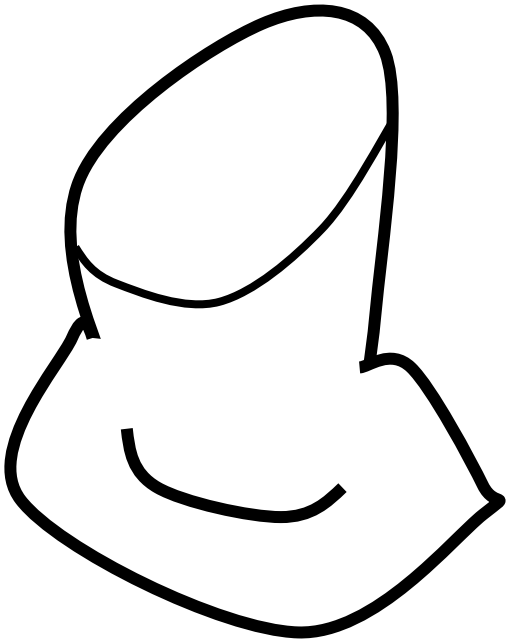
- The information seeking hat..
- What are the facts?
- What information is available?
- What is relevant?
- When wearing the white hat we are neutral in our thinking

The Role of White Hat - Examples

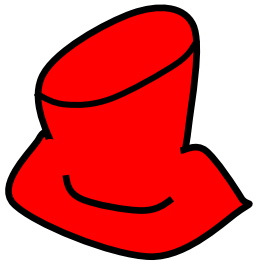
‘What will the costs be to produce one unit of the product?’

‘Over the past year, the turnover has increased by 10%’

‘It is estimated there are 80 million people in the United States between the age of eighteen and thirty-five



Red Hat

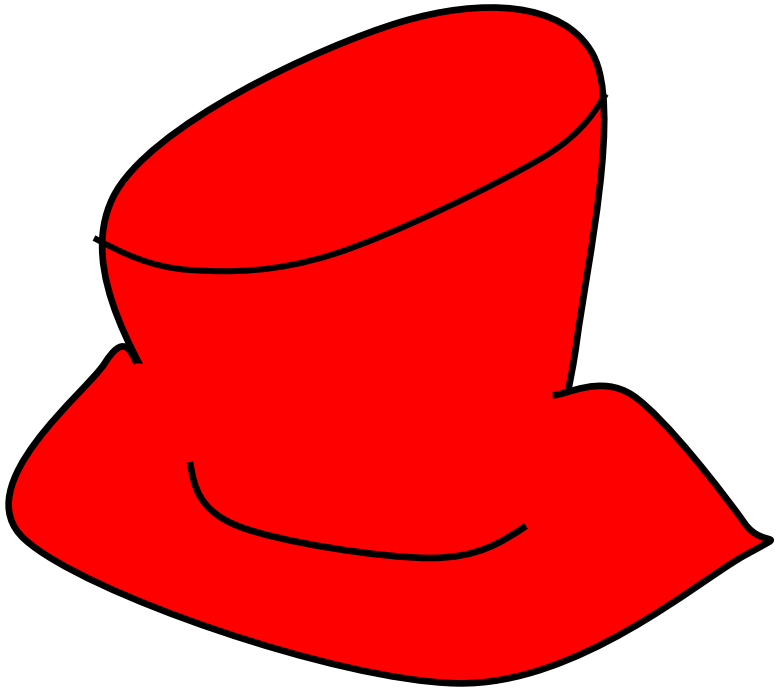


Emotions: intuitive reactions or expressions of feelings (but no justification required). The red hat is the emotions hat. Whenever this hat is worn, the emotional thinking process is targeted

Emotions can be both positive and negative. Examples of positive emotions include joy, happiness, admiration, enthusiasm and expectation

Negative emotions include, for example, disappointment, jealousy, cynicism or anger. More neutral emotions would be curiosity and intuition. The objective behind wearing the red hat is to address the credibility of the emotions that play a part in a certain discussion

The Red Hat



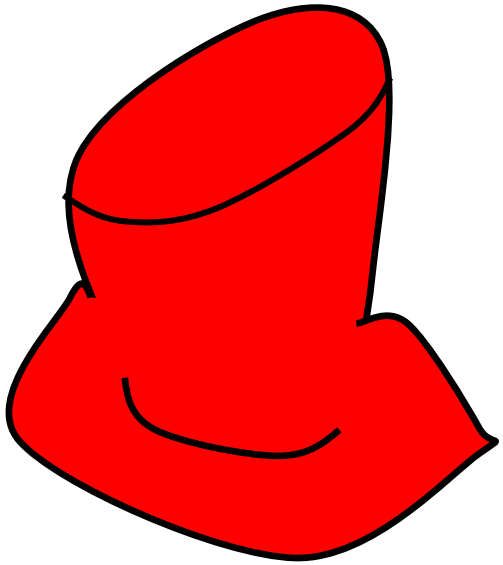
- What do you feel about the suggestion?
- What are your gut reactions?
- What intuitions do you have?
- Don’t think too long or too hard.

The Role of Red Hat- Examples

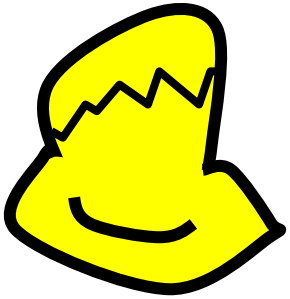
‘Finishing this project next week makes me happy’

‘The results from this research make me angry!’

‘Research shows our customers are afraid of a change in recipe’



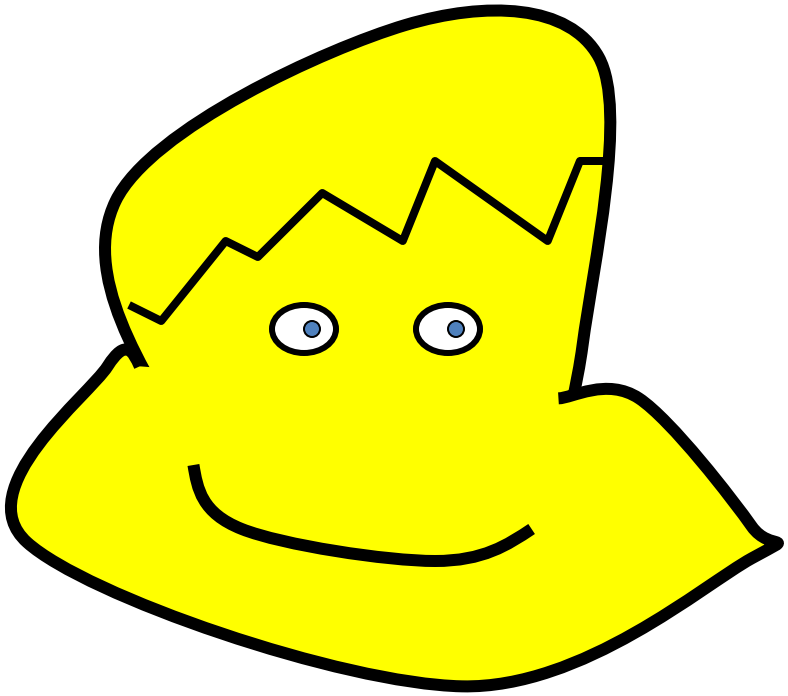
Yellow Hat



Positive view: logic applied to the identification of opportunities, looking for harmony. The yellow hat is the hat of positivity. The wearer of this hat is required to bring forward as many positive aspects related to the subject as possible. It is vital that, whilst wearing this hat, positivity is encouraged, all times

The focus is on how something works, not on how it doesn't work. All positive aspects that come up will be jotted down. The objective of this hat is to understand all benefits and positive points of the various ideas.

The Yellow Hat



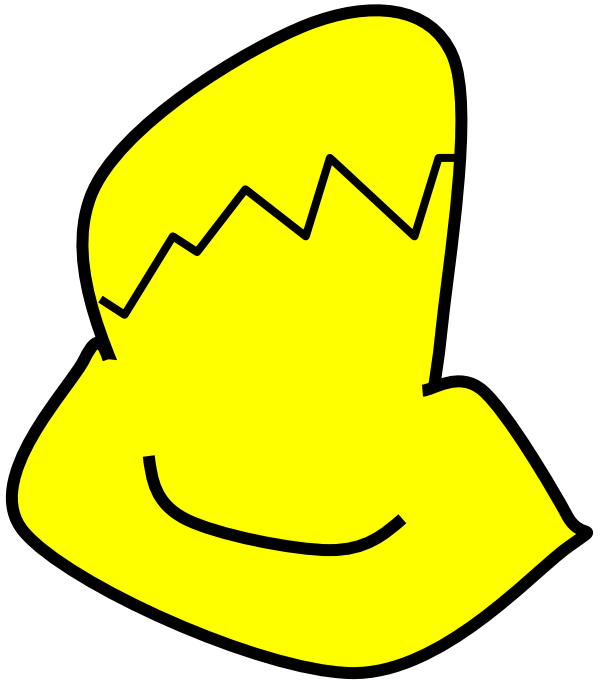
- The sunshine hat
- It is positive and constructive
- It is about effectiveness and getting a job done
- What are the benefits, the advantages?

The Role of Yellow Hat - Examples

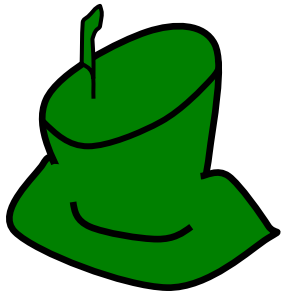
‘Can we save on products and energy in order to cut costs?’

‘Our sales team has many years of experience in selling programs’

‘Tapping into a new market offers room to expand’



Green Hat

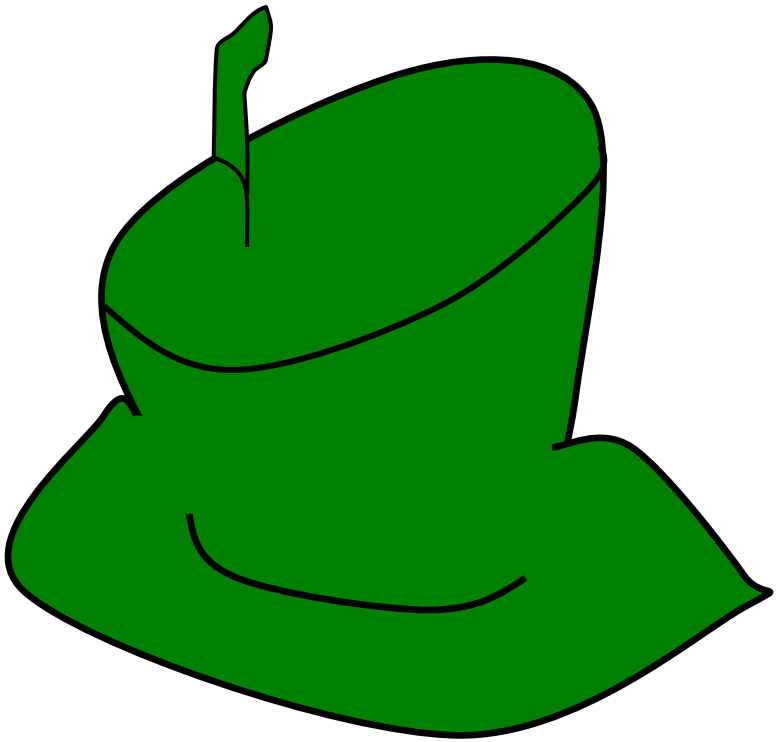


Creativity: statements of provocation and investigation, hearing what an idea is about. The green hat is the hat of ideas

Feasibility and judgment are temporarily set aside when this hat is worn, ensuring participants are free to generate as many ideas in the scope as possible

New ideas inspire you to think of even more new ideas. In this situation, everything is adapted to ‘out of the box’ thinking. The objective of this hat is to generate as many new ideas as possible

The Green Hat



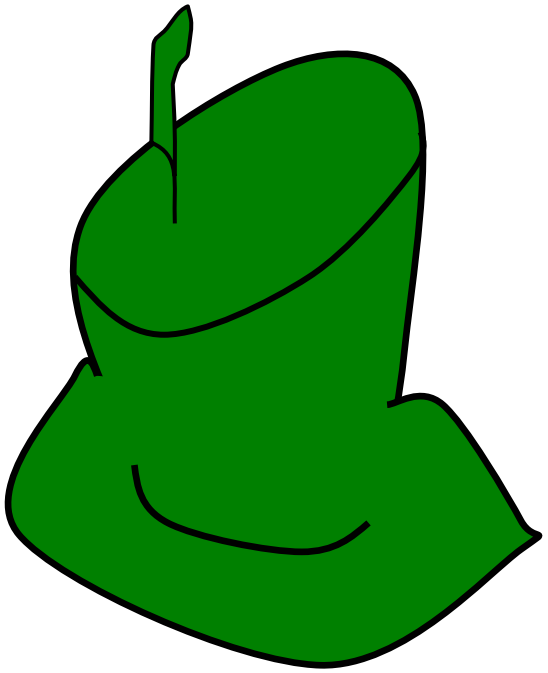
- This is the creative mode of thinking
- Green represents growth and movement.
- In green hat we look to new ideas and solutions
- Lateral thinking wears a green hat

The Role of Green Hat – Examples

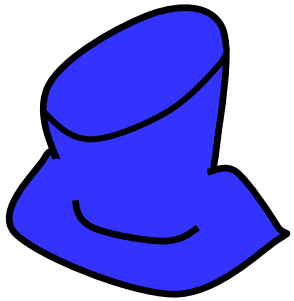
‘Instead of opening the factory in China, we could also upgrade the one in New York’

‘This is a difficult matter. Let’s get together with the team and organise a brainstorming session’

‘Are there any other options we have not yet considered?’



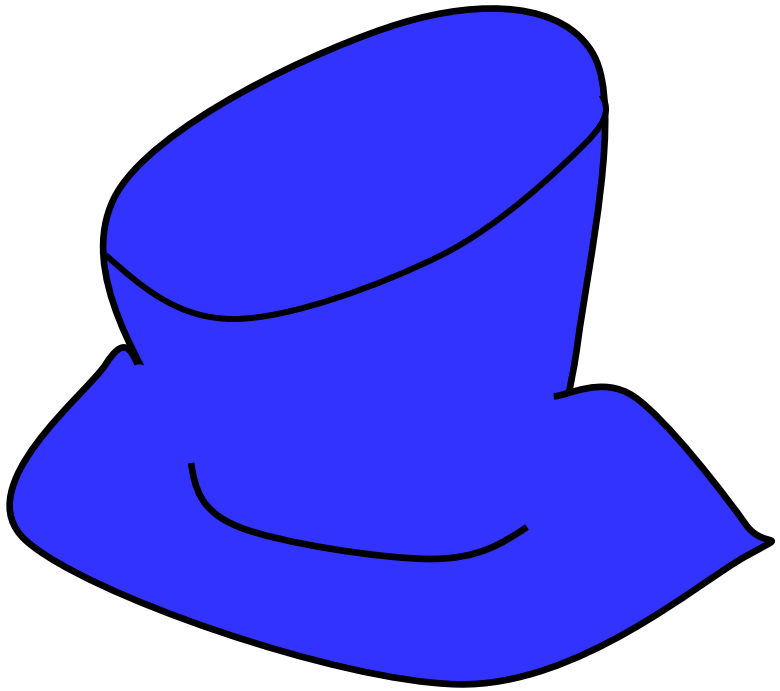
Blue Hat



Thinking: thinking about thinking. The blue hat is about the flow of the brainstorming session or discussion itself

Thinking about thinking is also referred to as meta cognition. The agenda and timeline are also part of this. How long do the sessions take? When do you need to wear a particular hat, and for how long? The group's controller should wear the blue hat for as long as the session takes

The Blue Hat



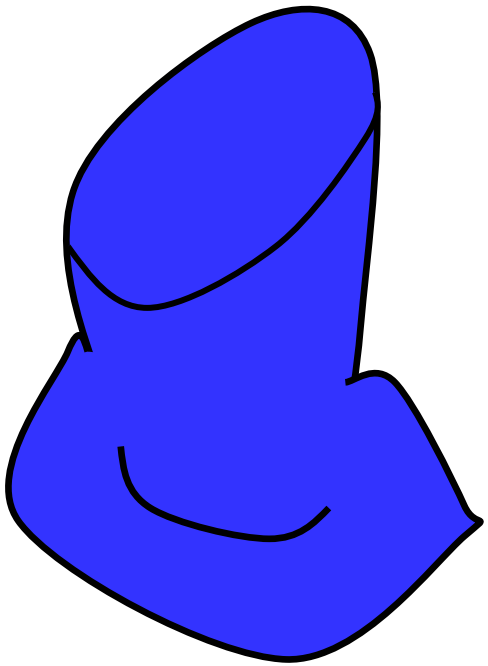
- The control hat, organising thinking itself
- Sets the focus, calls for the use of other hats
- Monitors and reflects on the thinking processes used
- Blue is for planning

The Role of Blue Hat – Examples

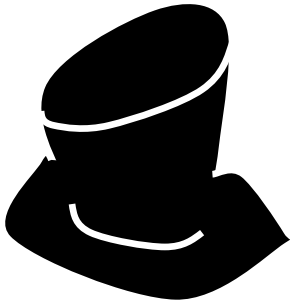
‘We will talk about this problem for one hour’

‘Besides the other, what are the benefits of this plan?’

‘Let’s put our emotions to the side for a moment: we will take action when it’s time for the red hat’



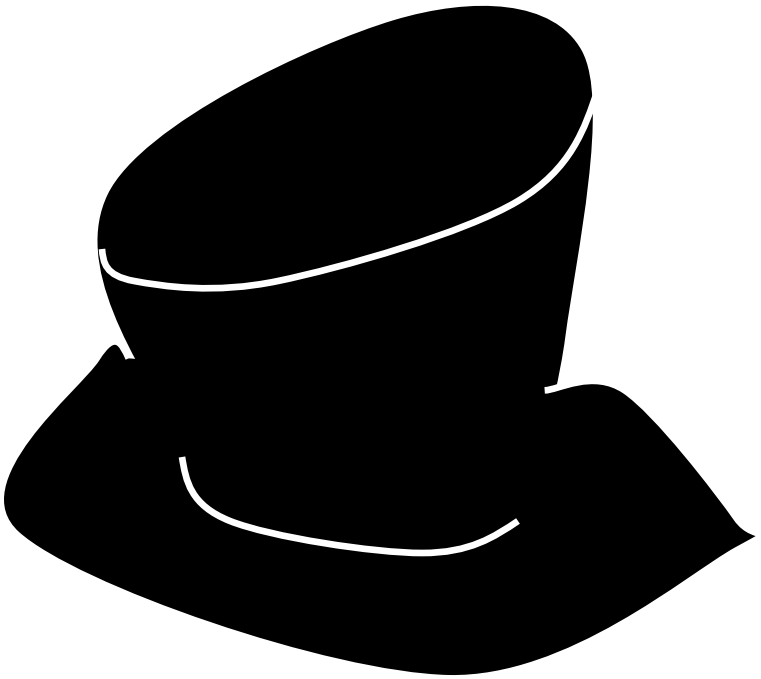
Black Hat



Judgement: logic applied to identification of mistakes or barriers, looking for a mismatch. The black hat is the hat of caution. This also includes critical evaluations

All shortcomings of the concept that is up for discussion are noted. The scope of the problem is maximised, through which the ‘worst case scenario’ can be found. The moment this hat is worn, the participant is required to play devil’s advocate

The Black Hat



- The caution hat
- In black hat the thinker points out errors or pit-falls
- What are the risks or dangers involved?
- Identifies difficulties and problems

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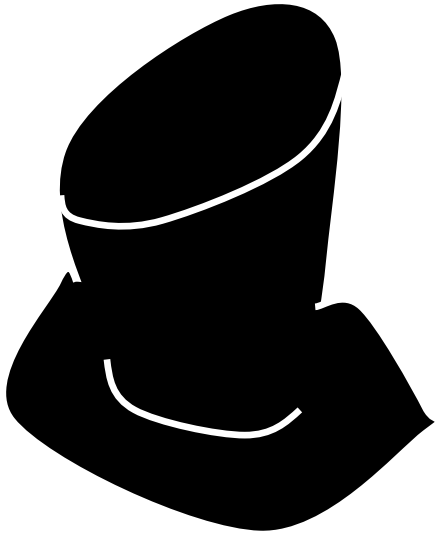
The Role of Black Hat - Examples

‘With the current capacity we can never expand that quickly’

‘I am almost certain that would be illegal’

‘This idea has many advantages. What problems does it involve?’



Process to put for effective use

Sequences always begin and end with a blue hat, the group agrees on how they will think together, then they do the thinking and finally they evaluate the outcomes of the thinking process and what to do next

The following division can be made:

Initial Ideas – Blue, White, Green
Choosing alternatives – Blue, White, Green, Yellow, Black, Red
Identification of solutions – Blue, White, Black, Green
Fast Feedback – Blue, Black, Green, White
Strategic planning – Blue, Yellow, Black, White
Process improvement – Blue, White, Yellow, Black, Green, Red
Problem-solving – Blue, White, Green, Red, Yellow, Black
Performance assessment – Blue, Red, White, Yellow, Black, Green

Mediator/Leader Role

- Define the focus of your thinking
- Plan the sequence & timing of the thinking
- Ask for changes in the thinking, if needed
- Handle requests from the group for changes in thinking
- Contribute under each hat
- Form periodic or final summary of the thinking for consideration by the team

Member's Role

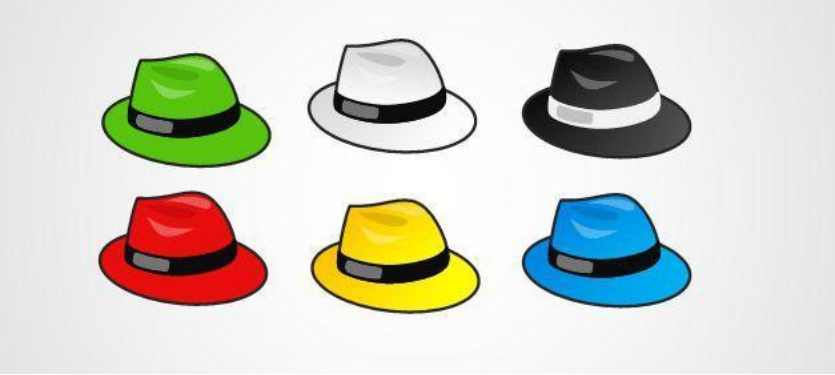
- Follow the lead of the Mediator/Leader
- Stick to the hat (type of thinking) that is current in use
- Try to work within the time limits
- Contribute honestly & fully under each hat

Benefits of Six Thinking Hats Tool

- The Six Thinking Hats method is a properly defined method
- It stimulates parallel thinking
- The Bono method provides structure to a brainstorming session or meeting
- The Six Thinking Hats method motivates a clear thought process
- The method inspires creative and effective thinking
- The Six Thinking Hats method provides a variety of possible solutions to a problem
- The method stimulates team engagement and performance
- Foster Collaboration

Disadvantage of Six Thinking Hats Tool

1. Applying the method in a team is time-consuming
2. In using the method, people can still disagree strongly and there can even be conflicts about different perspectives



BLUE HAT

Managing The Thinking

Setting The Focus
Making Summaries
Overviews · Conclusions
Action Plans

White Hat

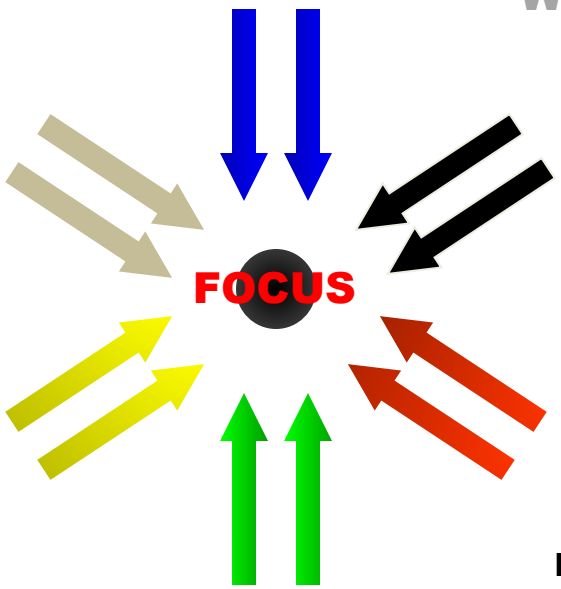
Information & Data

Neutral & Objective
Checked & Believed Facts
Missing Information &
Where To Source It

Black Hat

Why It May Not Work

Cautions · Dangers
Problems · Faults
Logical Reasons
Must Be Given



Yellow Hat

Why It May Work

Values & Benefits
(Both Known & Potential)
The Good In It
Logical Reasons
Must Be Given

Red Hat

Feelings & Intuition

Emotions Or Hunches
"At This Point"
No Reasons or Justification
Keep It Short

Green Hat

Creative Thinking

Possibilities · Alternatives
New Ideas · New Concepts
Overcome Black Hat Problems &
Reinforce Yellow Hat Values

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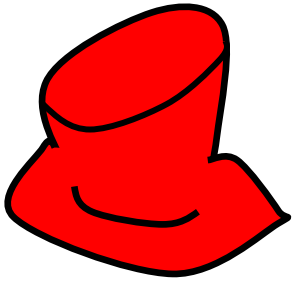
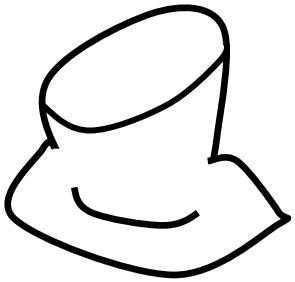
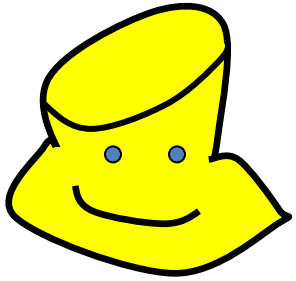
In Summary



Intuitive

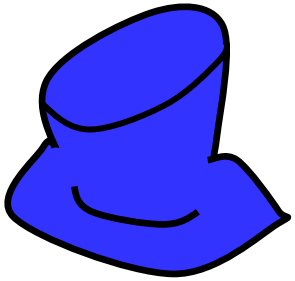


Informative

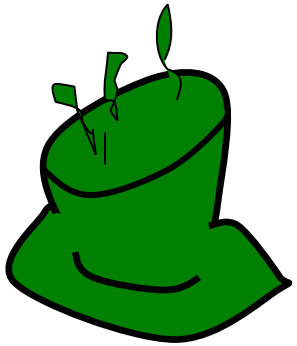


Constructive

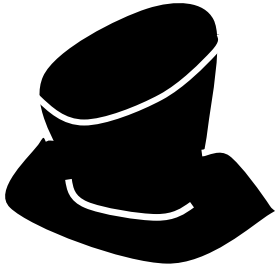
Reflective



Creative



Cautious



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Let us get going ….

Ordinary people can deliver extraordinary performance

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Thank you!