

Taken from Edward deBono
Six Thinking Hats
(1985) Penguin

The WHITE Hat

Information available and needed

White is neutral and objective.

The white hat is concerned with objective facts and figure

What do we know?

What do we need to know?

What is missing?

What questions should we ask?

How might we get the information we need?

Whose fact is it?

Is it a fact or a likelihood?

Is it a fact or is it a belief?

Are there any facts?

Checked fact or an unchecked fact (belief)

The Red Hat

Intuition, feelings, and hunches

Red suggests anger (seeing red) rage and emotions.

The red hat gives an emotional view.

I feel.....

I do not like this idea at all.

My feeling is that this simply Will not work

My intuition is that this is highly dangerous

I feel it is a waste of time.

That idea is very interesting

That idea is very unusual

No need to justify

No need to give reasons for the basis

Reacting and getting upset

This is what I feel about the meeting

To show or hide feelings

The Black Hat

Cautions and difficulties Where things might go wrong

*Black is sombre and serious.
The black hat is cautious and careful.
It points out the weaknesses in an idea.*

Does this fit our values?
Does this fit our strategy and objectives?

The black hat can be used to point out in a number
of different ways:

- To indicate a fault in logic
- To point out incorrect information
- To point out faults and weaknesses
- To point out the 'downside'
- To point out potential problems
- How something does not work
- Why something may not work
- Pointing out difficulties and problems
- Staying within the law
- Keeping to values and ethics
- Point out errors in thinking
- Question the strength of the evidence
- Does the conclusion follow?
- Is it the only possible conclusion?
- What is likely to happen in the future?
- Does this fit past experience?
- What are the risks?

The problem of overuse

- It is easy to be critical
- Some people enjoy being only critical
- The need to contribute

The Yellow Hat

Where are the Values and benefits

Why something might work

Yellow is sunny and positive.

The yellow hat is optimistic

and covers hope and positive thinking.

Positive thinking

Optimism

Focus on benefit

Constructive thinking and making things happen.

To consider:

When is optimism foolishness?

From the hopeful to the logical

What is realism?

Reason and logical support:

What is the positive view based upon?

Why do you think it will happen this way?

Background reasons for the optimism.

Speculation:

Looking into the future.

The value of 'if'

The best possible scenario.

The Green Hat

Alternatives and creative ideas

The energy hat

Green is grass, vegetation and abundant, fertile growth.

The green hat indicates creativity and new ideas

This is the productive hat, the generative hat,
the invitation of the creative hat

Creative thinking

New ideas, new concepts, and new perceptions

The deliberate creation of new ideas

Alternatives and more alternatives

Change

New approaches to problems.

Humour

Changing patterns of behaviour to aid creative thinking

Move instead of judgement

Using an idea as a stepping stone

Where does this take me?

The forward effect of an idea.

You are allowed to put forward crazy ideas

Hypothesis, sup**po**se, **p**ossible and even **p**oetry

The po car

po cars should have square wheels

po planes should land upside down

po shoppers should be paid to by things

po executives should promote themselves

po a polluting factory should be downstream of itself

The Blue Hat

Managing the thinking process

Blue is cool, and it is also the colour of the sky, which is above everything else. The Blue hat is concerned with control, the organisation of the thinking process and the use of all the other hats.

The chairperson

Discipline and focus

Who is in charge?

Asking the right questions

Defining the problem

Setting the thinking tasks

Observation and overview

Comment, Summaries, conclusions, harvesting and reports

Blue hat at the beginning

Why we are here

What we are thinking about

The definition of the situation (or problem)

Alternative definitions,

What we want to achieve

Where we want to end up

The background to the thinking and

A plan for the sequence of hats to be used

The final blue hat

What we have achieved

Outcomes

Conclusions

Design

Solution and next steps