

Six Thinking Hats Strategy

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 different thinking hats:

- **White hat thinking** identifies the facts and details of a topic
- **Purple hat thinking** examines the negative aspects of a topic
- **Yellow hat thinking** focuses on the positive aspects of a topic
- **Red hat thinking** looks at a topic from the point of view of emotions and feelings
- **Green hat thinking** requires imagination and lateral thinking about a topic
- **Blue hat thinking** focuses on reflection, metacognition (thinking about the thinking that is required), and the need to understand the big picture.

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, such as joining a particular conservation group. Students work in small groups and ask themselves a range of questions:

- **White hat** what are the facts about the conservation group?
- **Purple hat** What are the negatives about this group?
- **Yellow hat** What are the positives and what do people gain from belonging to this group?
- **Red hat** How does belonging to the group make us feel?
- **Green hat** What could be changed to make the conservation group more accessible or more appealing?
- **Blue hat** How does this organisation impact on conservation efforts?

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 examining all aspects of an issue

(Adapted from <http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/english/sixhats.htm>)