

Six Thinking Hats®: Using Parallel Thinking in Policy Discussion

Presented by

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Partners in Policy Governance®

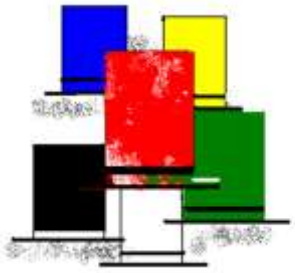
Grand Ledge, Michigan, US

The Six Hats method was developed by Edward de Bono, © 1985, 1999.
The authoritative text is Six Thinking Hats, © 1999, published by Little, Brown & Company.

Western Thinking = Argument

- Socrates – dialectic and argument
 - Always pointing out what is wrong
 - Correct use of concepts
- Plato – real truth lies in the shadows
 - Truth lies just below the surface of appearances
- Aristotle – inclusion/exclusion logic
 - Everything fits into a box.
- Western thinking concerned with what is—as determined by analysis, judgment & argument





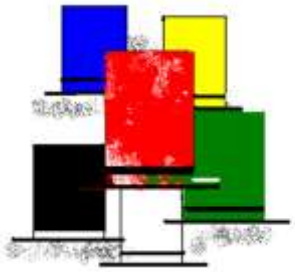
Missing Piece

- **What can be?**
 - **Where is constructive thinking?**
 - **Where is creative thinking?**
 - **Where is 'designing a way forward?'**



Parallel Thinking

- **Everybody looking in the same direction at the same time.**
 - In looking together, we create a full field of possibilities for our thinking map.
- **Then we change directions and look together.**
 - Everybody in the group brainstorms in the same direction at the same time.
 - This makes fullest use of everyone's intelligence , knowledge and experience.
- **Unless we intentionally take time to notice, we miss critical pieces of information.**
- **Six perspectives to consider in the process.**

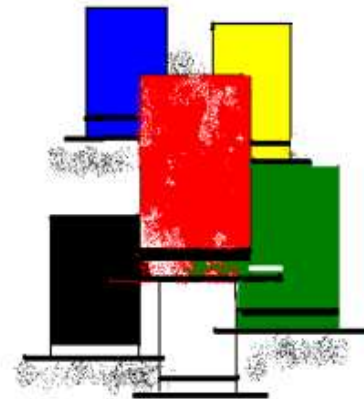


Six Directions

- **White hat thinking = information**
- **Red hat thinking = personal feelings, emotions, intuition**
- **Black hat thinking = caution, risks, difficulties, challenges**
- **Yellow hat thinking = possible benefits, value**
- **Green hat thinking = creativity, new ideas**
- **Blue hat thinking = organization and management of how the process unfolds**

White Hat Thinking

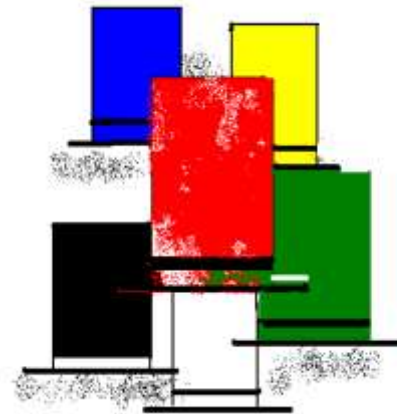
- Neutral and objective
 - What information do we have?
 - What information do we need?
 - What information is missing?
 - What questions do we need to ask?
 - How are we going to get the info we need?
- Seeks objective facts and figures.
 - Do we have any facts?
 - Is this a “checked” fact?
 - Is it a fact or a belief?
 - Is it a fact or a likelihood?

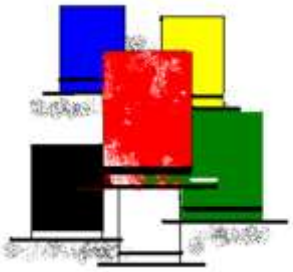


What is a fact?

Look at the spectrum!

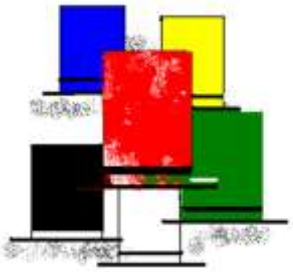
- Always true
 - Usually true
 - Generally true
 - By and large
 - More often than not
 - About half the time
 - Often
 - Sometimes true
 - Occasionally true
 - Been known to happen
 - Never true
 - Cannot be true
- This could be helpful when examining data in a monitoring report!





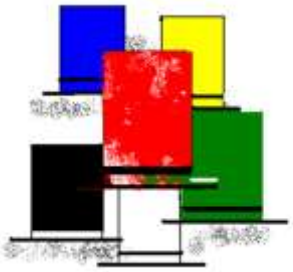
Red Hat Thinking

- Red hat thinking calls for the kinesthetic observation: emotions, feelings, intuitive hunches, sensing, taste and opinion based in any of these.
- Red hat thinking legitimizes the emotion and feelings as an important part of thinking.
 - There is no need to justify red hat thinking.
 - Taps into the energy, stepping in before one gets entrenched into an emotion.
- Purpose: The red hat makes feelings visible so that they can be part of the thinking map and part of the value system that chooses the route on the map.



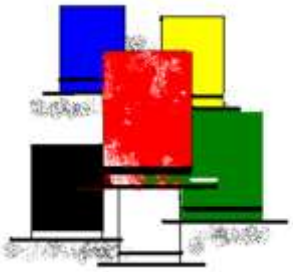
Black Hat Thinking

- The black hat is the basis for critical thinking.
 - Black hat thinking exposes caution and care.
 - It points out the weaknesses in an idea.
- Black hat thinking raises the risks, dangers and difficulties involved.
- Black hat addresses “fit”.
 - With our culture, values, experience, resources
- Purpose: put the “caution points” on the map.



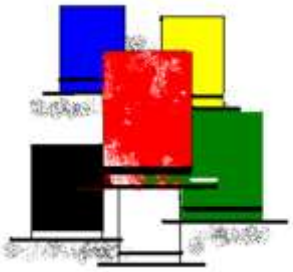
Yellow Hat Thinking

- The yellow hat is optimistic thinking, seeking hope and positive value, a positive assessment of an idea
 - What are the possible benefits of an idea?
 - What value could this bring to us?
- Yellow hat thinking is:
 - Constructive
 - Generative
 - Speculative
 - Opportunistic
 - The gateway to vision and dreams



Green Hat Thinking

- The green hat seeks to break through usual patterns of thinking, provoke movement in thinking.
 - You can wait for inspiration/provocations OR you can deliberately produce them.
- Green hat thinking:
 - Seeks alternatives, creativity and new ideas
 - Results in generative thinking
 - Causes a creative pause and allows generation of new possibilities



Blue Hat Thinking

- Blue hat thinking orchestrates the process.
 - Concerned with organization of thought process, control of process, and the use of the other hats.
- The blue hat:
 - Facilitates the focus of the discussion
 - the definition of problems,
 - the questions to be asked,
 - Monitors the thinking to ensure the rules of the game are observed.
 - Summarizes, observes and concludes

Results of Parallel Thinking

- A group can explore a subject honestly.
 - Everyone is working and looking in the same direction.
 - Fully uses the intelligence, experience and knowledge of all members of the board.
 - Equalizes power plays of withholding information because it might weaken your argument.
- Because you are working together, one direction at a time, it saves time.
- Removes ego dynamics – there is nothing to win.
- Removes confusion because you are addressing one thing at a time.
- The bottom line: The six hats method can build the thinking capacity of your board.

