

SIX THINKING HATS

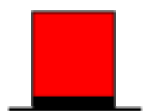
There are six metaphorical hats that the thinker can put on or take off to indicate the type of thinking being used. Being clear about which hat is being worn helps others understand your thought process. And using all of the hats help guarantees that an option is examined from the full range of perspectives.

The six hat approach is not meant as a way to label people, and must never be used to categorize individuals. When using this technique in a group, everybody wears the same hat at the same time.



White Hat Thinking

This is the objective hat. It covers facts, figures, information needs, and gaps. "I think we need some white hat thinking at this point..." means "Let's drop the arguments and opinions, and look at the data."



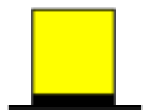
Red Hat Thinking

This is the intuitive hat. It covers "vibes," feelings, and emotions. The red hat allows the thinker to put forward an intuition without any need to justify it. "Putting on my red hat, I think this is a terrible proposal." Usually feelings and intuition can only be introduced into a discussion if they are supported by logic. The red hat gives full permission to a thinker to leave logic aside and put forward his or her feelings on the subject at the moment.



Black Hat Thinking

This is the negative, devil's advocate or "con" hat. It covers skepticism, judgment, and caution. It is not in any sense an inferior or destructive hat. The black hat is used to point out why a suggestion does not fit the facts, the available experience, the resources available, or the policy that must be followed. The black hat must always be logical, never emotional.



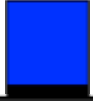
Yellow Hat Thinking

This is the positive hat. The yellow hat describes why something will work and why it will offer benefits. It can be used in looking forward to the results of some proposed action, but it can also be used to find something of value in what has already happened. Like its black hat counterpart, the yellow hat must always be logical and rooted in facts, never emotional.



Green Hat Thinking

This is the hat of creativity. It covers alternatives, new proposals, and changes. The green hat is always interesting. Often it is fun. Sometimes it is provoking as well. Sometimes people are threatened by green hat thinking.



Blue Hat Thinking

This is the overview or process control hat. It looks not at the subject itself but at the approach to the subject. The blue hat monitors how productive the discussion is and helps keep it on track. "Putting on my blue hat, I feel we should do some more green hat thinking at this point."