

SIX THINKING HATS

Harnessing the wisdom of multiple perspectives

The Six Thinking Hats method is a powerful tool used by facilitators to **enhance group discussions and decision-making processes**. Developed by Edward de Bono, a renowned psychologist and creativity expert, this method encourages participants to think from different perspectives, fostering more comprehensive and balanced outcomes. By assigning specific “thinking hats” to different modes of thinking, facilitators can guide participants through a structured and focused discussion, promoting creativity, critical thinking, and effective problem-solving.

Purpose: Information Exchange, Knowledge Construction, Development

Group size:
< 20

Duration: 60-120 min

Multilanguage fit: No

Level of interaction:
High

USE THIS METHOD TO:

- Foster productive discussions by encouraging balanced thinking
 - Enhance critical thinking
 - Promote collaborate
 - Encourage sharing multiple perspectives while maintaining a collaborative atmosphere
 - Gain insights by exploring an issue or topic from multiple perspective.
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STEPS TO APPLY THE METHOD: _____

Preparation

1. Identify and define the purpose of the learning activity and the topic to discuss.
2. If the topic is new, complex or not in the front of participants' minds, or they have different levels of awareness, send out an briefing or information note beforehand, so that they can arrive prepared to the meeting. This will help them focus on taking perspectives, instead of trying to understand the topic.
3. If you are using a plug-in to use virtual hat filters, send installation and setup instructions to participants as well.
4. Prepare prompting questions for each hat, to get participants started or in case they get stuck.

Delivery

The method can be implemented in two main different ways. Option 1 - The hats are divided among participants at the onset of the exercise. Option 2 - Everybody "wears" the same hat at the same time.

1. Brief the participants and explain the learning activity, its purpose and the topic of discussion.
 - a. Explain the purpose and benefits of the Six Thinking Hats method to the participants. Emphasise the importance of adopting different thinking styles and the value of collaborative thinkin.
2. Explain the Six Hats: Introduce the concept of the six hats and their corresponding thinking styles.

Blue Hat: The blue hat represents the facilitator's role, focusing on process control, organising the discussion, and setting objectives

 - a. White Hat: The white hat symbolises facts and information. Participants wearing this hat focus on providing objective data, figures, and available knowledge.
 - b. Red Hat: The red hat embodies emotions and intuition. Participants wearing this hat express their feelings, intuitions, and gut reactions without needing to justify them.

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- c. Black Hat: The black hat signifies caution and critical thinking. Participants wearing this hat identify potential risks, weaknesses, and drawbacks associated with ideas or proposals.
 - d. Yellow Hat: The yellow hat represents optimism and positive thinking. Participants wearing this hat explore benefits, advantages, and constructive aspects of ideas.
 - e. Green Hat: The green hat signifies creativity and new possibilities. Participants wearing this hat generate ideas, alternatives, and novel approaches to the problem or situation.
- 3. Assign Hat Roles:**
- a. Option 1: Assign each participant a specific hat role for a designated period. Encourage everyone to fully embrace the thinking style associated with their assigned hat and contribute their thoughts and ideas accordingly.
 - b. Option 2: Start the discussion by assigning a specific hat style to the entire group. For example, you may begin with the white hat, where everyone focuses on sharing factual information and data related to the problem or situation. Encourage participants to contribute their thoughts and ideas from the viewpoint associated with the assigned hat. Facilitate a discussion where everyone explores the topic using the same thinking style.
- 4. Rotate Hats:**
- Option 1: Rotate hats between participants: At regular intervals or when necessary, instruct participants to switch hats. This allows individuals to explore different perspectives and engage in diverse thinking styles throughout the discussion.
- a. Option 2: Rotate hats as a group: After thoroughly exploring one perspective, instruct the group to switch to the next hat together. For example, transition from the white hat to the red hat, where participants express their emotions and intuitions related to the topic. Continue this rotation process for each hat, allowing the group to collectively delve into different perspectives and thinking styles.
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5. Facilitate Discussions: As the facilitator, guide the discussion by asking relevant questions, encouraging active participation from all participants, and ensuring that each thinking style is adequately represented. Maintain a balanced and respectful environment to foster open communication.
6. Summarise and Synthesize: After exploring the different thinking styles and perspectives, summarise the key insights and findings. Encourage participants to identify commonalities, patterns, and potential solutions emerging from the discussion.
7. Decision-making and Next Steps: Based on the collective insights gained through the Six Thinking Hats method, facilitate the decision-making process by considering the various perspectives and evaluating potential courses of action. Collaboratively determine the next steps or actions to be taken.

TOOL TIPS:

1. Snap Camera: Snap Camera is a desktop application by Snap Inc. that allows you to apply various filters, including hats, to your video feed. It works with platforms like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other video conferencing software.
 2. ManyCam: ManyCam is a virtual webcam software that offers a wide range of filters, effects, and virtual objects, including hats. You can use ManyCam to apply hat filters to your video feed and share the output in video conferencing platforms.
 3. Sample questions <https://www.dau.edu/tools/Documents/Coaching%20Guide/resources/6%20Thinking%20Hats%20-%20Parallel%20Thinking%20Worksheet.pdf>
 4. Mindmap templates <https://www.edrawmind.com/templates/six-thinking-hats-template.html>
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