

Creative Thinking 2 – Six Thinking Hats and The Journalistic Six

Six Thinking Hats - background

The idea of six thinking hats was invented by Edward de Bono to help people make better decisions more quickly in meetings.

He reckoned that some meetings go on far too long and bad decisions are made for the following reasons:

- People go in with fixed ideas and aren't prepared to change them
- Some people aren't interested and don't have an opinion
- Some people are too negative and argumentative
- Some people are too positive and enthusiastic – they can't see the snags in anything
- Personalities clash and people become determined to have their own way
- New ideas aren't explored

Edward de Bono invented the Six Thinking Hats role play to ensure that all opinions were given equal time at meetings and that new ideas were explored. He linked different attitudes to coloured hats as follows. (People in meetings can actually wear coloured hats, or just act according to the colour.)

White – Facts – think “Neutral White Paper”

This is a neutral hat that only deals with the facts and history of a situation. It has no emotions.

Red – Feelings – think “Fire and Instinct”

This hat expresses strong feelings, both positive and negative, about the situation. It doesn't have to give reasons for the feelings – it expresses “gut reaction”.

Yellow – Positive – think “Sunshine”

The yellow hat is positive and optimistic. It sees only the good side of a situation or idea.

Black Hat – Negative – think “Caution”

The black hat is negative, gloomy and critical. It sees the bad and dangerous side of situations and proposals.

Green Hat – Creative – think “Growth and Freshness”

The green hat produces new ideas, thinks of changes and offers new ways of seeing things.

Blue Hat – Chairperson – think “Overview of Blue Sky”

The blue hat summarises the views of the others. It decides when each of the others should be brought in, for example - “we need more yellow hat thinking”. It brings things to a conclusion.

Six Thinking Hats – the online material

- Learners are introduced to the concept of the Six Thinking Hats with a mouse rollover exercise. They roll their cursor over six coloured hats to see popups containing different views on the subject of television.
- There is then a description of Edward de Bono’s concept and why he felt it necessary to introduce it – poor performance in meetings. The six hats are represented once more – the learner can click on each to see the point of view it represents, e.g. the yellow hat is positive and optimistic.
- Finally, learners are asked to consider the topic of fast food and type in the views of the six thinking hats. They can see suggested answers.

Supporting Learners

To get the full flavour of what Edward de Bono intended for this role play it would be ideal to have learners working in groups, but this may not be possible within the constraints of individual, online learning. It is still very valuable to go through the process of looking at an issue or topic from a variety of angles.

This is one of the more challenging concepts as and some students may find it difficult to discriminate between the views of some of the hats. Others find the idea of role play daunting. However, the concept of the Six Thinking Hats is worth mastering, especially for learners who are regularly involved in meetings.

Additional Exercises

In the chunk called Creative Exercises, there are six exercises for Six Thinking Hats, one for each of the creative strands:

Pictures

Words

Logic

People

Music

Movement

Learners could choose an exercise from the list that inspires them and they could do more than one if time allows.

In addition to this, they could apply Six Thinking Hats as follows:

Work

They could request that the Six Thinking Hats method be applied to a meeting to see if the quality of decision-making improves. They could also use it individually to apply to work situations.

Personal

Six Thinking Hats could be used to examine many situations such as proposed career changes, house moves, additions to family, etc.

Websites

Mindtools – Six Thinking Hats Overview

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm

Teachnet – example of use in education

<http://www.teachnet.com/how-to/manage/sixhats120800.html>

Six Thinking Hats - summary

<http://members.optusnet.com.au/~charles57/Creative/Techniques/sixhats.htm>

Six Thinking Hats – Wikipedia Encyclopaedia entry

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Six_Thinking_Hats

The Journalistic Six

When trainee journalists are sent out to cover a story they take with them a sheet of paper with six words on it to remind them what to write about. These are called the journalistic six: who, what, where, why, when and how.

Using these six words it is possible to map out all the aspects of most situations, from investigating a murder to planning a fund-raising event.

The Journalistic Six – online material

- Learners are asked to think about a fire at a primary school and to imagine what a journalist might include in an article for a newspaper. They can click on six buttons to reveal what might be included for: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?
- After this there is a drag and drop exercise where the learners read a short article about a car accident and identify the parts that correspond to the Journalistic Six words.
- The Journalistic Six technique is then applied to a organising an event such as a party or theme night.
- Finally, there is a more complicated case study about slow production in a computer factory. Learners can click on buttons to reveal a range of answers that might explain the slow production.

Supporting learners

Learners usually find it fairly easy to identify the 5 W's and the H for most situations. Where they mainly need some guidance or prompting, however, is when they act on the information they have discovered to take things to the next stage, e.g. finding out what is going wrong with a process and deciding what to do to remedy it.

Additional Exercises

In the chunk called Creative Exercises, there are six exercises for the Journalistic Six, one for each of the creative strands:

Pictures

Words

Logic

People

Music

Movement

Learners could choose an exercise from the list that inspires them and they could do more than one if time allows.

In addition to this, learners could apply the Journalistic Six as follows:

At work:

To analyse processes where there are delays or breakdowns, or to improve current practice.

In their studies:

To plan individual and group projects and activities, e.g. organising an event with service users in a work placement.

At home or in their leisure time:

To plan major events like weddings, holidays, parties.

Websites

Creativity and Innovation in Science and Technology – 5 W's and an H

<http://www.mycoted.com/creativity/techniques/fivewandh.php>

Charles Cave – Asking Questions

http://members.optusnet.com.au/%7Echarles57/Creative/Techniques/ask_questions.htm

Virtual Salt – Creative Thinking Techniques

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/crebook2.htm>

