Designing Thinking & Creativity—de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats® Method

A Webinar on Dr. de Bono’s Thinking Methods for the IIE

Sponsored by the Society for Engineering and Management Systems
Learning Objectives

• Develop an understanding of the need for thinking tools, looking at Dr. Edward de Bono’s research in the area of thinking
• Give you an overview of the most used de Bono Tool and Method
• Let you practice using the Six Thinking Hats individually
• Give an example of how it is used in meetings
• Give an example of how it is used to treat and shape ideas in the creative process
The Need for New Thinking!

“The problems of today will not be solved by the same thinking that produced them in the first place.”

“Everything has changed except the way we think.”

Albert Einstein
Who would win the race?
Car.  
(engine=brain/intelligence)  
Driver.  
(one’s thinking ability)  

Who wins the race? The better thinker.
Thinking About Our Thinking

• Do you do your best thinking individually, or in meetings with others?
• Are your meetings highly productive?
It's Time to Take Control.

When your technology isn't working, you're not in control. And when you're not in control, you can't execute strategy. But now you can eliminate the distractions and focus on strategy. The power of Cognification makes it possible.  

**cognify** /kəˈɡəˌnɪf/ v. -ified. 1. To transform chaos into order. 2. To synchronize technology with the needs of the business or organization. 3. To take control of the technology platform. 4. To remove technological distractions that prevent execution of strategy.
Dr. Edward de Bono

Thinking By Design
- World’s leading authority in conceptual and creative thinking
- M.D., Ph.D. (physiology, medicine, and psychology), Rhodes scholar
- Nominated for a Nobel Prize in Economics in 2005
- World-renowned consultant to business, government, and industry
- Originator of Lateral Thinking
- Author of over 70 books with translations in 38 languages
- Creator of CoRT, the largest thinking program in the world for children
Dr. de Bono’s Research

• Assistant Director of Medical Research at Oxford in the 1960’s
• Research on the human brain = *Mechanism of Mind*
• Research on the human brain in *creativity* = Lateral Thinking™
Your Assets

• The brain is a self-organizing system of neural networks of information
• There are symmetric and asymmetric patterns
• Brain chemicals differ when we are cautious vs. positive
• Creativity can’t occur when we are thinking logically
Think of how rain and water shape pathways—this mirrors the brain’s system.
What WAS
What IS
What CAN BE
Argument, Analysis, and Being Right
(aka Traditional Model of Thinking)

• The Gang of Three: Argument leads to truth and new solutions
• Critical thinking focuses on what is and what was
• Perceptions and concepts are a summary of history
I am in the right place, really. “No, I am.” It looks right from where I stand...
“What is not easy is to direct attention deliberately in one direction after another when your prejudices have already decided for you what you should feel about an idea. It is this “will” to look in a direction that is so important.”

De Bono’s Thinking Course
So, back to Creativity…
Do You Have ISAs?

Where are your **Idea Sensitive Areas?** (Places where ideas--possibilities--can flourish and be developed.)
“The Quality of Your Thinking Will Determine the Quality of Your Future”
Liberating Structures and Tools: Software for the Mind

- CoRT for schools
- Perception Broadening Tools
- Lateral Thinking™ Tools
- Six Thinking Hats® & Parallel Thinking
- Six Value Medals
Six Thinking Hats®: The Parallel Thinking™ Tool

- **Focused thinking:** *Unbundled* thinking
- **Parallel thinking:** *Cooperative exploration*
Personal Tool: Unbundled Thinking

• “Where to begin…”
• “So much to consider…”
• “Complex situation…”
• “We need to be creative…”
• “I need to be sure…”
• “I really want…”
• “What if…”
• “I must…”
• “I’m frustrated…”
Team Process: Parallel Thinking

*Using the Six Hats Tool*

- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Innovation of new options
- Strategic planning
- Project management
- Mergers
- Designing change
- Treating and shaping ideas
“No one is as dumb as all of us.”  With credit to Despair.com
The Six Hats method replaces adversarial thinking with Parallel Thinking™.
Six Hats

Six Colors

Six Types of Thinking

Not Categories

*Each thinker should be able to use all of the hats*
six thinking hats

white hat

what do we know?

information data

what do we need to know?
yellow hat

benefits

optimism

value
black hat

cautions

difficulties

problems

risks
green hat
growth
alternatives
creativity
ideas
blue hat

thinking about thinking
facilitating
organizing
process control

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Take it for a drive...

• Focus: ________________________________
  (something you have which needs some thinking)

I’ll take you through each Hat/Area with a minute on each...
Six Thinking Hats®

- **White Hat**
  - Information Available and Needed

- **Red Hat**
  - Intuition and Feelings

- **Yellow Hat**
  - Benefits and Value

- **Black Hat**
  - Caution, Difficulties and Weaknesses

- **Green Hat**
  - Alternatives and Creative Ideas

- **Blue Hat**
  - Managing the Thinking Process
Using the Hats

- Which two hats do you feel most comfortable using?
- Which two hats dominate the thinking in your team/organization?
- What impact does this have on your team’s effectiveness?
Meetings: Sequencing and Planning

• In most cases for the Six Thinking Hats and the Parallel Thinking process to work well, you need to have a good facilitator who’s planned a thinking sequence.

• The more challenging the topic or group, the more skill and practice you need.
Managing the Thinking

• “Control” hat
• Organizes the thinking
• Sets the focus and agenda
• Summarizes and concludes
• Ensures that the rules are observed
Using Parallel Thinking

We ALL focus in the
Same area of thinking
At the same time, before
We move on to the next
Area together.
The most challenging are usually
• Disciplining the brain takes practice
  – Time
  – Tools
  – Focus
Clinical Nutrition Team:
12 audit problems to fix
15 employees
2 hours to meet
• Our Agenda for the Meeting

I. Overview

II. Each group spent 15 minutes each on 4 audit issues, using this sequence: White, Green, Blue

III. Groups present out to the whole Nutrition Team and take input.

IV. Assignments on next steps confirmed with whole Nutrition Team
Shaping and Treating Ideas

• Idea: ____________________
Simple and Powerful

When thinking is clear and simple, it becomes more enjoyable and effective. Six Thinking Hats simplifies thinking by allowing the thinkers to deal with one thing at a time and allows a deliberate switch in thinking when needed.
If you do not design the future, someone or something else will design it for you.

--Edward de Bono