"If you play act being a thinker you will become one."

Today a hat is a rarity. Hats are used as part of a uniform, which itself defines a role … Just as well established is the idea of a *thinking hat* or *thinking cap.* The deliberate putting on a hat is something very definite … Let us consider two types of thinking: coping and deliberate. When you are driving a car, you have to chose roads and follow roads and keep out of the way of other traffic. You are looking for signals and reacting to them. This is reactive thinking … The other type of thinking has to do with mapmaking. The six thinking hats correspond to the different colors used in printing a map … choosing what color thinking you are about to use.

White Hat … Virgin white, pure facts, figures and information.
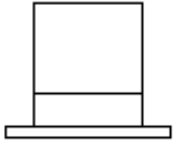
Imagine a computer that gives the facts and figures for which it is asked. The computer is neutral and objective. It does not offer interpretation or opinions. When wearing the white thinking hat, the thinker should imitate the computer. The person requesting the information should use a focusing question in order to obtain information or information gaps. There is a spectrum of "likelihood" ranging from always true to never true. In between there are usable levels such as "by and large," "sometimes," and "occasional."

### Red Hat … Seeing red, emotions and feelings, also hunch and intuition.
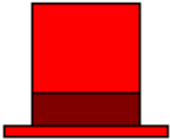
Wearing the red hat allows the thinker to say: "This is how I feel about the matter." The red hat legitimizes emotions and feelings as an important part of thinking. The red hat makes feelings visible so that they can become part of the thinking "map" and also part of the value system that chooses the route on the map. When a thinker is using the red hat there should never be any attempt to justify the feelings or to provide a logical basis for them.

Black Hat … Devil's advocate, negative judgment, why it will not work.

Black hat thinking is specifically concerned with negative assessment. The black hat thinker points out what is wrong, incorrect and in error. The black hat thinker points out how something does not fit experience or accepted knowledge. The black hat thinker points out risk and dangers and faults in design. Black hat thinking is not argument and should never be seen as such. It is an objective attempt to put the negative onto the map.

Yellow Hat … Sunshine, brightness and optimism, positive, constructive, opportunity.
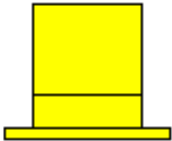
Yellow hat thinking is positive and constructive. The yellow hat thinking is concerned with positive assessment just as black hat thinking is concerned with negative assessment. Yellow hat thinking covers a positive spectrum that ranges from the logical and practical at one end to dreams, visions and hopes at the other end. Yellow hat thinking probes and explores for value and benefit. Yellow hat thinking seeks to put forward a soundly based optimum. From yellow hat thinking comes concrete proposals and suggestions. Yellow hat thinkers make things happen.

Green Hat … Fertile, creative, plants springing from seeds, movement, and provocation.
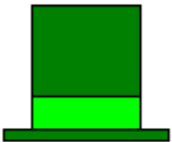
The green hat is for creative thinking. The person who puts on the green hat is going to use the idioms of creative thinking. Those around are required to treat the output as a creative output. Ideally both thinker and listener should be wearing green hats. The search for alternatives is fundamental aspect of green hat thinking. There is a need to go beyond the known and the obvious and the satisfactory. A provocation is used to take us out of usual patterns of thinking. There are many ways of setting up provocations including the random word method.

Blue Hat … Cool and control, orchestra conductor, thinking about thinking.

The blue hat is the "control" hat. The blue hat thinker organizes the thinking itself. Blue hat thinking is "thinking about the thinking needed to explore the subject." The blue hat thinker is like the conductor of the orchestra. The blue hat thinker calls for the use of the other hats. Blue hat thinkers set the focus. Blue hat thinking defines the problems and shapes the questions. Blue hat thinking is responsible for summaries, overviews and conclusions.