

# ADRP Zooms In

## Problem Solving Hand Out 2

### Exercise: Six Thinking Hats

by Hyper Island

Session Lab: <https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/6-thinking-hats>

Six Thinking Hats is a powerful technique for looking at decision-making from different points of view. By introducing a structured parallel thinking process, it helps people to be more focused and mindfully involved in a discussion.

---

### Goal

- To look at a problem from different perspectives
  - For complex decisions to make
  - Help a group that got stuck in a conversation
- 

### Instructions

#### Flow

1. Explain at the beginning of the meeting that in order to examine the current topic from every perspective we will use the Six Thinking Hats framework, which helps to separate thinking into six clear perspectives and roles. Each thinking perspective is identified with a symbolic, colored "thinking hat." By mentally wearing and switching "hats," the group can easily focus or redirect thoughts, the conversation, or the meeting. **Briefly explain the six hats and their meaning:**

- **White Hat** - when wearing this hat, the group focuses on **facts and data** in order to identify all information needed.
- **Red Hat** - when wearing this hat, focus is on **feelings, intuition** and hunches. Group members can express emotions and feelings and share fears, likes, dislikes, loves, and hates.
- **Black Hat** - when wearing this hat, focus is on why a solution **might not work** or possible negative outcomes. Often the most powerful and useful of the Hats but a problem when overused.
- **Yellow Hat** - here, everyone focuses on **positive outcomes and benefits** of potential solutions
- **Green Hat** - wearing this hat, focus is on **creative solutions**, possibilities, and new concepts. This is an opportunity to express new ideas and new perceptions
- **Blue Hat** - worn by facilitators or meeting leaders, it is used to manage the process of the Six Thinking Hats

2. **Facilitate the conversation** (wearing the blue hat): You may **decide which sequence of hat use fits best** for your purpose. In general, it is recommended that each hat is worn at some point, however there are some sensible sub-sequences, too (See Facilitator Tips). As an inspiration, check the following example of how to use Six Thinking Hats to resolve a problem with different alternative solution:

1. White Hat: Present the facts of the problem
2. Green Hat: Generate ideas on how the problem can be solved
3. Yellow Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their benefits
4. Black Hat: Evaluate the ideas by listing their drawbacks
5. Red Hat: Get everybody's gut feelings about the alternatives
6. Blue Hat: Summarize the discussion and agree on the conclusions

---

### Facilitator tips:

- Encourage each person to contribute to each of the perspectives. Avoid putting people into categories - **Everyone can and should use all the hats.**
- One or more hats can be used at any point during a discussion process. They are used as a convenience for directing and switching the thinking process as needed. (E.g. "Let's have some black hat thinking...")
- Simple sequences of two or three hats may be used together for a particular purpose, for example:
  - The yellow hat followed by the black hat may be used to assess an idea.
  - The black hat followed by the green hat may be used to improve a design.
- Six Thinking Hats is excellent at eliciting different perspectives, but there is less guidance on how to resolve conflicting views among the different hats. Sometimes a group will naturally move together toward one resolution during the discussion. If not, another framework might be needed to resolve the discourse.

---

### Tips for running this activity online

- Pick an [online whiteboard tool](#) that allows you to use a large, zoomable canvas.
- Set up each participant a name tag note and images for each of the six thinking hats. Have multiple copies of each hat.
- Invite participants to drag the relevant thinking hat to their name tag when using it.
- It can also be useful to have a section to collect feedback for each hat: IE: all red hat feedback is recorded in one place. Have your participants add sticky notes to each section as they go.
- If you're not using an online whiteboard, we'd recommend using a collaboration tool such as Google Docs to collect the information for each hat under a separate heading. Invite everyone into the document to share their images but be very clear in regards to editing rights. You can delineate which person is wearing each hat by using Zoom icons.
- When facilitating group discussion, we'd recommend that participants use non-verbal means to indicate they'd like to speak. You can use tools like Zoom's nonverbal feedback tools, a reaction emoji, or just have people put their hands up. The facilitator can then invite that person to talk.

---

## Background

World Café Community Foundation

Source: [Hyper Island toolbox](#)

Hyper Island designs learning experiences that challenge companies and individuals to grow and stay competitive in an increasingly digitized world. With clients such as Google, adidas and IKEA, Hyper Island has been listed by CNN as one of the most innovative schools in the world