

## DE BONO'S SIX THINKING HAT STRATEGY: WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS



~ Zuleikha Hassen ~

Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats Strategy is designed to assist individuals in using various perspectives or thinking modes by phrasing questions that elicit the different thinking modes. By wearing a specific colour hat, the individual symbolises that he/she is involved in a specific thinking mode, e.g. the white hat represents factual, objective information, the red hat symbolises emotions and hunches. The black hat signifies critical, logical negative thinking, while the yellow hat indicates logical, positive thinking. The green hat means creative thinking and new ideas while the blue hat denotes control of process and organised thinking about thinking.

Two interesting workshops were held for parents of the learners at the Roshnee Preschool on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and at the Roshnee Islamic School on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April. Roshnee PreSchool decided to become involved in the Schools as Thinking Communities Project since 2013, that is coordinated by the North-West University, School of Educational Sciences, Vanderbijlpark. Since 2013, Grade R learners have been exposed to the intentional application of the Six Thinking Hats strategy during teaching.

The workshop presented was entitled: *"How can I as parent assist my child in the enhancement of her/his thinking skills?"* This workshop was held with the aim to empower parents with skills to promote effective conversation with their children, that would strengthen and reinforce the application of the Six Thinking Hats Strategy, that is implemented at school.

Parents thoroughly enjoyed this workshop. They found it light-hearted and easy to implement it in their communication with their family members. Their thinking also became more spontaneous as the workshop progressed. The workshop format comprised story reading and we used the thinking hat strategy for posing questions about the story, and to encourage discussion about the story.

Similarly, to what the teaching of the learners entails. The parents understood how easy it was to promote the use of various thinking modes, by asking simple questions. Parents were also guide to create communication at home about simple topics by phrasing questions in line with the Six Thinking Hat strategy.

I was also able to hold their attention and interest throughout the workshop, as they felt and knew that they were learning a skill/technique on how to promote effective and meaningful conversation in their own homes.

After the workshop, I received feedback from a few parents, informing me that their children spoke, and expressed themselves a lot more, than previously, as they were prompted by the questions asked by the parents. The learners asked more questions at home, and also seemed to be more pleasant to talk to.

Parents were equipped with a skill to become capable of promoting a deeper conversation with their children, as they learned how to pose questions to their children, and elicit a discussion as a result.

The parents also indicated that they often felt isolated in their children's learning process. Being empowered with some extra skills, as well, would assist in contributing to their children's learning.

At the beginning of my workshop, I had asked some parents to describe themselves. They mainly used one word or one sentence to describe themselves, e.g. *"I am honest"*.

At the end of the workshop, I asked them again to describe themselves, using the thinking hat technique. They were so spontaneous in their thinking and confident of their own qualities and were also able to describe themselves in more words and sentences, e.g. *"I am an honest woman of 34 years of age. I am fun to be with but do not tolerate disrespect and dishonesty."* With this exercise, they realised how they could implement this technique in their daily living and communication with their children, and with everyone. It also made them aware of objective thinking.

We devised a plan of action to use the six thinking modes at home in the following ways:

- Communicating with their children, with regard to their day at school.
- To engage in discussions with family.
- To give an interpretation or opinion.
- When assisting their children to write a speech or essay.
- When reading stories, and asking meaningful questions to promote their children's thinking.
- To analyse a problem in the home.
- To cultivate the habit of managing thoughts in an objective way.

Parents expressed their enthusiasm and what a difference it makes, to be aware of one's own thinking and how to direct it by using the Six Thinking Hat Strategy.



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