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This book is one of a series of four resource books for the teaching of the six thinking hats method in schools. The use of the method is valid at all ages. The teaching of the method will, however, vary with age and ability.

With younger students, the use of each hat can be much simplified. With older and more able students, the use of each hat is more comprehensive and more precise. Simpler exercises are chosen for younger students. There are more difficult exercises provided in the upper-level book: Book 4.

Time and Place

In some schools, there is a specific allocation of time to the direct teaching of thinking skills. In such cases, the six hats method can be taught directly as part of the thinking skills program.

In schools where there is as yet no provision for the direct teaching of thinking skills, the six hats method can be taught as part of other subject areas. For example, there is always a close link between language and thinking. Language is there to express thinking. If the thinking is poor, then language skills by themselves will not be much use. So the six hats method could be taught as part of language arts.

The six hats framework is also valuable for writing about or talking about any subject. Therefore, the method may be taught as part of such subject areas as reading, social studies, science or maths.

My experience suggests that thinking skills are most effectively taught if they are taught directly and deliberately. So I recommend the direct teaching of the six hats method—with subsequent infusion into other areas. Where this is not practical, then the method can be taught as part of some existing curriculum area—like language.

USING THIS BOOK

*Thinking
skills are most
effectively
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directly and
deliberately.*

Follow these steps to introduce the white hat: lead-in, explanation, demonstration, practice and elaboration.

Lead-in

Begin by asking students to review the two hats which they have previously learned: the black hat, for checking out weaknesses and dangers and the yellow hat, for looking at the good points and benefits.

Then invite the students to participate in some activities which will introduce another of the six thinking hats. Do not name the hat until after the lead-in is completed.

Choose from the following activities.

Wrap several items—a scarf, comb, compact disc, jar of jelly beans or a bundle of pencils, for example—in thin but opaque paper. Invite students to inspect the wrapped packages and then ask them what might be inside. As they tell their ideas, ask students what information led them to these conclusions (shape, size, weight, texture, etc.).

Ask students to write down five points of information about their classroom—but not about the people in the room. Encourage them to look around as much as they like. Then ask volunteers to read their information aloud.

Help the students to distinguish between facts and other kinds of points like feelings, opinions and suggestions. For instance, “I love the view from our windows,” (red hat) could be reworded to make it a neutral point: “The room has windows with a view of the front lawn.” “The room is terribly hot and crowded,” (black hat) could be rephrased: “The desks and bookcases take up most of the floor space. The temperature in the room is 28° C.”

The White Hat