

let's think about it

IDEAS FOR USING THINKING HATS

- Use coloured thinking bubbles and ask children to imagine life without television.




















red thinking



black thinking



yellow thinking

- Use colours to structure thinking for a piece of writing, e.g. life in a village in Egypt.
- Divide paper into six colours and ask pupils to reflect upon and then record types of thinking used in science.
- Invite children to think about and create names for different types of thinking, e.g. critical for  black hat. Then use in mental maths for solving problems. What information do we have? Ideas for steps? Another way of doing this?
- Use as a framework to extend thinking about nursery rhymes, e.g. Jack and Jill. Why did they go up the hill? What else could they have gone up for? Why did Jack fall down? What would have made it easier for them to get the water? What could have been done to help Jack?
- Use to problem-solve health reforms / find best way to spend money. What are we trying to achieve?  (blue). What do we know already?  (white). Invite proposals and evaluate these.
- Use in geography for problem solving, e.g. about pedestrianising a local high street.  Blue hat for planning at start and reviewing at end. Use hats to identify information needed, to check if feasible or not. Then use  green hat if need alternative ideas.
- Use to examine issue of getting rid of school uniform. Good things about this  (yellow), bad things (came more slowly), then  green hat thinking.
- Use to critique a story. Invite yellow hat thinking (parts liked), then  black hat thinking (aspects could have done better), then  red hat.
- Use hats for a problem / question / challenge, e.g. what one suggestion do you want to put to the school council?  White hat gathers information.  Red hat asks 'what's my gut reaction?' 'What's the first solution that comes to mind?'  Green hat has lots of ideas – how many ways are there of approaching the problem?  Yellow hat looks at  green hat ideas and smiles. It asks 'what do I like about the  green hat ideas?'  Black hat looks at  green hat's ideas and frowns. It asks 'what are the possible problems with  green hat ideas?'  Blue hat sees the big picture. It listens to all the other hats before selecting the best answer to the problem.



PROMOTING CHILDREN'S THINKING through classroom discussion

Scaffolding

Vygotsky believed that the key area for a child's learning was the "zone of proximal development". These are the tasks that a child *can do with some support*, but cannot yet accomplish independently. The support that is given is termed "scaffolding" the child's learning.

Scaffolding can be provided through modelling the skill required; breaking the skills into component parts; and through careful discussion. This verbal mediation has been developed by Feuerstein in his programme *Instrumental Enrichment*. Feuerstein argues that intellectual potential is not fixed, but can be developed through learning. The Instrumental Enrichment programme was developed to challenge the impact of cultural deprivation. The Somerset Thinking Skills programme is based on the ideas of Feuerstein.

In Instrumental Enrichment the teacher acts as a mediator for the child's learning by "asking challenging questions rather than giving dismissive responses".

Use of stories

In the USA Lipman has developed a programme "Philosophy for Children" which aims to develop children's cognitive reasoning skills through the reading and discussion of stories. Robert Fisher's "Stories for Thinking" are based on similar lines.

Quicke (1992) Stories –

- Require you to hold 2 viewpoints simultaneously – story teller and listener.
- Provide an opportunity to explore alternative viewpoints through different characters. This may be less threatening than exploring the ideas in open discussion.

Stories also provide opportunities to make predictions and test hypotheses –

- What do you think will happen next?
- Can you explain why you think that?
- Does anyone have any other reasons?
- Does anyone have a different idea?
- Who agrees? Why?
- Who disagrees? Why?
- Were you surprised by what happened? Why?