GROUP DISCUSSION: DERIVING CONTENT-BASE FROM SIX THINKING HATS
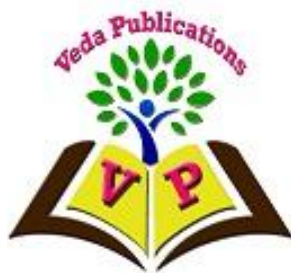
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ABSTRACT

"A good discussion increases the dimensions of everyone who takes part" Randolph Bourne. The technological revolution of the 21st century has augmented growth in such a phenomenal way that the workforce requirement is not that of "stamping letters"; it is rather that of individuals who would bring their ingenuity and innovation to their work area. Therefore Group discussion becomes a very important tool to assess aspirants' skill set. This paper aims to investigate the utility of the "Six Thinking Hats" concept in the preparation of the attributes of communication skills, group behavior, leadership skills and content knowledge in conducting Group Discussions. The study was conducted with the V Semester Engineering students of Hindustan University and the findings revealed that when students adopted the concept of Six Thinking Hats in Group Discussion, the purpose was achieved in terms of developing the content, covering all aspects of the given topics. The praxis of Six Thinking Hats created a concatenation of clarity in the thought process, idea organization and verbal presentation without inhibition. This paper discusses the process, explanation and the usage of Six Thinking Hats to teach Group discussion.

Keywords*: Good Discussion, Six Thinking Hats, Classroom Education.*

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INTRODUCTION

"You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere."

- Lee Iacocca

The above-stated lines are from an American automobile executive known for spearheading the development of Ford Mustang and Pinto cars in the 1960's and his statement still holds true in 2017. It has been implored by the industry and catered to, by the educational institutions to bridge the gap between the classroom education and actual field work. The result is a harmonious blend of tailor-made technical courses that imbibe all the essentialities and knowledge base of the actual work scenario giving great scope to initiate and innovate. Teaching English in Engineering colleges have also gone through the same metamorphosis of engaging students to be equitable and opposite in their communicative competencies. One such competency is Group Discussion. A Group discussion is not only an essential entry level bout to get the entitled position but it serves as a de facto element in coming to a decision or conclusion for varied products and process while on job and onsite. Therefore this round is ideally conducted in order to understand a candidate's interpersonal skills. At theentry level, group discussions are interviews involved in discussing topics with individuals who have never interacted before, how well they are able to put across their point and are able to lead a discussion is judged upon, based on which how they could work in a team or lead them can be easily be assessed. It also portrays to the interviewer a side of their attitude which they might probably display in their workplace.

I.LITERATURE REVIEW

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centered approach in which students learn about a subject by working in groups to solve an open-ended problem. According to Hung Jonassen and Liu "The primary goal of PBL is to enhance learning by requiring learners to solve problems." they further state that knowledge enhancement occurs with the problem as they have to work around to find a solution. It brings forth learning points, not from the teacher rather from the students as they work in groups.

The elements that the students have to work with is primarily the problem, which prompts them to delve into their previous knowledge. Equipped with the prior knowledge they come together in groups to discuss their own viewpoint thus creating learning issues. In their research, Loyens Krischner and Pass have been able to establish that the given problem is able to encourage students to develop, integrate and apply learning of new facets of solutions.

SIX THINKING HATS

The Six Thinking Hats (STH), posited by Edward deBono as an effective strategy to problem-solving, requires individuals to approach a problem from various perspectives that are related to the four primary thought modes namely objective, subjective, critical and creative. The advantages of STH include increased productivity, enhanced thinking process, creative, parallel and lateral thinking, better communication and quicker decision making.

II.OBJECTIVES

The present study was carried out with the following objectives:

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To help students understand the concept of Group discussion.
2. To ascertain the importance of Group discussion in interview selection
3. To encourage and help them to communicate in English effortlessly.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To help students to comprehend and use Edward De Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' concept in their content development.
2. To help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
3. To help them anatomize the topic and be able to do in-depth research and discussion.

III.METHODOLOGY

The research was to understand how students perceived and performed in Group discussion before and after the introduction of Six Thinking Hats. Firstly the students were segregated into groups of six and four members each followed by a mock session wherein they were told to select and discuss a topic. Each session was evaluated by

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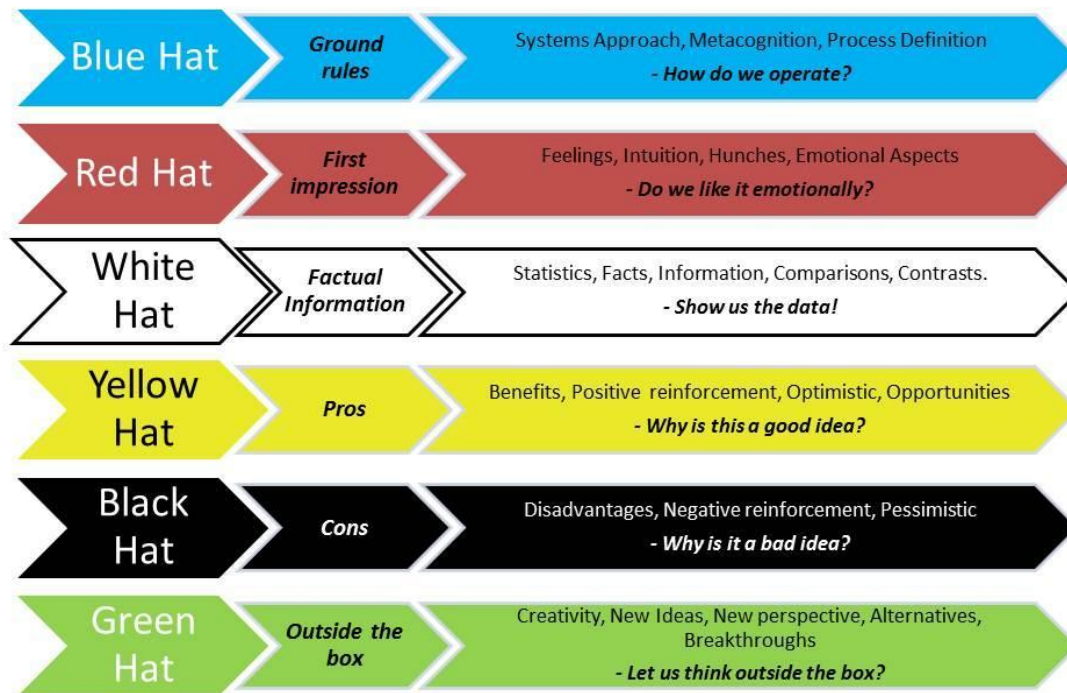http://www.joell.in

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the teacher. This exercise gave insight to the teacher as to their conceptual knowledge, marking criteria, content knowledge and verbal and nonverbal skills required in Group Discussion.

This was followed by a teaching session that explained the student participant roles which are and the use of Six Thinking Hats (Fig. 1) in developing the content that needs to be discussed. The students had to pick a hat and work on the topic from that point of view. They were each given ten minutes to collect the required information then come together to discuss.

Six Thinking Hats

Blue Hat	*Ground rules*	Systems Approach, Metacognition, Process Definition **- How do we operate?**
Red Hat	*First impression*	Feelings, Intuition, Hunches, Emotional Aspects **- Do we like it emotionally?**
White Hat	*Factual Information*	Statistics, Facts, Information, Comparisons, Contrasts. **- Show us the data!**
Yellow Hat	*Pros*	Benefits, Positive reinforcement, Optimistic, Opportunities **- Why is this a good idea?**
Black Hat	*Cons*	Disadvantages, Negative reinforcement, Pessimistic **- Why is it a bad idea?**
Green Hat	*Outside the box*	Creativity, New Ideas, New perspective, Alternatives, Breakthroughs **- Let us think outside the box?**

[de Bono (1985, 1999) – Six Thinking Hats]
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CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF GROUP DISCUSSION

The following parameters that were used to assess the students:

Content: The student should express his opinions based on facts, figures, and statistics.

Voice and Pitch: There are two subparameters i.e. Tone and Modulation. If the student is audible in a GD he scores high on tone and pitch. Voice modulation is based on the ability of the student to emphasize on keywords/phrases while making his point.

Analytical Ability: This includes both logical and critical reasoning. This checks how well a candidate is able to analyze somebody's viewpoint and also how well is he able to reason his own viewpoint.

Body language: Proper eye contact with the group is an essential requisite. The student should talk to his team members, not to the examiner. The student should sit attentively in a GD. He should bend a bit forward. This shows his attentiveness and interest in the GD.

Group Behavior: Group behavior is the ability to work well with the team members. Aggression, shouting in a GD, staring at somebody, cutting somebody in between, trying to enforce views on others, are some of the activities which are against teamwork and a candidate should be rated negatively on this parameter if he demonstrates any one of them

DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data of three group discussions were assessed by the teacher and the

marks were collected, tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results show a very definitive improvement in the performance of students on all the criteria as shown in Fig. 2.

The trend line clearly indicates the improvement between first group discussion and second group discussion. The first group discussion was araw attempt at discussing a topic. Most of the communication was concentrating on counting the pros and cons of the topic given. As the session progressed every group witnessed only 2 or 3 dominant members presenting their views and based on these dominant members opinion a conclusion

was reached. Group 3 and 4 had given a conclusion to the topic rest of the groups elucidated the good and the evil effects of the topic.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT BEFORE TEACHING SIX THINKING HATS

Every group was given 10 to 15 minutes to discuss a topic of their choice. Post the introduction of the topic every group almost completed their discussion within 5 to 7 minutes. Each group had 2 or 3 dominant members. The groups limited themselves to discussing the good and the bad aspects of the topic. Most of the group's information was presented had a chaotic bearing while none of the groups were able to put forth any facts or figures about the topic.
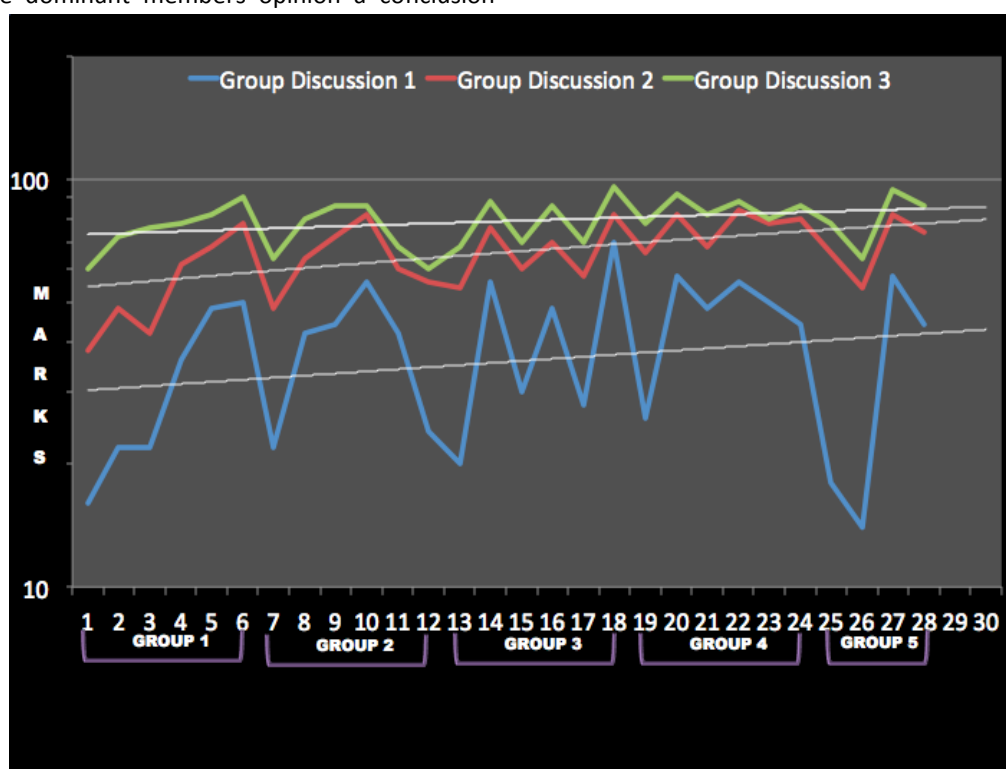

Figure 2. Trendline Analysis of Group Discussion 1, 2 and 3

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AFTER TEACHING SIX THINKING HATS

While teaching Six Thinking Hats the students were asked to wear the Red Hat and think of the topic they were part of and pen down their feelings in a word about the topic and answer a why with it. Gradually they had to wear every hat and logically understand and channelize and weave the topic to a solution. Every student was given five

minutes time to work around with this idea then come together in a group and divide the thinking hats so they can work on individual issues and bring their unique perspective to the table. Each group was given a five-minute window to research their topic by using theinternet. The time limit was the same of 10 to 15 minutes and another 5 minutes to write the report. This time the discussion was more streamlined, effectively moderated, and every

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member had something to speak about. The abuttals of every topic had widened with more resources and information being discussed.

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

It was observed, once the students had access to information and were equipped with knowledge about the topic they were confident and were more participant. Language at times became a barrier in expressing their idea or information but the other members were quick to help and provide the required assistance.

CONCLUSION

The main difficulty of thinking is confusion. We try to do too much at once. Emotions, information, logic, hope, and creativity all crowd in on us. It is like juggling with too many ball.

The six thinking hats allow us to conduct our thinking as a conductor might lead an orchestra.(-Bono, E. D. (2017). *Six thinking hats*. London: Penguin Life, an imprint of Penguin Books.)Group discussion and focus discussions are an integral part of any corporate, management and research wings. They have been long considered an effective tool to initiate and incorporate an idea. Group discussions are a matter of genuine indulgence for every student in college for every HR team will evaluate on how a student can function as a part of a team, how the student will interact with a team becomes an important criterion for their selection. Managers have to work in a team and get best results out of teamwork. Therefore their preparation of Group discussion has to be rid of "confusion" so they can contribute effectively and effortlessly.

The Six Thinking Hats aren't just for facilitating effective meetings, running creativity sessions or mapping their thinking they are all this and more. There are fantastic benefits to using the Six

Thinking Hats for team communication making the whole team more effective.

- Thoughts are streamlined.
- Communication is more channelized and more worked out.
- Reactions give way to responses.
- Thorough evaluation of all the aspects of a topic

- A genuine interest is sparked to be a part of the discussion
- Peer motivation is seen at its best.

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