ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION OF EDWARD DE BONO'S THINKING TECHNIQUES, STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

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Abstract

Thinking is a skill that everyone possesses, but not everyone has the same level of thinking skills. According to author Edward de Bono, creative thinking is not a talent, but it's a skill that can be learned and developed, so today we have his own thinking techniques, strategies and programs such as: "Lateral thinking techniques", "*Six thinking hats" and "The CoRT thinking programme*" that is applied by many countries around the world at all levels of education.

The purpose of the paper is to critically elaborate on Edward De Bono's thinking techniques, strategies and programs, and present them through alternative ways of application.

The paper consists of three parts, in which the first is related to the theoretical foundations of Edward de Bono's thinking techniques, strategies, and programs; the second part is concerned with the criticism of the theoretical basis of Edward de Bono's thinking techniques, strategies, and programs; while in the third part are presented experiences from alternative ways of applying the author's thinking techniques, strategies, and programs, which are considered to be the outcome of applying them in elementary schools.

The paper helps us to outline the positive aspects of applying Edward de Bono's thinking techniques, strategies, and programs, and emphasizes the importance of applying Edward de Bono's thinking techniques, strategies, and programs, to contemporary teaching.

Keywords: thinking techniques; thinking strategies; thinking programs; Edward de Bono's techniques, strategies and programs; alternative approaches to teaching; contemporary teaching.

Introduction

Possessing abilities to solve problems that a man faces during his life isn't a small thing, but above all, requires a sharp thought to overcome the problem areas.

Given the fact that our society faces economic, sociological, and political problems every day, I posit that schools should develop lateral thinking in students, starting from primary and secondary education, in order to enable them, in the future, to find solutions to the problems that society faces in different fields.

Edward de Bono is world-famous author who devoted special attention to the development of thinking in people of different groups. For this purpose, he designed the lateral thinking techniques, the Six Thinking Hats strategy, and the CoRT program. He wrote over 64 works translated into over 37 world languages. Techniques, strategies, and programs, apply to many countries around the world.

This fact motivated me to find application alternatives to de Bono's techniques, strategies, and programs in primary education, which resulted positivelt.

I The Theoretical Basis of E. de Bono's Techniques, Strategies, and Authoring Programs

1. 1. Lateral Thinking Techniques

Edward de Bono is known as the author of the lateral thinking since 1967, where for the first time he introduced it in his book *The Use of Lateral Thinking*, which became known worldwide.

According to Edward de Bono, lateral thinking is the process of thinking outside the box, thinking beyond norms, coming up with something that can't be comprehended under normal thinking. (https://creativecorporateculture.com/creativity-exercises-improve-lateral-thinking/).

Side-thinking is a mental process by which ideas and problems are created by looking at a situation or problem from a unique perspective. So, it is an individual ability to solve problems by thinking indirectly and creatively through reasoning.

The following are the seven side authoring techniques of Edward de Bono.

1. **Alternatives**: How to use concepts as a breeding ground for new ideas. Sometimes we do not look beyond the obvious alternatives.
2. **Focus**: When and how to change the focus of your thinking. You will learn the discipline of defining your focus and sticking to it.
3. **Challenge**: Breaking free from the limits of traditional thinking. With challenges, we act as though the present way of doing things is not necessarily the best.
4. **Random Entry**: Using unconnected input to open up new lines of thinking.
5. **Provocation and Movement**: Generating provocative statements and using them to build new ideas.
6. **Harvesting**: Capturing your creative output. At the end of a creative-thinking session, we normally only take note of the specific ideas that seem practical and have obvious value.
7. **Treatment of Ideas**: How to develop ideas and shape them to fit an organization or situation. (http://debonothinkingsystems.com/tools/lateral.htm).

2.2. Thinking strategies

To develop thinking, Edward de Bono also suggests the "Six Thinking Hats" strategy that can be used to debate any issues or problems, solve the problem, or bring some important decision. This strategy represents a tool that enables group discussions and individual thinking by utilizing the six hats in different colors:

White hat - for collecting information and facts. Find answers to questions: What information/facts do we know? What information do we lack? What will we do to collect the information? What's so important? How valid is the information? ...

Red hat - for feelings, intuitions and emotions. Find answers to questions: How do I feel about this? How warm or cold / unconscious I feel about it? How do I react to this? ... It is not necessary to justify feelings!

Black hat - for care, criticism and risk assessment. Find Answers on Questions: Is it true? Will it work? What are the weaknesses? ...

Yellow hat - for benefits and advantages. Find answers to questions: What are the good qualities? What are the benefits? Why would this idea work? Why is it worth it to do? How will it help us? ...

Green hat - for creativity, new ideas and opportunities. Find answers to questions: What are the possible ways to work out/ do this? What are the other ways to solve this problem? ...

Blue hat - for checking the process. Find answers to questions: What have we done so far? What will we do next? What decision did we achieve?

As noted above, the six cap colors represent six types of thinking. So each hat is identified with its own type of thinking.

3.3. Thinking programs

Edward de Bono intends to develop the thinking skills, so today we have his own program called the **CoRT** = **Co**gnitive **R**esearche **T**rust, which includes six subprograms, namely:

CoRT 1: Breadth
CoRT 2: Organization
CoRT 3: Interaction
CoRT 4: Creativity
CoRT 5: Information and Feeling
CoRT 6: Action

The CoRT 1 program is highly applied at all levels of education.

The CoRT 1 program structure consists of ten tools that help us to determine a situation and review the implications before taking action, and De Bono calls them "Attention, Management Tools", which we present below:

1. **PMI** - **P**lus, **M**inus, **I**nteresting;
2. **CAF** - **C**onsider **A**ll **F**actors;
3. **APC** - **A**lternatives, **P**osibilities and **C**hoices;
4. **FIP** - **F**irst **I**mportant **P**riorities (What should be done first? What is more important?);
5. **OPV** - **O**ther **P**eople's **V**iews (Consider the views of other people);
6. **C & S** - **C**onsecuence & **S**equel (Prediction and Evaluation Tool);
7. **AGO** - **A**ims, **G**oals and **O**bjectives (What is the goal?);
8. **Rules** - Make life easier and better;
9. **Planning** - (Think Before You Act);
10. **Decisions** - (Think clearly and thoroughly before making the decisions);

II Criticism of the Theoretical Basis of Edward de Bono's Techniques, Strategies, and Thinking Programs
2.1. Criticism on lateral thinking techniques

The lateral thinking techniques enable the individual to gain the ability to change his concepts and perceptions about the problem. Thus, lateral thinking techniques enable the individual to solve problems by thinking indirectly (side-by-side) and creatively.

A ⟹ B   Analytical thinking

A ⟹ B   The lateral thinking (side)
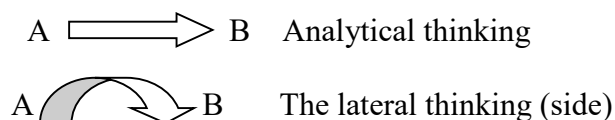
2.2.   Criticism on the "Six Thinking Hats"

The "Six Thinking Hats" strategy is used to debate any issues or problems, solve the problem or bring some important decision. Working with students enables group discussions and individual thinking.

Benefits from the "Six Hats of Thinking" strategy are: Removing the ego and confronting others; We have diversity in thinking; We do not have categorizations of people ex. He is the thinker of the black chapel ... Each student must use all the hats; Collaboration with others; Creation, evaluation and implementation of the plan.

2.3. Criticism on "CoRT 1 Thinking Program"

The lessons in CoRT 1 define attention areas into which thinking can be directed:
- Looking for plus and minus points**;**
- Considering all factors**;**
- Consequences**;**
- Aims and objectives**;**
- Assessing priorities**;**
- Taking other people's views into account (http://www.cortthinking.com/cort/1)

The goals of the CoRT program are:
- To acknowledge that thinking is a skill;
- To develop practical thinking skills;
- Encourage students to objectively view their thinking and thinking of others (http://www.cortthinking.com/front-page-aims-cort).

III Alternative Ways of Applying Edward de Bono's Techniques, Strategies, and Programs

3.1. Alternative way of applying lateral thinking techniques

Lateral thinking techniques can be applied to students through different forms of learning. They are very useful if they are applied to students through forms of work: in groups, couples, or individuals. The teacher should always start with a story, exercise, or problem! Consequently, students are provided with work sheets prepared previously. Worksheets for students are prepared separately for each technique and special assignments.
- *Alternatives*-Task: Find Different Ways / Alternatives to Solve the Issue!
- *Focus* - Task: Train your brains to think more about problem solving! Think more clearly to solve the problem!
- *Challenge* - Task: Think not so traditionally to do something! Accept different and better ways to do something!
- *Random entry* - Task: Be open to new and different lines of thought! You can use randomly selected words, pictures, sounds, or other incentives to open new thinking lines!
- *Provocation and Movement* - Put a provocative situation into something useful! or
By provocative statements construct new and useful ideas!
- *Harvesting* -Drop: Choose Your Best New Ideas for Practical Problem Solving!
- *Treatment of ideas* -Task: Change ideas to adapt to different situations!

3.2. Alternative way of applying the strategy "Six Thinking Hats"

The "Six Thinking Hats" strategy can be applied to students through forms of work: in groups, couples, or individuals. But applying the "Six Thinking Hats" strategy in most cases finds implementation through the form of group work.

The teacher should always start with a story, exercise, or problem! Consequently, students are put into groups and supplied with previously prepared worksheets, designed similarly as worksheets for lateral thinking techniques.

The strategy does not end every time within a lesson, it depends on the student's problem or assignment, so it may take several days, weeks, or months.

It is important that the activity of the students begins and ends with the blue hat! So, we have the blue hat on the board, following in turn the activities of the groups with the hats in other colors, and then the activity of the blue hat at the end.

The <u>Blue Hat at the beginning</u> - the students of this group have the task of: Defining the situation or problem; Write what their opinion is on the given situation or problem; What do they want to achieve ...; Determine the rules; Make plans for the order of the chapels.

The <u>Blue Hat at the end</u> - after the activities of all groups of students, distributed under different colored hats, have been carried out, the students belonging to the group with the blue hat note: Summary and conclusions; What are the results achieved? What is the solution to the problem? What will we do next, or What is the next step?

3.3. Alternative way of applying the " CoRT thinking program "

Can be applied with students through forms of work: in groups, couples, or individuals.

The teacher must always start with a story or an exercise! Worksheets for students are prepared separately for each CoRT program tool and with special assignments. For example:
- **PMI - P**lus **M**inus **I**nteresting - The worksheet is divided into three columns. Task: Column 1 - Write good things to ... Why do you like this...? What are the benefits...? Column 2 - Write down the bad things ... Why do you not like this...? What are the possible problems...? Column 3 - What is interesting to...?
- **CAF - C**onsider **A**ll **F**actors - Task: Write at least ten factors regarding the given situation, trying to consider all the factors.
- **APC - A**lternatives, **P**osibilities, and **C**hoices - The workbook is divided into three columns. Task: Column 1- Write at least ten possible alternatives for the given story or exercise. Column 2 - Write / separate five options from the alternatives that you wrote in Column 1. Column 3 - Write / separate three choices from the options listed in Column 2.
- **FIP - F**irst **I**mportant **P**riorities - It is a tool that applies to groups of students where the first task of students is to mark at least ten important priorities. In the second assignment students have to choose what is most important. So, we put the ten important priorities listed first into the voting. After the voting is done, we collect the points for each important priority and in the end, we choose three of the most important priorities that have won the most votes of the students.
- **OPV - O**ther **P**eople's **V**iews - Discussion with the students. Each student has the right to speak; each student gives their opinion on the topic being developed; what other people think outside of the class or stakeholders; everyone's opinion is respected, for example we analyze x students in the classroom. Interested parties in this case are: the student himself; other students; teacher; school employees; parents of students; parents of other students; the environment where he lives; etc.
- **C & S - C**onsequence & **S**equel - It is a tool for predicting and evaluating what might happen after making a decision. The worksheet is divided into three columns. Task: Write the forecast and estimate the consequences! Column 1- short-term (1-2 years); Column 2- medium term (2-5 years); column 3- long-term (over 5 years).
- **AGO - A**ims, **G**oals, and **O**bjectives - Goals are general direction; Goals are the ultimate destination; Objectives are popular points that can be accessed. The worksheet is divided into three columns. Column 1- Write for aims (What is the aim?); Column 2- Write for goals (What do we want to achieve ...?); Column 3-Write for objectives (What can we do ...?).

- **Rules** -Task: Put the rules to make life easier and better! When setting the rules, it is helpful for students if they use the tools: CAF and PMI. The purpose of the rules is to make the life of most people easier and better.
- **Planning** - Task: Think Before You Act! It is a thinking tool that includes: AGO, C&S, CAF, and PMI. The activity may last more than one lesson.
- **Decisions** - Task: Make decisions by thinking clearly and thoroughly! To make decisions, many other CoRT tools have to be considered, such as AGO; C & S; CAF; PMI; OPV; FIP; APC; as well as Rules.

Conclusions and recommendations

We are working to get to the surface of the positive side of applying Edward de Bono's thinking, strategies, and thinking programs.

We disclose the importance and methods of applying Edward de Bono's thinking, strategies, and programs, to contemporary teaching.

I recommend Edward de Bono's techniques, strategies, and programs, to be applied to our schools as well.

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