

Brad Barton's

Teaching with Magic Series

Volume 2

Colombo's Cognition

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Age Group Target: 1st – 12th Grade

Materials:

- Knowledge and understanding of the magic trick (included)
- Comprehensive Lesson Plan including script (included)

Introduction:

Teaching this lesson using magic requires a bit of practice, but only a bit. The explanation below, coupled with a visual demonstration illustrates how this lesson can be effective in teaching the **not sure** skills. Sample dialogue and steps are provided to get you started. This is written “movie-script” style where the italics give directions or offer unspoken information. (Some of this script should be said word for word, other parts of it can be improvised depending on the situation, age level, and type of students in your learning environment.)

You will love The Mystery of Colombo's Cognition®. It is so named because I first saw it on a Colombo murder mystery episode. I've seen many versions of it since. It is easy to learn and a piece-of-cake perform, but truly mystifying.

The nuts and bolts of the “Trick”

This is an easy, self-working trick with very little setup.

As the magician, you declare that you have “cognitive” powers beyond that of normal humans.

To prove it, you call for a student to come forward.

You produce an envelope held closed with a gold paper clip. Inside the envelope are three cards (red, blue, and yellow), a pencil, and a folded sheet of paper. (You will have previously removed this sheet of instructions.) You proceed as follows:

Remove the paper clip from the envelope and set the clip casually aside. Open the envelope towards you. (So your audience can't see what is inside.) Take out the pencil and put it casually behind your ear. Take out the red, blue, and yellow cards. (Leave the folded sheet of paper in the envelope.) Lay the cards out side by side. (Don't let your audience see the writing on the back of the blue card.) Set the envelope casually aside.

Take the pencil from behind your ear and, pointing with it to each card in turn, ask your student to identify the three colors.

Next, ask your subject to *tell* you which of *these three colors* he or she likes the best. (Don't ask your subject to *choose* or *pick* the color or your subject might pick the card up. *Never let people touch your illusions or equipment unless you specifically direct them to.*)

After your subject has chosen a color, make a big deal out of whether or not your subject is sure they are sure he or she likes like that color the best. Once your subject has settled on the choice, do one of the following:

- If blue is chosen, ask your student – or someone else in the audience – to turn over the *red* card. Then ask your student – or someone in the audience – to turn over the *yellow* card. Then ask your student to turn over the *blue* card and read aloud what is printed on the back of it! (*It reads, "You will choose blue."*)
- If red is chosen, hand your student the envelope and say, "Please take the folded sheet of paper out of the magic envelope and read what is written on it." (*It reads, "You will choose red."*)
- If yellow is chosen, hand your student the pencil and say, "Please read what is written on the magic pencil." (*It reads, "You will choose yellow."*)

As they stand there dumfounded, quickly – but nonchalantly – put everything back in the envelope. (Arrange it just as it was when you started so you will be ready for your next performance.)

Performing the Trick

Instructor:

Lay out the colored cards. Point to each one with the pencil

What color is this card?

Students:

Red

Instructor:

Good. What color is this card?

Students:

Blue

Instructor:

Right! What color is this card?

Students:

Yellow.

Instructor:

Excellent!

Call up a student from the class for the rest of the trick. Have the student choose a favorite color of the three.

Which of these three colors do you like the best: red, yellow, or blue?

If blue is chosen:

Instructor:

Are you absolutely sure? Because you can change your mind if you want to.

Student:

I'm sure. I choose blue.

Instructor:

Good. You have chosen blue.

Point to the yellow card with the pencil.

(*Student's name*), would you please turn over the yellow card?

Student:

Student walks over to the card and turns it over. It is blank.

Instructor:

Thank you.

Point to the red card with the pencil.

(*Student's name*), would you please turn over the red card?

Student:

Student walks over to the card and turns it over. It is blank.

Instructor:

Thank you (*student's name*). Now, please turn over the blue card and read out loud what is printed on the back.

Student:

(*Student's name*) reads the card: You will choose blue.

Instructor:

Wow! That's amazing!

If red is chosen:**Instructor:**

Are you absolutely sure? Because you can change your mind if you want to.

Student:

I'm sure. I choose red.

Instructor:

Good. You have chosen red.

Hand (student's name) the envelope.

Now, please take the folded sheet out of the envelope and read out loud what is printed on it.

Student:

Reads: You will choose red.

Instructor:

Wow! That's amazing!

If yellow is chosen:**Instructor:**

Are you absolutely sure? Because you can change your mind if you want to.

Student:

I'm sure. I choose yellow.

Instructor:

Good. You have chosen yellow.

Hand (student's name) the pencil.

Please read what is printed on the magic pencil.

Student:

Reads: You will choose yellow.

Instructor:

Wow! That's amazing!

Put Magic in your Message

We can teach many things with magic. This illusion can teach children the three primary colors: red, blue, and yellow. It can also demonstrate to adult audiences that people naturally want to help and will usually do what you want if you just ask. It can also show how good people feel when we make them “right” and tell them how amazing they are!

When you teach audiences or individuals how to do this illusion, you can also teach the principles of “misdirection.” Misdirection is the key to deception and trickery. Misdirection is achieved by drawing attention away from that which *is* important and onto that which is *not* important – by treating that which *is* important as though it is *not* important and that which is *not* important as though it *is* important.

If you teach this illusion, please sell or give your audience the illusion so they can perform it; otherwise you’ll just be revealing the “secret”, which is unfair to other magicians and speakers *and their audiences*.

You can teach many important concepts with magic. Whether you perform for your grandkids; or teach or speak professionally on cruises, at educational conferences, business conventions, youth camps, or the many other places where magic is enjoyed; *let me help you put magic in your message!* Contact me at brad@bradspeaks.com or 801-791-9017.

“More truth is comprehended through
emotion than through intellect.”

-C.S. Lewis

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