Aims

1. Explore varieities of magical thinking
2. Distinguish different approaches to it
3. Come up with possible explanations of magical thinking

Opener

Examples on screen "Would you. . . "

10 minutes

Class activity: find, classify and explain examples of superstitions

- Students work in groups of three.

  - data collectors
  - classifiers
  - explainers

- data collectors: collect examples on index cards – goal 30 examples

- classifiers: classify into groups based on similarities – three or four main categories

- explainers: come up with ideas as to what might explain why we find these modes of thought helpful, or where they might come from

- Discuss results

25 minutes

Slideshow

My classification scheme and possible explanations:

- Essentialism: a side effect of categorization

- Words and thoughts have power: a side effect of the magic of language

- Agents are everywhere: a side effect of social cognition

25 minutes

Conclusions

Question to discuss: is belief in magic a good thing or not?

10 minutes

George Matthews