

Magical Misjudgements & Media Literacy



Topic: Exploring how the production of a text can be dishonest **Course:** ENGXX

Time: 75 min

Teacher: Roger Wilkinson

Before class prep:

- Make sure the video and website links are still working

Materials Needed:

- Playing cards
- computer and projector

Learning Outcomes:


Students can:

- analyze media content from a critical point of view
- produce their own *text* with a specific goal for a specific audience

Specific Curriculum Expectations:

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Activity	Time	Description
Minds On	15 min	<u>Card Magic Video:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play the following video by David Blaine: David Blaine: Mentalism Tricks• You can then have a brief discussion with the students about how they think the tricks are done and list 3 possibilities:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ (Option 1) The person is magical or psychic!○ (Option 2) The person is just lucky!○ (Option 3) The person is cheating!• Promise the students that you will show them how to do these tricks!• But first tell students that we are going to use an experiment to determine how hard it is or isn't to randomly guess chosen cards.

Working On It	30 min	<p><u>Class Experiment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain that the probability of guessing a card correctly out of 52 cards is 1/52 ● Load the following website on the projector http://random-cards.com/random-cards/ ● Instruct students to think of a card in their head, then click the card on the site to generate a random card. If the card they have in their head appears on the screen they should raise their hand and the class should record this as a HIT and record the other students as misses. ● After a few rounds, have the class add up all of the trials and hits and use this information to calculate the experimental probability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (Number of hits) / (total number of trials)
Consolidation & Connecting	30 min	<p><u>Consolidation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revisit the 3 possible explanations about how the tricks are done. The results of the lesson should allow you to eliminate possibility 2; there is no way someone is THAT lucky! <hr/> <p>***Read the “Going Beyond the Curriculum” section below before revealing how the trick is done if you wish to expose students to topics outside of the standard curriculum.***</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Now explain how the basic trick is done. The David Blaine video just involves repeating the guessing of cards with many, many people until you have some hits, then only putting the videos with successful guesses in your magic special! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The teacher may also demonstrate the method of the final trick in the video by preparing a deck of cards with one card facing the opposite direction, then go around the class having students guess cards until someone guesses the card you’ve turned the opposite way then have them open the deck to reveal the card. ● Have a discussion about how doing this is misleading to the audience and have students offer suggestions of other types of media that do this. An example is provided below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○  Students Vs. Mexicans: Cultural Appropriation ● Students should be engaged to think about the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why would someone produce such a video? ○ What is the intention behind the video? ○ What will people who don’t know about the editing trick think about the video? ○ What did you originally think about the video?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have students design their own idea for such a video ● Challenge students to make some of their own videos that rely on this type of editing for HW
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Going Beyond the Curriculum

- Given that the students have ruled out option 2 - The person is just lucky! - as an option, ask them to think about what probabilities they would assign to the other two possibilities:
 - (Option 1) The person is magical or psychic!
 - (Option 3) The person is cheating!
- The students will assign probabilities, or likelihoods, concerning options (1) and (3) based on their prior knowledge and experiences, which allows you to introduce the idea of *Bayes' Theorem*. Given diverse experiences some students will think that option (1) being psychic, is just as likely as option (3) cheating.
- Now explain how the basic trick is done. The David Blaine video just involves repeating the guessing of cards with many, many people until you have some hits, then only putting the videos with successful guesses in your magic special!
 - The teacher may also demonstrate the method of the final trick in the video by preparing a deck of cards with one card facing the opposite direction, then go around the class having students guess cards until someone guesses the card you've turned the opposite way then have them open the deck to reveal the card.
- Now ask students to reevaluate the likelihood of options (1) and (3) given the new information that they have. They will now be updating their probabilities given new data and knowledge just like Bayes' theorem suggests.
- Have a brief discussion about how doing this is misleading to the audience and have students offer suggestions of other types of media that do this.
- Suggest that students watch the following video on Bayes' theorem for further exploration: [▶ How To Update Your Beliefs Systematically - Bayes' Theorem](#)

Assessment Tools

- Observation/Conversation - Consolidation conversation after the trick is revealed to see if students realize how this type of text production is misleading
- Homework - see if students can now produce their own text in a similar fashion

Suggested Homework

- Have students create their own text with a specific purpose and share it with the class and maybe the school, if there are video announcements.