

Talcott Mountain Science Center

Topic Science & Magic

Home School Science

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Home Links

Date Oct 28, 2023

Here's some information about the activities your student did with us. Links at the bottom will help you explore further. Enjoy!

What did we do (content, skills, data collection)?

We focused on a classic trick - "cups and balls" and several variations. It is one of the oldest examples of stage magic, dating at least to the 1400s if not 2,500 BC from evidence in an Egyptian burial chamber. It involves at least three variations and can be done with plain old pompoms from the craft store and 9 oz red plastic cups.

We watched and practiced all three variations, looking for the essential parts of magic: sleight, misdirection, illusion and gimmicks, and stressed patter (the story you tell during the trick) and emphasized practice.

How did we do it (materials & methods)?

We demo'd the three different variations of the trick and discussed possible explanations for all three, compared these theories and tested them by changing the trick according to these theories to see if they were correct.

We rehearsed and practiced the three "discovered" variations, doing them step by step to build the basic trick.

We each then performed and tried personal variations and stories for each of the students.

We used video playback (freeze frame, slow motion) to investigate other performers' cups and balls tricks.

Where can we find out more?

Links:

Figurines for the cups and balls "final load" (students will know what this means)
<https://www.michaels.com/shop/kids/toys-games/figurines/mammals>

Cups & Balls demo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zUbxAAGCtQ>