

Three-color Mind Control Notes

THE TRICK (easier to carry out than to describe)

1. In one hand, fan out three sheets of colored paper, each having a different color. Yellow, green, and orange, for example. Display them clearly to the audience and announce the names of the colors.
2. Call on a volunteer from the audience and tell them that while they might believe they have freedom of choice, they do not.
3. Ask the volunteer to choose one color from the three you have. Assure them you have, in fact, already made the choice for them.
4. When they name the color of their choice, stop, take a deep breath, and ask them if that was really the color they wanted to choose. Sometimes volunteers feel rushed and, having made one choice, suddenly wish they had made a different choice. (Sell everyone that you were really hoping they had chosen a different color.)
5. Once they've made their final selection, reveal the evidence that you knew beforehand the color they would choose. You will appear to be clairvoyant.

Depending on the color they chose, the evidence will be either:

- a. Turning their sheet over, revealing a statement like "I predict yellow." Then revealing no message on the back of the other two sheets.
- b. Turning on the classroom overhead projector, revealing the message, "I predict green."
- c. Pulling a sign down off your wall or bulletin board and turning it over, revealing the message, "I predict orange."

THE SETUP

1. Prepare three sheets of card. I had pieces of fluorescent paper laminated. I actually laminated a few sheets so that the stack would be opaque. On the back of the yellow sheet, I printed the message, "I predict yellow." The green and orange sheets were opaque but blank on the back.
2. Create a transparency for the overhead. The message, "I predict green." Before you perform the trick, place it on the overhead, ready to go.
3. Set an "I predict orange" sign somewhere in the classroom, obscured but easily revealed. I use a posted bell schedule or list of administrators/counselors. It's a staple of the classroom topography; no one would suspect it would be part of a trick.

The point is that you are going to be ready for whichever color the volunteer picks.

IMPORTANT: You only do this trick once per class.

Give students one day to figure it out. The next day, ask them how you did it. If no one figures it out, repeat the trick.

The hardest I ever laughed in class was when my AP class busted me when I did this trick for them. They saw right through it—the first time! Luckily, I hadn't recently enjoyed a Big Gulp.