

Conjuring up creativity: Can magic tricks hold the key to unlocking children's creative thinking?

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New findings from researchers at the University of Hertfordshire show that learning to perform magic tricks makes children more creative.

Published in *PeerJ*, the study was led by psychologist, and member of the Inner Magic Circle, Professor Richard Wiseman.

During the experiment, a group 10 to 11-year-old children completed a [creativity](#) test that involved coming up with multiple uses for an everyday object. They were then taught how to perform a simple trick, in which they showed someone a cube with different colored sides, asked the person to secretly choose a color, and then magically revealed their person's choice. They then completed the creativity test a second time. Compared to another group of children who took part in an art lesson, learning the trick significantly boosted the children's creativity scores.

Magic tricks often involve lateral thinking, and the research team suspect that learning to perform them encourages children to think outside of the box.

Professor Wiseman noted, "There is a widely recognized need to enhance creative thinking from a young age. Learning [magic tricks](#) would be a cost effective, practical, and fun way of teachers and parents boosting [children](#)'s creativity. Perhaps in the future, magic will become part of the school curriculum!"

The benefits of creative subjects in education have been widely recognized, but this is the first study to experimentally explore the impact of learning [magic](#) on creativity. Researchers hope that future work will start to identify the types of tricks that are especially beneficial.

The peer-reviewed work was carried out by Professor Wiseman, Amy

Wiles and Professor Caroline Watt (Edinburgh University), and published in the academic journal *PeerJ*.

More information: Richard Wiseman et al. Conjuring up creativity: the effect of performing magic tricks on divergent thinking, *PeerJ* (2021). [DOI: 10.7717/peerj.11289](https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.11289)

Provided by University of Hertfordshire

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