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The Use of Magic in Optics in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Why use Magic for teaching Optics? Magicians know that, once the surprise has worn off, the audience will seek to understand how the trick works. The aim of every teacher is to interest their students, and a magic trick will bring them to ask how? And why? And how can I create one myself? In this article we consider a project I gave in 2006. I summarize the project scopes, the student theoretical studies, their "new" Grand Illusion realization. I conclude by the weak and strong points of this approach... but let's not reveal all the secrets just yet! Whatever the student's professional ambitions, they will be able to see the impact that originality and creativity have when combined with an interest in one's work. The students know how to "perform" a magic trick for their family and friends, a trick that they will be able to explain and so enjoy a certain amount of success. Sharing a mathematical/physical demonstration is not easy and that they do so means that they will have worked on, understood and are capable of explaining this knowledge. Isn't this the aim of all teaching?

KEYWORDS

Optics, Ray Tracing, Use Magic for Teaching, Higher Education, Engineer, Educational Method, Grand Illusion, Hodges

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