



Preparing skillful, team-playing, out-of-the-box thinkers!

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Who's Telling the Story?

By Kim Kempton

Every good OM long-term solution involves a good story - a plot that leads the judges and audience through the solution while introducing interesting characters and evoking emotions like humor. Developing a theme, plot and ultimately script can be challenging for some teams. As a coach, help your team by breaking the process into manageable tasks. Here is one way you could go about it.

Brainstorm Themes

Use a spontaneous challenge or team building exercise to brainstorm themes. Vote on 2-3 favorites. Next have the team revisit those themes. Can it be easily adapted to the selected problem? How can it be represented in costumes or props? How can it be enhanced?

Define Characters

Everyone on the team needs to be a part of the solution. Do you have a student who does not want a speaking role? What type of character can be created that contributes to the plot, but does not require lines?

Develop a storyline

Every good script will have an introduction, action leading up to the climax and then additional action leading to the conclusion. How will the team integrate drama, humor or the all-important team STYLE into their plot? Start simple and allow the team to add layers and interest.

Write a script

Encourage one or two students to write a first draft and then work with the group to adjust and improve. Don't forget to be flexible. Remember that many teams will continue to improve and adjust their solution until the day of the competition!



The STEMInists are Back!

Sign-up for their workshop at Odyssey Day 2019! Page 2



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Team-building is key to success in the spontaneous portion of the competition. Page 3

For More Information

*CTOM is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization
dedicated to Odyssey of the Mind in CT*

Please visit our website at www.ctom.org



Team Tips

(*ESPECIALLY* for NEW coaches)

Planning a Meeting

Be sure to create a simple agenda, including times for each meeting. Select specific activities that you would like to cover, similar to:

1. Teaching the team skills such as sewing, painting, cutting balsa, engineering, drama ...
2. Do at least one spontaneous problem.
3. Include a fun activity (can be silly) or snack (mmmm...) for socializing (which is also team building!)
4. Brainstorm solutions to parts of the Long-Term problem -- keep paper and pencil handy for ideas... and doodles.
5. Work on Long-Term problem requirements (which might mean dividing to conquer).



Recognize the Work

Reward the team for meeting intermediate goals (ice cream, or a half hour of free time or an extra 'hands-on' activity).

Be a Role Model

A strong team is grounded in a strong coach. Be sure to model good behavior for your team members, and always encourage respect, understanding and compassion.

Evaluate and Improve

At the conclusion of each meeting, lead the team through a brief evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses:

- What issues did you encounter today?
- What came easily for each team member?
- What did you do well?
- Where could you improve?
- Is there a skill or concept that the team needs to review / learn?



CTOM - 2019 Odyssey Day

Sat, Nov 16, 2019 8:30 AM EST

Engleman Hall

Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven

Odyssey Day is an optional (and free!) event that consists of skill building workshops for team members. It is also a chance for coaches to learn. Each team attends three 50 minute workshops.

Don't worry if you or your whole team cannot attend. Even sending one team member and a parent can positively impact your team.

Space is limited and teams will be registered strictly on a first come, first served basis.

REMINDER: Registered teams will be invited to choose their workshops via an invitation from the SCHED system starting on Monday, November 11 at 8pm.

NOTE: CTOM Merchandise (including last year's pins) will be available for purchase on Odyssey Day!

Spontaneous Spotlight

The Spontaneous portion of the competition (worth up to 100 points) requires that the team solve a problem they have never seen, before a team of judges. Helping your team learn one another's skills and develop a collaborative spirit are critical for teams to perform well under pressure. Below are some 'fun' team building spontaneous to use with a new team.



All Aboard

Tape a 20" x 20" square on the floor.

You will have 8 minutes to complete this problem. The competition will end when you are finished or time has ended. You may talk or ask questions at any time; however, time continues. In front of you is a square. Your challenge is to get the entire team to stand with both feet on the square and remain off the ground for the chorus of a song. If a team member touches the ground, all members must step off the square and begin again. (If the team does well, create a smaller square (15") or challenge them even more with a paper plate or a piece of paper.)



Traveling Circle

Grab a hula hoop and ask the team to stand in a circle!

You will have 4 minutes to make a hula hoop travel completely around the circle. All participants join hands and form a circle. Two participants drop hands and put their arms through a hula hoop. They then join hands again. The hula hoop dangles from their arms. The objective of the game is to send the hula hoop completely around the circle and return it to the starting point without releasing hands. This means that each person has to go through the hula hoop as it makes its way around the circle. Try two hula hoops traveling in opposite directions - one of the hula hoops will have to travel through the other hoop. You cannot let go of your teammates hands or use your fingers at all! It takes co-operation with your partners. Once experienced, add more hula hoops or other limitations to enhance the challenge!

Where DID you get THAT?

Always remind your team that Odyssey rewards creativity with points. Encourage team members to look around their homes and communities for unique materials that can be used in creative ways to enhance a costume, set or prop. Encourage team members to bring something new to every meeting. How can we use this? How can it be altered? What could we do with 100 of these?

Please teach the team to be respectful and ALWAYS ask permission before taking anything...even from a dumpster!

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Help your team to develop their public speaking skills, avoid filler words in your spontaneous answers, learn about each other, PLUS identify skills that may be vital as they develop their long-term solution. Encourage your team to play the [Ah... Um... Game!](#)

How to Play The Ah, Um Game:

Sit the team in a circle and ask for a volunteer to go first. The team member must talk to their group about themselves for two full minutes without saying the following taboo words: "Ah", "Um", "Like", or "You Know", or pausing for 5 seconds. As soon as a taboo word is said, the person sits down and the clock is reset. Then the next team member stands and begins. As the team improves, ask them to talk about their teammates and what unique skill they can use in OM. Help students to see and recognize the ability of each team member and capitalize on the strengths of ALL! You can also use the same game to help develop plots, characters and brainstorm solutions! What do you know about Arm & Hammer Baking Soda?

A note about Clarifications

Remember to check for problem specific clarifications early and often. There are two types of clarifications: General and Team-Specific.

General Clarifications amend or further explain a long-term problem's limitations. They take precedence over the limitations listed in the problem and the rules in the Program Guide. It's important that teams stay current on all general clarifications issued throughout the year.

Team-Specific Clarifications

allow teams to submit a clarification request that asks if its ideas for a solution are allowed or if they meet the problem's requirements. These clarifications are kept confidential.

To submit a clarification, teams must login at the Members Area of <https://www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications/>.

The deadline for submitting clarification requests is February 15, 2020.

Rules of Engagement

To ensure your team has a productive and positive experience, we encourage you to begin to establish "Rules of Engagement" that apply for team meetings, work sessions and spontaneous challenges. Establishing rules will assist your team in realizing that criticism of the ideas of others undermines teamwork and prevents good ideas from appearing and evolving.

Empowering the team to make their own set of rules gives them ownership that will promote their following the rules by choice. It also begins teaching them that in OM they are encouraged – required, actually – to do all of the work themselves!

Suggest RULE #1: All ideas should be allowed and never criticized!

What is Outside Assistance?

Students learn best when they complete tasks on their own, and they develop a sense of pride and increased self-esteem when they go beyond what is expected. Although no one may assist the team members in solving the problem, it is not Outside Assistance to teach the team HOW to DO something. It is also not Outside assistance to use something that was created by someone who is not on the team — provided that it was not created to help solve the problem in any way or is being considered for score. For example, if a school has an "OotM closet" where it keeps materials used from past years, future teams may select and use those items without penalty. If the materials were created by the members of the current team, they will be considered team-created. Otherwise, they will be judged as commercially produced, and should be included on the cost form accordingly.

Parents and other supporters may act as tutors or instructors, but they must not make suggestions on how to solve the problem. For example, a parent may teach the members how to sew if they ask, but cannot sew and/or design a costume for the team's solution.

Dates, Details & The Drill

Key Dates

Saturday, November 16, 2019
Odyssey Day

December 2019 (Tentative)
Coaching Spontaneous Webinar (Training)

Saturday, January 11, 2020
Coach Training

Saturday, January 12, 2020
Tournament Registration deadline (Fee: \$225, after this date, a late fee of \$50 applies)

Friday, January 31, 2020
Tournament Registration closes – No additional teams accepted

Saturday, March 7, 2020
Judge Training

Saturday, March 21, 2020
State Tournament

Saturday, March 28, 2020
World Finals (Coach) meeting

Details

One of the most overlooked and important documents is the *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*, accessible from the CTOM website. Topics include: coaching a team, penalty categories, forms, spontaneous tips and much more.

The Drill

The CTOM Board, problem captains and various community members are here to support you, so feel free to ask questions (a recurring theme)!

CTOM is here to provide you with any information or guidance you may need as you proceed along your coaching odyssey!