



Welcome to Odyssey of the Mind. This is your coaches training.

Sort of...it is the experience of coaching that will actually train you. This will just take you into a fog of important considerations and information. If you come out the other side excited about getting started, and with different kinds of questions than when you began, then you are ready to coach



A successful training will leave you here



The rest of the journey is up to you.

What you will need to complete it.



Perspective



Preparation

Perspective: The coaches puzzle

A coach has two problems. This is your first one.

Open the window of opportunity for your team.
Keep it open.



Above all else...remember
STEP BACK + ALLOW
Let them fly out that window.



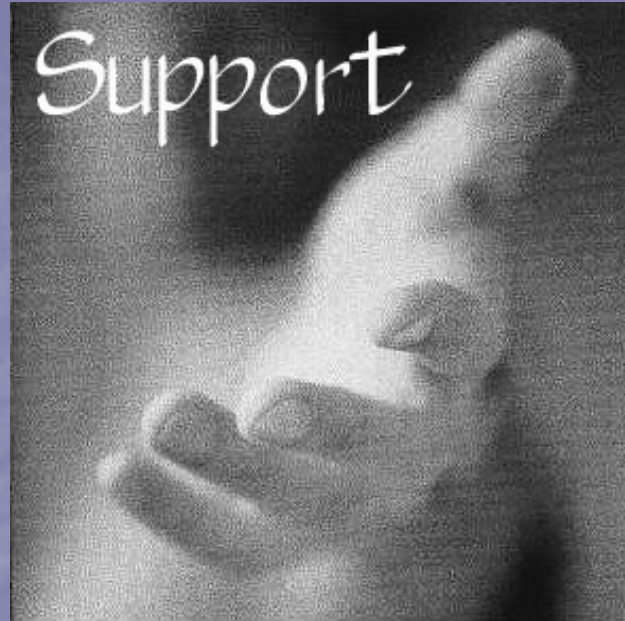
To soar

and



to fail

Perspective is balance



To find it,
familiarize yourself with the goals of Odyssey of the Mind



Deconstructing the gestalt: the goals of Odyssey of the Mind

To promote the keys to a
life-time of learning

- **intrinsic motivation**
 - hard work can be fun
 - curiosity can yield results
- **critical thought**
- **self-reliance**
 - purpose
- **responsibility**
 - pride
 - integrity
 - reflection

These are nourished by your

To provide practical uses
for those keys

- **brainstorming skills**
 - teamwork
 - communication
 - creativity
- **research + development**
 - analysis
- **organizational skills**
 - resource allocation
 - time management
- **planning strategies**

These are why you need

PERSPECTIVE

PREPARATION

Preparation: Where to start

1

Read the Program Guide. Read the problems. Read them again. Your familiarity with them will allow you to shepherd the team's work.



2

Sit down and ask yourself questions. Create a schedule and a commitment. Find a place to meet, a workplace, a place to store things.

3

Meet with the team and its parents. Explain the program. Make your expectations clear. Discuss funding, timelines, volunteer duties.



4

Collect spontaneous problems and materials. Make copies of the Program Guide and the problems, for each member of the team.

5

Relax

The **CONTENT** of the team meetings is not your problem
Yours is the **PROCESS**



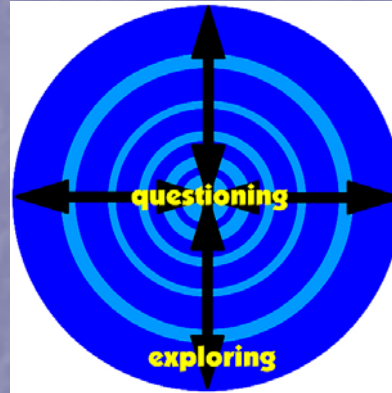
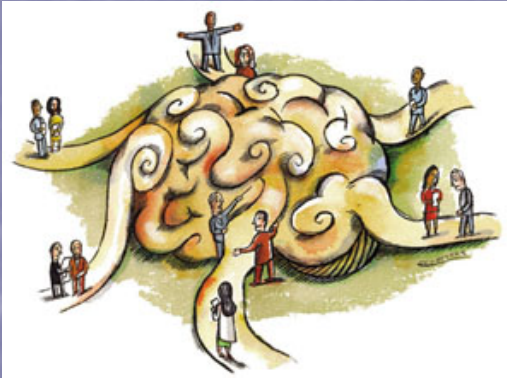
Preparation: Process?...what process?

It happens at the meetings. It is your second problem

Show your team the tools to solve any problem.

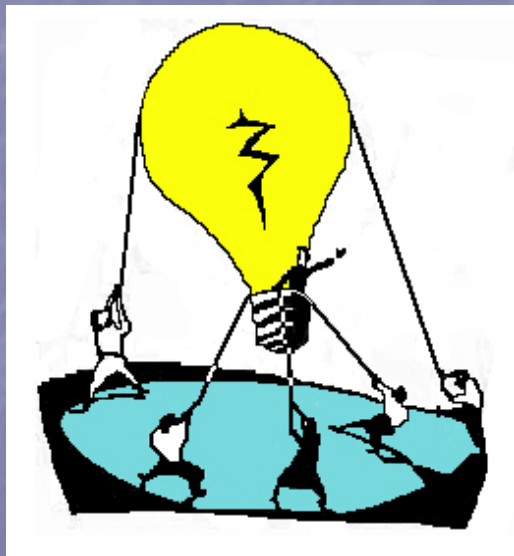
Remind your kids to use them. Constantly.

Brainstorming
Communication



Analysis
Planning

Teamwork
Leadership



Creativity
Taking risks

The process is your playground: avoid Outside Assistance

Preparation: Outside Assistance

What is it?

Participation in the **CONTENT** of a team's work.

A coach's participation in the **content** of a team's solution is limited to observation, questions, and the ability to apply the tools of the **process** to a situation. Understanding the goals of Odyssey of the Mind is your most powerful weapon, and patience your closest ally, in resisting the natural tendency to help kids "succeed".

How do I avoid it?

It's easy...don't do this!!



How ELSE do I avoid it?



The team will make mistakes.
So will you.
It's OK

Making observations about the content
is not Outside Assistance.
Offering a solution is.



Something you could do in
minutes will take them hours
They're learning. Be
patient...pay attention

Ask questions. Lots of questions.
Take them back to the process:
discuss planning, teamwork, strategy.



They will surprise you.
Anticipate.
Do not provide.

Encourage planning ahead.
Are you ready? What do you need?
What could go wrong?
Remind them to think it through.



They will take risks
Good for them.
Discuss the possibilities.
Period.

It is their problem.
Their success, and their failure.
NOT YOURS.
Be supportive...it is about learning.



**There is no coach in these pictures.
Just the kids, and their content.**

But BOTH have been influenced by:

KNOWLEDGE: this is their responsibility.

TOOLS: brainstorming, teamwork, critical thinking

QUESTIONS: hundreds of them

If you are feeling perplexed, dazzled or dumfounded by the fact they ever finished any solution and actually made it to a tournament...you're not alone.

And you know why Odyssey of the Mind is fun,
challenging, chaotic, painful and inspiring.

Congratulations!!!

You have found **PERSPECTIVE**.

PREPARATION will resolve itself as needed.

These nuts and bolts will help

Nuts and Bolts: Commitment

Annual Financial Commitment

FEES: National membership (currently \$135/year -this provides access to the long term problems... with limitations, it allows for multiple teams for a sponsor, if the sponsor is a school)

State fee (currently \$65/national membership)

Regional tournament registration (currently \$55/team...note the word "TEAM" -not membership)

PROBLEM BUDGET: Each long term problem has a budget for ALL the material that is on stage during a team's performance. (varies by problem, and ranges from \$125 to \$150...some materials are excluded; others have a predetermined value...for donations and used or recycled items, garage sale prices apply)

The actual cost of the materials used during the creation of a solution could be twice as much, depending on the team and it's desire to experiment with materials and ideas.

TRAVEL EXPENSES: Teams that advance to the State tournament must consider gas, lodging, and food (about \$800 for a team and it coach) Teams advancing to World must also pay airfare and shipping (about \$8000 for a team and its coach)

ODDS'n'ENDS: There will probably be incidental costs: snacks, materials for spontaneous problems, maybe a field trip (\$0 to \$200)

Nuts and Bolts: Commitment

Annual Time Commitment

COACHING: Varies according to YOUR schedule, and the team's requirements to meet the tournament deadline (1 to 3 hours/week until the winter/Christmas break...after the break, as the tournament approaches, it can reach 6 to 10 hours a week, or more)

VOLUNTEERS: Odyssey of the Mind is an all-volunteer program. Without these requirements, there would be no tournaments (One adult judge is required from each team at the Regional tournament. This is a two day commitment: one for training, and all day at the tournament. Teams that advance to State must provide a trained judge, a person who is at least 16 for two hours at our region's volunteer assignment, and a responsible adult to be the door monitor for the performance following your team -about 20 minutes)

PARENTS: Some of your parents will feel at loose ends because they cannot help their kids. Give them things to do. (Organize and implement a snack schedule, transport props to the tournament, pursue and organize fundraising activities)

Nuts and Bolts: Scoring

Tournament scoring measures both the **CONTENT** of a team's accomplishments, and its use of the problem solving **PROCESS**

A team receives three scores at the tournament.

Long Term

A team's solution is performed before an audience and a team of judges; a score is tabulated based on the criteria of the problem, and penalties deducted for violating limitations. The maximum score is 200 points

Style

The team elaborates its solution by showcasing its skills or creativity in 5 Style choices. The identification of these choices are the responsibility of the team, although some must be selected from general categories within the problem. Style is scored right along side Long Term, and is worth a maximum of 50 points

Spontaneous

"Spont" is a short problem known only to the Problem Captain until tournament day. Teams solve spontaneous problems without their coaches in the room. It is the icing on the cake, a test of teamwork, quick and flexible thinking, and individual creativity. It is worth a maximum of 100 points

Spont is one area where a coach can be very directive. Learning how to approach, analyze, and solve spontaneous problems teaches both content and process. No meeting should be without at least one.

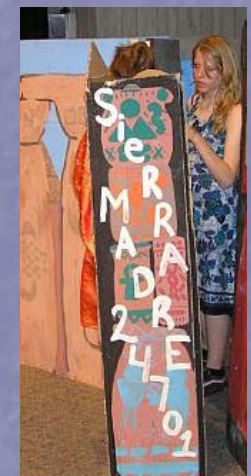
Scoring: Long Term

D. Scoring

1. Creativity of the overall performance (originality, effectiveness)1 to 20 points
 2. Quality of the performance (audibility, movement, stage presence)1 to 20 points
 3. The Muse3 to 50 points
 - a. Quality of visual appearance1 to 10 points
 - b. Creativity of the performance1 to 20 points
 - c. How well her art form is reflected in the performance.....1 to 20 points
 4. The Moments of Inspiration.....2 to 30 points
 - a. The required characters freeze when inspired.....0, 5, or 10 points
 - b. Creativity of how the muse inspires the two required characters (2 @ 1 to 10 points).....2 to 20 points
 5. Originality of the way the real character's positive achievement is portrayed to have come to be1 to 20 points
 6. The team-created character.....2 to 30 points
 - a. Originality of the character1 to 15 points
 - b. Originality of the way its positive achievement is portrayed to have come to be1 to 15 points
 7. The two required works of art.....4 to 30 points
 - a. Creativity (2 @ 1 to 10 points)2 to 20 points
 - b. Effectiveness in the performance (2 @ 1 to 5 points).....2 to 10 points
- Maximum possible: 200 points

E. Penalties (Deducted from percentaged scores.)

1. "Spirit of the Problem" violation (each offense).....-1 to -100 points
 2. Unsportsmanlike conduct (each offense)-1 to -100 points
 3. Incorrect or missing membership sign-1 to - 15 points
 4. Outside assistance (each offense)-1 to -100 points
 5. Over cost limit-1 to -100 points
 6. Overtime: -5 points for every 10 seconds or fraction thereof
overtime limit (example: 27 seconds over = -15 points).....maximum -30 points
 7. Real character does not meet specifications.....zero score for D5 only
- Omission of scored problem requirements carries no penalty except loss of score.*



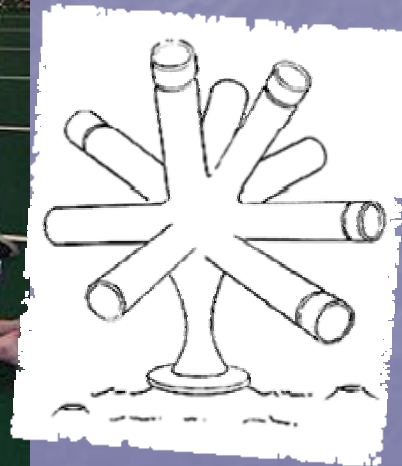
F. Style (Elaboration of the problem solution; use three copies of the Style Form from the 2007-2008 *Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide*)

- 1. Creative use of materials in a costume1 to 10 points
- 2. Visual artistic quality of a prop or a designated part of the stage set1 to 10 points
- 3. (Free choice of team)1 to 10 points
- 4. (Free choice of team)1 to 10 points
- 5. Overall effect of the four style elements in the performance1 to 10 points



.....1 to 10 points
.....1 to 10 points
.....1 to 10 points
.....1 to 10 points
.....possible: 50 points

Style



Spontaneous

Nuts and Bolts: Considerations

Paperwork

Teams are responsible for their own paperwork. (Coaches of Division I teams can write for the little ones). Make sure your team understands its importance to the judges: some of it is "accountability" (the Outside Assistance form, the Materials Value form), and some of it will influence how the judges see content (the judge's list, any research paperwork, the Style form)

THE PAPERWORK IS BOTH CONTENT and PROCESS

Clarifications

Study the long term problem. Its criteria and the limitations reveal its "jumping off point". But if anything about it remains unclear, or if the team is uncertain about whether an idea meets the criteria or violates the limitations, do not hesitate to remind your team about the clarification process. In general, if the problem doesn't say you can't do it, then you can. But if it feels too close to call, then rely a clarification. Don't assume.

EVEN IF YOU DON'T ASK FOR ONE, REVIEW THEM REGULARLY.

<http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications/default.php>

Rehearsals

Time them. Discuss set-up strategies and stage presence. Critique the content: tell them what you did not understand about their performance. Encourage refinement. Find some audiences.

KEEP THEM FUN: FOLLOW THE TEAM'S LEAD.

Experts

An expert can be anyone with knowledge that the team thinks it needs. Generally, they can talk about or demonstrate anything to the kids, unless it's related specifically to their content.

IT IS OA TO TELL YOUR KIDS THEY NEED ONE: USE THE PROCESS

Parents

Tell them all about the program. Tell them what they can do to help, and emphasize what they cannot do, even if it seems like help. Most, if not all, of them will be confused the first year. Tell them to let it go: the tournament will help them understand.

There ARE things they can do to help.

**OFFERING IDEAS ABOUT THE PROBLEM OR THE TEAM
IS NOT ONE OF THEM!!**

Tournament Day

It is a competition, and everyone hopes to win. But it is also a part of the process. See as many performances as possible with your team. Enjoy them. Learn from them.

Remind everyone: the team is here because it solved its problem!!!!

CELEBRATE THE TRIUMPH.

Closure

Remember to have one last meeting

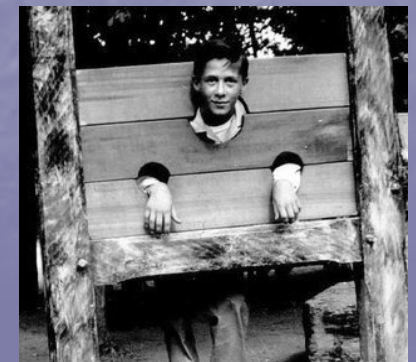
REVIEW, RECOLLECT, ASSESS. PLAN FOR NEXT YEAR.

Team Dynamics

Personalities: they come with baggage. It will scatter across a meeting one day, blocking the way forward.

Each team has its own assortment.

**YOUR PERSPECTIVE WILL
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**



Nuts and Bolts: The Wall

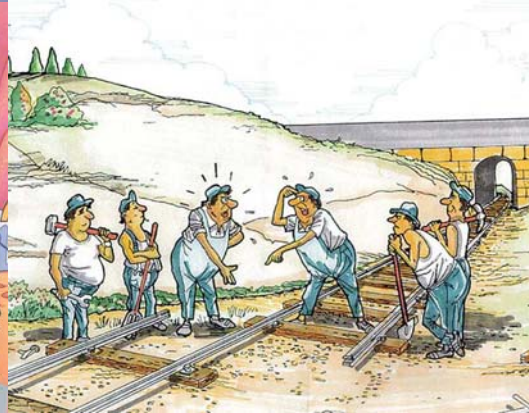
At some point, a thread in the fabric of the process will snag on something, bunching content, time, and personalities up into a wall of apathy, confusion, or frustration



Make a monster:
when it's all just
too much



The illusion:
when problem and
solution collide



Oops:
when the best laid plans
aren't



The house of stone:
when one idea
becomes a fortress

It is the moment when what the team has learned shows its weaknesses; a moment when their purpose and confidence falter...when the process must yield to your compassion without surrendering to it.

It is a moment when a coach is needed most;
when your **preparation** and your **perspective** become one,
defining the experience.

What to do when your team hits the wall

Practice spontaneous

Find an expert

Go back to the problem

Assign homework

Get a Clarification

Go on a field trip

Listen

Make some cookies

It is an open ended problem.
There is not just one answer.

You and your team will find a solution.



The LA Basin region exists for you. But we have deadlines to make our planning run as smoothly as possible. You will receive email notifications of them. The information will also be posted on our website.

Pay attention: avoid the penalties.



Our regional mailbox
la_odyssey@earthlink.net

Please be sure that this address will not be blocked by any spam filters you may be using.

We will use it to send you regional news. Use it to ask any questions you may have.



That's it.

Read the Program Guide

Remember:

Laugh at yourself.
Celebrate the experience.
Be respectful, open-minded,
flexible, and adaptable.
Be enthusiastic.



Ask questions.

Have fun.