


**TX Odyssey
Coaches' Training
Primary Team Coach Training**



Prepared by
Glenna Mathews

Former OMER
herself, now
coaching her
children's team

Helms
Elementary



Odyssey of the Mind

What To Expect From The Program



What To Expect

Primary Teams

- The intent of Primary teams is a non-competitive learning platform for teams and coaches
 - Building skills for future success in OOTM and life
 - Learning what it means to work as a team
 - Building self confidence
- Adjust your expectations and timelines
- The tournament is an exhibition, not a scored competition
- Celebrate the minor milestones



What To Expect Timeline

- Fall
 - Build a team
 - Start regular meetings (weekly or other)
- Mid-November
 - **Register for the regional tournament**
 - Start recruiting your tournament judge and volunteer(s)
- December
 - Buckle down on the long-term problem solution
 - **Register your tournament judge**
- January
 - Plan your presentation
 - **Pay tournament fee, Register your volunteer(s)**
- February
 - Practice your presentation
 - **Regional coaches conference call**
- March
 - **Regional Tournament – early March**



What To Expect

Getting Started

- Expect Chaos
 - Young children at the end of the day have lots of energy to burn
 - Diversify your meeting agenda
- Start simple
 - Do some spontaneous problems
 - OOTM Philosophy
 - Fundamentals of brainstorming
 - Chose a team name
 - Develop team dynamics
 - Baby steps
- Plan backwards
 - How much “productivity” is reasonably accomplished in one meeting
 - Revise your meeting schedule or cadence if needed
- Breathe and cut yourself some slack



What To Expect

Tournament Prep

- Paperwork
 - Who should fill out the forms?
 - What forms need to be filled out?
 - When should the forms be completed?
 - Where can you find the forms?
 - How should the forms be filled out?
 - How many copies should you bring?
 - Why are the forms needed?
- Planning logistics
 - Transportation of students
 - Transportation of materials
 - Coach's call before the tournament
- Review style and scoring guidelines
 - Although Primary teams are not scored, it is worth reviewing the point assignment areas to gain familiarity in what to look for in your team and other team's presentations
 - Higher point values may help drive team focus on one component or another



- Practice
 - Setting up the displays
 - Getting dressed (if costumes are a part of the presentation)
 - Speaking parts
 - In front of others
- Remember that this is not a competition
 - Tell your team how impressed you are of their work - > be proud to show it off!
 - Build up their self-confidence
 - Remind them that they are in control of what they do or don't want to do





What To Expect

Tournament Day

- Arrive early to get the lay of the land
- Eat breakfast/lunch/snack
- Bring a bag/box with extra supplies for repairs
- Watch another team (see the room)
- Go to the bathroom before you line up outside the room
- Judges will do a walk through of procedures and prepare them before time begins
- Judges will talk to the team 1:1 after the presentation to ask questions
- Have a parent in charge of video and pictures (if the team allows it)
- Post-it note type feedback – read it together



- Take a team picture
AFTER the performance
 - Look at their faces!
 - The pride pouring out of the team as they exited the presentation was just awesome
 - I still watch the video of our team performance or look at the post performance picture and beam with pride



What To Expect When It's Over

- What was your favorite part of OOTM this year?
 - Lego challenge/marshmallow sculptures (spontaneous problems)
 - Helping others
 - Presenting their museum
 - No grownups helping
- Who should get thank-you notes for supporting the program this year?
 - Coach
 - Co-coach(s)
 - Teacher of the classroom we used for meetings
 - PTA
 - School coordinator
 - Principal
 - Tournament judge and volunteer
 - Snack providers
 - Teammates



What To Expect Resources

- TxOOTM Site
 - Problems/Handbook/Contracts
 - Calendar of events
 - Forms
 - Registrations
- Coaches Handbook
 - Roles/Responsibilities
 - Techniques for teaching creativity
 - Sample meeting agendas
 - Sample spontaneous problems
 - Section 13 – Particularly Primary
- Parent Guidelines
 - How to support the team
 - Do's/Dont's
- Other OOTM websites
 - Google is your friend



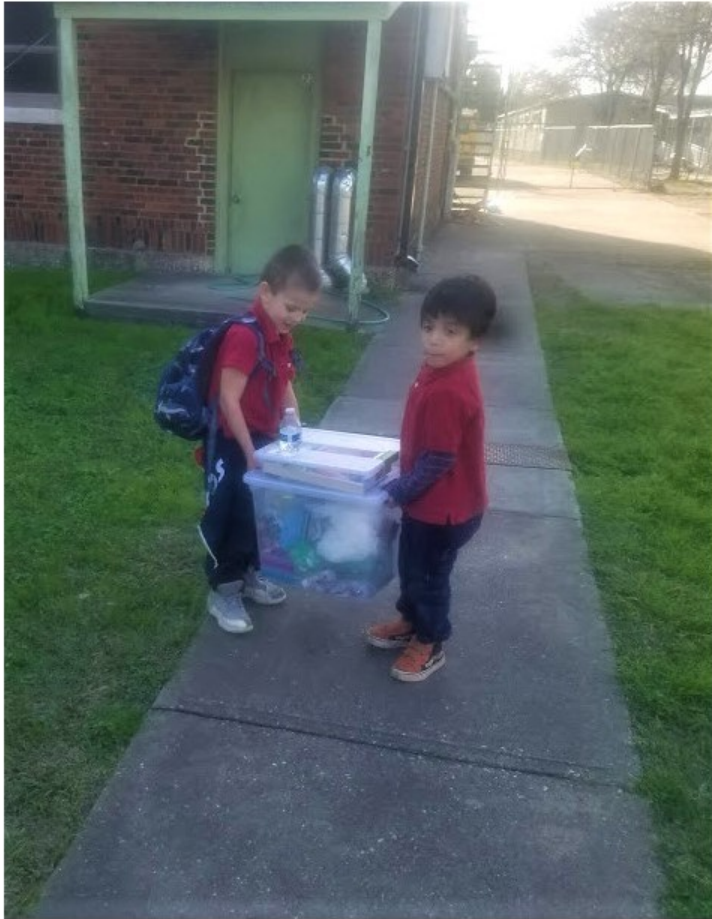
Odyssey of the Mind

Notes From A First Year Coach



Notes To Team Members

- First and foremost, we want to have fun. If we are not having fun, we are not doing it right
- You are going to solve a problem and create a presentation
 - Let your imagination run wild
 - Don't limit yourself to things you already see and/or know how to do
 - Set a goal and figure out the steps to achieve it
- Be respectful (team members, coaches, area, ourselves)
 - Listen
 - Acknowledge
 - Support
- Things are not always going to go your way
 - Communication, compromise and negotiation are a part of learning to work as a team
 - Didn't get your way?
 - Can you creatively incorporate your ideas?



- This is your project
 - Be a contributing team member
 - Take ownership
 - Acquire supplies
 - Setup/cleanup
- Remember that adults are for support, not to do it for you
- Have fun!



Notes To Parents

- Discuss the commitment
 - Read the contract
 - Ask your child if THEY want to do OOTM
 - Prepare them for when decisions might not go their way (what does it mean to be on a team?)
- Read the problem
 - Review the vocabulary
 - Ask them what aspects interest them
 - Ask them what challenges they see
- Communicate with the coach(es)
 - Ask if they need snacks, supplies, storage space for projects, organizing a carpool
 - Volunteer to help with a skill, be a tournament volunteers or judge, transport props
 - Ask what concept/project is currently being worked on and if there is any homework
 - Answer emails



- Get creative with your kids (as a habit)
 - Encourage them to use more descriptive language
 - Encourage out of the box thinking
- Always be aware of how you “help”
- Be prepared to work where/when needed, especially as the tournament gets closer
 - May need more work sessions in the weeks leading up to the tournament
 - May need to be flexible on meeting locations due to materials, prop storage, etc
- Remember, your child’s coach is a volunteer



Notes To Coaches

- Communicate with your parents
 - Ask for a co-coach if you have a young team
 - Ask for Volunteers
 - Tell them what the kids are working on
 - Let them know about schedule changes or other needs (materials, clothes, etc.)
 - Ask early about the competition dates
- Pace yourself
 - Start early
 - Let go
 - Focus on building skills they will use for years to come
 - Remember the end goal
 - Consider options for tournament
- Emotions and touchy situations
 - Kids may drop out
 - Crying/upset child leaves
 - Disruptions
 - Let the team help
 - Communicate with the parents



- Make sure your team has a snack or dinner
 - Use that time to talk or transition into a productive session
 - Define terms, talk about challenges they are having, brainstorm, do some roll playing, do a verbal spontaneous problem, etc.
- Get the wiggles out
 - Change of scenery – get outside!
 - Dance or other physical challenge
 - Increase/decrease focus
- You may have to teach some skills
 - Teamwork
 - Organizing
 - Brainstorming
 - Listening
 - Voting
 - Conflict resolution
 - Whole brain thinking
 - Not stomping snacks into the carpet ;-)



- Create other learning challenges
 - Channel YOUR creative ideas
 - Teach vocabulary
 - Trigger their thinking about the long-term problem

- Spontaneous Problems

- Yes, even Primary teams
- Great way to build team
- Quickly gratifying and sense of accomplishment
- Warm up and stretch our creative thinking skills
- Improve communication and forward thinking
- Do it again – harder iteration and/or more creative solutions





Notes To Membership

- This is an extra curricular activity, not an after-school program (nor is it free babysitting)
- Start the recruiting process early
- What does the team make-up look like?
 - Grade levels
 - Gender
 - Friends
 - Pre evaluation
- How will you handle logistics
 - Recruiting
 - Scheduling
 - Costs
 - Locations



Thank You