

# TX Odyssey Coaches' Training

Long-Term Problem  
presented by Rishi Shah



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## Forming and Understanding your Team

- ✓ Make the most of your divergent thinkers
- ✓ Different skills and abilities - creates a team of excellent breadth - coach should encourage kids to see and respect these different skills and characteristics
- ✓ Encourage team to build ground rules for OM practice - Humor, fun, mutual respect, discipline, time, creativity
- ✓ Encourage role-play, role assignments (producer, set designer, creating music, costumes, etc.)
- ✓ To build a cohesive team - members play the rules of positivity, mutual support and learn to relax (that's when it helps creativity)



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## Choosing a Problem

- ✓ Read the problem - often! Different ideas will pop up
- ✓ See how your team members react to the problem type - vote with your smiles (not with your head)
- ✓ Encourage them to not rush to find a solution! Throw the kitchen sink and get a member to keep track of ideas
- ✓ Developing several solutions - vote for the most creative solution (Coach note: Ask your team if this is most creative solution they can come up with)
  - ✓ Defining a solution - explore as much as you can - importance of failures, trial and errors
  - ✓ Seek clarifications



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## Long-Term Practice Guide

- ✓ Consistent meeting times (especially Primary, division 1)
- ✓ Keep schedules not too busy - Discuss with parents about having down times during the day to let the creative juices flow
- ✓ Assign task responsibilities to team members individually - music, script, costume, props, etc. (Primary exception - coach)
- ✓ Enlist parents - teach valuable skills (sewing, carpentry, dancing, engineering, science, assistants), food, morale
- ✓ Break the long-term problem down to encourage creativity - have a few smaller practice sessions in problem solving (especially useful for primary and div 1 and new OM members)



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## The Parts of a Long-Term Problem

Need LT Problem + Program Guide + Clarifications

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## Long-Term - Brainstorming Guide

- ✓ Generate a LOT of ideas - one will stick! (encourage teams to brainstorm often (the solution to individual items in the solution)
- ✓ Allow no criticism (Coach can discuss “wild ideas” that were successful - walking on the moon, Cocteau’s submarine)
- ✓ Encourage outrageous ideas - going beyond normal
- ✓ Encourage piggybacking of other ideas - (avoid ideas becoming “mine”, especially in div 1 teams)
- ✓ Evaluate the ideas - discard those that are not feasible or against program rules or does not contribute to the final solution (Point efficacy)
- ✓ Avoid functional fixedness - can a thing be used for something other than its intended use.  
**Recycle!!!!** Lots of great materials lying around.

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## Understanding the problem...

Tips about staying on task, as the presentation is getting put together:

- ✓ Team members should take turns reading sections of the problem
- ✓ When changes are made, does the team still solve all the aspects of the problem.
- ✓ Team members can take turns being the judge and assigning scoring points.
- ✓ Watch those low hanging fruit. "0 or 5" means either you did it or you didn't.
- ✓ In general... if it doesn't say you can't do it ... you **CAN!**



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## Long-Term - Some Tips

- ✓ Every problem is presented as an 8 min skit - Time management is critical! (- 5pts for every 10 seconds overtime in some problems)
- ✓ Props - Surprise element or an artistic set design
- ✓ Costume - Getting out of formulaic costumes - looking the part
- ✓ Acting - This is a great way to add humor. Voice projection. (Situational slapstick comedy, affected acting, looking and enjoying the part)
- ✓ Getting the message across - using signs and props to clarify situational changes and underscore the dialogs and what's happening on the set
  - ✓ Work out of a script, if possible, to help everyone be comfortable with their parts. Essence of improv. This will free them to focus on things that could go wrong on performance day. Murphy's law - *Que sera sera!*



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## Long-Term - Outside the Point Box

- ✓ Objective Points - Required elements from the points - you score either a 0 or 5 (If you think the element is not clear, you can always point it clearly to the judges either in the form or after the performance)
- ✓ Subjective Points - 0 to 15 - Qualitative and based on the opinion of the judge
- ✓ Every problem has a list of criteria and how they are scored. Remember to check each category and points awarded. Direct your team to the points and make sure they are thinking of creative ways to score high
  - ✓ On required items (say an original use of trash), the team can use the trash items in several ways but must point to the judge exactly which one they want to be scored on (e.g. They have to clearly state whether they want to score a chandelier made of trash or a costume made of recycled bags)



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## Long-Term - Points to Remember

- ✓ Request a clarification if the team is not sure if its interpretation can meet the problem requirements. Read rules carefully.
  - General clarifications Vs. Team-specific clarifications
  - Feb 15 is clarification deadline
- ✓ Scores and Points
  - Long-term scores - 200 points (you have 150 points elsewhere)
  - Judges will tell you where and when to pick up scores
  - 30 minutes to raise any questions
  - Raw scores become official 30 mins after the last team has competed. So plan to receive your scores and raise questions well before the scores become official!
- ✓ Read the program rules (Chapter V) of program guide for safety rules, floor covering and damage, battery and power outlets, membership signs, penalties and categories (over time, over cost, outside assistance etc.), code of conduct and discipline



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## Final Words

- ✓ Remember to enjoy the long-term problem!  
Having fun is a very integral part of the creative process!
- ✓ Do not let team meeting times become stressful. Sometimes to think outside the box, you might want to change meeting venues, format, what kids wear to practice...make it exciting! (especially for younger kids)
- ✓ Reach out and ask for help: Parents LOVE to help! Delegate predictable tasks. Make it easier on yourself by delegating!
- ✓ Consider doing one spontaneous activity outside the long-term problem practice to train your team to think “outside the box”
- ✓ Enjoy the closeness of 6-7 kids who will love you unconditionally for OM!



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Thank you for your interest in  
Coaching!

Coming next...  
Current year's problems



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