How To Create Effective Odyssey of the Mind Style Elements

November 2012

Copyright: Virginia Odyssey of the Mind Region 9, NoVA North
What Will I Learn?

• What is an OotM Style element
• How do I coach the team to develop effective style elements
• What else should I know
What is an OotM Style Element?

- **Style elements** are intended to **enhance the Long-Term Solution** that your team will present
  - Cannot be something scored in Long-Term Problem solution
  - Opportunity to capture points for something the team creates that is not scored in the Long-Term solution but greatly enhances the overall presentation

- **Style elements** can be created from any activity your team members enjoy doing such as:
  - Creative writing
  - Performing arts
  - Artwork of any kind
  - Sewing or clothing design
  - Any creative endeavor
  - Building or making things
  - Science and technology
  - Humor
  - Song or Dance
  - Scene Transitions (how the skit is constructed)
How do I Coach Style?

• Read problem with team
• Have the team list all of the required long-term scored elements
  • These will convey the Creative Emphasis and Spirit of the Problem
• Brainstorming session:
  • Lead the team in selecting a general theme for their long-term solution (skit)
    • Almost any theme will work so long as the theme gets the team excited to create
    • Suggestion – theme should naturally accommodate a part or task that each team member is interested in doing
  • Lead the team in developing the story that will become their skit
    • The story should include all required elements
• Now … Lead the team in brainstorming additional content for skit that would be fun to create
  • Original song lyrics or music
    • Have your team start by telling a story and morph this into a rhyme or rhythm
  • Building a clever backdrop or prop
    • Have the team discuss the use of (cheap) materials
  • Dialog or other spoken content that enhance the theme and story
  • Costume
  • Anything a team mate would find fun to do that enhances skit
• Have team explain any description of a Style idea with:
  • How it ENHANCES OUR LONG-TERM SOLUTION

Any of these Can be used As Scored Style Elements
What Else Should I Know?

• Style category is worth 50 points out of the total 350 points available
  – 5 Style elements are each worth 0 to 10 points

• Style element scoring is subjective
  – Judges will assign a score in the range 0 to 10 points based upon their personal impression of how well each Style element enhanced the team’s long-term solution
  – Usually 3 (or more) judges scores are averaged
  – Therefore, quality is important

• Style elements express each team’s unique talents!
Example Long-Term Problem

In Your Dreams, OotM Problem #2, 2005

• Long-Term problem required elements:
  – Create an original performance that includes a dream
    • Cheerful
    • Nonsensical
    • Nightmarish
  – Creative Emphasis
    • Nonsensical portion of the dream
    • Method used to create the sound
    • The monster
    • Team-created task
  – Spirit of the Problem
    • Present a performance about a dream that includes
      – Sounds
      – A monster
## LT Scored (Required) Elements

**In Your Dreams, OotM Problem #2, 2005**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>LT Points</th>
<th>Element of LT Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Creativity of the Performance</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>Quality of the Story and Dramatic Presentation is Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Quality of the Performance</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cheerful part of dream</td>
<td>1 to 25</td>
<td>Creative Writing is Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Nonsensical part of dream</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td>Story (Skit) has 3 distinct parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Nightmarish part of dream</td>
<td>1 to 25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Originality of monster</td>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Monster change of appearance</td>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td>Technical Solution is Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Monster picks something up</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
<td>Greatest number of points are associated with technical elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Monster turns around</td>
<td>1 to 15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Monster 1st team-created task</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Monster 2nd team created task</td>
<td>1 to 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Let’s pick a theme and setting for the story
  – Theme should accommodate a 3-part story
    • Dream with cheerful, nonsensical, nightmarish parts
      – And enough characters to give each team member a part

• Let’s describe the monster
  – It should be consistent with the theme

• NOW, let’s add style elements
  – Should help to convey the theme
    • Song, Dance, Costume, Prop, Humor, Backdrop, ...
    • Specific examples from prior years:
      – *Out of the Box* ➔ Bach’s music theme ➔ dress made with sheet music
      – Costume made of trash ➔ Mad Scientist character’s lab coat is mosaic of candy wrappers ➔ pattern is periodic table of the elements
**Style Form Content**  
In Your Dreams, OotM Problem #2, 2005

- **Style Element descriptions**
  - **BE SPECIFIC**
    - Good → The RED and YELLOW costume ... (judges immediately know which one)
    - Bad → Joey’s costume ... (judges don’t know who Joey is)
  - **EASY TO READ**
    - Judges have only a few minutes to read so be clear & concise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>How It Enhances Our Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Costume</td>
<td>Required by problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Appearance of</td>
<td>Required by problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership Sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free choice of team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Free choice of team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Overall Effect</td>
<td>Required short paragraph that explains how our selected style elements taken together enhance our skit’s theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>