

# METRO DI NEWS

2011-2012 #3

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## Reading the challenges

The Challenges are written to allow teams as much latitude as possible when solving them. This means that the definitions of some of the elements are left purposefully vague to allow teams to solve the Challenge any way that they wish. For example, several years ago teams that selected Challenge C had to present an interpretation of a piece of literature. What is literature? How was it defined? In the end, if the students thought it was literature, it was. Read the Challenge carefully to see if there are clues to help you. Usually, the Challenge can be solved using very simple technical devices or more complex ones. Those choices are up to the team. There are 2 main principles that can be applied to solving any of the DI Challenges:

**Rule #1** states that if the Challenge (or the *Rules of the Road* or RotR) **doesn't say that you cannot do something**, then it is safe to assume that **you can** do it.

**Rule #2** states that if the Challenge (or the RotR) says that you cannot do something, then you cannot do it. The corollary to Rule #2 is that if the Challenge (or the RotR) say that you must do something, then you must do it.

However, it is important for the team to understand the scoring of the Challenge. There is another principle called Sutton's Law...it says "go where the money is." Willie Sutton was a bank robber and when asked why he robbed banks he said "because that's where the money is." The practical application of this is that your team must understand where the points are coming from. This is not so they can be more competitive but so they understand what they are being asked to do and how much emphasis is being placed on that aspect of the Challenge. Every subjectively scored aspect of each Challenge has a continuum that the Appraisers apply. At one end of the continuum will be very, very simple solutions and at the other extreme will be very innovative ones. The simple solutions may receive scores on the lower end of the range while the very creative or innovative ones would be expected to receive scores at the higher end of the scale. Key point: **READ your challenge multiple times!**

**Metro Regional Tournament is March 3, 2012.**

**IF your team has a conflict, you may compete at the Southern Region tournament on March 10, 2012.**

**Email Donna if you wish to discuss this.**

# Solving Team Manager Challenges

*Teams are starting to meet. And as much as we would love for things to be perfect, sometimes, they are not. Remember that some of the characteristics that attracted these students to DI—bright, independent and engaged kids who are usually taking a leadership role in class — are exactly what may now make things challenging. Here are a few common issues, and some ideas that might help:*

**Issue # 1. TIME MANAGEMENT:** Team members often lead hurried lives. Getting them to attend meetings, keeping them calm, centered and focused is often the goal.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Teach them to prioritize tasks—homework, social events and extracurricular activities.
- Have them create and publish their meeting schedules well in advance, supply an extra refrigerator copy for parents.
- Use an agenda at meetings so time is spent productively.
- Begin with a calming exercise.
- Divide and conquer ... Remember “wherever two are gathered” a meeting can occur; it is not necessary for everyone to be present.

**Issue # 2: TEAMWORK PRINCIPLES:** Teamwork requires a style of behavior that students were not born knowing. So teach it to them. Re-enforce the teaching ALL the time. Give them positive strokes when you see them struggling to achieve it.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Ask the team to write their original list of agreed upon teamwork rules (i.e. all team members are treated with respect, when one team member is speaking, the others are listening attentively, there is no I in teamwork, etc.). Post the rules and publish the rules in future memos, etc.
- Conference individually with students and ask them to evaluate their team on teamwork skills and to discuss ways of possibly improving teamwork.
- Teach them about teamwork through anecdotal information. Example: Lance Armstrong’s astounding *Tour de France* victory made possible by a dedicated medical team fighting almost impossible odds and his loyal American bicycle team that rode ahead of him to absorb the fierce wind for him.
- Encourage team rituals: team tee shirts, jackets, hats, logos, mottos, songs, etc.

- Promote bonding exercises: humorous instant challenge exercises, sharing of snacks, food, birthday parties, field trips, etc.

**Issue # 3. PARENT PARTICIPATION:** Sooner or later everyone runs into the “impossible” parent. While you cannot control the serious personal issues a parent may be juggling, much can be done to mold parent behavior so that it is largely constructive.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Call a parent information meeting early in the game and in writing clearly spell out the role and responsibilities of all the involved parties. Indicate that the parent role, while important, is limited to things like cheerleader, pizza deliverer, driver, etc. Parents need a clear understanding that they are not a member of the team or the team manager. Give them a “heads up” so that they know that when the honeymoon ends, and the really hard stretch begins, their cheerleading is very, very useful in helping everyone including team managers get through the tough parts. The mantra “It’s the kids who solve the problem,” needs to be said 8 million times. Also emphasize the priceless life skills being developed.
- Put it in writing. Put everything in writing. Expectations. Goals. Types of creativity models and exercises the team will be exploring. Once parents finally “get it,” their level of support is often astounding. Communicate frequently in positive tones with them.



# Team Manager Challenges <continued>

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK (FOR REVISION)

- Devise a revision matrix at the beginning of the writing process so students will expect to go into the writing process knowing there will be considerable revision.
- Show revision models. Most teams will have 4-5 revisions. Keep copies of previous revisions so the team can see the exciting growth that almost always takes place.

**Issue # 5 PUBLIC RELATIONS.** Promotion of Destination ImagiNation within the larger community and school staff has a halo effect. It gathers immediate support and enthusiasm for both current and future teams.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Utilize the Destination ImagiNation resource/promotional materials available.
- Establish a good working relationship with several media.
- Be sure all news releases come from one appointed individual.
- Issue weekly memo updates to teams and parents filled with inspirational quotes, much positive news about team progress, and occasionally obstacles to be overcome.

**Issue # 6. LACK OF STRUCTURE**: DI is a highly creative process often best introduced and developed when a left brain approach is present. This pleases linear thinkers, and it often moves the process ahead dramatically faster. The absence of a structured approach can result in too many energy draining messes.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Publish monthly meeting schedules, weekly update memos, written “homework” assignments that team members generate. Put it all in writing.
- Have students create a realistic timeline for necessary tasks to be completed.
- Use a visible agenda generated by team members at every meeting that begins with either a calming exercise or a warm-up exercise depending on the group, time of day, etc. Include time for snacks, humorous exercises, etc.
- Have a blast but also push to accomplish many things.

**Issue # 7. THE “DUH” PHASE:** The dreaded duh phase, when creative ideas are not flowing from the team, can strike at any time. If that happens, it’s time to shift gears to get the team unstuck.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Go on an idea gathering odyssey: junk yards, theatrical performances, factories, museums, etc.
- Hold meetings in alternative, unique sites: church basements, local pizzeria, town hall, etc.
- Focus on idea generating tools like Force Fit, Morphological Analysis, Brain Writing, Guided Fantasy, Scamper, Mind Maps, etc.
- Introduce new stimulus such as music, colored paper, pens, food, different lighting, etc.

**Issue # 8. MELTDOWNS:** It is the rare team that does not experience an occasional meltdown where one or more members functions at a very high level emotionally. At times meltdowns appear when they are least expected. Both negative forms of stress and positive forms of creative tension can be the catalyst—determining which is the dominant causal factor can really help. At times individual team members experience stress for a variety of personal reasons. There is also a wonderful *creative tension* present when a hard working team is very close to reaching its goal. This is largely a positive force at work since the team has given its personal best and is very close to the finish line. Usually a “second wind” kicks in here and spectacular results eventually occur.

## IDEAS THAT MIGHT WORK:

- Begin team meetings with a round robin approach where everyone gets one minute to share his or her feelings. This is a super approach to always use at team meetings because it clears the air and allows the team to move on.
- Counsel team members individually
- Allow for time-outs when needed.



## Tips for developing a script

Developing a script or story line is difficult for every team. Encourage the creation of an original plot with a clearly defined **beginning, middle** and **end**. To facilitate this process, try the story starter technique. Conduct a brainstorming session and present story starters like these:



To save the world ...

If only ... How about ...

In the future ...

People could ...

Just imagine ...

Humanity needs ...

If animals could ...

Why don't ...

I wish ...

Pretend that ...

What would happen if ...

In a \_\_\_\_ long ago

Place a list of these starters, one at a time, in clear view of all team members. Each team member responds in turn, completing the sentence for a couple of minutes. Record all the answers. At the end of a half hour, discuss and evaluate the stories, looking for the most creative ones.

Once a basic story has been developed, have the team create a story board of images, using simple sketches. Taking the time to execute this process will help the sets, background, props, and costumes come to life for the team members. Now everyone will see the vision and know what they are working toward. **Don't forget to save all those ideas for when the team is stuck, and they need a great new idea!**

## Lettering in DI

As an OSAA approved activity, it may be possible for you to receive an activity letter for your participation in Destination Imagination. Many high schools in Oregon offer academic or activity letters and DI is an approved activity! Please contact your region director if you are interested and I will email you the full list of criteria, but **here is a sample:**



- **Time Commitment**—Attendance at team meetings, practices, and responsibilities outside of practices. The team manager will be responsible for keeping a record of each participant.
- **Public Performance**—Attendance at competitions is mandatory. Other public performances may be requested.
- **Student Registration**—All students must be registered through the main office at the school, paid any designated activity fees, and be subject to all school activity rules concerning attendance, grades, and appropriate conduct.

Any student who participates on a Secondary level Destination ImagiNation team will earn a varsity letter with the accumulation of 125 points *and* the team manager's recommendation. Points may carry over from one year to the next.

# Create your own instant challenges

Use the table below to create your own instant challenges. Mix it up and do more than one challenge at each meeting. Or put new items on the list, or change the locations under column D. Or change the tasks under column C. You get the picture! Make things look a little different each time your team meets. Limit the time the team has. Set a timer in front of them so they can see the seconds tick.

- **Performance based Challenge:** Randomly choose one or more items from A and one item from columns D and E.
- **Task-Based Challenge:** Randomly choose one or more items from column A and one item from column B and C.
- **Combination Challenge:** Randomly choose one or more items from A and one or more items from B, C, D or E.

## INSTANT CHALLENGE MATRIX

A. Materials	B. Make a ...	C. That Will ...	D. In a ...	E. Situation
Craft sticks	Sculpture	Hold a tennis ball	Amusement park	A really wet day
Paper plate	Shelter	Protect	Antarctic	Lost your notebook
Newspaper	Structure	Make noise	Concert	Are very, very hungry
Cereal box	Aircraft	Move	Cove	Talking to the fish
Straws	Kitchen utensil	Signal	In the ocean	Trying to fly
Index Cards	Game	Cool people off	Jungle	Cleaning the kitchen
Spaghetti	Container	Keep us healthy	Rainforest	Lost all your money
Cardboard	Vehicle	Hit a target	Storybook land	Playing a new game
Cotton balls	Cleaning tool	Make a task easier	The moon	Late!
Aluminum foil	Cosmetic	Make people laugh	Tree house	Making a fancy meal

## IC Tips and Tricks

One of the key tips in Instant Challenge is getting the team members to think about the materials they see in a challenge. What if they see modeling clay? Would they automatically know that clay could be a support for pillars or a bridge, as well as a means to connect two items? What if, instead, there were gum drops or marshmallows on the table? Would they recognize that those items could be used in the same way modeling clay is used? One of the reasons to work with a variety of materials is to get the team members to feel comfortable with the many materials that serve similar purposes. I have supplied a starting list on page 6.

For those of you working with teams, set out instant challenge materials. BEFORE the kids get the instant challenge, have them talk about what they *could* do with each of the materials on the table. What items are connectors? What could be transporters? Ask them to identify the supplies in terms of the categories below! Make them think a little!

**Types of Materials Used for Instant Challenge and Their Purpose:** Can you think of other uses for the items listed below? Can your team think of other materials to add to the categories listed?

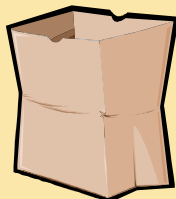
### Extenders

Yard sticks  
Pencils  
Rulers  
Dowels      Straws



### Transporters

Pieces of cardboard  
Bags      Tubes  
Balloons  
Piece of paper  
Cups  
Aluminum foil  
Ball bearings  
Straws  
Envelopes  
Plates      Marbles



### Connectors/Adhesives

Mailing labels  
Clay / gum drops  
Rubber bands  
Pasta      String  
Paper clips  
Pipe cleaners  
Toothpicks  
Yarn or ribbon  
Marshmallows  
Tape (all types)      Tubes

### HOLDERS

Envelopes  
Paper/Styrofoam cups  
Toothpicks      Lunch bags  
Paper plates

### Structural Items

Styrofoam cups  
Paper  
Cardboard  
Rulers  
Dowels  
Pipe cleaners  
Pencils  
Paper Clips  
Paper plates  
Envelopes  
Straws  
Spaghetti  
Popcicle/craft sticks  
Foil  
Index cards



**FINDING THE POINTS:** This is a hard skill in DI, but it is essential. When you get a challenge, one of the first things to do is discuss how the points are earned. For example, if you get up to 10 points for creative use of materials, but 10 points for each inch of height, then it is more important to go for height. However, if you get 50 points for creative use of materials, and 2 points for each inch of height, then you should pay close attention to what materials you use and how you use them. Look to see how to maximize your score and do not spend time on elements of a skit that are not scored. So, as an example, if the score does not ask for song, do not spend 2 of your 4 minutes preparing a song! BUT if you have solved the challenge as best you can and still have time, you could add a song.

**IDENTIFYING IC ROLES FOR EACH TEAM MEMBER:** Most instant challenges are written to maximize the use of at least 5 team members and while team work is critical in almost every challenge, it really helps to assign roles and responsibilities of the team members. Examples of the roles that could be assigned to an instant challenge team, (every team will come up with a different list) could be Rules Processor, Timekeeper, Song Maker, Brainstormer, Materials Manager, Narrator and BME Manager (BME = Beginning, Middle, End). Whatever roles your team comes up with, I suggest that you rotate these roles, so that one week Team Member #1 is the timekeeper and Team Member #2 is the Song maker and so on, but next week Team Member #2 manages the materials, etc. In time, the team members will learn those roles they prefer and gravitate to the role they excel in.