

PROJECT MANAGEMENT WITH DI TEAMS

It isn't Interference to teach project management skills that prevent the team from wasting their (and more important, YOUR) time. You are not influencing or contributing to their solution idea. You are just teaching them how to get project tasks done more efficiently.

Do not let the team go to the garage to start building until they have presented a plan, created a *specific* materials list, and shopped for the materials (you can shop for them or parents can IF the kids give you a list)

Brainstorming 2-6 weeks

- Ideas for the storyline theme for the challenge. List the basic outline, remember beginning middle and end for the story.
- Ideas on how to solve the challenge requirements. Ie. Transforming prop ... Our garden hoe will become the scarecrows backbone.
- The team needs to come to an agreement on how each scored item of the Central Challenge will be solved before you move on. Remember to discuss Team Choice elements

Planning – 1 -2 weeks

1. Time - Figuring out with kids how to get all of this done in just few weeks.
 - Get out the calendar again and review it with the team. –
 - When is the first DI tournament? – FEB XX?
 - How many rehearsals do you want before the tournament? – usually 2-3
 - How many team meetings do we have to get all this stuff done – work backwards 6-8 weeks
 - **Panic sets in!**
2. Tasks
 - Break big tasks down into smaller pieces.
 - Make a list of each sub-task. – Sticky notes work well
 - Identify who will work on which pieces – 2-3 kids for each task
3. Drawings or models
 - Research - Research how to build similar things on the internet The kids typically see several options on how to build something. Often, their plan is a YouTube demonstration video or tutorial that they follow **and modify** to make the final creation their own How will they create the item or complete the task
 - Models – Have the kids make models of their ideas first out of paper. Draw their backdrop design... anything need changing? It is easier to remake a paper model if something doesn't work than a gigantic prop.
 - Models- for technical items make mini models out of popsicle sticks or tinfoil or paper to see if the proportions and concepts might work before building.

- Field trips or online research to learn more about available materials. – Home Depot and McMaster Carr, dumpster diving etc.
4. Materials list that they need to complete their plan.
 5. Budget – have kids price out the parts on the internet and see if they are under or over budget. This allows the team to modify their ideas and plans **before** they start building.

Construction/ Building – 4-5 weeks. TMs often add a few weekend open garage sessions. Groups show up and work on their parts when they can. It is easier for you to monitor fewer kids working on fewer things. More work gets done with smaller groups. Work around your schedule but Sunday afternoons typically work well.

- Potentially have another parent help monitor script writing. The parent can write down/type what the kids come up with in their own words. Recording the discussion and or taking notes is OK too. BEWARE of Interference. The parent writes the kids words not interprets the words.
- Once you have a plan and the right materials, then the construction meetings will have much less frustration and a much higher sense of satisfaction, productivity and accomplishment.
- Revise and refine – the kids will need to constantly revise their plans during the DI process. It is OK if they had grand plans at the beginning. They will learn to become more realistic by doing. Ask questions when you see frustration and have them rethink their ideas into more manageable pieces.
- Team Choice elements – Some teams plan them out, others look at everything afterwards and then choose what they think are the 2 best choices. (riskier unless the team goes beyond the challenge requirements and designs many options)

Rehearsal – 2-3 meetings

Have them figure out who is going to carry and set up each prop. Divide and conquer
Have them figure out where to stand BEFORE they run through their lines with scripts.
They make changes before memorization.

Video the first run through without costumes so they come up with ideas to improve.
Have everyone memorize their lines at home.