

Tip Tuesday #7

What Makes a GREAT Performance?

It would be considered Outside Assistance for the coach to direct the team's performance. But the coach (or a parent volunteer) can give short stagecraft SKILLS lessons.

4 Things that Might Make the Audience H.I.S.S. Start with the team thinking of a great play or show with young actors, what made it great? Then switch to the opposite side, thinking of a terrible play or show with young actors, what made it terrible?

Here is a list of things to avoid (so the audience doesn't hiss).

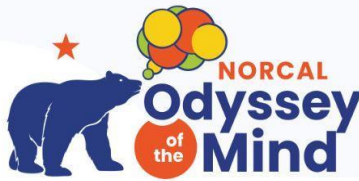
- **H = Can't Hear** The audience can't hear what was said either because the actor was mumbling, speaking too quickly, or not facing the audience.
- **I = Incoherent** The play doesn't make sense because something important or the character's reasons for their actions haven't been explained.
- **S = No Story** A story has a beginning, middle, and end. The audience will be disappointed if there is no ending or nothing exciting that happens in the middle. If you haven't already used it, [Story Elements in OM](#) provides a good organizer.
- **S = Too Silly** Humor is great, but constant silliness rarely keeps the audience entertained.

Adapted from NoVA North, Region 9, Virginia Odyssey of the Mind

Basic Tips for Young Actors This was found [online](#) and gives some basic tips on

- Focus/Concentration
- Reactions
- Projection
- Diction (Clarity of each spoken word)
- Vocal Expression
- Facial Expression
- Gestures
- Blocking
- How to Learn Your Lines

Each of these could be a short skill lesson depending on what the team feels they need to work on most.



Quick Games to Practice Skills If you have the time, try these quick games.

How You Say It Game This was found on [YouTube](#). 1) Choose a simple line. 2) Choose an emotion (happy/excited sad/depressed mad/angry afraid/fearful curious nervous satisfied disappointed jealous). 3) Say the line trying to convey that emotion. Have the rest of the team guess the emotion.

Cat Walk Game from [Bob's Top Ten Team Building Activities](#). 1) Designate a walk way 2) Choose a surface to pretend to walk on/through (slippery ice, hot desert sand, thick swampy mud, the moon's surface, underwater). 3) Walk on/through that pretend surface and have the team guess the surface.

Having Trouble with Script Writing? Here are a few tips that I've found helpful.

Improvise the script Choose a short part of the story outline. Ask the team questions.

- Who should be out on stage in this scene?
- Where do you want to stand on stage?
- This is what you want to have happen in this scene.
- Ready? Action!

Record the performance and ask the team what they liked. The coach can be a note-taker, but with older teams, it would be better to have team members transcribe a script from the recorded scenes. The team member can add ideas as they are transcribing. The coach cannot.

Hold off on deciding parts Sometimes you have an amazing actor on the team. Asking that team member what they would say or do if they were one of the minor characters can help make those parts more dynamic and/or humorous. Switching roles while improvising scenes provides new ideas and perspectives on how those characters might behave.

Use of a narrator? Ask the team if they want one of the characters to be a narrator.

Explain the benefits of a narrator.

- The narrator doesn't have to memorize lines. They read the lines to the audience.
- The narrator helps explain events that might have happened before, in between, or after what the audience sees in the performance. This can help shorten the length of the performance and help the audience better understand the characters and/or the story.
- The narrator can help emphasize the action or how a character is feeling. (This might remind the (younger) actors what they are supposed to do).

Good luck! And remember to **HAVE FUN!**