



From the National Director

## Things I Saw that Worked

I attended the first USAT meet of the year, where I saw new and returning teams dive in for another fun season. I watched one team go from room to room, and the first thing one of the girls asked was, "Is there any way to get extra points?" Then she directed her team to the *scoring rubric* and told them where points were available.

She remembered that this is not only fun, but practice for competition, and she wanted her work to count wherever possible. Good strategy!

One coach told me, "I need to do a P.A.R.T.Y. every time my team

practices. They need to work on their cooperation skills--a lot!" He has gotten to know the dynamics of his team, and he's helping them to build teamwork outside of meets, so they will learn to divide and conquer tough challenges.

December's P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box was a recipe for every show: Choose an interesting main character, add sidekicks, define a problem and a solution. Use it as a starting point for every skit plot.

Here's another thing that worked: Asking "Could you please repeat the question?" in *Face-Off!*. That query buys time, as well as clarity.

### What didn't work

I regretted the reticence I saw when one triathlete told his captain, again and again, what the right answer was--but didn't dare hit the strip, himself. It cost his team valuable time, and the captain seldom rang in unless he, himself, was sure of the answer. Remember, there's

*Review "scamper" for January!*

Heads up, Coaches! Check out the research by Bob Eberle, et al., at <http://creatingminds.org/tools/scamper.htm>. The students will be using this creativity technique at the January meet..

no penalty for a wrong answer, or for guessing! Team members need to affirm risked answers by teammates: "Hey, good try!" is always nice to hear after you find out you were wrong, isn't it?

It didn't work to bring the wrong things in Competition Kits. The Host/Facilitator read off a list of what was to be in each kit, and students had to turn in, for safe-keeping, anything that didn't belong. Let's all do that in January.

Some teams used scratch paper from the kits to write out their poetry, then used those pages during their shows. Remember, nothing except what comes in the 10-ream copy paper box may be used during the presentation, itself.

Lastly: NEVER do a skit that is a fairy tale or literature that has already been written. It's lazy, at best, and plagiarism, at worst. A new story every time, fresh from young minds, please!

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SCAMPER