



Overview

Odyssey of the Mind was developed in 1978 by Dr. Sam Micklus and Dr. Theodore Gourley at Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) in New Jersey. At first, the competition involved only 28 schools in New Jersey and now has grown to include most states and several foreign countries.

All participating teams are given the choice of the same five **long term** problems to solve though these problems change from year to year. Part of the long term problem includes **style** which enhances the solution through costumes, props scenery, drama, etc. The nature of the problems incorporates the use of critical thinking skills and creativity. The problems usually include a "vehicle" problem, a mechanical problem, a "classics" problem, a balsa wood structure problem and a strictly dramatic problem.

The team of five to seven members selects from the five given problems and after working for several months on the solution, presents it at a state tournament. At this time, the students will compete against other teams solving the same problem in their division. Also, the first place winners for each problem in each division are invited to compete at the World finals.

The teams are also given **spontaneous** problems to solve the day of the state and world tournaments. These problems also foster creativity and teamwork. Their solution involves a form of brainstorming. Though teams may practice for this segment, they do not know the problem ahead of time.

Participation in Odyssey of the Mind is a memorable experience for the team members. Students look forward to forming new teams and solving new problems each year.

Program Goals

- ✓ Develop creative thinking abilities
- ✓ Increase student ability to apply known principles and facts to "hands-on" situations.
- ✓ Improve communication skills.
- ✓ Learn how to use a creative problem solving process.
- ✓ Develop and utilize skills of all team members.
- ✓ Develop and use local resources.
- ✓ Develop and use research skills.
- ✓ Exercise and use the higher order thinking and critical thinking skills, especially analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- ✓ Have fun while learning all of these very important skills.

Rationale for Participation

- ✓ Participation in Odyssey of the Mind provides the student with both cognitive and affective experiences.
- ✓ Students are challenged to develop their critical thinking potential and their divergent thinking skills through creative problem solving.
- ✓ They are encouraged to plan, organize and set long-range goals.
- ✓ During this process, they gain sensitivity and experience with group dynamics.
- ✓ Learning to take risks allows the students to become more self-confident and independent thus making successes and defeats easier to place in perspective.
- ✓ Experiences with OotM problems prepare students to solve real-life problems using specific skills and behaviors.