**Interference Instruction**

**(Slide 1) Be aware of Interference.**When you become a parent or an educator, you become responsible for teaching, nurturing, and protecting children from physical and emotional harm. DI insists that adults change their behavior, and this is really, really hard. This is the single toughest thing to do since we are all used to jumping in and giving kids hints about how to do things the best way. It’s easier to remain hands-off if you have the bigger picture of what kind of growth happens with a DI team.

**What are they learning?**

They are learning to think creatively. The team manager is planning activities and teaching the team tools that will help them:

* Generate many ideas
* Defer judgment
* Allow ideas to flow and document those ideas
* Piggyback and hitchhike on the ideas of others

At the same time they are learning to think critically. They are examining every idea that has been generated in a very deliberate manner. They are considering lots of factors – originality, costs, skills they will need, and they are learning to stay on course and develop persistence.

**(Slide 2)** Destination Imagination teaches the creative process by allowing kids to solve Challenges together as a team, and adults are not part of the team. A big part of our program is the Interference policy: in short, kids have to imagine, create and develop solutions on their own. Parents, Team Managers, family and friends can’t suggest ideas or force teams in certain directions. It’s very important for the kids to do their own research and get their hands dirty. **(Slide 3)** Outsiders can only facilitate the acquisition of skills and knowledge. For example, if the team needs to learn carpentry, a parent might contact a local contractor to teach the kids, or teach them himself. This must be teaching of general skills only. It is up to the kids to take these general carpentry skills and use them as they see fit in their Challenge solution.

**(Slide 4 – Rule 1)** The team is going to be excited by their ideas, and we will be excited by them too. Great ideas are infectious, and it is impossible to keep your brain from wanting to play. **(click – review text) (click – review rule 1)** You have to think, think, think about how you respond. When we offer our ideas, we are stealing the potential of the team to have that idea on their own. Your mantra should be, “I am excited about the possibilities, and I can’t wait to see how your team develops its ideas.”

Why do we have this rule? (not an adult competition, want team to think for themselves, team should feel ownership of all facets of the solution) As adults we’ve been teaching them the “best” way to do things. Our ideas will stop the creative process of ideation where quantity of ideas is so important. We want them to examine all possibilities – good and bad. It’s an important part of the process.

**(Slide 5 – Rule 2)** The team is going to have to design some things, build some things, and perform some things. For those of us who have skills, this is a very painful process to observe unless you can remember how exciting it was to learn and acquire those skills you have. (click – review screen) (click – review rule 2.)

Why do we have this rule? Rule 1 keeps us from interfering with creative thinking process, but rule 2 keeps us from interfering with the critical thinking process. We want them to analyze their product, figure things out, try things, make mistakes and try again. Rule 2 will also encourage the team to develop character traits of determination, diligence, patience, perseverance and self-discipline.

**(Slide 6 – Rule 3)** **(click)** Ah, at last, an area where we may be able to participate - skills instruction. **(click to review rule)** There are several areas of skill instruction that most teams will need sooner or later. All of our challenges require a performance, so the skills of characterization, stage presence and story development need to be taught. Our region does a drama workshop every December, and these three areas are covered every year. Non-team members can do the instruction, but they cannot critique, offer suggestions, or make corrections. Another area of skill development that should be taught are improv skills. It is critical for all of our team members to be able to think on their feet when it comes to instant challenge. They need to be taught consistency, exaggeration and how to keep a story line simple. Teams also need to be taught practical skills such as using tools safely, using materials safely and without waste. They need to know about building, wiring, painting, and the limitations of size, space, and materials. Non-team members are a vital part of the skills acquisition process, but they cannot model how or explain how a solution should be done. Teams have to do that part.

**(Slide 7 – Rule 4) (click to review rule)** Why is there a need for this rule? (expense report, random purchase of materials might suggest a solution, etc.) There are so many adult skills that DI teaches our teams. Thinking through and listing all the supplies and tools needed to accomplish a task are adult skills. The team learns thrift and responsibility. When adults go out and buy stuff, the team is denied this process, and the danger is that the materials supplied may suggest a solution.

There’s also quite a bit of verbiage about stores cutting materials, and we need to think about the reason for this rule. Sometimes, a team will decide they need a material such as plywood. Everyone knows that Lowe’s and Home Depot will do three cuts. It’s part of their service to their customers. Teams that do not need an entire sheet of plywood can ask that it be cut to a specific width or height, but those stores will tell you that their measurements are not guaranteed. The same is true for fabric. The team may request a specific length to avoid having to pay for more than they need. The rule also states that you may not ask the store to cut the item using a team-created template or sketch. That would not be in the spirit of team produced solution.

**(Slide 8 – Rule 5)** Team Managers are our most important volunteers. They help the team learn to be a team, they plan the meetings, they round up the materials for instant challenge, they give up whole rooms in their homes for months on end, they teach problem-solving and decision making skills, they round up appraisers and tournament volunteers, and The Rules of the Road gives them permission to do a little bit more. (Review text on slide.)

**(Slide 9 – Rule 6)** Just in case folks didn’t get it when you went through Rules 2 and 3, Rule 6 makes it pretty clear that the team has to do it on their own. Hands off for the rest of the world, hands on for them.

**(Slide 10 – Rule 7)** Cognitively, our teams have fully developed frontal lobes. They can dream dreams and make plans that boggle our minds, but the part of their brain that says, “You might not want to do that,” hasn’t been developed, yet. When we are monitoring the kids when they are using tools, we go into hyper safety alert, but greater dangers may things as simple as tripping hazards, pointy things at eye level, running with scissors. . .Rule 7 also addresses behaviors that are dangerous. If a team is formed in a school, the team manager and team members need to know the school’s code of conduct is in force whenever that team is together wherever they may be. Team codes of conduct should also be developed early in the beginning of the process, so team members know there are consequences if they behave inappropriately.

**(Slide 11 – Rule 8)** Last year I remember standing here and telling you to Google everything and then Google it again. So much information is at our fingertips, but internet research also comes with the risk of children being exposed to objectionable content or content more sophisticated than appropriate for their age. Destination Imagination expects that children will have adult supervision if they use the Internet as they work to solve their Challenge.

**(Slide 12 – Rule 9)** Have you had experience with a team that reused a prop or costume? Why would a team chose to do this? (a talisman, is non-scored) The team will need to make sure to declare it in the appropriate manner on their expense report.

**(Slide 13 – Rule 10)** Review slide. The recurring theme, only team members may do anything to the solution.

**(Slide 14 – Rule 11)** Review slide. Rule 11 also allows non-team members to move scenery, etc. in crowded hallways to allow movement.

**(Slide 15 – Rule 12)** If at tournament it is determined that interference has occurred, deductions will be made. The DI philosophy is about rewarding points, but the interference rule is strictly enforced to keep a level playing field for all participants. It guarantees that every team receives every point they have earned – no more, no less. It is important to note that deductions are given for interference whether it was intentional or not, and really, there is no reason for interference to occur unintentionally. TMs and team members should know these rules backwards and forwards and parents need to be trained when the team is formed. The only exception is unintentional interference caused by an official.

**(Slide 16 – Rule 13)** Wouldn’t it be fun for us if appraisers or members of the audience could become part of the performance? But, this is strictly forbidden. If you involve anyone other than the team in the solution, it is like having extra team members because they are adding something to the solution, and the same reasoning applies to receiving hints or cues from the Team Manager or a member of the audience. If, however, a member of the audience who is not a TM or a non-performing member of the team spontaneously interferes through no fault of the team, the team will not receive a deduction. I was there once when Grampa saw collapsing scenery, so he stood up and held it in place. He just didn’t know better.

**(Slide 17 – Rule 14)** Review Slide.

**(Slide 18 – Rule 15)** While The Rules of the Road says this rule is in place because of potential allergy and health concerns, I think it also is part of that level playing field. What if your team could really cook well? But, what if they couldn’t?As far as providing items of clothing, headphones, whatever, the solution must stand alone.

**(Slide 19 – Rule 16)** Rule 13 addresses communication from the audience, but rule 16 targets TMs and non-performing team members. TMs need to know from the get-go that the performance at tournament is a danger zone for them. Think about what they do for our kids. If their hair is out of place they smooth it. If they cut their thumb, they give them a bandaid, and if they can’t be heard while performing they put their hands to their ears – and oops! There’s interference. TMs and non-performing team members cannot communicate time or send any kind of verbal or visual cue to the performing team members. I always sat on my hands and looked at my lap or the team’s feet because I couldn’t control my face.

**(Slide 20 – Rule 17)**I can think of several good reasons why a team would want to prepare a sound track to help them convey emotion or to help them with timing, and I’ve seen wonderful teams in Project Outreach with dazzling videos to show the depth of their project. I have also seen teams paralyzed when their technology failed. Teams need to know that relying on technology is a gamble, but relying on their team is a sure bet. The bottom line for this rule is the appraisers have the latitude to decide if there was too much reliance on technology and scores may reflect this.

**(Slide 21)** The Interference Triangle – You’ve seen it in The Rules of the Road, and you may not have read all of those little bitty words, because we know what interference is – we can smell it a mile away. That being said, we need to make sure our teams, TMs and supporters all know and understand what it is, and the triangle is a simple way to explain interference.

The Base of the Triangle consists of two corners: Skills and Challenge & Rules. Every youth who participates comes to the program with skills, some more than others, and we give them the Challenges and the Rules. These two components are the foundation of DI.

Skills are the special abilities that the participants already have and bring to the team along with the skills they will learn while being a part of the team. Learning skills is an important and valuable part of the process of DI. Every team member’s participation in the program will someday end, but the skills learned will continue throughout life. These skills include: performance skills, technical skills, thinking skills, team building, research, organizational,

time management, budgeting and life skills, to name a few. It is not interference for the team to be taught skills. Let me say that again, it is not interference for the team to be taught skills.

In fact, it is the job of the Team Manager to facilitate the team members’ acquisition of skills, however, it is the job of the team to apply learned skills in creating a Challenge solution.

The Challenge & Rules are the documents that teams, Team Managers and tournament Officials have in common. The Challenge requirements and limitations, and the rules in Rules of the Road are the facts by which all must abide. Understanding them and internalizing them is the job of the team, the Team Manager and the Officials. What does the Challenge say? What

does it say in Rules of the Road? What are the Published Clarifications? Let’s write for a Team Clarification! This is all learning that can be shared, should be shared, and is shared among teams, Team Managers and Officials.

Sometimes skills determine which Challenge to choose; sometimes the Challenge is chosen, and skills have to be learned in order to solve it. Regardless of which comes first, there is a back-and-forth of learning skills and understanding the Challenge that occurs before and while the team makes choices that apply to its solution.

The team’s solution is the team’s alone. It is something that the team members build from their acquisition of skills and from their understanding of the Challenge and rules. It is interference to be in the team’s solution section of triangle, and the rules of interference are pretty clear.

Before we leave this topic, I want to explain why Sue felt we needed to look at interference as a group. This year at globals some issues of interference that were suspected were confirmed. One of our international affiliates had identical structures at every level for their teams. Another thing that was startling was a team that not only copied the design from the team they beat at their affiliate tournament, but the copied props and dialog, as well.

Folks, interference isn’t something to be ignored. Interference is theft – theft of opportunity to exercise the creative process, it’s theft of the experience of trial and error, and it’s theft of ownership, pride, and quite possibly points. I think, though, the greater loss is the loss of innocence. Teams that have received outside help have to live with that knowledge. They broke the rules, they cheated, and there’s a loss of respect for themselves and the people who interfered with their solution. Please make sure your TMs understand how important it is to play by the rules.

**(Slide 22)** In closing, encourage your TMs to be patient with their team and with themselves. In DI you hear how our participants are creative. They think outside of the box. Heck, our logo reflects that belief. With interference, there is no “outside the box.” The rules are real, and they are there to protect the creative and critical thinking process.

**(Slide 23)**

That’s All Folks!