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TEAM DECISION MAKING

JAMES MCGILL, COACH, THE BRAINIAC MANIACS (TEAM 25108)

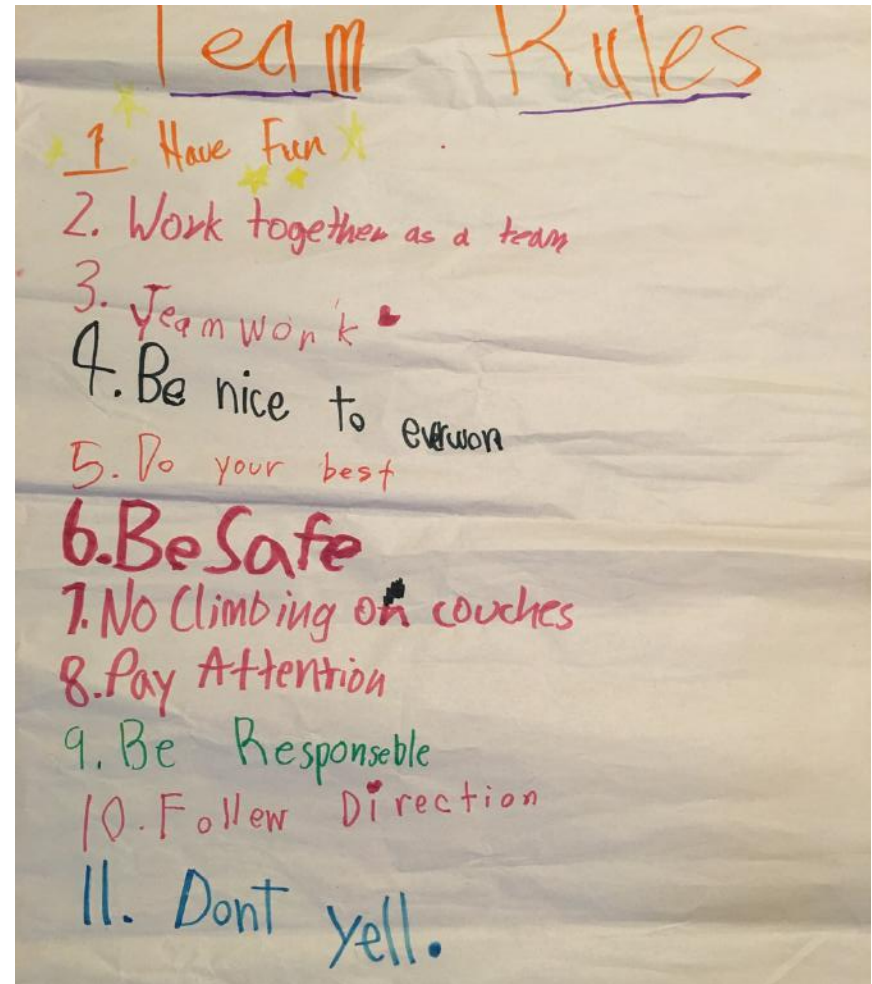
MEET THE BRAINIACS MANIACS

- Girl Scout team from Texas
- Won the state championship in their rookie season
- Attended World Festival Houston in 2018



CREATE SOME TEAM RULES

- Create a set of team “rules” and review and update them at the start of every meeting to set expectations for team behavior
 - To create the first rules, we review the Lego Core Values, but I always start with “Have fun” and “Kids do the work” and then the kids add from there
 - Have the kids write their ideas on a big sheet of paper in marker
 - Suggest some common rules (like talking turns)
 - For conflicts, I refer to an existing rule or suggest they add a new one



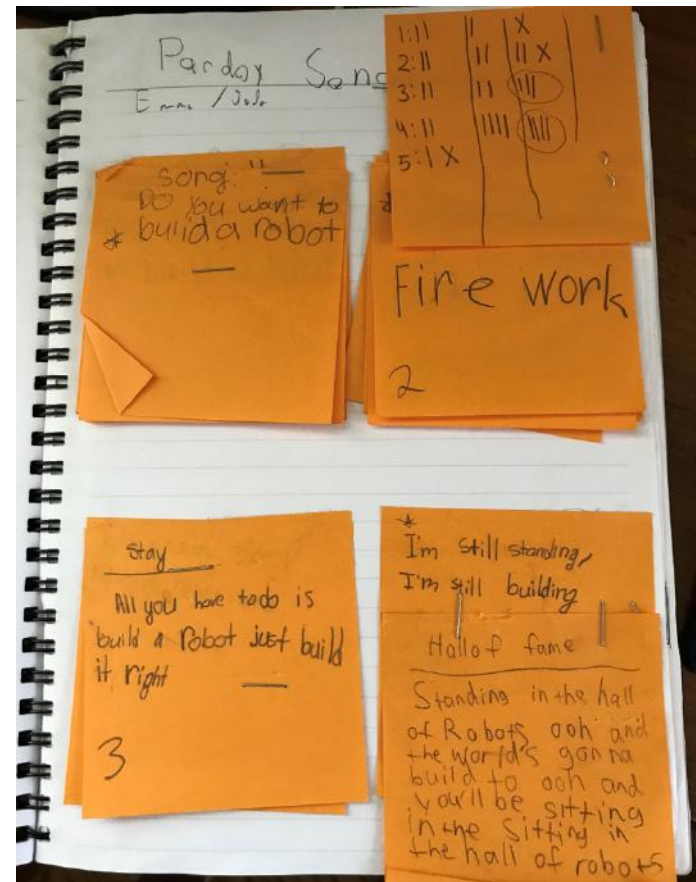
GROUP DECISION-MAKING

- For “big” decisions (team name, project, etc.), create a decision-making process to make it “fair” and consistent, such as
 - Brainstorm for a set time (3-5minutes) to get as many ideas as possible on post-it notes, white board, etc.
 - Group similar/same ideas (e.g. team names based on animals, planets, etc.) and do a group vote to select top 3 and revote to select top 1
 - Vote on specific items in group to select top 3 and revote to select top 1



EXAMPLE OF GROUP DECISION-MAKING

- Our team entered the FIRST FIRST Parody song contest
- We started with 5 ideas
- First round voting narrowed to four
- Took two more rounds to get to final selection
- Final video: The Brainiac Maniacs made “I’m Still Building” (<https://youtu.be/O5BjZQMhvHw>)



DO ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE MAKING DECISIONS

- Include one core values practice in every meeting
 - FLLTutorials.com is an excellent source, but also search for “Destination Imagination Instant Challenges” for many more examples
 - After each core value exercise ask kids and parents
 - What went well?
 - What could have gone better?
 - How did you communicate?
 - How can you communicate better?
 - How well did you plan?
 - How can you plan better?

Building Duplicate LEGO models



EVERYONE CAN HAVE A ROLE

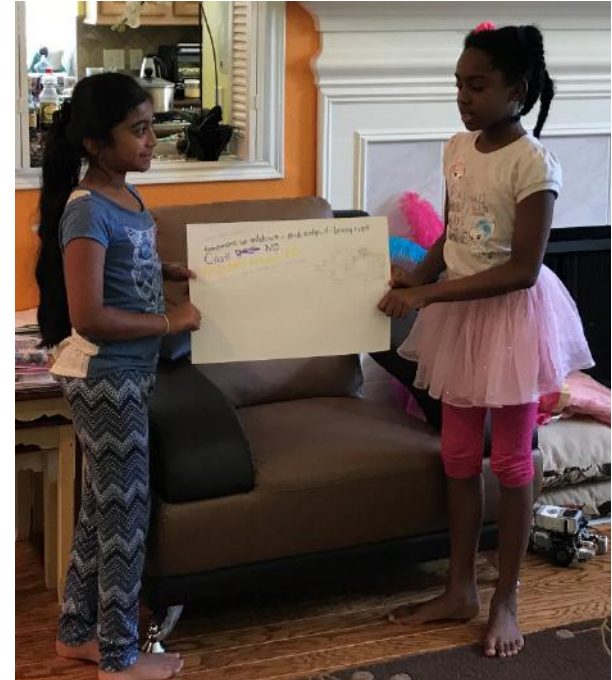
- Roles can help some teams with core values exercises
- It is good to rotate roles so each team members can have experience in each and then let the team decide if they would like set roles, rotating roles or none at all
- Roles include
 - **Brainstorm Manager:** In charge of fast, focused organized brainstorming of ideas, focused on creativity. May not provide an idea, but can combine ideas from others. Ensures the team starts with a good idea.
 - **Task Manager:** In charge of understanding the challenge task, focused on keeping the team on task. Ensure the team gets the task done.
 - **Time Manager:** In charge of how much time will be spent on each part of the challenge and asking the appraiser how much time is left. Ensures the team does not run out of time.
 - **Materials Manager:** In charge of how materials are used. Ensures the team gets the most out of their materials.
 - **Flex Team Member:** Team member without an assigned role who supports the overall team efforts. Ensures the team gets the support it needs.

Marble Roller Coaster



ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION

- Follow the team rules and these (if they are not listed)
 - Take turns
 - Once you say an idea, it belongs to the team
 - Building on each other's ideas is great!
 - Don't say "no", say "Yes, and..."
 - See https://youtu.be/x27_qlfF8Ko (Second City Improv technique)
- Have team members and sub-teams present their ideas to the rest of the group



Sub-teams of 2 presented and discussed before a final design was selected

HANDLING CONFLICTS

- Conflict happens, it's how the team deals with it that counts
 1. Ask the team members involved to work it out
 2. If they can't then help mediate the discussion
 3. If still not resolved, do 2 out of 3 for rock-paper-scissors
 4. If still "hard feelings", chat individually

Tower Building



CREDITS

- This lesson was written by James McGill (james_mcgill@yahoo.com)
- More lessons for FIRST LEGO League are available at www.flltutorials.com



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