

FOCUSING TOOLS

ALoU:

This tool provides a constructive way to analyze the strengths, challenges, and unique aspects and future potential of an option.

Uses:

- ✦ When a group needs to give a balanced and fair assessment of any option
- ✦ To refine, develop, and strengthen interesting possibilities
- ✦ To thoroughly explore one or more very promising options
- ✦ When a group needs to keep its focus on the positives and potentials rather than the negatives

Possible Applications:

- ✦ Situations in which teams must choose from a short list of options such as evaluating and choosing a theme or characters, the use of one kind of material, prop, or object over another
- ✦ Evaluating the merits of different technical or mechanical designs
- ✦ Analyzing different courses of action impartially
- ✦ Helping the team to work out differences of opinion in a constructive way
- ✦ Helping the team to see all sides of an option and keeping discussions on a positive note

Steps:

- ✦ State the option(s) to be examined and write it on the chart or worksheet.
- ✦ List the Advantages of the option. Ask “What is appealing or positive about it?”
- ✦ List the Limitations of the option. State these as questions such as “How might we...,” “How to ...,” instead of phrasing it as a negative. For example: Instead of saying “It’s too big to fit in the car” say instead, “How might we make sure it will fit in the car?”
- ✦ List the option’s Unique Features. Ask “What is truly unique about this option?” “What are some good things that could happen as a result of us using this option?” “What makes this option stand out?”
- ✦ Go back and look at the Limitations. Identify those that pose significant concern or difficulty. Explore ways of Overcoming them.
- ✦ Review all the lists (A, L, o, U) and see if the option does seem to be workable or worth developing.
- ✦ Decide what action to take next.

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Sample Worksheet

The Option to be examined: **Having the Set be "GIANT" and the Characters be "small."**

Advantages	Limitations (and How to Overcome Them)	Unique Features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Allows for a lot of creative ideas + Would be visually very interesting + Would be unlikely any other team would think of this + We would have fun making small objects in large sizes + We could set the story in a lot more places, i.e. inside a desk in a schoolroom + Would allow our characters to really exaggerate their moves + Could be very humorous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + How to create GIANT sized objects? --- We could ask an expert to show us how to make things to scale + How might we physically move large props? --- We could make things out of lightweight materials such as cardboard, Styrofoam etc. + How might transport GIANT props? --- We could build some props in pieces that could be assembled on site. + How might keep the number of props reasonable as we would need a lot of props in order to get the point across? --- We could be very selective in terms of what we choose and our setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + We would learn a lot about proportion and scale + We would learn to look at ordinary things in new ways + The Appraisers would be very impressed + We would have to be very creative in terms of the materials we use