



# Mind Builders: Multidisciplinary Challenges for Cooperative Team-building and Competition

*Paul Fleisher, Donald M. Ziegler*

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Like the nationally known Destination Imagination competition, *Mind Builders* offers simple engineering problems to be solved by student teams. It begins with a few exercises to introduce the team concept. These are followed by ten warm up problems that can be completed within an hour or less, with little advanced preparation. Finally, teachers choose one of 12 engineering challenges to be completed by teams over an extended period, and presented to judges on Challenge Day.

For more than twenty years, the Richmond, Virginia Public Schools' program for gifted students has conducted an interscholastic competition similar to the nationally known competition, Destination Imagination. In the featured contest of this yearly event, teams of five students present solutions to engineering problems that they have worked on for several weeks or more. The problems are multidisciplinary, including elements of research, writing, mathematics and science, and a creative dramatic or musical presentation. Each challenge requires just a few inexpensive materials and a minimum of equipment.

In addition to their use with gifted students and others in interscholastic competitions, these problems make excellent challenges for classroom use, or even for use with extracurricular or recreational organizations such as Scout groups or Boys and Girls Clubs. They are written to include basic skills from the core curriculum, and require students to work cooperatively to solve problems with multiple solutions. This book offers 12 simple engineering problems plus ten warm up problems to be solved by student teams. Each challenge includes detailed specifications, hints for teachers and coaches, scoring rubrics, a list of references that will help students get started on the problem, and a check-list for administering each competition.

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