

An Educator's
Top Ten List
For Leading Digital Game Building Classes with Youth

1. **Check all technology hardware and software prior to class.** This includes making sure that all necessary web sites are accessible from the school site and that the software is working correctly.
2. **Do a “test run” of the lesson.** Practice doing everything ahead of time that you will be asking the youth to do during the lesson. This will allow you to catch any glitches in the instructions or unexpected extra steps in the process, which could throw students off.
3. **When providing group instruction, have students turn off their computer monitors** (while leaving the CPU on) so they can give you their complete attention.
4. **Arrange the classroom so that you can easily see all the computer monitors.** This will assist in keeping students on task and allow you to easily assess who is on and off task.
5. **Have an assistant who can help youth troubleshoot** to help reduce their frustration levels and consequently reduce drop-outs. For middle school students, one helper per 10 students works well. Program graduates, college students, and retired professionals can make great volunteer assistants.
6. **Have a reliable and simple system for saving and retrieving game files each day** (e.g. flash drives, server space, Learning Management System). The simpler the system the better.
7. **Create a standard file naming system that AVOIDS using symbols** (e.g. name, date and version number: JillOrtiz_6_3_09_V1). The students love to use symbols, such as smiley faces, “#” and “!,” in file names, but they can significantly alter the file as it is being saved – and render it inoperable.
8. **Have students save their work by creating a new version each time**, thereby saving a file of each version (for example, JillOrtiz_6_3_09_V1, JillOrtiz_6_3_09_V2, JillOrtiz_6_3_09_V3, etc). This allows students to go back to a previous version without losing too much work.
9. **Have students create a daily task list** of what they plan to accomplish for that given day's session. This allows the students, and you, to keep track of their progress.
10. **Create a simple monitoring system to track student progress** on their daily tasks. This can be as simple as a page with each student's name and what he/she accomplished by the middle and end of each class. Acknowledge students for their progress.