

Twenty-One Classroom Suite Tips from the Who's in the Barn Workshop

Tip 1: Always import and export from Classroom Suite. When you export one or more linked activities, they and all attached files (overlays, large sound files, movies, and/or PDFs) will be exported together and can be put into a zip file in that same operation. When you import one of these exported files, all included files will be placed in the proper location, and all links will be retained.

Tip 2: Build new activities by adding on to or changing activities, including the ones that ship with Classroom Suite. But be sure you work with an activity enough to understand the machinery behind it. Check for hidden toolbars, and items that appear or disappear as a result of animation.

Tip 3: A new, blank IPS3 document has a default action in the page, **Play IntelliMation and Page Sound**. Decide if you want either or both of these things to happen when the page opens. If not, remove this action, and use page buttons or toolbar buttons to give control to the student. If you want an automatic page sound, remember that you also have to import or record a sound and mark it for the page.

Tip 4: Notice that choosing an action from the list of available actions puts the chosen action into the "Add" box below the two windows, and above the **Button Actions** list. It still is not in place as an action for the button. You must click the **Add:** button to actually place the action into the list to use it for this button. Alternately, you can double-click an action in the upper window to directly add it to the list of button actions, bypassing the Add box.

Tip 5: If you are creating a toolbar with many buttons that are similar in function, it may be fastest to finish and test the first button, make copies of it, and then make changes in the copies. Things you would usually change would be the name, the picture, and perhaps the assigned sound. This is a real time saver when your buttons have multiple actions, and all or most of the actions are the same for each button.

Tip 6: If you use the default choice to play a page sound, you can only have one sound per page. But both toolbar and page buttons can control sounds with a **Play Sound** action and a highlighted sound in the sounds list. This gives you the power to have multiple sounds play on a page. You could have several buttons with sounds for students to click.

You also could hide a toolbar full of sound buttons, and have a visible button choose one of the hidden buttons to play sounds. A third choice is to hide the sound buttons toolbar, and then have a series of page actions that would choose each of the sound buttons in the order you desire when the page opens.

Tip 7: The **Select Object...** action is very powerful, and yet it is often overlooked. You can type in the name of text boxes, page buttons, and graphics that are on the current page. You can even use it for a hidden page button. Selecting a page button is just like clicking it. For text boxes and graphics, you would use **Select Object "Name"** followed by an action that affects that object. Here we select a text box and read it out. If there were three text boxes, each with a different name, you would use three **Select Object** actions, each followed by **Read All**. You could also do other things, like select a graphic and move it to a region.

Tip 8: Use finished activities, both ones you have made and others, as templates. Customizing or adding onto an activity saves you time. You may need several versions of an activity to use with different students. It also is a good way to stretch your authoring skills without biting off too much at once. If you use another author's activity, spend enough time looking behind the scenes to be sure you understand how it works. Then make whatever changes will fine-tune it for your students' needs.

Tip 9: Use **Paint** mode to create a floating graphic you can animate from a background photo. The procedure is to go into **Paint** mode, select and copy the rectangular area you need, go immediately back to **Design** mode, and paste. The result is a floating graphic that you can animate. If you need to trim the rectangle to the edge of a shape, go to a new blank page while in **Paint** mode, paste the rectangle, and erase around it. Then select and copy again, go to **Design** mode, and paste.

Tip 10: When objects are stacked on top of one another, you can still easily select one for editing by choosing **Select Object** from the **Edit** menu, and picking the object from the list of object names in the flip out menu beside it. Next choose **Properties...** from the **Edit** menu to open the **Properties** window for the selected object.

Tip 11: If a graphic will not be clicked by a student, remove it from scans by opening **Properties** and taking off the checkmarks under the **Scanning** tab. Also remove the checkmark from **Respond to Mouse Clicks**, to prevent a reaction from

direct selection. If a student can interact with a graphic, there should be some effect or reward; otherwise, set it so it seems to be part of the background.

Tip 12: The timeline really does act like a time machine. If you forgot and made a change at, say, 2 sec, then it would not be there at time 0. Things added at 0 remain for future points unless you delete them at a later timepoint. In fact, like in the real world, things added at any timepoint will remain at a later new timepoint, but will not appear at earlier timepoints.

Tip 13: You can use the **Set IntelliMation Time...** action as a reset. If you play an animation, it does not automatically jump back to 0 seconds after it plays. A button with **Play IntelliMation and Page Sound** will indeed cause it to go to the 0 point and play to the end. But having it jump back when the button is clicked sometimes looks silly. If so, add **Set IntelliMation Time to 0** after **Play IntelliMation and Page Sound**.

Tip 14: Activating the **(Wait)** option for **Play Sound** makes certain that the sound will play completely before going on to the next action. This may be exactly what you need to have a voice-over complete itself. It can also make sure a sound finishes before going to the next page. If a sound is being cut off by the next action, turn on **(Wait)**!

Tip 15: You can use the **Transform Tools** within an IntelliMation to create the illusion of something moving closer or farther away. Don't try to change the size yourself at every half second. Just set the size you want at the beginning, jump to the timepoint where you want to end up, and reset the size there. Classroom Suite will smoothly change the size in between. This **tweening** effect is built right in!

Tip 16: You can create animations longer than 5 seconds by clicking the **plus 5** seconds button. The timeline is as long as you want it to be! You can move back to a previous 5 second section by clicking the **minus 5** seconds button.

Tip 17: In building a complex animation, plan ahead to delete items you no longer need, use the fewest possible points, and do segments in the order that will make best use of elements already in place. This will help you do the animation faster, and also make it easier to edit if necessary. If you make a change in the middle of a bunch of timepoints, you must make that change in each later timepoint.

Tip 18: Use **Play Range**, an advanced IntelliMation option, to play a part of an IntelliMation. By specifying several different ranges in various buttons, you can in effect have more than one animation on a single page.

Tip 19: Combining the **Choose Random** function with a toolbar of buttons that use **Play Range** lets you create cause and effect activities in which the animation doesn't always come out the same.

Tip 20: You can edit a button partway through an IntelliMation so that it looks different and has different actions. By having the action stop where the edited button resides in time, you can let students interact within an animation.

Tip 21: You can take a screen shot of the thumbnails in **Sort Pages...** to make a flowchart of a multi-page activity. But for this activity, which all takes place on one page, I used pieces of clip art from the activity to show the flow of the actions.

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