

Tips from learners



We asked girl and minority gender learners:

What motivates you?

How could someone have improved situations where you or your learning were blocked?

Here's what they said...



Learning space setting and feel

✓ FEELING PRIDE:

- Recognition, validation and appreciation motivate us – whether it's trying a new technology or process, or using existing learning.
- Celebrating achievements, however small. Supportive feedback and compliments help fight imposter syndrome.
- Being given equal respect: not being ignored, or overlooked due to being quiet.

✓ NOT FEELING JUDGED:

- A culture of 'no question is a stupid question' so that learners don't feel it's their problem if they don't know the answer.
- Staff and learners treated with respect and feeling safe – training should be offered to make sure this happens.

✓ ARRANGEMENT OF SPACE:

- Collaborative and inclusive room layouts, such as a circle, or engaging face-to-face if working on a laptop.

✓ RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF FUN:

- 'Being with friends – then I feel like I can do anything!'
- Encouraging a sense of play and delight whilst providing opportunities to gain confidence and knowledge.

✓ OPENNESS TO NEW IDEAS:

- Supporting experimentation: encourage a sense of being ground-breaking and new.
- Ensuring that learning time includes creativity as well as factual information.

✓ A POSITIVE LEARNING CULTURE:

- Promoting a sharing culture, not competitive or hoarding knowledge.
- No egos! The leader/teacher listens and responds instead of just pushing their ideas.
- Exploring music tech through music styles that students love – following our passions.
- Introducing relatable role models and inspiring new music.

✓ AN ATTENTIVE MUSIC LEADER:

- Talking to everyone in the room, paying attention to those withdrawing from the situation. Asking their opinions and showing that they are valued.
- Keeping communication channels open and checking in if we may be struggling.
- Working from a position of accessibility not ableism.
- Encouraging the peer group to be supportive friends, listening and offering help.



Proactive learning and teaching strategies

- Allowing us to have time in the space on our own, or with the tutor, to get to grips with something not grasped.
- Offering extra-curricular access to equipment.
- Keeping explanations and discussions simple and jargon-free.
- Ensuring everybody in the room has hands-on access to the equipment.
- Including everyone in the conversation instead of imagining some won't understand.
- Not assuming that everyone is happy, and at the same level. Some learners may find asking very difficult.
- Showing an equal interest in everyone's musical backgrounds and tastes.



Leaders, teachers and role models

- Ongoing mentorships, formal or informal, with leaders who share their own experiences with women, girls and minority gender learners.
- Welcoming us to share our experiences or issues to seek advice.
- Focusing energy on retention of women and minority gender tutors, retaining more role models for the next generations.
- Always making more space for other women.



Educators taking the lead

- Watching for misogyny, and calling it out when it happens.
- Pointing out when others are talking over women and minority gender people, or taking credit for their ideas.
- Making space for women and minority gender group members to talk, spotting if they are waiting to say something and offering them the room.
- Challenging gaslighting and put-downs – if the sound mix was good, say so.
- Ensuring there is a balance of people of different backgrounds and genders in learning materials and examples.
- Showing awareness of how lone minority gender learners in a group might feel, but not by publicly pointing to difference.
- Doing 'vibe checks' to open up the room, see how everyone's feeling, and give an opportunity for anyone feeling unheard to communicate this.
- Remembering that gender issues are not just the burden of cis women, trans women and non-binary people.

