Creative Content

Tee Peters

Music artist & programme provider
10 Creative Music Top Teaching Tips

For today's young creators (and even for us as educators), tech offers accessibility in ways we've never had before. Music producer, Tee Peters, shares his tips on how to encourage tech-enabled thinking and creative freedom in the music classroom.

1. Assign a habitual 'Sound Diary' Challenge

Challenge students to record a sound or musical idea each day using basic tech. This could include humming a tune into a phone, clapping a rhythm with their hands, recording a friend's laughter, or capturing street sounds on their walk home.

By doing this habitually, students develop a sense of observation and start hearing the world differently - not as noise, but as potential. It's also a great way to make music a daily routine, encouraging students to think of themselves as lifelong creators, not just classroom composers.

If budget allows, introduce tools like LIFE by XLN Audio, which transform environmental recordings into usable drum loops and percussive elements. This means students can go outside, record the sound of a bicycle bell, a school bell, birdsong, or playground chatter - and hear it transformed into rhythmic textures they can build music around.

This is just one tool amongst many available for different budgets, task your students to research and explore the possibilities of each one.

2. Reframe Low-Tech as a Creative Superpower

Normalise the use of unconventional tools and accessible devices. It's not about fancy gear - it's about giving students the power to create anywhere, anytime.

Give students a range of creative prompts using things already around them: plastic bottles as percussion, rulers twanged on desks, layered handclaps, or kitchen utensils recorded on a phone mic. These items not only make music accessible but also spark imagination. Run a “found sound” competition, where students bring in one everyday object and use it as the base for a loop, beat, or atmosphere.

Another activity is to encourage the groups to make music using the classroom itself. For example, ask students to pick a part of the classroom that no one else has selected. This could be the bottom of the table, a keyboard, using the floor to tap on, hitting a pencil against something etc. The student/group then makes a percussive loop using their chosen surface and afterwards, the student/group/class can analyse the decisions made by noting key terms that describe the actions.

3. Let Students Choose Their Tools

Instead of assigning one platform, provide a curated list of accessible apps (such as BandLab, Soundtrap, Koala Sampler, or Groovepad) and let students choose how they want to create. To encourage reflection and decision-making, students can write a short explanation of why they chose that tool and what it helps them achieve.

This approach encourages agency. Students are more likely to engage with the creative process when they have chosen the tool that fits their needs or curiosity. You can guide this process by grouping tools by function - e.g. beat-making apps, vocal processing, sampling tools - and letting students explore one from each category over a term.

4. Teach Tech Fluency as a Form of Musical Literacy

Music tech isn't just about gear — it's about access to expression. Staying up to date with emerging platforms helps students stay empowered.

You don’t have to be experts in every tool. Instead, set up a monthly 15–minute “What’s New in Music Tech?” class segment. Let students bring one new platform or plugin they’ve discovered and explain it to others. This shifts the burden of research off the teacher while encouraging peer-to-peer learning and curiosity. You could put all of these into a youth co-created resource that can be passed down across year groups and fellow teachers.

Websites like Splice, Soundtrap’s blog, or even TikTok creators who review music tools are great places to get bite-sized, current insights without having to deep-dive alone.

5. Show That Modern Culture Is Welcome in the Classroom

Bring in relevant, modern references — whether that's a TikTok sound, a video game soundtrack, or a trending artist. Let students know their tastes are valid and can be a launchpad for creation.

You could dedicate a "Sample the Culture" day where students pick a cultural moment — a meme, trending sound, or a viral video — and create a loop or short piece of music inspired by it. This helps them see that inspiration isn't distant or academic; it's happening in real time.

6. Equip Students with Pocket-Sized Creativity

Encourage students to record ideas using any mic they have access to — voice note apps, smartwatches, or handheld recorders. These impromptu moments often capture real inspiration and may even make it into the final track.

This is especially powerful outside of school hours — for example, during lunch, the journey home, or in quiet moments on weekends. Although many schools now ban phones, encouraging students to experiment with audio recording *in their own time* can give them a portable way to grow creatively. As a future-facing tip, schools might consider allocating a few inexpensive handheld recorders to support this process, especially for students with limited access to personal tech.

7. Encourage Real-World Relevance as a Creative Option

Let students know they can use current events, personal experiences, or social issues in their music — but never force it. For some, it'll unlock purpose; for others, it'll simply be a way of relating to music more personally.

Model this by sharing examples: How does music reflect a community's struggles or joys? What might a beat sound like if it were inspired by today's headlines? You're not turning students into journalists — you're helping them realise they have a *choice* to be in dialogue with the world around them.

8. Build Emotional Checkpoints into the Music Process

Incorporate regular, low-pressure moments in class for students to reflect, express their struggles, and ask for support. These checkpoints build trust and support more confident music-making.

Rather than wait for students to burn out or disengage, set a rhythm: every 3–4 weeks, include a "check-in activity" where students answer questions like, *What's been the*

hardest part of music-making this month? What's one thing I'm proud of? These can be anonymous if needed and help create a culture where uncertainty and imperfection are part of the journey.

9. Make Reflection Part of the Lesson, Not Just the Homework

Build time into your lesson plan for reflection. This could be a class circle, a two-minute voice note, or a written "exit ticket" with prompts like *What worked for you today? What will you try next time?*

Doing this *in class* rather than as homework ensures all students participate and signals that creative reflection is just as important as output. It helps embed self-evaluation skills that young artists need for long-term growth.

10. Work with Parents

Speak to the parents of your students. Music is such a difficult subject to get into because accessing an instrument can be expensive. To be better safeguarders of young people, we need to work as a team.

By building relationships with parents you can spot where additional support is needed. If a parent knows their child is regularly using a DAW at home, or that they're trying to practice traditional instruments without resources, that context can help you make better decisions about how to nurture their creativity in school. You can't do it alone — but with parents as allies, we can spot financial challenges early, adapt projects to suit home life, and create more personalised development pathways for students.

Final Note from Tee: Fact - I made this 10-tip guide using AI - not to outsource thoughts, but to interview myself in a more natural way, a process that helped me express my views on teaching and creativity, especially as someone who faces neurodivergent challenges with language.

"Tech can be a personal accessibility tool. Let's give young people the freedom to create in ways that truly work for them."

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