Facilitating Fundamentals

Ask questions rather than giving answers

It may be tempting to give the answers to questions right away, but if it's possible, ask questions instead so that learners can arrive at their own answers. Even something as simple as "Can you explain what your program does? What do you want it to do?"

Build trust and relationships

Learning is a social process. Get to know your learners and help them get to know you. Learning new things requires learners to be open and vulnerable. Being around people that they know and trust can facilitate the learning process. (We believe it also retains families.)

Encourage exploration, experimentation, and risk-taking

Authentic enthusiasm goes a long way

Sometimes learners, especially beginners, can feel unsure about their projects. Some encouragement or cheerleading can help them feel good about their work and their next steps.

Use technical words cautiously

Be aware of the words you use. Avoid technical jargon. If you have to use it, use it as a learning opportunity to explain the jargon.

Be a connector

Connect learners with similar interests to each other and to relevant resources in the workshop.

Put yourself in their (unique) shoes

Surface their interests

It can sometimes take time for people to know what they want to do. Create an environment that is open to many interests. Ask questions like "What do you like to do?"

Hold the tools as a last resort

It's tempting to grab the mouse, but try describing the steps rather than doing it for learners. If you have to grab the tools, let them try it again for themselves after you show them and guide them along.

Mistakes and failures are welcome!

Rather than avoiding mistakes, encourage learners to be open to them. As you support them through it, help them see what they are learning in the process.