

Clay 101 – running your lesson

Remember, the kids are the only ones you need to impress and they have no idea you've never done this before.

Preparing for your lesson

- Read all the appropriate clay 101 instructions so you are comfortable cutting clay, scoring and slipping, etc. etc.
- Study the lesson plan ahead of time and ask the kiln volunteer (number/e-mail address in the workroom) if you have any questions.
- Lesson plans can be found in the workroom.
- Practice making a sample if you want.
- It is possible you have to collect leaves, cut templates etc. so visit the supply area before so you can make sure every thing you need is there.
- Have your helpers meet you in the work room ½ hour ahead of the lesson so they can help you gather and carry supplies.

Preparing the classroom

- Have the teacher clear a desk at the back so you have a work space. Set it up like the kid's desks.
- Have one person responsible to cutting clay. We have 2 colors of clay, red and white. Decide before hand which you are using.
- Everyone else prepare the desks and hand out clay.
- Each child will need: freezer paper with clay, cutting tool, dowel for rolling and 2 batons if a slab project, any other supplies indicated in the lesson plan. **Lesson plans are located in the work room.** Between 4 kids: small pot of water and a small pot of slip.

A word on cutting tools

- We use paper clips as cutting tools, open like this:



- Do not open all the way as it will be too difficult for them to use.

Demonstrate your lesson!

- This is important so the kids see the end product. Have them gather around you and make sure they can all see.
- Make sure your helpers are watching too otherwise they can't help the kids!
- Don't go step by step with the kids if you can avoid it. They all work at very a different pace.
- Start by reminding them that this is clay not play dough!
- Explain how easy it is to get air bubbles if they poke and prod and mess about with their clay.
- Emphasize the importance of scoring and slipping over and over and over....
- Demonstrate how to make the project.
- Send the kids back to their desks and help them out as needed.
- Their name needs to be on the bottom of their work – write it with a pencil, not the paper clip.
- Ask them to be patient, especially if there isn't much help.
- Be prepared to trouble shoot – if they make a hole or really mess up consider having them start over and stay with them.
- Have the teacher keep control of the class so you can concentrate on helping the kids.
- Have score and slip be your mantra – keeping on reminding them!

A note on air bubbles:

The most likely reason a piece will explode in the kiln is moisture because the project wasn't dry enough. Not your responsibility.

The second reason can be air bubbles which expand when the kiln gets hot (nearly 2000f) and cause the explosion.

Air bubbles that cause explosions are pretty rare if the children take care, don't mess about. There's no need to start "slamming" clay mid lesson, simply grab new clay if you aren't sure.

NB – I had a class of 1st graders play with their scraps and make what ever they wanted. They squished and shaped and squished some more. When it was fired nothing blew up.....

After your lesson

- Put the children's work in boxes – these can be found in the workroom.
- As each piece goes into the box make sure their name is on it.
- Clean up is easy. Any supplies simply need the clay to be knocked off. Do not use water or cookie cutters will rust and wood will warp.
- The next people to use the supplies will knock off any dry clay when they prepare for their lesson.
- Do not pour any slip in to the sink– it will block the drain.

Most important step of all

- **WRITE YOUR PROJECT ON THE KILN SIGN UP BOARD!**

