

Be a PMC Promoter - Teach PMC!

In our last issue, Elaine Luther wrote about how to get a PMC teaching job and how to prepare teaching materials. In Part 2 she takes us into the classroom.

Part 2 of 2:

- Skills you'll demonstrate
- Tools you'll need

by Elaine Luther

There are two important steps in teaching: getting hired and getting prepared for class. [Part 1 of this article](#) (see the last issue of Studio PMC) discussed how to present yourself to an art center and some of the support materials you'll need. Now let's talk about what to present in class and the tools with which to do it.

What skills need to be demonstrated in a PMC class?

The following are what I consider to be the essential PMC skills, which you may want to customize for your own classes:

- tool use, rolling and cutting
- firing time and procedure
- slip creation and use
- thinning and extruding
- texturing and impression making
- creating hollow cores from homemade play dough, potato, wax, floral foam, Paper Clay^a, and biodegradable packing peanuts
- building up over hollow cores
- soldering with PMC
- imbedding objects
- setting stones
- care and storage
- re-moistening technique
- burnishing
- patina ("oxidizing")

What tools and supplies are needed for a PMC class?

- samples of PMC projects you have made
- tools manufactured for use with polymer clay and Play-Doh
- polymer clay-type extruder with various tips
- mini plastic cutting tools, such as those intended for use with polymer clay and Play-Doh.
- interesting textures for making impressions



Toys and common objects make great textures when pressed into PMC.



Polymer clay can be impressed with textures which are in turn pressed into PMC.



This earring was textured by pressing it into the textured polymer clay mold below it.

- cutting tools such as X-acto knives, dental tools, and/or wax carving tools
- pasta machine for rolling PMC very thin (optional)
- polymer clay and hard carving wax to create you own stamping tools
- olive oil and plastic wrap
- silver wire for imbedding loops, stones to set, or objects to imbed
- alumina hydrate on which to fire hollow objects
- small terra cotta pots and saucers for holding the alumina hydrate
- burnishers for compacting the fired PMC before soldering
- one or more kilns capable of reaching and maintaining with consistency the necessary temperature. I recommend the Paragon Rapid Fire Kiln, available from the Lark Books Catalog and jewelry supply houses.
- tumbler with stainless steel shot, Rio Grande Albuquerque's Super Sunsheen Descaler, and water for polishing class projects.

Which of these items you supply, the art center supplies, or the students bring themselves varies from art center to art center and will need to be discussed. Where I teach, the art center has one or more kilns, and it usually supplies the olive oil, plastic wrap, alumina hydrate, and metalsmithing tools. I bring the pasta machine, hollow core materials, a plastic toy assortment, extruders, Play-Doh tools, and terra cotta pots. Remember not everyone likes a scavenger hunt. The more you can bring, the easier it will be for your host. And you'll know you have what you need!

If students receive a list of materials, they can bring in some of these items themselves. Some art centers include the cost of PMC in a lab fee, while others prefer that the students purchase the PMC on their own.

The more tools you own, the more places you can teach; you just have to make sure that the fee you charge accurately reflects your costs. You may be able to get reimbursed by the art center for items you buy, such as the floral foam and terra cotta pots. The rest of the items are washable (to remove the olive oil) and thus reusable.

Happier students

I recently purchased a Paragon Quick-Fire kiln, which comes up to temperature in only fifteen minutes and is easily portable. While I bought this for my own work with PMC, I will also use it in teaching classes. Even if an art center has a big kiln, having two (theirs and yours) means you get more firings in each class session - and more firings means happier students. Having a portable kiln also allows you to teach at locations such as bead stores, which usually do not have kilns.



Teaching PMC is rewarding in many ways. You get to be the one to introduce people to new skills which offer great-looking projects in a relatively short time. Promoting PMC will reward us all by keeping the product on the market, someday bringing platinum PMC to the United States, creating a market for PMC-created jewelry, while educating customers, collectors, and workshop students. So get out there and be a PMC promoter!

All photos by Ralph M. Romero

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