



Qualities of a Good Teacher

by Holly Gage

Teaching is a specialized job. It's best performed by a generous, sharing, and caring person, with an interest to see others achieve. A person with patience, and clear methods of explaining the designing and making process. It is true what is said, "Just because you make beautiful things, doesn't mean you can teach others how to make beautiful things," but this is a learnable skill, and a very worthwhile career choice. If you are thinking about teaching or are looking for a good teacher to learn from, this list may be helpful for you. You will find guidelines for what to look for or strive for, in your efforts.

What Students Look For Is A Qualified Teacher

This is a good checklist for finding a teacher, and what students look for in a teacher. I think it is important to note, every teacher has a first class.

- They look for someone who is knowledgeable and who can master the technique they will be teaching.
- They seek someone with the ability to teach as well as the ability to create.
- The examples of the teachers work should illustrate the project accurately.
- The teacher's work in general shows innovation, good design, and excellent craftsmanship.
- They would like the teacher to have a good reputation.
- They seek a learning style that matches their interest. Do students repeat the master's project or is the student to create from their own voice?
- They want to feel confident in the teacher's credibility. Have they taught before? Have they been published? However, I think it is important to note, every teacher has a first class, but if they have many of the qualities included in this article, and charge a fee accordingly, they too can be successful.
- Certification, Masters Registry, College Degree, Juried State Guild status, and many years of working experience are not a must, but indicate more advance skill levels.

Teacher Preparation Before Class

A large portion of the work is done before class even begins. Both you and the students will notice how smoothly the class runs with proper preparation.

- A teacher does research about the project to be presented and knows her subject matter.
- They do a lesson plan for themselves.
- They supply the students with a checklist of tools and materials or make them available for use or purchase.
- They road test the technique, working out any bugs.
- They time themselves to make sure the students can finish in the allotted time slot and inform them in advance if they won't be finishing in class.
- They love what they do, both the art form and the teaching, and it shows.
- They enjoy motivating and guiding the students development of their own artist interpretation of what is being taught.



Teacher Performance During Class

A good teacher is always prepared for class, and different situations arising in class.

- They remember there is more than one method for reaching a desired goal and inform their students of this as well.
- They know how to motivate and inspire their students.
- They look around the room for signs of confusion, boredom, and frustration, and respond to the student with patience.
- They make themselves available for all types of questions without making the student feel like they are an imposition or stupid.
- They pace class so there are periods of demonstration and periods of work time as not to overwhelm the students with too much at one time.
- They encourage student sharing as there is much to be learned from each other.
- They fully understand firing concepts and relay this important information to their students. They educate them on the different philosophies about firing and why.
- They listen to their student's concerns, learn from them, and adjust their lessons if need be.
- They have the ability to be flexible and change on a moment's notice, depending on what they see happening in the class.
- It's important they know not everyone learns at the same rate. Some underestimate and others overestimate their ability and experience needed for the class. Being able to guide the quick learners along, but be patient with the slower ones is necessary.

Teacher Availability After Class

- They ask for feedback from the students, so they can always be improving, and consider an evaluation form.
- They continue to keep learning and stay on top of new developments within their specialty.
- They allow follow up questions if need be concerning the class they taught.

Being the best teacher you can be or picking the best teacher to learn skills from involves many personal choices. However, passion is an essential ingredient, and when a teacher is in front of their students, their love, passion, and enthusiasm is infectious. They act like there is no better place to be than in the classroom, and you can tell teaching is a joy. The incredible gift of being a great teacher or having a great teacher to guide you can never be understated.

Biography: Holly Gage of Gage Designs is a 2015 Saul Bell Design winner recognized for distinction in jewelry design. She creates contemporary jewelry and teaches her unique techniques with a gentle blend of design instruction and technical proficiency. Holly brings her innovation, creativity, and gift of helping others find their artistic voice through classes, mentoring programs, and master workshops. Classes are available live Online, throughout the US, and abroad. She is a full-time jewelry artist, Certified Metal Clay Instructor, author, and conference speaker. In addition, Holly holds a BS in Fine Art and Education. Her jewelry and articles on techniques and design can be found in over 75+ regional and national publications including the Best of America Jewelry Artists; Named 3rd in Handmade Business: Top 12 Makers, Movers, and Shakers; Metal Clay Today; Art Jewelry and Lapidary Journal Jewelry Artist; Making Jewellery; among others. You can find more information about Holly's jewelry, classes, and awards, along with numerous Metal Clay tips, tutorials, and blog on her web site at <http://www.HollyGage.com>

