

# CERAMICS MAKES YOU SMARTER

BECAUSE OF NEUROPLASTICITY. Thanks to advances in technology, researchers have discovered that the adult brain is not a done deal - formed in childhood and then forever set on "auto pilot". The brain is constantly changing as we think, learn and act. The most recent theory - neuroplasticity - says that new knowledge and skills increase the number of brain cells, the way they are organized and the pathways between the existing and new brain cells. As we learn, think and do, our brains become more powerful, more adaptable and more efficient. Our brain becomes better at what it does. When you change the brain's activity by learning a new skill, the pay off is higher than if you keep using a skill you already have.

## SO WHY CERAMICS? Three reasons!

**First** - because learning and doing ceramics calls on many brain centers (often at the same time). Activating the centers (often simultaneously) means also the creation of new links and strengthening or adapting the old ones. So you get increased brain cells as well as more and better communication between them. Centers of brain activity: Physical sensation - pretty basic brain stuff and yet so essential to successfully throwing or hand building an object. Hand - Eye Coordination commands involvement of both the motor control centers and the visual centers. Thinking and planning involves envisioning and projecting into the future. These activities demand involvement of multiple centers in the higher functioning fore brain. Rapid fluid integrated reaction and interaction as your body and mind adjust to and commands this piece of emerging pottery. Intellectual - Pottery is probably the most technically demanding of the arts. Your command over the clay and glazes grow as you understand the technical information and science of ceramics. Artistic 'muscles'. Several parts of the sophisticated brain must step up to the demanding task of having 'vision' and making those artistic decisions.

**Second** - because pottery teaching techniques and strategies use the methods known to be the most effective. The best way to grow brain cells and to get them in efficient and effective communication is by providing learners with the following opportunities: Guided experience (mentorship, demonstration etc.), New knowledge built on previously acquired knowledge, Learners encouraged to imagine a new creative result, Making and executing plans, Doing all this in a group setting and Finally - Critical to brain success - learning by trial and error - practice and learn by mistakes.

**Third** - Making pottery calls on both brain hemispheres: The **left brain** - the logical, sequential thinker. Problem solves by logic - arranging parts into a whole in a sequence, cause and effect, Wants concrete information, Pays attention to the technical and mechanical side of learning, Good at knowing rules, Likes verbal descriptions, The **right brain** - the emotional and artistic thinker, Likes to manipulate objects, Likes demonstrations, Proceeds from big picture to assembling its parts, Is very sensitive to colors, Wants to sense, feel or touch a real object, Thrives with hands-on activities, Likes to back up things visually, And what you get out of pottery are the old pathways stronger and quicker and new pathways with new connections.