Level 5 LOTE - Indonesian Vocabulary and Clay

PEEL in Practice: 1300 ideas for quality teaching
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I had an increasing problem of general boredom/'switching off' with a number of classes towards the end of term. I wanted to try something new and 'out of the ordinary' with my Year 7 and 8 classes. Reports were finished and we were all feeling somewhat 'jaded'. I thought a lesson with no writing would be suitable.

I told the students that I had a new idea for a test/quiz. Instead of the usual 10-15 written vocabulary answers or picture answers (using very familiar vocabulary) they would be making their own 3D versions of the words. I also said that I would be choosing the most interesting and innovative ones as winners each time.

The risk of bringing in chunks of modeling clay bothered me a little. They could have been used as missiles or colours meshed together or who knows what? (some students might have preferred to make 'rude' models instead!) I had to trust them to approach this activity sensibly! All four classes seemed enthusiastic with the idea when I suggested it. Generally they all enjoyed the exercise. Some who normally don't care or aren't interested really tried hard to do their best all lesson. One girl said 'This isn't Indonesian, this is ArtCraft'. I think they liked it because they had ownership. Some were loathe to destroy their own perfect little model of a book/chair/ ruler or whatever in order to go on with the next item! Of course some were very disappointed that I did not choose them as 'winners' as they were so proud of their individual work (perhaps it was not such a good idea to single out winners?) One particular Year 7 girl who has been very antagonistic all term was surprisingly cooperative and enthusiastic this time. At the end of the lesson she came up to me and commented how much she had enjoyed this task.

This made me smile! After the lesson many were asking if they could use the clay again. Upon reflection to improve this lesson and to overcome the difficulty of some students never winning, I decided that on the next occasion, they could work in pairs with the list of 10-15 foreign words. One student makes their object and the other tries to guess what it is.

All correct guesses are recorded, the aim being to quickly get through the list (with less emphasis on perfection in each model) so that they then swap over and reverse roles.

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