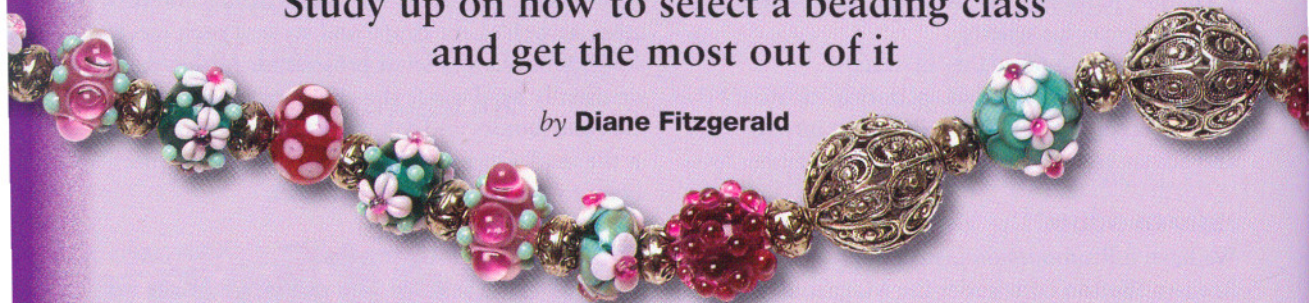


# Class act

Study up on how to select a beading class  
and get the most out of it

by **Diane Fitzgerald**



You've tried your hand at a few projects in *Bead&Button* magazine or maybe had a lesson from a friend. Now you want to take a class at your local bead store or at a bead show. How do you go about selecting a class?

## ✓ **Know yourself**

Let's begin with you. What kind of project appeals to you — a necklace, bracelet, or earrings? Do you want a project that will be completed in class or finished on your own? Are you interested in learning a new technique or gaining a deeper understanding of a technique you've already tried?

Also consider your skill level. This is important in selecting a class, because an instructor may not have time in an intermediate or advanced class to bring a beginner up to speed. Beginners generally have little or no experience, while intermediate bead makers know the basic stitches, such as peyote and brick, and perhaps can follow a pattern.

## ✓ **Get the details**

If you're interested in taking a class locally, you may have access to classes through a bead shop or a local bead society. Ask to be on the store's mailing list, or join the bead society, so you can see what is offered.

If you're headed to a bead show, there are two ways to learn more about the classes offered. The first way is to order a show catalog. Show catalogs are fun to peruse because they describe what you will learn in each class and show pictures of the projects. Look for *Bead&Button* Show classes online at [BeadAndButtonShow.com](http://BeadAndButtonShow.com).

Second, you can visit the show Web site. Show Web sites offer a chance to read about class projects, learn more about the teachers, and see images of completed projects. Class listings may also be searched by date, keyword, instructor, media, or technique, enabling you to zero in on your preferences. You can also download a show schedule and get a good idea of what the show will be like.

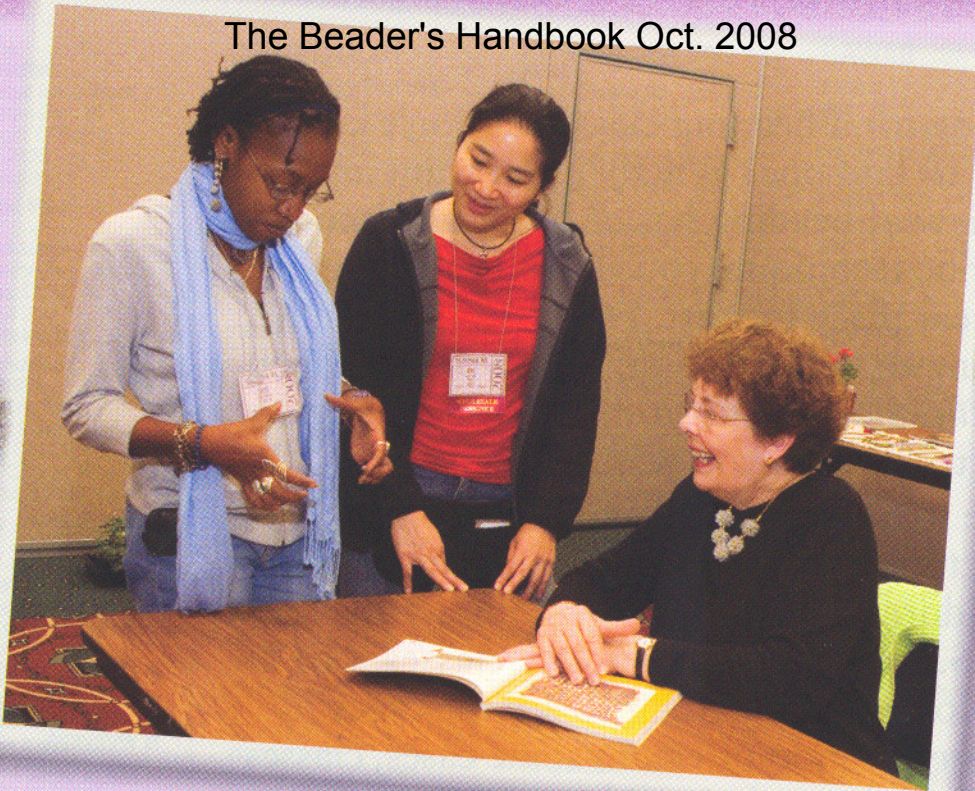
## ✓ **Consider supplies**

Be sure to check whether the supplies are provided in the class or whether you are expected to bring your own. Supplies for a beginner project may cost less than \$10, while supplies for an advanced project could be \$100 or more.

For many classes, you will be expected to bring a small sharp scissors, needles, thread, beads, and perhaps a task lamp and work surface, such as a placemat or cloth. Wirework or bead-making classes may require special tools or equipment.

## ✓ **Student/teacher expectations**

What can you expect during a class, and what will be expected of you? Most important, if you have questions about the class, you are expected to contact the instructor for answers before registering. You will also be expected to arrive at the class a few minutes before the starting time to get set up.



Left to right: Ony Ndika from Fishers, Ind., in the U.S., and Riki Sono from Tokyo met with Diane Fitzgerald after taking her class "Teaching Beading like a Pro" at the 2008 Bead&Button Show.

Classes at a bead shop with a local teacher are a good place to learn the basics, and guest instructors may be invited to teach more advanced techniques or special projects.

Keep chatting to a minimum so other students aren't distracted, but don't be afraid to ask questions or ask the instructor for a demonstration. If you're uncertain about something, chances are others may be too. Before leaving class, be certain you know how to complete the project and whether you may contact the instructor if you have questions about it later.

During a class at a bead show, the instructor will provide written as well as verbal instructions, demonstrate the processes, and explain the basics, from how the tools are used and held to how to thread a needle and pick up beads.

No matter where you take your class, the instructor should be respectful and patient. Students are expected to return this courtesy both toward the instructor and their fellow students by

listening carefully, asking the instructor for help rather than interrupting a neighbor, waiting for assistance, asking necessary questions, and being patient with themselves as they learn.

### ✓ Class dismissed

After the class, keep your materials together. As soon as possible, take time to sit down quietly and go over the class materials and techniques that were covered. Then, enjoy your accomplishment, find a few friends to start a beading group, and join the ranks of dedicated beaders who expand their repertoire by regularly taking classes. ●

Opposite page: Glass beads by Laura Rasmussen, [razberibeeds.com](http://razberibeeds.com).

*Diane Fitzgerald received the 2008 Bead Artistry award at the Bead&Button Show last June. She has written nine books on beading, travels extensively to learn about beads, and teaches at her shop, Beautiful Beads, in Minneapolis, Minn., in the U.S. Contact Diane at [dmfbeads@bitstream.net](mailto:dmfbeads@bitstream.net), (612) 333-0170, or [dianefitzgerald.com](http://dianefitzgerald.com).*