

# Persistence: The Guaranteed Fuel For Success

**Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser**

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“The more we know, the more we know we don’t know.” It’s paradoxical, isn’t it? Perhaps this is the other side of, “Ignorance is bliss.” Those who are committed to excellence are always exploring new sources of information to increase their personal library of understanding, and in doing so they discover uncharted horizons they could not previously even imagine; it is an exciting and endless journey. Might I suggest you are reading the various articles from different publications in hopes of finding some the latest, greatest data that will offer new possibilities in your own program; it is one of the predictable characteristics of those people we have come to label as master teachers.

We are living in a time where there is a desire to MEASURE LEARNING. What determines LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT? Is successful learning based on test scores? From a musical standpoint is it the results of the ratings-and-rankings of adjudicated performances? Do we point to professional achievement based on the number of participants in the given program? What criteria do we use?

This short article will not offer any quick-slick answers to the important inquiries above. There are brilliant minds dedicated to the ongoing search of how we can objectively evaluate the learning process, and even they struggle to be definitive. Certainly there are no easy answers, as though there could be or should be. However, while this intellectual discussion continues on many fronts, we can determine our own direction, our own methodology, and our own standards as we stand in front of our students each day. It is HERE where we can extend our learning, our knowing, and our growing to those young musicians who have chosen to be in our ensembles.

The truly great teachers embrace what is and move forward in the constant development of what can be. Certainly there are systemic

mandates that challenge every educator, but they do not serve as a deterrent in reaching the given goal. The master teachers have given-up giving up; they realize

persistence alone is often the answer to reaching the destination. While it is easy to become discouraged or to lose enthusiasm, that simply is not an option for those teachers who are focused on reaching the chosen destination.

It is one thing to write about it, it is quite another thing to put it into action. And, let’s be honest, there have been many times for all of us when

we wanted to throw-in-the-towel, however one gains momentum by moving forward one step at a time. Whether it is inspiration or perspiration...or a combination of both, the willingness to stay the course is a cornerstone attribute of those very special teachers who walk-their-talk.

**Teaching is about honor and goodness and mercy. You either live up to the calling of the profession or you don’t, and most likely no one will ever know but you. But it matters because the kids are counting on you.**

*The Greatest Catch:  
A Life of Teaching  
by Penny Kittle*

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A dear friend passed along this wonderful quote from Penny Kittle's delightful book, *The Greatest Catch: A Life of Teaching*:

"When you're teaching you're going to see people who cut corners, don't work as hard as they should, or just complain all the time about everything. I believe you've got to do what's right, every single day of your life, even if the rest of the crowd isn't. Teaching is about honor and goodness and mercy. It really is. And no one will be watching you most of the time. You either live up to the calling of the profession or you don't, and most likely no one will ever know but you. But it matters because the kids are counting on you."

Therein lays the part we can control; our own daily approach to not only WHAT we do, but the WAY we do WHAT we do. Yes, we do have some say-so in all of this. We do have the wherewithal to take each present-moment and make it a teaching-moment. While our rehearsals and our classes might not reflect the perfect model, as long as there are students who choose to learn music and make music, we have work-to-do, and – as we know – it is some of the most important learning they will experience, and it will have a positive impact on every aspect of their lives. As Ms. Kittle writes, "But it matters because the kids are counting on you." And it matters because YOU MATTER; we're ALL counting on YOU.

...STRIKE UP THE BAND!...

*Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a well-known name in the music education world as a teacher, clinician, author, composer, consultant, adjudicator, and above all, a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence. His own career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following three years in the music industry, he created Attitude Concepts for Today, an organization that manages workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the pathway-to-excellence. Tim presently holds the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer position at Ball State University. Tim is the Executive Director of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., and he serves as the national spokesperson for MENC's "Make a Difference with Music" program. His books The Art of Successful Teaching, The Joy of Inspired Teaching, Music Advocacy and Student Leadership, and Everyday Wisdom for Inspired Teaching are best sellers. He is co-author of Hal Leonard's popular band method Essential Elements - 2000.*

## Mission Statement

The purpose of the Texas Bandmasters Association, Inc. is to:

Continually assist its membership in achieving the highest standards of instrumental music education.



Promote the place and value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual, and social lives.



Foster goodwill, fellowship and a collegial, fraternal spirit among its members.



Provide its membership with an annual Convention/Clinic which introduces new music, tried and proven teaching methods and materials as well as instruments and equipment.



Provide Educational Publications of instructional methods and materials for TBA members and aid them with their personal development and leadership.



Provide information for the university music student preparing to become a band director.