

Music Learning: It Lasts a Lifetime

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

(...supported by the thoughts of Albert Einstein)

Being an avid fan of quotes, it is always special to run onto some wisdom that challenges the mind and forces one to push to the next level of understanding. This particular bit of insight comes from arguably one of the greatest intellectuals in the history of mankind, Albert Einstein. Well known as a scholar, Einstein was probably more recognized for his ability to translate information into pragmatic application. In other words, he brought REAL VALUE to the data at hand. From his perspective:

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten everything one learned in school.”

- Albert Einstein, 1879-1955

We continue to deceive ourselves by thinking stand-alone information is valuable. Information is only potential value; we have to “take action” on the information and to this end, we have to be realistic about what we deliver to our students via our teaching agenda. Does it REALLY have pragmatic value and can (and will) they make it applicable to their life habits? Every master teacher goes through this ongoing introspective inquiry, “Does the lesson-plan of the day have merit in relationship to the positive growth and development

of my students? Will they use it? Is it applicable? Will they integrate it in a way that brings value to their lives?” This is clearly a very difficult litmus test for any teacher to embrace. However, it is also where we discover and identify the source of true learning—learning that lasts, learning that stands-the-test-of-time, learning that makes a difference.

What does all this mean to those of us who are music educators? It has a direct relationship to what we offer the entire educational curriculum. The brain research continues to spotlight the importance of music-learning as it relates to the overall competency of the child in every academic area. For years we have said, “All the smart students are in music.” Now (because of the technological ability to measure and identify how the mind maps itself), the process of learning music appears to **embellish** all aspects of the student’s achievement. Clearly it is a quantum leap in thinking to even suggest that music makes people smarter; however, the statistical research points in that direction and it is certainly in our favor. Are we bringing this good news to parents, administrators, community leaders, other teachers in our schools? Do our students understand their musical study is benefiting their lives far beyond the preparation of the upcoming concert?

Music does make the difference. The learning that takes place in your classroom has lasting power. It is “what remains after one has forgotten everything one learned in school.”

It is no accident we can remember the lyrics to songs we were taught many years ago, but we cannot recall the information learned in our algebra class, or the various state capitals, or even those intensely memorized birth/death dates of all the great composers we learned about in our music history classes. We can easily sing all of our favorite melodies even though many decades have transpired since we last visited these “special friends.” **THOSE MEMORIES REMAIN!**

Each day when you see your students enter, you can rest assured you are going to bring something to their lives that will have a lasting impact. You are one of those magical teachers they will remember forever because you avail them to a language they will keep with them for the rest of their lives.

...Let the music begin...

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a well-known name in the music education world. His career involves ten years of successful college band directing, three years in the music industry, and his organization Attitude Concepts for Today. Tim presently holds the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer position at Ball State University, serves as the Executive Director of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., and is the national spokesperson for MENC’s “Make a Difference with Music” program. Dr. Tim is a TBA Life Member.