

# Music: The Driving Force For All Learning

**Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser**

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Clearly one of the *hottest* topics in today's educational community is "brain-based learning." While all learning is certainly "brain-based," this specific label refers to the lasting connections (mind maps) of information (the curriculum) to the student's retained learning. Simply put, does the exchanged material have beneficial relevancy to the individual's journey in life? Will it be used? Does it *really* make a difference, or is it just a template of facts and figures that they memorize for the assigned test and then soon forget due to lack of reinforcement and/or application?

Ongoing research points to MUSIC as **the discipline** that has the most positive impact on every facet of human development. As a personal point-of-view, I am certainly not in favor of justifying our school music programs on the premise they are necessary to increase math and verbal skills. *Music for the sake of music* is the purist defense of the reason EVERY child should have a solid background in music; it is certainly evident to all of us, but let us keep in mind, we see this discussion through the eyes of trained musicians. Our biased opinions are evident. However, rather than shy away from the compelling

data (which is crucially important to administrators, curriculum specialists, and PARENTS), we must take the initiative to share it with everyone so ALL children have the opportunity to experience the language-of-music and the joy of music-making. *Music for the sake of music* is certainly THE REASON for music in our schools, but if we don't have the music in the curriculum (and available to all students), the ultimate goal will never be attained.

The solid evidence suggests music is central to all learning; for many, music is the driving force supporting all other areas of learning. In addition to the countless cognitive (academically assessed) benefits, music-making offers a host of healthy life-habits; creativity, self-discipline, teamwork skills, cooperation, persistence, motivation, etc. Aren't these the very life-skills we are trying to

bring to every student to foster a better culture?

In the words of noted research author Eric Jensen,

*The musical arts should be valued in schools not only because the merging science supports them, but because the dynamic and broad-based appeal of music is equivalent to other widely accepted disciplines. Beyond that, consider how music has impacted your own aesthetic awareness, cultural exposure, social harmony, emotional expression and appreciation of diversity, and sense of self.*

Unlike many other academic studies, music is constantly justifying its place in the daily school schedule. Whether right or wrong, it means every music teacher must embrace the responsibilities of music advocacy. We must bring parents, administrators, and decision-makers up-to-speed availing them to the latest findings that highlight



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the importance of music education. There is no shortage of convincing statistics; it becomes a matter of sharing this powerful information with those who “need to know” and that includes EVERYONE. The bottom line is: MUSIC SHOULD BE A PART OF EVERY CHILD’S EDUCATION. As music educators let us pledge to put this important assignment at the very top of our “to do” list!

**...Let the music begin...**

*Tim Lautzenheiser is a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence and a passion for high level achievement. His career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University.*

*Following his tenure at the university level, he spent three years with McCormick’s Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, Tim created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of positive attitude and effective leadership training. Over two million students have experienced his acclaimed student leadership workshops over the last three decades.*

*He presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. In addition, he continues his rigorous travel schedule touting the importance of arts education for every child.*

*His books, produced by G.I.A. Publications, Inc., continue to be bestsellers in the educational world. He is also co-author of popular band method, Essential Elements, and is the Senior Educational Consultant for Hal Leonard, Inc. Tim is the Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All, and NAMM (The International Music Products Association).*

*Tim holds degrees from Ball State University and the University of Alabama; in 1995 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the VanderCook College of Music. He is presently an adjunct faculty member at: Ball State University (Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer), Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he serves on the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors.*