

Feature Story: The Lessons of Paul Reed Smith

National Standards: 1, 8-10

35 years ago, Paul Reed Smith created the guitar company that bears his name and has been leading it ever since. PRS Guitars is the third largest guitar maker in the U.S. Smith is a leader in the musical instrument and equipment industry, and continues to manage his business, but still finds time to play music and to teach.

In Tune's feature on Paul Reed Smith's teaching activities contrasts the workstyle of a business leader that has always made time to pursue other personal interests, like fishing, but also teaching. Smith teaches regularly offering lessons in small and large settings, doing so consistently, year after year.

Prepare

Discuss the essence of teaching and why people gravitate towards the profession. Why would a successful business person want to take time away from their company to teach?

Key points in the article:

- Smith is an inventor, having studied physics, woodworking, practical engineering, graphic mathematics and art.
- "Giving back" feels good, and beyond donating money, donating one's time to teach creates a positive connection with other people that cannot be duplicated in any other way.
- Paul created a masterclass with the Maryland Hall this past summer, now available online, to help people use the time in quarantine or lock down to learn to play music.

Begin

Poll your students to see who has used a video lesson to learn something before

- Ask them about their experience. Were they successful in learning something?
- Ask students about their special skills. Might they consider teaching?

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- MANUFACTURER – a person or company that makes goods for sale.
- MASTERCLASS: a seminar for advanced music students conducted by a master musician
- PHYSICS: a science that deals with matter and energy and their interactions
- ALTRUISTIC: having or showing an unselfish concern for the welfare of others

Discuss

The benefits of a varied life experience can be rewarding. Focusing on one endeavor is critical in achieving a level of proficiency, but differing experiences can influence and support one another.

Expand

Teaching is a unique endeavor that both contributes to society and rewards the teacher. How is the teacher rewarded? To teach, one needs to learn themselves, and many subjects require constant updating. To teach is to constantly learn.