

THE EFFECTS OF PART-TIME INSTRUMENT TRAINING ON FULL-TIME INSTRUMENT TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Part-time-music-education has been implemented in State Conservatories in Turkey for a long time. The aim is not only to support full-time-education, but also to spread classical music and increase the number of full-time students. The Music Department of State Conservatory of Anadolu University in Eskişehir/Turkey has adopted and incorporated this system starting the first year it was established. In this study, the efficiency of the part-time instrument education program, which was opened as a preparation for full-time instrument training, has been investigated. The data of the study came from a survey conducted with the participation of the instructors teaching at the same institute. The results of the study revealed that the effective application of the part-time instrument training curriculum increased the success rate in full-time instrument training. It has also been observed that the part-time instrument training program has been beneficial for the education process of students attending full-time instrument education.

Key Word: Part-time-music-education, Full-time-music-education, The Music Department of State Conservatory

INTRODUCTION

Anadolu University, State Conservatory was established in 1986 by Prof. Dr. Yılmaz Büyükerşen – the Rector of the time – and aims to provide training on classical western music and performing arts and also spread polyphonic classical western music. The Music Department of the Conservatory aims to train students who have contemporary and universal understanding, are creative and investigative in their field, are fully-equipped with technical and musical competence in the world standards, and are sophisticated and constructionist. Starting the 1989-1990 Academic year with part-time education, the conservatory began full-time education in 1990-1991 Academic year. In the early years of the institution, the number of students and academics was 40 whereas it reached 450 by 2011.

The cooperation and the studies of the academics providing instrument training since 1990 has formed the curriculum of part-time instrument training. In the first years, the curriculum started from the fifth grade of primary school, however, in the following terms, the third and the fourth grades were added as well. The aim is to prepare for the full-time conservatory training by giving the teachers and the students a chance to experience the advantages of starting music training in the very early years. In addition,

students and parents' becoming aware of instrument training is vital in that it is the period during which the decision to become a professional instrumentalist in the future is generally made. During the course of the program, part-time instrument training student is trained on ear-training, technical music and solfeggio training to read musical notes. The student who undergo Instrument and Solfeggio training specified in the curriculum and students who are well above the criteria will experience the benefits of starting the instrument and solfeggio training in early ages in his/her full-time instrument training.

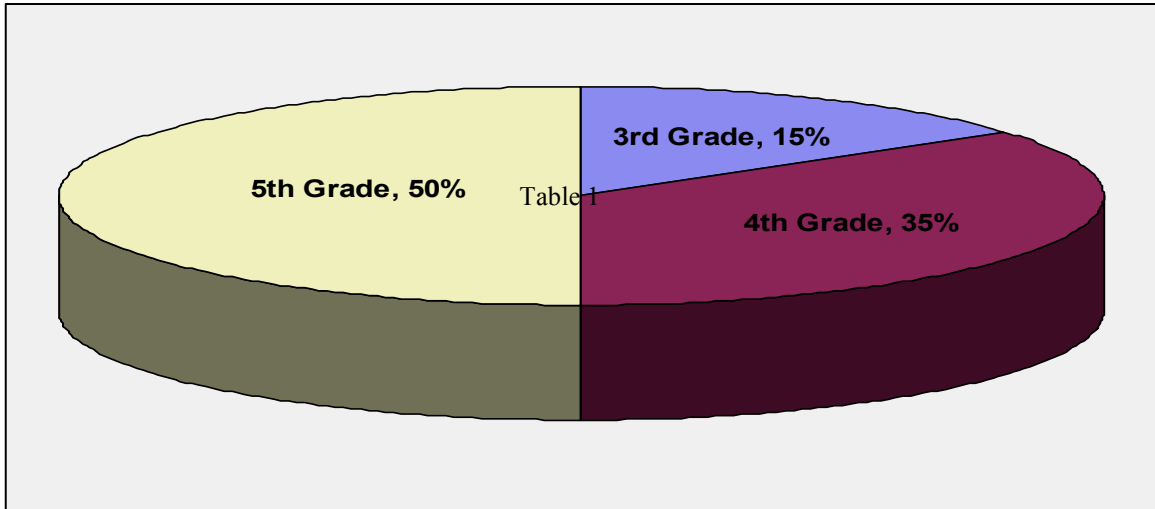
This study is stimulated by the fact that no empirical research on Part-time Education Program in Anadolu University State Conservatory has been conducted and no discussion of the instructors' ideas has been made. Therefore, this study was conducted with the hope of shedding some light on the issue.

METHOD

A preliminary study was conducted with a group of academics who had provided training on part-time instrument training and so the questionnaire was developed out of this study. At this stage, the items of the questionnaire were created based on the views of the Academics who had contributed to the program. Next, the questionnaire was conducted with the Academics who taught Violin, Viola, Cello and Piano in part-time education program (See App. 1). The ideas on the effects of part-time instrument training on full-time instrument training have been analyzed via a questionnaire.

RESULTS

The Academics participated in the study had nearly 4-8 part-time students in the program. The grades included in the program were mostly the fourth and the fifth grades. %15 of the Academics trained the third grade students. Table 1 shows the grade distribution of the students who were trained by the Academics in part-time instrument training program.



The participants who provide training in part-time instrument training were asked which grade is the best for the program. The participants had different views on this issue. The vast majority stated that the fourth grade is the best for the program. Some of the Academics who support the idea that it is beneficial to start the music training at early ages stated the first grade including the chorus and solfeggio training is the ideal one. Table 2 shows the distribution of Academics' views on the grades.

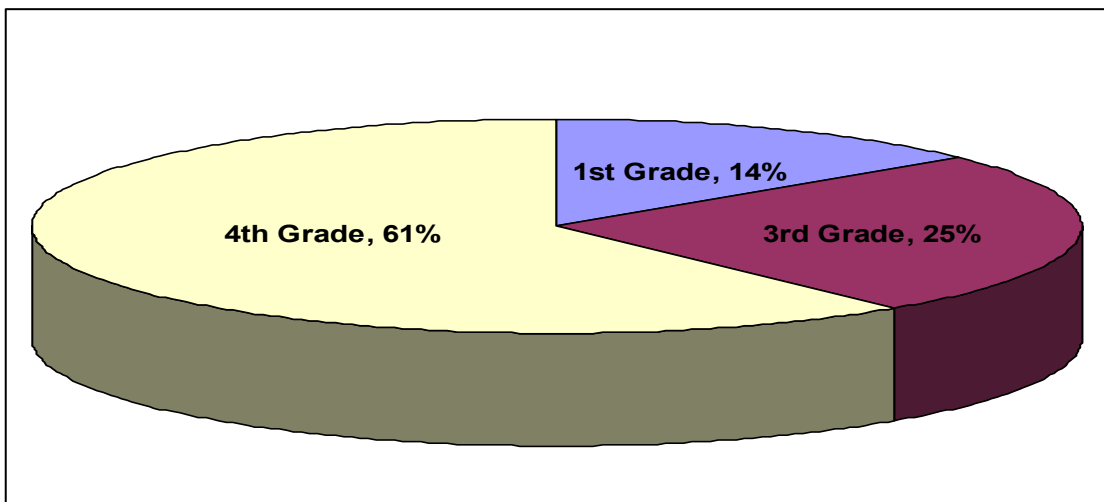


Table 2

When asked if the part-time instrument program practiced accordingly to the curriculum, the %70 of the participants stated that the practices varied depending on the conditions. The curriculum of part-time instrument training was developed by the

Academics who have been providing training on the subject matter for years and considering students' busy schedule on the other school, so the trainer doesn't expect students to have a heavy working pace. However, it may change in accordance with the student's interest on the instrument, his/her patience, physical and mental capacity, the excitement of playing the instrument and discipline. %30 of the participants stated that the curriculum couldn't be carried out properly. The reason for this is that the students gave the priority to the other school they attended. According to the Academics views, this priority affects the discipline on part-time instrument training badly and it reveals that the stable and systematic training cannot be carried out.

One of the participants points out that in case of the student and the parents being aware of and willing to attend the full-time conservatory program in the future, the students would have a more productive term and benefit from this process in the following years. %50 percent of the participants who commented on the studying habits of the students who attend both part-time training and another school stated that the students do not experience any important problems owing to the fact that the curriculum was designed taking the situation into account. %30 of the participants shares the idea that part-time instrument training students' excitement and love of his/her instrument and his/her determination of working properly, and the instructors' challenge to force the limits of students through constructive attitudes could meet the expectation. %20 of the participants state that the students who both attend the conservatory and the other school cannot have enough time for the conservatory and get confused. One of the participants points out that the student can improve dramatically if she can get used to her instrument and trainer and loves them and acquires the habit of regular study.

The participants were also asked if the student's love of music or interest in his/her instrument improved in the part-time instrument training. %90 of them stated that it definitely improved. The participants observed that using some techniques, the student's interest in his/her instrument can be improved. Some of these techniques are joining the student concerts during the academic year, watching CDs of concerts and when reached a certain level, performing a piece of music on the stage. %10 of the participants stated

that the students who tried to fulfill the requirements of both schools had a hectic schedule and thus they lost their interest in their instrument.

The participants were asked on which grade the student who started full-time instrument training and the student who underwent part-time instrument training specified in the curriculum and students who are well above the criteria reach the same level and %50 of the participants stated that it depends on the student's interest, skills, discipline and time-spent with their instruments. If these fulfilled properly, full-time students -after a part-time training program- and the students who directly started full-time training have at least one year of difference in grade. %40 of the participants observed that even if it depends on the factors mentioned above, the part-time curriculum has been designed considering the heavy schedules of the students who attends both the conservatory and another school and thus at the end of the second year the two types of the students reach the same level. In addition, since full-time students are mostly in the conservatory and focus on just one curriculum and have an intensive program on solfeggio and music classes, they have quite a big opportunity to reach the level of the students who have part-time instrument training.

On the other hand, %10 of the participants pointed out that compared to the full-time students, it is easier for part-time students to reach a higher level, since part-time students meet music and their instruments early and spend longer time with their instrument owing to the part-time training.

When asked about the benefits of part-time instrument training, all the participants agreed that they found it extremely useful. The participants pointed out that the earlier a student starts training on an instrument, the more successful s/he becomes. From the student's point of view, it is a great opportunity for the student to explore the conservatory, get to know the instrument and build a background. Also, the student who attends the part-time instrument training has a chance to decide if s/he wants to be a musician in the future. In addition, this is such an important process for the Academics to observe the candidates of the full-time instrument training, which will help to evaluate them. In terms of the conservatory, it is a useful and important program to gain students who are ready for the conservatory training.

The participants had similar point of views on their expectations of the students' skills at the end of the first year. They expect the students to be able to recognize the instrument, to master using the bow, to be able to practice at least some of the basic bow movements (such as whole, half, two or four slurred bow), to be able to coordinate his/her right and left hand, to develop the skill to produce good sound, to play clearly and to pay attention to learning to listen to his/her playing at the end of the first year. The student would be able to play some small pieces of melodies owing to the skills listed above.

RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the results of the questionnaire conducted with the Academics who provide training in the part-time instrument training program in State Conservatory of Anadolu University, the program is effective in providing a good preparation for the conservatory, creating positive effects on the student who start training in early ages, and in gaining prospective students for the conservatory. Part-time Instrument Training Curriculum is developed considering the heavy schedule of the students attending both schools and compared to the full-time curriculum, it is more flexible. However, the level that a student is able to reach depends on his/her interest in the instrument, his/her passion to the instrument, discipline and physical and intellectual capacity.

The student who are enthusiastic, patient, and disciplined his/her work and who works in a high level of physical and intellectual capacity are observed to be more successful in full-time training program. The student who undergoes the part-time instrument training specified in the curriculum and students who are well above the criteria benefits from the advantages in the full-time training program. The process is also vital for the Academics that provide instrument training since in this way, the student will be able to start his/her education fully equipped with techniques and background in music. In addition, the student's enthusiasm for music will help the Academics, the student and his/her parents gain time to assess his/her physical and intellectual capacity. It's observed that the love and enthusiasm for music can be flourished with the help of some techniques. For example, part-time instrument training students' attending student concerts that are held in the term, the academics' joining the instrument training classes

and concerts of full-time students, the students' watching videos of symphony orchestra concerts, ballet performances, chamber music and a variety of recitals can be used as reinforcing factors.

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APPENDIX 1: The Questionnaire

- 1) Did you have part-time students before?
- 2) How many part-time students have you trained so far?
- 3) Which grade were your part-time students in?
- 4) What is the best grade or age for the program?
- 5) Do you think part-time instrument training curriculum can be conducted in this program?
- 6) How do both attending conservatory and another school at the same time affect students' studying habits?
- 7) Have you observed that the student who attend the part-time instrument training program gain love of music and instrument after a while?
- 8) On which grade do the student who started full-time instrument training and the student who undergoes part-time instrument training specified in the curriculum and students who are well above the criteria reach the same level?
- 9) Do you think part-time instrument training is beneficial?
- 10) What skills do you expect the student to acquire at the end of the first year?