



The opinions of prospective music teachers towards the problems that they encounter in the course of piano

Assist. Prof. Dr. Feyza SÖNMEZÖZ¹
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the opinions of prospective music teachers towards the problems that they encounter in the course of piano. The study group of the research consisted of a total of 69 students who study in the Departments of Music Education in Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Trakya University, Marmara University in the academic year of 2014-2015. The data of the research were obtained by means of a semi-structured interview technique. The research concluded that the prospective music teachers encountered certain problems on technical issues such as the ability to decipher, to use both hands independently, to make a tone, as well as using fingers, speeding up in the courses of piano.

Key words: Piano, Piano education, Piano technic.

1. Introduction

Many problems can be encountered in music teacher education process in piano lessons. Among these, there are problems which are related to piano's own instrumental feature, beginning piano education at an older age, lack of piano practicing hours, choosing the right/wrong homework, various physical conditions or teacher-student relationships.

“It is possible that teacher, student, instrument, teacher trainee programs, instrument education programs and environmental factors are accepted as the problems encountered during the process of instrument training” (Çilden, 2004).

Apart from the factors such as environment, physical conditions, educational planning, , programs of instrument education, the problems that preservice teachers may face in terms of technique has become important while practicing piano.

¹ E-Mail: feyzasonmezoz@gmail.com

According to Tecimer (2006), music preservice teachers have to graduate after they have acquired functional piano skills in piano programs in the institutions that instruct music teachers.

Among the functional piano skills are the habit of studying in a disciplined way, being capable of knowing how to study on methods of practicing, being capable of planning a study programme, acquiring the piano techniques which are required by music education undergraduate syllabus besides acquiring the discipline of studying without skipping any stages in piano education (Kamacioğlu, 1996).

According to Leber ve Stark, piano technique is the skill of being capable of giving the right, fine and distinctive nuances with the instrument. (akt: Ünal, 2010).

It is important that preservice teachers acquire sufficient piano skills in terms of technique. This acquisition which is required since the beginner level of piano education provides a great convenience for piano players when preservice teachers reach advanced levels.

Therefore, addressing the technical problems music preservice teachers of the institutions that instruct music teachers encounter in piano lessons are considerably important.

2. The Purpose and Significance of the Study

This research has been conducted in accordance with the views of music preservice teachers in order to determine the problems which are technically encountered in piano lessons of institutions that instruct music teachers. The research is important in that it tries to point out problems that are encountered in the process of piano education and to suggest solutions from the point of preservice teachers' perspectives.

3. Study Group

Research sample consists of 69 students studying in Music Departments of Marmara University, Abant İzzet Baysal University and Trakya University in spring term in 2014-2015 education period.

4. Methodology

In the study, qualitative method was used in order to determine and examine the technical problems that are encountered by preservice teachers in piano lessons of music education departments within the scope of undergraduate music education program which instruct music teachers.

4.1. Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured interview form has been developed in order to determine the views related to problems which are encountered in piano lessons of institutions that instruct music teachers and this form has been carried out for preservice teachers. An open-ended question, which requires preservice teachers to explain problems they encounter in terms of technique in piano lessons together with the reasons, has been asked to preservice teachers in the interview. Preservice teachers' answers have been evaluated and commented on after the data were categorized. Among the answers given to the questions in interview form, interesting ones have been selected by the researcher and they have put in the findings part of this study as comments.

5. Findings And Interpretation

According to interview, it has been determined that music preservice teachers have problems in some areas such as speeding up, the ability to decipher, the ability to use both hands independently, controlled use of fingers, being capable of free wrist, problems encountered in the selection of a piece and an etude, playing with metronome, playing with tone, using pedal and exhibiting properties of pieces in any given period in piano lessons.

Table 1. The Distribution of Problems Encountered by Music Preservice Teachers in Piano

<u>Lessons</u>		
VIEWS	F	%
Speeding up	14	20,3
Deciphering	14	20,3
Control of finger	9	13
Freedom of wrist	2	2,9
Independence of both hand	7	10,2
Choosing piece and etude	4	5,8
Playing with metronome	3	4,3
Playing with ton	6	8,7
Pedal	6	8,7
Exhibiting pieces' period properties	4	5,8

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that music preservice teachers have problems in speeding up with 20,3 %, the ability to decipher with %20,3, control use of fingers with 13 %, being capable of free wrist with 2,9 %, the ability to use both hands independently with 10,2 %, problems encountered in the selection of a piece and an etude with 5,8 %, playing with metronome with 4,3 %, playing with ton with 8,7 %, using pedal with 8,7 %, exhibiting properties of pieces in any given period 5 % in piano.

In interview form, some of selecting has been lined up among answers that music preservice teachers given are related to their faced problems in piano lessons:

“I have equalization problem in both hands while practising piano. I can’t use each independent of each other. My left hand is very troubled. I can’t utter a melody in my right hand. My left hand is very powerful in playing. Moreover, I have a speed problem. My left hand is very slow therefore I can’t gain speed.”

“I’m a left-handed therefore my left hand make more sound than my right hand when I am playing piano with both hands and when I am playing piano with my right hand, melody is croaked”

“My decipheration is very weak. I can’t play every rhythm in a music piece. I need help from my teacher or someone else. I want to him/her to number rhythm. Therefore I’m bored when I am practicing the piano. I get so excited and I gripe my soul. Therefore I begin to start playing the piano in an unhappy mood.”

“When I do decipheration, I lose much time. I can’t follow musical note my finger simultaneously r. I find it hard. Therefore I can’t play a ton, as well. When I want to play with ton, My hands gets intermingled.”

“When I do decipheration, I can’t playing f clef with left hand. Therefore my left hand is slower than my right hand.”

“I can’t correspond myself to finger size. While I try to fulfil the right finger number, I can’t focus on musical notes.”

“I can’t practice finger speeding up . I have difficulty in differing finger numbers in quick etudes.I also have difficulty when finger numbers change over and over in the same musical note. ”

I have more difficulty than usual when I play bach. I both have a decipheration problem my in left hand and can’t give the feeling of Bach period.

6. Conclusions

In the study, it has been found that preservice teachers experience problems mostly in speeding up (%20,3) and the ability to decipher (%20,3)..

Given the selected views in the interview, music preservice teachers have major problems related to the ability to decipher. According to preservice teachers' views, problems related to the ability to decipher and, controlled use of fingers bring with the problems encountered in other technical subjects. For example; problems with controlled use to finger (13%) lead to speeding up problems, problems with speeding up lead to problems with controlled use of finger and independent use of both hands (10,2 %), problems with ability to decipher lead to problems with playing with tone (8,7%). This situation leads to loss of motivation and lack of desire while piano students are practicing piano.

It can be suggested that these problems may be caused by reasons such as lack of exercise or practice related to instruction of techniques as well as failing to enable students to acquire necessary technical knowledge while doing practices on the onset of piano education.

The piece of music-etude, scale and arpeggio studies that are selected in accord with the subjects and techniques which are taught in piano lessons of institutions that instruct music teachers enable target behaviors which are included in piano lesson syllabus of music education undergraduate program to be acquired more easily, more properly and more quickly. Therefore, practicing studies that introduce the keyboard such as scale- arpeggio and exercises are critically important as well as studying on pieces of music in piano lessons.

It should be kept in mind that, a piano player who is self-sufficient in terms of technique may perform other skills related to music such as tone, expression and rendering a piece of music more easily and is expected to acquire skills that are required sooner than usual.

7. Suggestions

1. Students who have technical problems that lower the motivation while playing the piano can be made to do physical exercise related to the technical problem s/he encounters.
2. Preservice teachers should be made aware of the technical objectives of piano lessons in the music education undergraduate program of the institutions that

instruct music teachers and they should be given explanatory information regarding the reasons for acquiring these techniques

3. It is necessary for instructors to be careful while choosing etudes and pieces of music which can be problematic in terms of technique for preservice music teachers as well as doing the right practices in order to correct the problematic technique.

References

- Çilden, Ş (2006). Müzik Öğretmeni Yetiştirme Sürecinde Çalgı Eğitiminin Nitelik Sorunlarının İrdelenmesi. *Ulusal Müzik Eğitimi Sempozyumu*, 26-28 Nisan 2006, Denizli.
- Kamacioğlu, F (1996) “Güzel Sanatlar Liselerinde Müzikle İlgili Eğitime Genel Bakış ve Öneriler. *I. Ulusal Anadolu Güzel Sanatlar Liseleri Müzik Bölümleri Sempozyumu*, 28-30 Kasım 1996, Bursa.
- Kasap, B. T (2005). İşlevsel Piyano Becerilerinin Müzik Öğretmenleri İçin Önemi. *Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 25(1), 149-154.
- Ünal, O.Z (2010). Piyano Eğitiminde Kullanılan Etütlerin İncelenmesi. IX. *Ulusal Müzik Eğitimi Sempozyumu*, 15-17 Aralık 2010, İstanbul.