

Motivation development for students in first four years of violin classes.

The topic of my presentation is motivation in music education, I am particularly interested in how to motivate students to learn violin since I teach violin myself. My students are children from 1st to 9th grade. I have noticed that students often experience sharp drops in motivation during the first four years and this is why the topic of my Master’s paper is motivation to learn for young violinists from 1st to 4th grade.

The music is indispensable to all-round personal development, intellectual ability and development of emotional intellect. There are many reasons children choose to learn an instrument – it can be their own choice or their parent’s desire. The student’s involvement in a certain activity, in this case their violin classes, depends strongly on their motivation and its reasons. Once they get involved in an activity does not mean they will continue doing it for a long time therefore it is very important to learn factors that predict children's choice of learning to play an instrument. Actually, do all students want and can they all become Professional musicians? All Latvian Music Schools realize common professional oriented education programs with certain requirements which must be fulfilled. Isn’t the education program too hard for all students? A few Music Schools in Latvia offer students to learn an instrument in an optional education program which is based on facilitated requirements for the play of an instrument. I have observed that students in so called optional education programs are more motivated to learn violin and enjoy the lessons more than those who are studying in professional education programs. Also difficulties in learning process and failure in tests often lead to loss of motivation, especially for those students who are not very motivated to learn at the beginning of study program. What is also very interesting is the age and gender differences with respect to the behavioral outcomes of motivation for music..

The aim of my paper was to find out how to improve the motivation to learn violin during the first four years of studies. In order to do this, I have researched theory on motivation to study music and I am still doing empirical research, based on which I will develop suggestions to help violin teachers motivate their students in long term.

In order to achieve my aim I studied the existing motivation system, found out what motivates students to learn and according to my research I made a few hypothesis which I later verified in the learning process:

The students’ motivation would be higher if:

- The learning program would be adapted to each student up to their will and abilities without obligatory requirements;
- The teachers and students would have better interconnection;
- Teachers would use individual pedagogic methods for each student.

While studying on the existing motivation theories I found out that there are many researches on motivation in education, there are a few research on motivation system in Latvia, but none of them actually researches motivation for students in music schools separately. In the theoretical part I analyzed theories of pedagogical researchers, opinions of music psychologists, music curriculums

in Latvia to find out connections between the age of children and motivation. I have described in my Master's paper several motivation theories from all the above mentioned researchers.

In the empiric research I made observations during my violin classes, used questionnaires prepared by Russian and American scientists to determine the reasons and levels of motivation in three Riga district music schools. As well as interviewed teachers in a professional music school for exceptionally talented children in Riga. While observing students during their classes, I investigated what motivates students to learn to play the instrument and I accordingly identified common motivational factors of students. This research permitted to determine how motivated my students are. By gathering information from questionnaires I have found out how motivated children are to learn music and what are the main reasons children actually learn to play violin. A different questionnaire was used for students from 1st grade. It contained images and association making since due to their writing and reading skills they are often not able to correctly answer all the written questions. Students from 2nd to 4th grade filled 3 questionnaires (1. Attitude towards music subjects and teachers, 2. importance of receiving good/bad rates and its impact on their will to learn, 3. Parent's involvement in practise). There was also one common task for all students from 1st to 4th grade – they were asked to draw their violin lesson.

By gathering the information from both – theoretic part and empiric part of the paper, I made some general conclusions:

- The motivation for the students drops sharply during each of the first four years;
- Relations between teacher and student are very important. A large part of the students that took the questionnaires said that they enjoy playing violin because they like the teacher;
- Parent's involvement in children's instrumental music activity is very important during the beginning of learning process;
- The level of the motivation has a direct influence on the time student spends to practice;
- Taking part in bands and orchestras helps to boost motivation;
- Students often are not able to fulfill the requirements of the education program even if they are willing to learn an instrument. Therefore a program made for each student individually would make students enjoy the lessons and it strengthen their self confidence;
- Sometimes teachers are not able or do not know how to establish good relations with students, that leads to communication problems which has important impact on motivation. I also developed a few suggestions to improve relations between teacher and student.