

## Online course adaptation process of Suzuki Early Childhood Education Program

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**ABSTRACT** The global pandemic has caused some sudden changes in education. The Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE), which aims at the musical education of babies (0-3) and conducts the lessons face-to-face, is one of the areas most affected by the pandemic. Due to the nature of babies, in these lessons, where digital technology is rarely involved, questions emerged about how the process is managed. The purpose of this research is to identify SECE teachers' views on online courses and their practices. Qualitative research method was used in the research. The researcher attended online classes organized by the Mexico Suzuki Association and made interviews. Content analysis was performed. It was found that online adaptation was easy due to the systematic structure of the SECE; in addition, managing the process was convenient thanks to the active participation of the parent; however, playing together, interaction, learning from each other and group studies could not be done as required; finally, there were deficiencies in tone and aural studies due to the lack of instruments. Overall, teachers were found to prefer face-to-face and interactive education.

**Keywords:** *Early childhood education, Music education, Online lessons, Suzuki Early Childhood Education, Technology*

## Suzuki Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi Programı'nın çevrimiçi ders adaptasyon süreci

**ÖZ** Küresel olarak yaşanan salgın süreci eğitimde ani değişimler yapılmasını zorunlu kıldı. Bu alanlardan biri olan ve 0-3 yaş aralığında bebeklerin müzik eğitimini hedefleyen Suzuki Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi (SEÇE) de bu alanlardan biridir. Bebeklerin doğası gereği dijital teknolojinin çok az yer aldığı bu derslerde sürecin nasıl yönetildiği soruları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu araştırma SEÇE öğretmenlerinin çevrimiçi dersler hakkındaki düşüncelerini ve uygulamalarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden gözlem ve görüşme kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacı, Meksika Suzuki Derneği tarafından düzenlenen çevrimiçi derslere katılmış ve röportajlar yapmıştır. Verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yapılmıştır. SEÇE'nin sistematik yapısı nedeniyle çevrimiçi adaptasyonun kolay olduğu, ebeveynin aktif katılımı sayesinde sürecin yönetilmesinde kolaylıklar olduğu ancak birlikte çalma, etkileşim, birbirinden öğrenme ve grup çalışmalarının gerektiği gibi yapılamadığı, çalgıların her evde bulunmamasından dolayı tını ve işitme çalışmalarında eksiklikler olduğu belirlenmiştir. Öğretmenlerin yüz yüze ve etkileşimli eğitimi tercih ettikleri belirtilmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Çevrimiçi canlı dersler, Erken çocukluk eğitimi, Müzik eğitimi, Suzuki Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi Programı, Teknoloji*

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, there have been countless situations in which our perspectives on life and education have changed. With the rapid technological developments in the 20th century, the understanding of education, methods, techniques, and materials have undergone a great transformation. The 2020 global pandemic, which has sharply accelerated this transition and carried all systems to the digital platform, has brought with it many questions. Firstly, there have been different reactions in age groups such as infancy and early childhood, where excessive use of digital technologies is inconvenient, and musical approaches based on natural and social learning. The main questions of this research are how the Suzuki Early Childhood Education Program (SECE), whose structure and principles are based on social learning and involves children aged 0-3 years, brings its education to the online platform during the pandemic process and whether the courses offered are compatible with the SECE principles. Before proceeding to the answers to these questions, the SECE program will be briefly mentioned in the first part.

### Suzuki Early Childhood Education

Suzuki Early Childhood Education (SECE) implements the basic principles and practices of the Suzuki Method by levelling them for use in music education of 0-3-year-old infants and children. The SECE seeks to enhance the child's natural taste in learning and lays the foundation for lifelong learning, which constitutes Suzuki's goals for all children. These goals can be expressed as creating an environment where children can gain skills free from pressure, create a sense of purpose in life, and appreciate discipline and beauty (Suzuki Association of the Americas, 2020). Suzuki's view on music education of a child aims to create musical infrastructure, humanitarian and social awareness for children long before they start playing the instrument. Suzuki has experimented in areas other than music by observing the stages of children learning their mother tongue. Japan Early Development Association and Mrs. Yano carry out projects to use and research the native language method in courses such as reading, painting, and physical education of preschool children (Suzuki & Selden, 1996). The transformation of SECE into a structured program in music education took place in the 1970s with the collaboration of Dorothy Jones and Suzuki. Jones created a prenatal program for prospective parents, a weekly infant and parenting class, a week of preschool and parenting classes, a five-day Suzuki preschool, and five-day primary school programs by observing the preschool classes of the Talent Education Institute in Japan (Rüttiman, 2020). These programs have been working institutionally since 1993 and are continually being developed.

### Pedagogical Fundamentals of Suzuki Early Childhood Education

The SECE program shares the other basics of the Suzuki method. However, some basic principles come to the fore in the early childhood program. These principles are listed below.

**Every child can learn:** In the 20th century, when Suzuki developed his method, it was a matter of great debate whether talent was innate or improvable. The general trend at that time was that talent is innate. Suzuki discovered that children could learn their mother tongue sooner or later, regardless of their innate intelligence level. He argued that every child could learn by observing the language learning process, focusing on the developmental part of the talent and sustainable studies such as listening and repetition. According to Suzuki (1981), talent is not innate. Perfect innate ability is the ability to be open to learning. Every child is born curious. Therefore, any child can learn.

**The environment supports development:** According to Suzuki, human is the product of his/her environment. No baby is born by knowing the scales in music. What is innate is the power to adapt to the environment (Suzuki, 2010). In order for the environment created in Suzuki early childhood

education to be beneficial and help growth, a positive environment is created by taking care that parents, teachers, and adults around the child are supportive and helpful, give positive feedback to the child for their efforts and accept the small successes of the children.

**Children learn from each other:** Suzuki realized that social interaction is significant in education. He planned group lessons in order to increase the interaction between the children. According to Suzuki (2010), children mostly enjoy making music with groups. In SECE classes, younger children copy what adults do, and older children develop sensitivity and empathy towards younger children (Rüttimann, 2020).

**Success breeds success:** Creating a positive and supportive environment in SECE classes also increases children's intrinsic motivation and makes them feel successful. According to Suzuki (2010), one skill that is sufficiently developed is a source of motivation for the formation of another. If a small success is met with positive feedback, the child will feel safe and be willing to try again.

**The involvement of families is essential:** Children experience their first interactions with the environment formed by their families starting from the prenatal period. Families' support is significant in everything from basic care skills to artistic development. Children attend SECE classes regularly and actively with their families. In this class, families are participants who not only bring and take their children but also actively participate in all processes and maintain this effect in rituals such as changing diapers and bathing at home (Gerry, 2012). This active participation also helps to strengthen the secure bond between the child and the family.

**Encouragement is essential:** In the Suzuki approach, it is essential to focus on the positive. However, this positive environment is not an approach in which everything is supported right and wrong. Promoting children's success involves a feedback process on whether they are doing it right. Without positive encouragement, very young children do not understand that they have learned something (Suzuki Early Childhood Chicago, 2019).

### **Suzuki Early Childhood Education Courses**

According to the International Suzuki Association (2019) framework program, SECE is the basis of the Suzuki approach. Through rhymes, songs, and poems, it provides cognitive, socio-emotional, linguistic, physical, and creative development opportunities for all children and helps parents understand Suzuki philosophy. It promotes the development of children's character and skills through rich, repetitive, and diverse musical experiences that form the basis of future studies.

In Suzuki's early childhood education, lessons include movement, singing, playing games, and playing instruments. These activities have been created in great detail for the acquisition of musical, social, motor, and cognitive skills. An example of a draft program is given in the Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, the course follows a systematic sequence of introduction, development 1, creativity, development 2, and conclusion. Activities prepared for each section are aimed at meeting the objectives in the rightmost column. The program consists of a two-week list of activities that are applied repeatedly. Provided that at least one of them is a licensed Suzuki teacher in the SECE class, two teachers work together and perform activities alternately.

**Table 1.**

*The Generic Example of The Suzuki SECE Structure (International Suzuki Association Framework Program, 2019, p.3)*

Activities (Week A / Week B)	Goals
Introduction	
Gathering activity	Arriving in a calm, familiar environment; Listening to beautiful music
Welcome Song	Social awareness; comfortable in a group
Walking to drumbeat	Awareness of good tone; listening skill, keeping a steady beat
Up & Down	Awareness and enjoyment of beautiful tone; listening skills; understanding concept of up and down
Development 1	
Variety of nursery rhymes, songs, finger games and other musical activities	Steady pulse, appreciation of beautiful sound, learning melodies, rhythm, listening skills, language acquisition: social awareness
Creative Section	
Moving/ Dancing freely	Musical expression and creativity, social awareness, respect for other members and their needs in the group
Falling thirds- songs	Listening skills, beautiful sound, creativity
Development 2	
Variety of nursery rhymes, songs, finger games and other musical activities	Social skills such as sharing, working together with parent, teacher and other children; solos, demonstration for others; counting, finger plays; language acquisition; inner discipline (waiting), concentration (careful listening)
Conclusion	
Closing song with drums	Rhythm skills
Story time	Concentration, listening, imagination, observation
Parent Journaling/ children reading time	Positive approach, careful observation

In SECE classes, instruments such as alto xylophone, alto glockenspiel, wooden blocks, steel triangle, lollipop drum, rain bell, maracas, and materials such as scarves, softballs, toy mice, and books are used. As it is seen from the lesson plan and classroom materials, plans were made to increase social skills through face-to-face interaction using natural instruments in Suzuki classes. In Suzuki lessons, digital technology is only used when listening to the recording music during the welcome activity at the beginning of the lesson and the parental guidance section at the end. Wireless Bluetooth speakers and digital audio recordings are used here. Although it is quite limited in the early childhood education program before proceeding with the digitalization process in the Covid-19 process, it would be appropriate to consider the Suzuki approach's perspective on technology in general.

### **Suzuki Method and Technology**

The 20th century, when the Suzuki approach was formed and developed, was a period in which technological developments were rapidly experienced. Technological developments in both transportation and communication have changed the way societies live. Technologies such as telephones, phonographs, pickups, cassettes, and CDs have enabled recording the voice and have made these recordings more accessible to people. Suzuki started playing the violin with these recordings. Although his family owned a violin factory, the first places he heard and was inspired by the skillful playing of the violin were the audio recordings. "We bought a gramophone before graduating from Business College. [...] The first record I bought was the Ave Maria of Schubert played by Mischa Elman. [...] I was fascinated by the sweet sound of Elman's violin. [...] I brought home a violin from the factory and tried to imitate it by listening to Elman play a Haydn minuet. I had no notes and moved the bow, trying to play what I heard." (Suzuki, 2010 p.57-58).

According to Suzuki, these records were his teacher. "Kreisler came to his house every day and taught him how to produce a beautiful tone. Of course, Mr. Kreisler did not come in person, but his life is on the record. Mr. Suzuki has been listening to his recordings for the last thirty years and working hard to get his tone. Since then, Kreisler has been living inside Mr. Suzuki (though not face-to-face) "(Honda, 1970 p.25). Pablo Casals, a famous cellist of the time, participated in a Suzuki concert in 1961. "When Suzuki greets Casals, he says he's been his student for a long time. Casals looks at him in surprise and

says, “I don’t know you.” Then Suzuki, with a twinkle in her eyes, says, “I became your student with the records I listen to every day.” (Hermann, 1981).

As Suzuki got inspired by these records, he started making records for his students. Between 1947 and 1954, he recorded his method with the piano and offered students the opportunity to listen, be inspired, and work together. These recordings have recently become digital formats on platforms such as CDs and smart music, as well as single, long-player, cassette.

As the possibilities developed, not only audio but also video recordings began to be made. The first video recording was the first graduation concert held in 1952. This concert was filmed and shown to American Suzuki teachers (Hermann, 1981). It was decided that anyone wishing to graduate from the 1950s would send a tape recording to Suzuki. Suzuki listened to the tapes and made a personal comment for each child. [...] There were only 195 recording tapes at the first graduation. He listened to more than 5,000 tapes in the 1970s, which became an enormous task (Hermann, 1981). According to Suzuki (1977), a cassette recorder is a revolutionary tool for music education. By listening to these recordings, Suzuki had the opportunity to get detailed information about the technical and musical situations of the students. If several students or students of the same teacher had the same technical problem, he produced various solutions and applied them at teacher conferences. Recording tapes at home was also encouraged. Parents could make short video recordings during lessons, record homework, and thus students’ progress can be followed (Braddock, 1974). Suzuki practitioners also frequently state that these records are a high source of motivation for students. Children admire hearing their audio recordings. Suzuki also used his performance records in teacher education. Today, video recording of all parts in the repertoire is requested as homework in teacher education.

In Suzuki method, all technological possibilities of the age were used most effectively for educational purposes. The use of this technology varies according to age groups. While listening to audio recordings is valid for all ages, students make their recordings with parental support on average from 4. Therefore, only a little technology is used in SECE classes. It is also seen that all these tools are used as materials to support face-to-face education. In the global pandemic conditions, it has come to the fore that all the courses here are held on a digital platform as in every field. Although the Suzuki approach is adaptable to any technological development, this sudden change has brought with it many problems. In this context, the research aims to determine the online implementation of SECE courses during the global pandemic and get the opinions of SECE teachers about online courses. In order to achieve this goal, answers to the following questions are sought:

- 1) What are the observed results and teacher opinions regarding meeting the principles of the Suzuki early childhood program with online courses?
- 2) What are the observed results and teacher opinions regarding the achievement of the framework objectives of the Suzuki early childhood program in online courses?

Considering the uncertainty of how long the epidemic period will last, it is thought that the research of these applications is important in terms of shedding light on future studies, and the results obtained in this period will also contribute to the shaping of digital ideas after the pandemic.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study was conducted with a qualitative single-case screening model. Situation screening models are screening arrangements aimed at determining the depth and breadth of a certain unit in the universe (individual, family school, hospital, association, etc.), their relationship with themselves and their environment, and reaching a judgment about that unit (Karasar, 2005, 86). Case studies may involve a

close examination of people, topics, problems, or programs for example, the experiences of students in one school and the act of cheating in another. These phenomena are known as special cases that are unique in their content and characters (Hays, 2004). In this study, a holistic single case pattern was used. According to this pattern, there is a single unit of analysis (an individual, an institution, etc.) in order to confirm or refute a well-formulated theory, it can be used to investigate extreme, contradictory or peculiar situations when no one has ever reached or worked before (Yıldırım & Simsek 2008, 290-292). In this context, the global epidemic emerges as an extreme situation. In this extreme situation, it was observed that different practices were made in order to adapt to this extraordinary situation in Suzuki Early Childhood Education, which is conducted face to face under normal conditions. In order to examine the applications of the Suzuki Early Childhood Education program, which had to adapt to online courses in a short time due to the global pandemic, and to shed light on subsequent applications, Mexican Suzuki Association educators who started to try online programs quickly were contacted, the courses organized by them were observed, and interviews were done with educators.

### **Study Group**

This research study consists of 2 Suzuki SECE educators working under the Mexican Suzuki Association, 12 students in the 0-3 age group and their parents. Both the mother and father of the three students attended the classes together. Only one parent of the others took part in the study. All 3 families have two children. The siblings participate together. SECE courses were observed on 25.06.2020, 24.11.2020, and 31.11.2020 for a total of 3 hours via zoom. The researcher participated only as an observer in the first lesson and as a participant-observer in the other two courses. Interview time was created with SECE trainers 20 minutes before and after the lessons for planning and evaluation. Interviews about the course were held during these periods. Parents' feedback about the course was also taken in the Parental Guidance section at the end of the course. Due to ethical principles in data reporting, direct quotations from Suzuki teachers' opinions were coded as T1 and T2, and the participating families were coded as F1, F2, etc.

### **Data Collection Tools**

Relevant internet resources such as a blog, vlog, and social media were utilized with observation and interview methods to collect research data. Two different data collection tools were used for observation and interviews in the study. In order to make systematic observations, a Suzuki ECE observation chart was established in line with the basic principles of the Suzuki SECE approach such as "children learn from each other" and the framework program objectives such as introduction and development part of the lessons. The achievement status of the activities in the framework program was marked, and compliance with the basic principles was made in the last part as the general evaluation of the course. The interview questions also consisted of 3 semi-structured questions. These questions were finalized by taking the opinions of three different experts and supported by the questions that followed according to the interview. Following the expert opinions, the interview questions were formed as follows:

- 1) To what extent do online courses align with the basic principles of Suzuki's early childhood education?
- 2) How did you experience the practical differences between online and face-to-face lessons?
- 3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of online courses?

### **Validity Reliability**

Various methods are used to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative research. In this study, purposeful sampling, data crossing, and auditing methods of another researcher were used. Firstly, the purposeful sample selection was made to ensure external validity. From the beginning of the pandemic process, a group that organized online lessons quickly gained more experience and was open to sharing

was taken as a sample. In this study, validity and reliability were ensured by cross-referencing the opinions of teachers with observation and interview data in determining the actual situation. Another field expert was consulted for the reliability of the data analysis. The field expert re-coded the data system formed within the scope of the content analysis conducted by the researcher by taking independent data samples and determined whether the relevant samples were compatible with the previous code table.

## Data Analysis

The qualitative content analysis method was used for the analysis of the data. The information obtained from the observation notes and interviews were coded under the headings '*Basic principles of the SECE program and teaching objectives and activities in the framework curriculum*' predetermined by both the researcher and field expert with MAXQDA 12 qualitative analysis programs. The intersecting codes were reviewed again, and the analysis was finalized.

## FINDINGS

### Compliance of Online Courses with SECE Basic Principles

The first of the research sub-objectives is to determine whether online courses comply with the principles of the SECE program. As summarized in the introduction, SECE principles are stated as 'every child can do it, the environment supports development, children learn from each other, success breeds success, the parental involvement is essential, and encouragement is essential'. The findings regarding the application of each principle in online courses are given below.

**Every child can do it:** This principle states that every child has wonderful learning potential. For this reason, students are admitted to Suzuki classes without undergoing any entrance exams. In online courses, teachers first said that they continue with students who have already attended classes and have previously learned face-to-face courses. They stated that they hesitated about the adaptation process if a new student was included in the classes. However, in the last observed course, it was observed that two new students had not previously attended the classes. In the interview with the teachers, they stated that the new students easily adapt to the other lessons they took and that the adaptation of the new student who participated in the last lesson was positive. Based on these views, it can be said that this principle is maintained in online classes.

**The environment supports development:** This principle refers to create supportive and calm atmosphere. The task of creating this supportive environment in online classes is mostly on families. Jones (2020), one of the founders of the SECE program, states that while parents continue to interact meaningfully with their children, it is a priority to support them so that they can provide a calm environment. In online courses, it is observed that parents have a great devotion from providing connectivity, organizing the instruments and the environment at home according to the course, following the activities during the course, and resting times outside the class.

**Children learn from each other:** The greatest deficiency expressed concerning online courses is that social learning opportunities have decreased. Jones (2020) stated that children in online courses lack the social and emotional components of SECE education, such as being closely observed by teachers, children's learning from each other, and, of course, a child having close contact with a teacher. It can be said that the students participating in the course as two or three siblings are more advantageous in terms of social learning.

**Success breeds success:** The positive and supportive environment in online SECE courses is provided by the feedback of parents and teachers during the course. Especially in the closing part of the lesson,

reflective conversations are made with each participant about the adaptation to the activities. Throughout the course, children's progress is discussed by parents and teachers, and decisions are taken for development. It can be said that this principle is mostly unaffected by online courses.

**Parental involvement is essential:** In face-to-face SECE classes, families are actively involved in the whole process of children. It is observed that this area of responsibility is further expanded in online classes. Family members had to assume the role of teachers at home. F3 stated that this increase in responsibility forced him at first but helped him to establish a deeper bond with his child by increasing qualified time opportunities. It is seen that this principle is maintained with a higher responsibility than face-to-face lessons.

**Encouragement is essential:** It is observed that the principle of encouragement in online courses continues effectively with the support of families and teachers. It has been observed that children are contacted one-on-one, especially in the beginning and closing parts of online courses. The developments observed by two teachers throughout the course are reflected as encouraging suggestions to children in the closing part. T1 stated that they made activity recommendations to parents not only during the online course but throughout the week.

### **Teacher Opinions on the Online Implementation of SECE Courses**

This section will include teachers' views on the situation overview. SECE teachers stated that they suddenly fell into the gap in the pandemic and isolation process experienced simultaneously as the whole world. T1 expressed their feelings in the first weeks with the expression, *"Until now, the most important topic in Suzuki lessons was performing musical works in social interaction. This is the basis of Suzuki's philosophy. We were naturally concerned when social communication suddenly became remote contact."* This transition process has been tried to be facilitated institutionally with other Suzuki teachers, and the Mexican Suzuki Association. T2 said, *"We took a break from all classes for the first few weeks. However, when we realized that the epidemic would continue, we held meetings with our colleagues to instantly make new decisions."*

Teachers state that they primarily decide about technological issues such as which video-conferencing software can be used and how they can improve the sound quality with these meetings. They stated that the most significant advantage for them was to do the lessons together from the beginning. When problems such as connection and internet speed occur, one teacher can take the role of the other and continue the course without interruption. Only teachers' audio systems are on during the lesson. Students attend the lesson with their microphones off. In the introduction and conclusion parts of the lesson, everyone's microphone is turned on. In the parts where the students perform solo, the assistant teacher turns the microphones on and off. It is stated that they did not have a great problem transmitting sound because movement and rhythm were predominant in SECE courses. They frequently stated that social interaction and reduced opportunities to interactive learning were major disadvantages in online courses.

Another issue that teachers emphasize is the course materials. Costly instruments such as alto glockenspiel, alto xylophone, and wooden blocks are used in face-to-face lessons. Teachers play these instruments in online lessons. Parents were encouraged to use materials that could replace these instruments at home. In the observed courses, it was observed that most parents acquired instruments such as lollipops drums, wooden blocks, and steel triangles. Families without instruments also met this instrument need with small size pans and wooden items in the house.

Teachers said that both they and the participants easily adapt to the online courses they were so worried about at first. T2 stated that they easily adapted the program with the expressions *"Suzuki lessons are an open program planned in detail in every aspect. Everything is clear, from where to sit and stand in activities created according to the purposes of the lesson to which instrument to use. For this reason, we adapted it to online courses in the same way."* However, they stated that they would do the lessons face-to-face if it returned to normal. They said that the principles of "children learn from each other"

and "raise positive human consciousness", which are the basis of Suzuki's philosophy, can only be learned face-to-face and together in a social environment.

According to teachers, online courses also have advantages. T1 stated that online platforms allow students to be joined from many different parts of the world by removing restrictions such as time and place. Teachers stated that they had more chances to attend the training held in different countries of the world during the isolation period and that the training was much more affordable.

### **Teaching Objectives and Activities in the Curriculum Framework in Online Courses**

This section contains the observation results regarding the adaptation of the courses to the online flow. The course flow will be addressed under introduction, development 1, creativity, development 2, and conclusion as outlined in the framework program.

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the introductory part activities of SECE courses is to enable children and families to enter a familiar and warm environment by listening to beautiful music and to feel comfortable in the group with social awareness. In face-to-face SECE classes, teachers invite children and families to the classroom environment by playing classical music from a record. In online courses, they also expect everyone to connect to the lesson by playing music from the recording. In turn, they make the first greeting by waving and saying hello to each other. They also use this activity to provide general information about the course, check for connection problems, and remind the microphones to be turned off. Similarly, in Suzuki face-to-face lessons, the introductory part continues with a question and answers song that allows greeting with each child individually and allows solo. One of the teachers says the names of the children in turn, and the song is repeated until all the children perform solo.

Children are expected to respond simultaneously to the rhythm played by the teacher, just like in the face-to-face lessons in the drumbeats and walking activity. This activity, which is performed as a circle in face-to-face lessons, takes place in small circles of 2 (parents + children), 3 (2 parents + children or parents + 2 children), 4 (2 parents + 2 children or parents+3 children) in online lessons. Some children have lollipop drums. When the teacher plays the rhythm, the children with drums repeat the rhythm. In face-to-face lessons, it is usually the teacher who plays the drum in this activity. It can be said that online courses create more and individual chances for children to try with drums.

The up & down activity involves the teacher playing alto glockenspiel as in the face-to-face lesson and the children moving according to their movements. In face-to-face lessons, older students are sometimes allowed to play the instrument. This activity is carried out in the same way in the online course. Since it is not only an instrument, but children also cannot be allowed to play solo.

When examined in the context of the objectives of the introduction section, it was observed that the purposes of greeting with music played from the audio recording and greeting with each child and his/her family could also be achieved in online courses. Purposes such as social awareness and feeling comfortable within the group are limited to children's families and siblings. Other children can also be seen on the screen of the video conference software. However, it has been observed that this interaction does not provide rich learning environments that can be fully met within the SECE philosophy.

#### **Development 1**

The objectives of this section are stated in the SECE framework program as regular rhythm, appreciation of beautiful voice, learning of melodies, rhythms, listening skills, language development, and social awareness. This section contains four activities consisting of children songs with rhythmic rhymes and small choreographies. Teachers show the movements envisaged to be made and ask parents and children to join them. According to the story, activities here include keeping rhythm with body percussion,

walking according to rhythm, and dramatization. Therefore, they are sustainable activities with the guidance of teachers without the need for any additional instrument. It was observed that some students had drums in a rhythm activity performed with a lollipop drum. Those who do not have drums imitate the drum movement by hitting their hands with body percussion and springing with their knees. T1 states that the important thing here is that the specified beats are felt on time and form a rhythm response. Children hear these rhythm patterns with the lollipop drum played by the teacher. In this way, the timber study is realized. T2 states that because the sounds are digital, the efforts to hear the beautiful sound and timber, which are SECE purposes, cannot be fully realized in online courses. He said that the timbers were not fully transmitted due to the suppression of sounds by the video-conferencing software used. As a matter of fact, it was observed that the same quality of sounds was not heard in online courses, especially in studies conducted with glockenspiel. This is not the case with body percussion and drums. The sound quality was better communicated in the activities with body percussion and drums in the development section.

It is thought that Development 1 has a level of effect close to face-to-face lessons on regular rhythm, learning melodies, listening skills, and language development. However, due to digital sounds, beautiful sounds cannot be appreciated, and social awareness goals cannot be fulfilled due to the lack of the possibility of coexistence.

### **Creativity**

In this section, which aims to respect musical expressions and creativity, social awareness, other people in the group, and their needs, participants are given scarves or egg maracas. They are encouraged to do free dances and movements accompanied by music played from the record. During these dances and free movements, the participants observe each other, imitate their movements, and create movement variations. In online courses, parents were contacted beforehand and asked to acquire scarves and maracas for use in this section. During the first online lesson, teachers took the scarves and first verbally drew attention to their colors. Then they showed a few rhythms and movement patterns. Music was turned on from the recording, and they danced using these movement patterns. These movement and rhythm patterns were used by changing during musical sentences such as ABA in piece played from the audio recording. The musical expressions aspect of this course has gained importance. A creativity-oriented study was conducted in the previous course by selecting very specific works without directing the participants. Children also did this activity with their family members and siblings. The same activity was reflected differently according to each age and skill. Baby participants held scarves or maracas and joined the rhythm in their mother's lap. Older children with Suzuki experience also followed the guidance of their teachers with their families but independently of them.

T1 emphasizes the importance of social interaction for creative activities to achieve their full purpose. However, children stated that since they continue these activities in a safe environment with their families, social interaction within the family takes place and gets closer. T2 said face-to-face interaction is essential to comply with SECE objectives. However, he stated that online courses are effective because they give the opportunity to see other children on the screen.

### **Development 2**

This is the part where SECE courses deepen the most in terms of content and experience. In the previous chapters, basic musical works such as listening, awareness of beautiful voice, and rhythm, which come to a warm environment, feel socially comfortable, are studied here by concentrating. In this section, six different activities have been designed to serve purposes for social skills such as sharing, working with family, friends, and teachers; solos, counting activities, finger games; language skills; internal discipline (waiting for their turn), focusing (listening carefully). The first activity is to strengthen the mother-child bond. The movements appropriate to the rhyme mentioned here take place between the mother and child. It can be said that the face-to-face and online versions of this activity are almost the same.

Subsequent activities include sequences and counting. These studies are always open to the contribution of the participants. For example, in the course where the researcher participated as a participant-observer, these counting studies were carried out in Spanish, English, French, and Turkish. It was observed that all children oversaw the screen during counting in different languages. According to T1, different languages contain different musical elements. Even counting alone enables the development of musical perception of these different languages. For this reason, they stated that they evaluated participants from different countries in every possible activity. T2 stated that international participation in face-to-face SECE classes is not always possible, but it is a great opportunity for a Turkish participant who is thousands of kilometers away in online classes.

In Development 2, there are also question and answer songs that will enable children to perform solo. However, the question-answer order here is different according to the face-to-face courses. In face-to-face lessons, these activities are organized in a circle, and usually starting with the teacher, everyone sings this solo part in turn. In the video-conferencing program, the order of each participant on the screen is different. For this reason, sometimes two students sing a solo at the same time. Teachers resolved this confusion by saying the name of the student they wanted during these solos. Initially, all students' microphone sounds are off. During the solo, the assistant teacher turns the sounds on and off.

## Conclusion

In this section, the last drum, counting song and story reading activity is performed. In this section, plastic storage containers that can easily be found at home are used as drums. The same materials are used in face-to-face lessons. In face-to-face lessons, teachers play a rhythm with plastic drums and ask children to imitate themselves. The same is right in the online course.

Story reading aims to improve children's careful listening and imagination skills. In face-to-face lessons, children sit on the floor and listen to the book their teachers read. This activity is applied in the same way in the online course. It has been observed that this section is the activity where children mostly look at the screen. Teachers are also open to different ideas here. A Turkish storybook was read in the course where the researcher was a participatory observer. Before reading, children were advised to listen to the sounds even if they did not know the language. T1 and T2 stated that it is possible to carry out these studies with people from very different parts of the world thanks to online courses and that they contribute significantly to the listening and attention levels of children.

The most important part of the closing section is parental guidance. In this section, teachers talk to families, share their observations in the lesson and answer the questions. In online courses, this sharing is done using the chat window of the video-conferencing program. Teachers write their feedback about the whole course as a public message. They also use the messaging section for private sharing. In online courses, families also shared their feedback about the course. They stated the parts that affected them the most and attracted their children's attention the most. Parents, who wanted, shared short videos of their children with teachers during the online course.

It is thought that the fact that two teachers are always together in SECE classes increases the efficiency of observation and feedback, especially in online courses. Teachers do the activities, in turn, alternately. While the teacher performing the activity plays an active role, the other teacher can observe the students.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, how Suzuki Early Childhood Education, which is based on social interaction, was done online during the pandemic was examined. The fact that the whole course process goes online also means that 0-3-year-old children have a longer time to be in front of the screen. Screen time (time spent in the digital world) has caused serious concerns among parents and educators as it is said to cause

psychological and physiological damages such as anxiety, depression, obesity, sleep loss, reduction of delay, satisfaction and deprivation from nature and human interactions (Ruston, 2016; Tromholt, 2016; Turkle, 2011). It has also been reported to have harmful effects on attention, depth of information processing, memory, and daily cognitive functions and abilities (Carr, 2011; Ellison, 2012). Nemours Foundation Children's Health System (2020) finds it inconvenient for children under 18-24 months of age to face the screen. 'Healthy children, healthy future program' also states that the screen time of children under the age of two should not exceed 30 minutes per week. However, there are also numerous reports and claims about the benefits of the digital world. In addition to access to information and experts, communication with friends and relatives, and overall comfort, there are also reports that digital world activities have cognitive and emotional benefits such as enhanced creativity (Resnick & Robinson 2017), perceived social support, increased social capital, and secure identity experiences (Aragon & Davis 2019; Ellison et al. 2007), and increased self-confidence. Synthetic reviews of recent experimental studies have found much variation and inconsistency in findings regarding the effects of the digital world on psychological, social, and emotional well-being and cognitive capacities (Wilmer et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2016).

In this context, it would be useful to continue the discussion on another platform. Nothing in existence is positive or negative by itself. Zhao (2020) states that labeling screen time as good or bad in education is related to being caught unprepared for the pandemic process. Since most digital world activities take place on a personalized screen (parent), children do not have the experience of observing and imitating how adults participate in digital life in the areas of socialization, entertainment, learning, and work. As a result, how individuals experience the digital world is mostly determined by their preparation and contexts.

Suzuki early childhood education is a program where adults also manage digital resources because they are between 0 and 3. For this reason, it has not been reported that there is a problem with the controlled use of digital technologies. Thanks to the active structure of the SECE program in the lessons observed within the scope of this research, it was observed that children did not stand still at the front of the screen. It can be said that the screen focus is more on the introduction and closing parts of the course, and in the development and creativity parts, children are constantly on the move with standing or sitting activities. SECE program includes many cognitive activities such as following, repeating, listening, playing. For this reason, it offers active screen time, not passive. However, children are affected differently from this screen time due to the age group and individual differences. According to Jones (2020), some children seem indifferent, and parents make efforts to draw them back to activities. The youngest babies who are unaware of the screen seem to be doing their best because they are completely busy with their parents. It can be said that a similar situation has been experienced in face-to-face SECE courses. Children who have just joined the class may choose to be observers by pretending to be indifferent from the beginning. These children become active participants after a few studies. In this context, Jones' observation needs to be investigated through long-term studies.

The most crucial issue that teachers stated as a deficiency in the research is social learning. In the 20th century, when Suzuki developed his approach, social learning theories also brought a different perspective to early childhood education. Dewey (1986, p.26-27), one of his contemporaries, stated that real education could take place in environments where children can interactively reveal their existence and skills as members of a group and enable them to understand group activities socially. According to Piaget (1969), real education should involve the child in active learning through exploration. The role of the teacher was to observe the child's actions, learn from the child and guide the child according to his/her interests (Ginsburg & Opper, 1979, p.220). Piaget (1969) stated that maturation, experience, social interaction, and balance were interrelated factors necessary for learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), the learning, development, and education of children took place in the social, cultural, and social contexts in which they lived. He was an advocate of education that promoted active, dynamic, and strategic cognitive processes through communication and problem-solving between adults and children who became a community of learners. Suzuki has transformed the theories of these contemporaries working in educational sciences and psychology into practice in the field of music education. His lessons

are based on the principle that children learn from each other. There are numerous cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and physical opportunities planned for social learning in face-to-face lessons in the Suzuki approach. This contact with isolation during the pandemic has also been significantly restricted in the sense that we know. Although the communication of children in online classes is limited, they have had cognitive and emotional communication opportunities with the image and voice of the teacher. However, in online lessons, the opportunities for children to learn by observing each other have decreased. It is thought that children can pay attention to each other in musical question-answer activities where each child performs solo.

Another issue is that teachers have difficulty with being observed the students. In Suzuki classes, the teacher also serves as a guide for the education of both children and parents. At the end of each lesson, feedback is given to parents about the development of children. However, it has become difficult to observe children in online lessons depending on the camera angle in the compartments inside the small screen. Although the lessons are easy to observe with 2 teachers, it is not enough. Jones (2020) stated that although connecting the computer (Zoom) to the television makes the "gallery view" images as large as possible, it is not enough to watch children carefully and observe them throughout the classroom. Especially since all of the participants had to turn the microphone off, the teachers said that they could not hear the children.

It is seen that the online Suzuki early childhood education demonstrates that Suzuki's "encouragement is essential" and "every child can do" principles can be properly applied; parents must take much more responsibility under the principle of "parental involvement is essential"; it has been revealed that the principles of "environment supports development" and "children learn from each other" have been interrupted in online lessons. As a result of teacher opinions and course observations, it is seen that the principles other than children learning from each other can also be applied in online courses. Although teachers hesitated at first, thanks to the systematic structure of the Suzuki approach, they were able to apply for the courses online. However, they stated that they prefer face-to-face lessons in the context of social learning.

This research was conducted only with SECE teachers working under the Mexican Suzuki Association. Different socialization strategies can be studied in future research by contacting teachers from different geographies who teach online. Simultaneously, post-application results may be observed with the infrastructure and tools that can make online courses technologically much better.

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## TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Küresel olarak yaşanan salgın süreci daha öncesinde uygulamalı ve yüz yüze etkileşim ile yapılan birçok alanda ani değişimler yapılmasını zorunlu kılmıştır. Bu alanlardan biri olan ve 0-3 yaş aralığında anne ve bebeklerin müzik eğitimini hedefleyen Suzuki Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi (SEÇE) de bu süreçte canlı dersler ile etkinliğini sürdürmeye çalışmıştır. Bebeklerin ve müzik eğitiminin doğası gereği normal şartlarda dijital teknolojinin çok az yer aldığı bu derslerde sürecin nasıl yönetildiği ve ders işlenişlerinin nasıl yapıldığı soruları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu araştırma SEÇE öğretmenlerinin çevrimiçi canlı derslere ilişkin düşüncelerini almak ve bu dersleri nasıl uyguladıklarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden gözlem ve görüşme kullanılmıştır. Türkiye’de Suzuki erken çocukluk eğitimi 2020 yılı şubat ayında ilk çalışmalarına başlamıştır. Bu nedenle henüz lisanslı öğretmen ve uygulama sınıfı bulunmamaktadır. Bu nedenle araştırmacı, salgın başlangıcından itibaren sürece çabuk uyum sağlayarak çalışmalarını sürdüren Meksika Suzuki Derneği temsilcileri ile iletişime geçerek çevrimiçi derslere gözlemci olarak katılmış ve görüşmeler yapmıştır. Verilerin analizinde MAXQDA 12 programı ile nitel içerik analizi yapılmıştır. Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik için içerik analizi iki farklı alan uzmanı ile paylaşılmıştır.

SEÇE programı ‘her çocuk yapabilir’, ‘çevre gelişimi destekler’, ‘çocuklar birbirinden öğrenirler’, ‘başarı başarıyı doğurur’, ‘ailenin katılımı esastır’ ve ‘teşvik etme esastır’ şeklinde ifade edilen temel ilkeler üzerine kuruludur. Araştırmada ilk olarak çevrimiçi derslerin SEÇE programının temel ilkelerini karşılama durumları incelenmiştir. SEÇE öğretmenleri sürecin ilk zamanlarında yeni öğrenci alma konusunda çekimser davrandıklarını ancak deneyim kazandıkça yeni başlayan öğrencileri gruba kattıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu görüşlerden hareketle çevrimiçi sınıflarda ‘her çocuk yapabilir’ ilkesinin sürdürüldüğü söylenebilir. ‘Çevre gelişimi destekler’ ilkesinde destekleyici ve sıcak bir müziksel ortam oluşturulması amaçtır. Çevrimiçi derslerde bu ortam oluşturma görevinin daha çok ebeveynlere düştüğü gözlemlenmiştir. Çevrimiçi derslerde de bağlantı sağlanmasından, çalgıların ve evdeki ortamın derse göre düzenlenmesine, ders sırasındaki etkinliklerin takibinden ders dışı dinleme zamanlarına kadar ebeveynlerin büyük özverisi olduğu gözlemlenmektedir.

Çevrimiçi derslerle ilgili olarak dile getirilen en büyük eksiklik ‘çocuklar birbirinden öğrenirler’ ilkesi paralelinde sosyal öğrenme fırsatlarının azalmış olmasıdır. Jones (2020), çevrimiçi derslerde çocukların öğretmenler tarafından yakından gözlemlenmesi, çocukların birbirlerinden öğrenmesi ve tabii ki bir çocuğun bir öğretmen ile yakın temas kurması gibi SEÇE eğitiminin sosyal ve duygusal bileşenlerinden yoksun olduklarını belirtmiştir. Bu bağlamda iki ya da üç kardeş olarak derse katılan öğrencilerin sosyal öğrenme konusunda daha avantajlı olduğu söylenebilir.

‘Başarı başarıyı doğurur’ ilkesi bağlamında çevrimiçi SEÇE derslerindeki olumlu ve destekleyici ortam ebeveynler ve öğretmenlerin ders sırasındaki geribildirimleri ile sağlanmaktadır. Özellikle dersin kapanış kısmında her katılımcı ile etkinliklere uyum hakkında yansıtıcı konuşmalar yapılmaktadır. Çocukların ders boyunca kaydettikleri gelişme veli ve öğretmenler tarafından konuşularak gelişim için kararlar alınmaktadır. Bu ilkenin çevrimiçi derslerden büyük oranda etkilenmediği söylenebilir.

‘Ailenin katılımı esastır’ ilkesi bağlamında yüz yüze SEÇE sınıflarında aileler çocukların tüm sürecine aktif olarak katılmaktadır. Çevrimiçi sınıflarda bu sorumluluk alanının daha da genişlediği gözlemlenmiştir. Aile üyeleri evdeki öğretmen rolünü üstlenmek durumunda kalmışlardır. Aileler bu sorumluluk artışının başta kendisini zorladığını ancak nitelikli zaman fırsatlarını arttırarak çocuğu ile arasında daha derin bir bağ kurmasına yardımcı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu ilkenin aileler tarafında yüz yüze derslere oranla daha yüksek sorumlulukla sürdürüldüğü görülmektedir.

Çevrimiçi derslerde ‘teşvik etme esastır’ ilkesinin aileler ve öğretmenlerin desteği ile etkili bir biçimde sürdürüldüğü gözlemlenmiştir. Çevrimiçi derslerde özellikle başlangıç ve kapanış kısımlarında çocuklarla

bire bir iletişime geçilmektedir. Ders boyu iki öğretmen tarafından yapılan gözlemler kapanış kısmında çocuklara teşvik edici öneriler olarak yansıtılmaktadır. Öğretmenler sadece çevrimiçi ders sırasında değil hafta boyu velilere etkinlik tavsiyelerinde bulduklarını belirtmiştir.

Araştırmada ikinci olarak, bu süreçte ders işlenişindeki değişimlere ilişkin gözlemler ve öğretmen görüşleri alınmıştır. SEÇE dersleri giriş, gelişme 1, yaratıcılık, gelişme 2 ve kapanış olmak üzere her bölümde farklı amaç ve yoğunluktaki etkinliklerden oluşan bölümler halinde planlanmaktadır. Giriş bölümü amaçları bağlamında incelendiğinde kayıttan çalınan bir müzik ile karşılama, her çocuk ve ailesi ile selamlaşma amaçlarına çevrimiçi derslerde de ulaşılabildiği gözlemlenmiştir. Sosyal farkındalık ve grup içinde rahat hissetme gibi amaçlar çocukların sadece aileleri ve varsa kardeşleri ile sınırlı kalmaktadır. Video konferans programının ekranından diğer çocuklar da görülebilmektedir. Ancak bu etkileşimin tam olarak SECE felsefesi içinde karşılık bulabilecek zengin öğrenme ortamları sunamadığı gözlemlenmiştir.

Gelişme 1'in düzenli ritim, ezgilerin öğrenilmesi, dinleme becerileri, dil gelişimi konularında yüz yüze derslere yakın bir etki düzeyinin olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ancak dijital sesler nedeniyle güzel sesin takdir edilmesi ve bir arada bulunma imkanının olmaması nedeniyle sosyal farkındalık amaçları yerine getirilemediği söylenebilir.

Öğretmenler yaratıcı etkinliklerin tam olarak amacına ulaşması için sosyal etkileşimin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Ancak öğretmenler çocukların aileleri ile birlikte güvenli bir ortamda bu çalışmalarını sürdürmeleri nedeniyle aile içi sosyal etkileşimin gerçekleştiğini ve daha yakınlaştığını belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenler SEÇE amaçlarına uymak için yüz yüze etkileşimin olmazsa olmaz olduğunu söylemiştir. Ancak içinde bulunulan şartlarda çevrimiçi derslerin de ekranda diğer çocukları da görebilme şansı vermesinden dolayı etkili olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

Gelişme 2'de çocukların solo yapmasını sağlayacak soru-cevap şarkıları da yer almaktadır. Ancak burada soru-cevap sırası yüz yüze derslere göre farklıdır. Yüz yüze derslerde bu etkinlikler çember şeklinde dizilerek yapılır ve genellikle öğretmenden başlayarak herkes sırayla bu solo kısmı söyler. Video-konferans programında ise her katılımcının ekranındaki sırası başkadır. Öğretmenler bu sololar arasında istedikleri öğrencinin ismini söyleyerek bu karışıklığı gidermişlerdir. Başlangıçta tüm öğrencilerin sesleri kapalıdır. Solo sırasında yardımcı öğretmen sesleri açıp kapatmaktadır.

Kapanış bölümünün ise en önemli kısmı ebeveyn rehberliğidir. Bu kısımda öğretmenler aileler ile konuşarak dersteki gözlemlerini paylaşırlar, soruları yanıtlarlar. Çevrimiçi derslerde bu paylaşım video-konferans programının mesaj bölümü kullanılarak yapılmaktadır. Öğretmenler dersin geneli ile ilgili geribildirimlerini herkese açık bir şekilde mesaj olarak yazmaktadır. Özel bir paylaşım için de yine mesajlaşma kısmını kullanmaktadırlar. Çevrimiçi derslerde aileler de dersle ilgili geribildirimlerini paylaşmışlardır. Onları en çok etkileyen, çocuklarının en çok dikkatini çeken kısımları belirtmişlerdir. İsteyen veliler çevrimiçi ders sırasında çocuklarının kısa videolarını öğretmenler ile paylaşmışlardır.

Araştırmanın sonunda Suzuki Erken Çocukluk Eğitimi Programının yapısının sistematik oluşundan kaynaklı olarak çevrimiçi düzenlenmesinin diğer metotlara göre kolaylıkları olduğu, metodun en önemli ilkelerinden biri olan ebeveynin aktif katılımı sayesinde çocukların evlerindeki süreçleri yönetmede kolaylıklar olduğu ancak birlikte çalma, etkileşim, birbirinden öğrenme ve grup çalışmalarının gerektiği gibi yapılamadığı, çalgıların her evde bulunmamasından dolayı tını ve işitme çalışmalarında eksiklikler olduğu belirlenmiştir. Öğretmenlerin duruma yaklaşımları problem çözme ve geliştirme odaklı olmasına rağmen bütünsel bir eğitim için yüz yüze ve birlikte etkileşimli eğitimi tercih ettikleri belirtilmiştir.