

IN-SERVICE ELEMENTARY ESOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES, USAGE, AND  
DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH MUSIC

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IN-SERVICE ELEMENTARY ESOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES, USAGE,  
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Dr. Wendy L. Sims, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the U.S., additional ways of teaching English need to be discovered. This study was designed to investigate teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages' (ESOL) perspectives, usage, and difficulties of teaching English through music. Missouri in-service elementary ESOL teachers ( $N=108$ ), responded to a researcher-designed online survey, which collected the participants' background information, their perspectives on using music, the methods they used to incorporate music into their classes, and their difficulties and needs. The majority of participants perceived a positive effect of music on students' learning, and felt comfortable singing and teaching songs to their students. However, they reported a generally low use of music to teach English, with vocabulary being the English language skill taught most frequently with music. Singing songs was the most popular music activity, and children's songs were the most commonly used genre. Songs that include repetition were the most frequently chosen criteria for song selection, and having students echo line-by-line was the most frequently used music teaching method. The majority of the ESOL teachers preferred finding music materials and resources through the Internet, and online video clips were the most popular. The main obstacles reported were a lack of time in the class schedule and lack of training in teaching with music, knowledge about music resources, music integration, and song selections. Recommendations include a redesign of teacher preparation and professional development programs to incorporate strategies and materials for teaching English through music.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

There is an increasing number of foreign-born immigrants living in the US (Camarota, 2012). Immigrant parents may not be able to provide an English spoken environment for their children in the home, and so their children are often considered English Language Learners (ELLs) and placed in ELL programs in schools. Because of the unfamiliarity with the English language and foreign culture, ELLs often struggle in their academic pursuits. Without effective teaching methods to help these students obtain English abilities, they may fail academically and not become acculturated to American society. Incorporating new ways of teaching ELLs, such as the use of music in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classrooms, could help reduce this problem.

In 2002, congress passed *Title III: Language Instruction for English Limited Proficient and Immigrant Students* as part of the No Child Left Behind Act. According to Title III, local education agencies are required to provide students with limited English proficiency assistance in learning English. With sufficient numbers of ELL students, school districts are required to hire ESOL teachers to help ELL students meet state academic content requirements and achieve the same academic standards as all other students. Although there are some guidelines regarding how ESOL teachers should teach English to meet the content standards (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, 2012), in order to create a successful ELL learning environment, ESOL teachers require skills to motivate their students and teach effectively. Some studies show that music can motivate students' learning and develop their language skills (Li & Brand, 2009; Rosová,

2007), but little research has investigated ESOL teachers' perspectives and use of music. Additional research can help fill the gap in knowledge about how teachers use music to help ELLs.

Over the past decade, music has been increasingly valued in English learning. Because of the No Child Left Behind Act, an educational consortium known as the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education to help educators teach students with diverse linguistic backgrounds to develop their English language skills. In 2004, the consortium established the *English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards* to connect English learning to academic content; however, music was not included. When WIDA ELP Standards were updated in 2007, however, chants, songs, and nursery rhymes were added under the content area of Language Arts for teaching PreK-K students as some of the topics and genres recommended. Unfortunately, the ELP Standards did not address music in any other grade level.

In 2012, the consortium published the *Amplification of the English Language Development (ELD) Standards*. Besides the standards connected to the five main content areas, the consortium added the Complementary Strands, which includes the language of music and performing arts. The consortium connected the *National Standards for Music Education* to English language proficiency and indicated how to relate music topics to language at different grade levels. Although the consortium only provided examples for using music to teach language in a few grade levels, this demonstrates that music has been gradually receiving more attention in language learning. More research regarding

music on language learning is required. Once policy makers and program designers in higher education understand the importance of music on language learning, they will become more willing to provide funding and training in this field. Then, ESOL teachers will have the opportunity to learn how to use music in their ESOL classes.

### **The Importance of Music in Language Learning**

Music shares the elements of rhythm, dynamics, pitch, stress, and intonation with language, and it can benefit students' learning and development in other areas. Music is a human universal. Even students from different cultural backgrounds and with limited English ability are able to express themselves through music. Music can bring pleasure to these students, motivate their learning, and lower their anxiety. Music educators similarly to all education disciplines have developed methods using their subject to enhance students' critical thinking (Pogonowski, 1987; Woodford, 1996), problem solving skills (Pogonowski, 1987), and creativity (Whitcomb, 2013). Additionally, being able to participate in musical activities and performances, allows students to collaborate and connect with others. Music has many benefits for students' development in general. Although in the past, music was not considered an important element in language teaching, there are an increasing number of studies that show the benefits of using music to enhance students' language learning (see those reviewed in the Literature Review, Chapter 2).

Music offers fun and a variety of repetition, which enhances second language learners' motivation. Based on Krashen's theory of second language learning, language acquisition processes occur more efficiently when learners' affective filter is kept low

(Lightbown & Spada, 2006). When students' affective filter is high, they feel anxious, tense, or bored with learning. Learning becomes a negative experience and therefore, the knowledge being taught will be filtered out. Contrarily, when students' affective filter is low, they feel comfortable and motivated toward learning. Music has been shown to motivate students and is associated with affective learning (Li & Brand, 2009; Rosová, 2007). Educators use music, such as singing and playing music games in groups to relieve language learners' pressure and stress, and to create an enjoyable environment (Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011). In Şevik's study (2011), language teachers have observed that music helps ELLs lower their anxiety while learning English through songs. Several studies also reflect language learners' positive attitudes towards using music to learn a second language (Laramie, 2012; Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011; Rosová, 2007). Because music has a positive impact on ELLs, ESOL teachers could benefit from using music regularly in their classes to motivate their students' learning.

Besides motivation, music is considered a helpful tool to more easily approach language learning. Hashemi and Azizinezhad (2011) stated, "musical people have increased aptitude in foreign language learning due to an advanced ability in perceiving, processing, and closely reproducing accent" (p.12). To discover how songs and texts help language learning, Palmer and Kelly (1992) indicated that with the correspondence of stress accents in lyrics and rhythm, learners could pay attention, anticipate, and memorize the text better. Because song lyrics, chants, and nursery rhymes emphasize the natural stress accents in the English language, they can be used as a valuable tool to help ELL students speak and comprehend the language.

From a linguistic point of view, music not only enhances learners' language perception and comprehension, but also develops language learners' vocabulary, phonological awareness, and grammar. Researchers have found that music helped second language learners acquire vocabulary (Legg, 2009; Li & Brand, 2009; Moyeda, Gomez, & Flores, 2006; Salcedo, 2010). By using music in language teaching, students understood, used, and memorized the target vocabulary better than students who received instruction with no music. Phonological awareness is a linguistic norm which affects students' language communication and reading achievement. Results of a study by Gromko (2005) showed that children could segment a word into its phonemes better after receiving music instruction such as body movement with music, keep the steady beat, word rhythms, and the pitch of words while playing music instruments. Bolduc (2009) further indicated that with music activities specially designed for linguistic purposes, young learners developed their phonological abilities on syllable, rhyme, and phoneme identification better than learners who only received regular music classes. Music instruction with the target linguistic purpose also was found to be beneficial for ELLs' English grammar. Cruz-Cruz (2005) indicated that by using songs and musical stories to reinforce English grammar, ELLs' grammar improved more than the students receiving traditional English classes. Supporting evidence that music has a positive impact on vocabulary, phonics, and grammar is accumulating. It is important to further discover ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music into an ESOL classroom setting to better understand what they currently do and how to further assist them.

## **ESOL Teachers' Perspectives, Usage, and Difficulties**

Although using music in the classroom has been shown to positively affect ELLs' language learning, only a few research projects have studied ESOL teachers' perspectives on the use of music in their classes. Şevik (2011) conducted research in Turkey on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' views of using music. He discovered that the majority of the teachers believed that songs have pedagogical value in teaching English. They also specified the effectiveness of songs in teaching English to enhance students' vocabulary memorization, motivate students' learning, and lower students' anxiety. However, a high percentage of the teachers revealed that they did not have enough song resources to use, had difficulty finding appropriate songs to reinforce the English curriculum, and had difficulty measuring students' knowledge when using music. My study of ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties may differ from EFL teachers' points of view. ESOL programs are designed to prepare ELLs with necessary skills to navigate in the US, while EFL classes are designed for students to learn a foreign language in their home country. Because the purposes of these two classes are different, the way that teachers instruct the English classes and the teachers' perspectives may differ as well.

In a study of instruction at the collegiate level, Bjorklund (2002) investigated college ESOL instructors' perspectives on using music to teach oral skills. She discovered that the majority of the ESOL teachers perceived that students responded positively to learning English through music. She also indicated that more than half of the ESOL teachers used songs to teach stress and intonation. Among the different types of

music used, pop songs were the most common. However, most of the ESOL teachers surveyed did not use any instruments in the classroom. In my study, I will explore ESOL teachers' music usage to enhance students' pronunciation as well as other English skills, such as listening comprehension, speaking fluency, reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, grammar, and cultural awareness. Because Bjorklund's participants were college ESOL instructors, the music styles, the instructional emphasis, and the perspectives of music most likely will differ from the elementary ESOL teachers in this current study.

Edwards (1997) conducted a study that most closely relates to this current research. She investigated elementary ESOL teachers' perspectives on music in language learning. She discovered that 60 percent of the ESOL teacher participants used music in the classroom more than 2 to 4 times a week. The ESOL teachers used music for vocabulary learning purposes the most frequently, then reading comprehension, syntax, and grammar the least. This phenomenon reflected the training that the teachers had received: among the ESOL teachers who received training in the use of music, vocabulary was emphasized more than other aspects of language learning. The obstacles reported by the ESOL teachers to use music in their classes were mainly the lack of money for supplies and not enough training. ESOL teachers had a generally positive attitude with 72% expressing interest in receiving further music training. Given that Edwards' study was conducted 15 years ago, I am interested in discovering if current ESOL teachers have the same perspectives on and difficulties with using music. Well-developed teaching strategies can enhance teachers' teaching efficacy. Therefore, in

addition to teachers' perspectives and difficulties, my study is also intended to discover what music activities, materials, and resources ESOL teachers use in their classrooms.

### **Strategies for Teaching Language through Music**

While teaching second languages through music has positive impacts on ELLs, simply teaching songs in a second language does not help learners acquire the target language. In order to develop second language learners' language skills, well-planned teaching strategies are prerequisites for successful instruction (Medina, 2002). Choosing appropriate music materials to reinforce ELLs' language skills is an important criterion for good teaching strategies. Appropriate materials considerations, as recommended by scholars, researchers, and experienced language teachers include considering the difficulty of the song and the lyrics, matching the music with ELL students' age and language proficiency levels (Abbott, 2002), choosing songs by the musical interests of the students (Saricoban & Metin, 2000), selecting songs with many repetitions (Abril, 2003), and using internationally well-known songs (Abbott, 2002; Paquette & Rieg, 2008; Saricoban & Metin, 2000).

In addition to selecting appropriate music materials, the teaching techniques of using music to reinforce language learning also are important. Iwata (2005) found that with active music learning, such as singing and signing, students performed vocabulary recognition better, and their reading pronunciation improved. The comparison group was taught by passive learning, such as watching and listening. Saricoban and Metin (2000) and Paquette and Rieg (2008) suggested that while teaching songs, teachers should add motions to help ELLs remember the vocabulary and the meaning of the lyrics.

Kinesthetic is one of the multisensory learning approaches discussed in Facella, Rampino, and Shea's study (2005). They also asserted that students learn more effectively when using a multisensory approach, such as some combination of seeing, touching, drawing, moving, and listening rather than a single approach, such as listening only. The multisensory approach of including various senses in English classes can relieve ELLs' tension produced by struggling with the language and help them develop understanding through several senses.

### **Importance of this Study**

With the increasing numbers of immigrants to the U. S., regular mainstream classes taught in English may not meet the needs of immigrant children in schools. These ELL students need a learning environment where they feel stress free and comfortable, as they work towards mastering English in order to meet state content standards. Music has been known to be helpful for releasing tension and anxiety. It can be used to provide ELLs a comfortable learning environment. Moreover, studies have shown that music helps students in language learning. Because music has many benefits for ELLs for learning English, it should be used in the ESOL classes. However, there is very little current research studying how ESOL teachers' think about the use of music in English learning, how they implement music, and their difficulties in using music in their ESOL classes. My study was designed to discover current ESOL teachers' experiences with the intention of filling the gaps in knowledge about ESOL teachers' experiences in teaching English through music.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the study was to determine ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music to teach English. The results are intended to provide information for instructors in higher education to design music curricula to meet ESOL teachers' needs and for professional development administrators to plan their programs to help ESOL teachers resolve difficulties implementing music in their classrooms. Another intention was to document current ESOL teachers' experiences of music usage so that researchers and educators will have a better understanding of current practices. This will help researchers and educators design future research to discover better practices.

Elementary ESOL teachers in Missouri were chosen to be part of this study because there has been no relevant research conducted in the midwestern region of the United States. Also, because all of the ESOL training courses I received were from the University of Missouri, I am familiar with the ESOL teachers, programs, and ELL educational policies under the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. My knowledge of Missouri ESOL teachers, programs, and policies will benefit the validity and reliability of this study.

Due to the lack of information about current elementary ESOL teachers' experiences, I proposed the following research questions regarding their perspectives, usage, and difficulties related to incorporating music instruction into their classes:

1. What are ESOL teachers' perspectives of teaching English through music?
  - a. What are teachers' comfort levels teaching music in their classes?
  - b. What are teachers' perceptions about teaching English through music?

2. What factors affect ESOL teachers' use of music in teaching?
  - a. Does length of ESOL teaching experience affect teachers' use of music in classes?
  - b. Does teachers' musical background relate to the use of music in their classrooms?
3. In what ways do ESOL teachers use music in teaching English?
  - a. How often do teachers use music to teach English?
  - b. How do teachers select songs or music for their ESOL classes?
  - c. What music genres, materials, and resources do ESOL teachers use?
  - d. What music activities and teaching strategies do teachers use in class?
4. What are the unmet needs of ESOL teachers teaching in English through music?
  - a. What difficulties do ESOL teachers have in using music to teach English?
  - b. What kinds of teacher development training may help ESOL teachers use music in their classes?

### **Definition of Terms**

Terms used in this study were defined as below:

1. The term *English Language Learners* (ELLs) refers to the students whose native language is not English who live in the United States.
2. The term *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) refers to the program of instruction taught to support non-native English speakers in learning English.

3. The term *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) student refers to the non-native English speaking student learning English in a country where English is not the native language.
4. The term *First language learners* refer to the native speakers who learn their native language.
5. The term *Second language learners* refer to the non-native speakers who learn a non-native language as a second language.
6. The term *self-contained class* refers to a class that has only one teacher in charge.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **Literature Review**

This study investigated ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music in their classes. The results were intended to provide information about ESOL teachers' comfort levels using music, their perspectives on using music to teach English, the frequency they use music in classes, their music selections and implementation, and their difficulties and needs in teaching English through music. These results were also intended to help instructors of teacher preparation programs in higher education to address ESOL teachers' music practices and design appropriate curriculum to help teachers use music in their classrooms.

The literature review is divided into four sections: (a) the importance of music for non-musical purposes, (b) teachers' perspectives of teaching music, (c) language teachers' usage of music, and (d) teachers' difficulties of teaching music. The main portion of the literature review consists of research studies including the influence of music on students' learning for other than musical purposes, teachers' attitude towards using music in their classes, teachers' confidence in their music skills, the challenges of including music in lessons, and teachers' attitudes toward music training courses. Other suggestions for music implementation by language teachers are also included in the literature review.

#### **The Importance of Music for Non-Musical Purposes**

Although music instruction typically has the goal to develop students' music skills and learning, for this study, it primarily is discussed for non-musical purposes.

Therefore, this section only includes literature regarding the importance of music for non-musical purposes. The following divisions start from a more general idea, such as the effects of music on students' learning and academic achievement. Then, the topic is narrowed down to the relation between music and literacy, such as the similarity of music and literacy and the effects of music on language development. Finally, the literature focuses on music and second language learning specifically, such as students' attitude toward including music in language classes and the effects of music on students' language skills.

**Music and learning.** There are many benefits for children in learning music. Brewer (1995) claimed that there are advantages of using music to enhance learning, such as establishing a positive learning state, facilitating a multi-sensory learning experience, improving memory, enhancing imagination, releasing tension, providing inspiration and motivation, and others.

Integration instruction has become a popular topic which has been discussed during the past decade. Music has been used in different subject areas to motivate students' learning and develop their academic achievement. McCammon (2008) used music integrated curriculum to develop an engaging and exciting atmosphere in middle school chemistry classes. By using modern songs designed to teach chemistry content, students and the teacher reported enthusiastic, passionate, and excited attitudes to learning and teaching chemistry. Another experiment done by Richardson (2009) illustrated the advantages of integrating music into a social studies workshop. By using geography, music, and history integrated activities, middle school students developed

better attitudes, geographic knowledge, and the understanding of the relationship between geography, history, and culture than students who received standard social studies curricula. In elementary levels, Albright (2011) integrated baroque and classical music into the math curriculum and found an increase of students' math achievement. Eaton (2006) compared music/reading integrated instruction with music and reading separated instruction. He discovered that integrating music into the reading class enhances elementary students' music and reading achievement significantly. Lyons (2008) conducted a similar study on reading achievement. She discovered that in addition to more engagement, elementary second graders who received the music /reading intervention curriculum performed higher reading achievement scores than students that received the regular reading curriculum. These studies show the effects of music integration on students' core subjects' achievement. For the purpose of this study, the following parts will further discuss the use of music on language development in the native language and in second language learning.

**Music and literacy.** Literacy is the ability to communicate in a specific language that includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Music shares many similar characteristics with literacy. Some educators use music to develop language skills for native or first language learners. Flohr (2005) indicated that music could be used for language development. The acquisition of language, reading, and music has the same auditory and visual processes (Hansen, Bernstorff, & Stuber, 2004). Using music can be an effective way to introduce language and reading to students. Lloyd (1978) indicated human being's many parallel abilities between music and reading, such as the ability of

tracking visually from left to right and top to bottom in both music and reading, the ability of hearing, distinguishing, interpreting, and understanding music and spoken sounds, and the ability to express oneself through music and reading. Based on the similar characteristics of music and reading, Lloyd suggested that teachers use music to help develop beginning reading skills.

In a more recent publication, Hansen, Bernstorff, and Stuber (2004) compared the required skills to read both written text and music text. These skills include phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, sight identification, graphophonemic awareness, cueing system awareness, and fluency. Phonological awareness is the ability to identify sound characteristics, such as rhymes, syllables divisions, rhythm, and pitch. Phonemic awareness is the ability to separate words into smaller units, such as “dog” to d/o/g or combine consonant and vowel sounds. Sight identification is the ability to recognize words or music notation instantly. Graphophonemic awareness is the ability to use letters or notation to represent sounds. Cueing system awareness is the ability to understand meaning from reading or music context. Fluency is the ability to read text or music with speed and accuracy. All these skills show that there are many similarities between reading written texts and reading music texts as all are used in both.

Phonological awareness is an important ability for young children to develop pre-reading/writing skills. Studies showed that music skills have a positive correlation to students’ phonological awareness. Lamb and Gregory (1993) indicated that young children’s pitch discrimination skills relate to their phonological skills. Children at ages 4-5 demonstrated their pitch discrimination skills by making a same/different judgment

on pairs of musical notes and chords. The results showed that children who received high scores on pitch discrimination skills also did well on pronouncing consonantal blended words and nonsense syllables. A related study supported Lamb and Gregory's findings on the correlation between music skills and phonological awareness. Forgeard, Schlaug, Norton, and Rosam (2008) discovered that children with the average years of 6.52 and 6.72 who had better tonal and rhythmic discrimination abilities tended to score higher in phonological awareness. These results apply to both normal children and children with dyslexia. Generally, children with dyslexia have significant lower ability on melodic and rhythmic discrimination, suggesting that music skills may be an important predictor of children's reading ability. Besides phonological awareness, children's music skills also relate to their reading abilities. Douglas and Willatts (1994) indicated that children at ages 7-8 who could better discriminate same/different rhythmic patterns could also recognize and spell words more accurately. While children's pitch and rhythm skills were considered predictors of their reading abilities, Anvari, Trainor, Woodside, and Levy (2002) further tested preschoolers' music skills from a broader perspective: melody discrimination, rhythm discrimination, chord discrimination, rhythm reproduction, and chord analysis. The results corresponded to the previous studies that music skills relate to children's phonological awareness and reading abilities.

More studies supported the assumption that phonological skills can be developed through music. Schön, Boyer, Moreno, Besson, Peretz, and Kolinsky (2008) examined the reinforcement of French adults' syllable segmentation skills in three ways, such as speaking, singing with matched pitch, and singing without matched pitch. Within these

three ways, the participants could best segment syllables after singing with matched pitch, which is a method that uses tonal pitch changes matched with syllable changes to ensure word and pitch boundaries occurred at the same time. The researchers concluded that music helps develop phonological abilities, especially when the pitch matches syllable boundaries. Bolduc (2009) further examined the effect of music instruction on Francophone kindergartners' phonological awareness. In a specially designed music group, students learned to relate their music experience to language skills, such as to analyze lyrics, compose rhythmic counting rhymes, read children's books containing music concepts, and to write words. The researcher indicated that both specially designed music instruction and regular music instruction improved students' phonological awareness. However, young learners received music instruction designed specially to develop their phonological abilities on syllables, rhymes, and phoneme identification better than those learners who only received regular music instruction. The researcher concluded that music instruction with target linguistic purposes can be beneficial for phonological development.

Phonemic awareness is another prerequisite learning process for learners to recognize the sound and spelling of words before learning how to read and write (Antonacci & O' Callaghan, 2004). Children with phonemic awareness can isolate sounds in a word and connect alphabetic letters to sounds. With the understanding of the letter-sound relationship, children will be able to read and write words. Music instruction has shown to have a positive influence on children's phonemic awareness. Gromko (2005) conducted research regarding the effect of music instruction on kindergartners'

phonemic awareness. She used active music such as singing a song from another culture, doing body movements to correspond to sound in time and space, and playing body percussion and instruments to reinforce steady beat, word rhythms, and melodic contour. Results showed that students in the music instruction group could segment a word into its phonemes better than students in no music instruction group; for example, the word “hat” is divided into the phonemes /h/+/a/+/t/. Gromko suggested that teachers should develop students’ language skills by providing active music opportunities to reinforce their phonemic awareness.

With phonological and phonemic awareness, language learners will be able to develop vocabulary. The following studies explained the effect of music instruction on vocabulary development. Moyeda, Gomez, and Flores (2006) indicated that the emphasis of music elements, such as rhythm, melody, and timbres increased students’ vocabulary memorization. Preschoolers with the average of 5.5 years old from the music group were encouraged to reproduce and identify rhythm, melody and the timbre of the music. They were also asked to explain the meaning of songs. With the music stimulation, students enhanced their vocabulary memorization and learned to use meaningful context to acquire new words. Piro and Ortiz (2009) also confirmed the positive influence of music lessons on primary grade students’ vocabulary and verbal sequencing skills. Students who took piano lessons for at least three-year outperformed on word comprehension and word sequence interpretation over students who had no music lesson exposure. In the Piro and Ortiz’s study, before students play a piano piece, they were first introduced to clap the rhythm of the piece and then to sing the melody. In the piano lessons, students

were also encouraged to explain the meaning of the vocabulary from songs, create song lyrics, and describe the different timbres, genres, and styles of music using the vocabulary. The researchers suggested that the music lessons had the benefit for students of learning vocabulary.

Researchers have found the evidence of the positive effects of music instructions on students' literacy achievement overall not only vocabulary. Corrigall and Trainor (2011) investigated the relationship between the length of music training and children's reading skills. The participants were children at ages 6-9, who had music training experiences. The results showed that the longer children participated in music lessons, the better their reading comprehension skills were. The researchers suggested that music training has the potential to help children stay-on-task for longer period of time. Therefore, the length of music training correlated with children's reading comprehension achievement. Besides the regular music trainings, music curriculum designed for language purpose also helped student's literacy achievement. Standley and Hughes (1997) implemented a music curriculum with literacy goals that emphasized print concepts and prewriting skills. They discovered it enhanced young children's prereading/writing skills. The music curriculum was designed based on the national standard for prekindergarten music education. The young children at ages 4-5 collected printed songs in their songbooks and were asked to find the song and follow the lyrics with their fingers. They were also asked to draw pictures of the lyrics meanings and explain their drawings. Results indicated that the children with music training were highly motivated and performed their reading awareness and prewriting skills better than

children with no music training. In a follow-up study, Register (2001) duplicated Standley and Hughes' (1997) music curriculum and further compared it to a general music curriculum. She found that children at ages 4-5 in the general music curriculum compared unfavorably to children in the literacy focused curriculum who showed improvement significant on logo and word identification. This study supports that specific academic design in music is critical for target subject improvement. In another study, Register, Darrow, Standley, and Swedberg (2007) designed an intensive music curriculum that focused on reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. This 4-week intensive music course included singing, listening, doing movement, and playing instruments with the emphasis on word-decoding, word knowledge, and reading comprehension. They discovered that grade 2 students receiving the music course presented greater word knowledge improvement than students from the regular reading program. The researchers suggested that a short-term intensive music/reading curriculum has the potential to develop children's basic reading skills.

**Music and second language learning.** In addition to first language learning, there are increasing amounts of evidence showing that music can help second language learning as well. Rather than constantly drill, music offers fun as well as a variety of repetition which enhances second language learners' motivation. Based on Krashen's (1982) theory of second language learning, students learning can be influenced by an "affective filter." When students' affective filter is high, they feel anxious, tense, or bored about learning. They will filter out the knowledge being taught. Learning becomes a negative experience and therefore cannot be processed efficiently. To the contrary, when

students' affective filter is low, they feel comfortable and motivated about learning. The knowledge will be processed more efficiently, and acquisition therefore occurs. Music has been shown to relieve students' tension and lower their affective filter. Fager (2006) discovered that the opportunities for ELL high school students to join music performing groups provided them with positive experiences, such as a sense of belonging, personal growth, social network opportunities, and feelings of academic success. Baker and Jones (2006) indicated that a music therapy program helped refugee students aged 11-15 years decrease their externalizing behaviors, such as hyperactivity and aggression in the classroom. This program helped develop students' self-esteem and improved the learning environment. A considerable number of studies also reflected language learners' positive attitude about using music to learn a second language (Laramie, 2012; Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011; Rosová, 2007). Laramie (2012) reported that the language learners aged 18-26 perceived the helpfulness of using music to learn the second language. By learning English through music, ELLs can learn to cooperate with their peers, such as by singing and playing music games in groups which can help to relieve ELLs' pressure and stress, and created an enjoyable environment in which to learn (Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011).

For students who study English as a foreign language, researcher Rosová (2007) found that Czech secondary to adult students reported more relaxing, positive, interesting, and enjoyable feelings while receiving English instruction through songs rather than poems. Chinese students at an average age of 23 also showed higher motivation, enjoyment, and confidence in English learning when music was included in the instruction in comparison to non-musical instruction (Li & Brand, 2009). Puerto Rican 4<sup>th</sup>

grade students indicated a high level of appreciation towards the inclusion of songs and music in their English class (González, 2004). Not only the students, but teachers and parents also witnessed the motivation of music on their children's language learning. In a study by Şevik (2011), teachers observed that music helps their primary students lower their anxiety to learn English as a foreign language. ELL's parents also reported that music enhanced their preschooler's self-confidence, lowered their stress, and improved their participation in English classes (Bird, 2007).

Besides motivation, music is considered a tool to design an easier approach to language learning. Hashemi and Azizinezhad (2011) stated "musical people have increased aptitude in foreign language learning due to an advanced ability in perceiving, processing, and closely reproducing accent" (p.12). To discover how songs and texts help language learning, Palmer and Kelly (1992) indicated the correlations of linguistic stress and rhythmic context. They explained that the match of the linguistic accents of lyrics and the rhythmic accents of music leads to the learners' better perception and comprehension. With the correspondence of accents in lyrics and rhythm, learners can pay attention, anticipate, and memorize the text better. From the linguistic point of view, music not only enhances learners' language perception and comprehension, but also develops language learners' vocabulary, reading pronunciation, phonological awareness, and grammar.

Studies have shown that music has positive impacts on second language learners' vocabulary acquisition (Legg, 2009; Li & Brand, 2009; Salcedo, 2010). Although in an earlier study, Medina (1991) found that there was no difference between second grade

ELL students' vocabulary acquisition in music and non-music groups. ELLs showed the same amount of vocabulary acquisition while learning English through a story in both a sung version and spoken version. She suggested that music can be used as an alternative method to enhance second language acquisition. In more recent studies, language learners demonstrated more effective learning through music instruction than through verbal instruction. Hsu (2009) conducted research in Taiwan regarding kindergarten students' vocabulary pronunciation and spelling in English. She found that modifying the lyrics for the vocabulary purpose and using songs with familiar tunes helped students to pronounce and spell English words better than teaching with verbal instruction. Legg (2009) also discovered that secondary English students were able to better use the French vocabulary and phrases to convey meaning in singing and performing a musical with the target vocabulary than being taught through an oral instructional form. In another study by Cruz-Cruz (2005), the researcher asked second grade Latino ELL students to listen to songs which contained target vocabulary, then to sing the songs, and identify the target vocabulary from the songs followed by a related activity. The researcher found that students showed greater vocabulary achievement and better participation through the songs compared to students who learned from text examples and teachers' verbal instruction.

Knowing that music helps vocabulary acquisition, some researchers experimented to further support suggestions for effective music teaching strategies to develop English language learners' vocabulary. Iwata (2005) found that American college students learning a foreign language developed their vocabulary through active music learning.

Iwata compared a group taught with active music learning, such as through singing and signing to a group taught through passive learning, such as watching and listening. She found that in the active music learning class, students performed vocabulary recognition better, and their reading pronunciation improved as well. Schunk (1999) determined the benefits of singing songs paired with manual signs. In her study, K-2 ELLs gained greater vocabulary recognition in the sung text paired with visual-gestural signs than other conditions, such as spoken text paired with signs, sung text only, and spoken text only. The researcher suggested that singing text with visual signs helps students to understand and remember the meaning of the vocabulary. She encouraged language teachers to use music paired with signs to develop students' vocabulary skills.

The research of Li and Brand (2009) indicated that music instruction used to enhance ELLs' vocabulary acquisition should be taught consistently. They investigated the effects of consistent music instruction on Chinese college students' English vocabulary acquisition. They discovered that students could understand, use, and acquire vocabulary more effectively when taught by consistent and intensive singing and listening music activities rather than inconsistent instructions. The researchers suggested that to avoid confusion and distraction, songs and music activities should be used on a consistent and regular basis.

Pronunciation is another linguistic norm which affects second language learners' communication. With precise sound discrimination and sound production, students will be able to receive and convey information more correctly. Slevc and Miyake (2006) discovered that adult ELLs who had good music abilities, such as music analysis,

discrimination, and memorization also recognized and produced English words, sentences, and passages more accurately. For the music analysis task, ELLs were asked to listen to chords and identify the numbers to notes being played. In the music discrimination test, ELLs had to detect the pitch difference while listening to two chords. As for the music memorization, ELLs listened to two short tunes and were asked to indicate the one note that was different in the second tune. ELLs also were requested to echo back the short tunes from immediate memory. Adult ELLs with good music abilities perceived and produced the English sounds better. In another study, Terrell (2012) incorporated music elements to teach college ELLs pronunciation. She demonstrated the relationship between music elements, such as pitch, duration, intensity and timbre to language elements, such as intonation, word stress, speech rhythm, and phonemes through music. With a better understanding of the similarities between music and speech, ELLs enhanced their pronunciation comprehensibility.

Not only English learners, but other language studies also found the importance of music training on pronunciation. Posedel, Emery, Souza, and Fountain (2012) examined undergraduate students who learned Spanish as a second language. They found that music training not only enhanced students' pitch perception but also helped their Spanish pronunciation. Another study illustrated the positive impact of music training on second language learning. White (2006) discovered that high school Spanish learners in the music training group appeared to increase pronunciation accuracy more than students in the group reinforced pronunciation by cartoon, films, and soap operas. The music training was designed to reinforce Spanish orthography and sound correspondence. Students

listened to the songs, sang along phonetically, and read the lyrics along with the music. They performed significant improvement in pronunciation accuracy in the music training group. However, learners still reported difficulties to pronounce sounds that do not exist in their first language. The author suggested second language teachers use music to enhance pronunciation accuracy and provide students extra opportunities to practice unfamiliar sounds.

Word and sentence stress is another component of pronunciation. Fischler (2005) indicated that Rap music could assist Grade 9-12 ELLs' pronunciation in word and sentence stress. Elementary ELLs were introduced to the word and sentence stress rules. Then, they listened to rap songs, distinguished the stress sounds performed body and instrument percussion that corresponded to songs and repeated to the rhythm of the rap music. Students had the opportunities to practice word and sentence stress with rap music along with lyrics and instrumentation only. The researcher indicated that the nature of rhythm in the rap music can support the stress of words or sentences in language, suggesting that rap is an effective way to teach pronunciation. Precise pronunciation leads to clear verbal communication. After students are able to recognize and pronounce words well, it is important to further establish language learners' communication skills, such as speaking and listening.

There are some studies that identified the benefit of music lessons to English learners' speaking skills. In a qualitative study by Niño (2010), Spanish students aged 10-15 improved their oral production skills, such as pronunciation and intonation through music in their English classes. Students learned to listen to songs, identify different

instruments, and describe their understanding of music concepts from their specialized music teacher. Results showed that they not only had better comprehension of music concepts, but also developed their pronunciation and intonation skills through the music lessons. A study by Kennedy and Scott (2005) also indicated the advantages of using music to reinforce middle school ELL students' story retelling and English speaking skills. This study compared two separate instruction designed to teach ELL students' speaking skills. One is the regular ESOL instruction, and the other is the music therapy instruction which includes chanting, playing instruments, singing songs, and rewriting lyrics. Chanting and playing instruments were used to reinforce the awareness of rhythm in both music and speaking. A verbal discussion followed by singing popular songs was designed to enhance topical conversation. Lyric rewriting and cloze activities were implemented to emphasize text comprehension, grammar rules, and sentence structures in English speaking. For story retelling skills, ELLs in the music therapy group presented more accurate sequences of events and grammar than those in the regular ESOL group. For English speaking skills, music instruction also increased ELL students' informal verbal interactions with the teacher, therapists, and their peers. Besides using music activities, the emphasis of music elements is also valuable for developing speaking skills. In a related study, Kennedy (2008) examined whether or not the music therapy techniques have effect on middle school students in different class contexts, such as regular ESOL program or the after school ESOL program. Besides the music activities being used in the previous study, the researcher added the call/response and detecting rhyming words activities through chanting and emphasizing phoneme combinations

through singing to reinforce ELLs' English speaking. He also used story songs to strengthen the ELL's recall, sentence order, and comprehension abilities in order to develop ELLs' story retelling skills. Results showed that music improved ELLs' speaking skills and story retelling skills in both ESOL contexts, suggesting that music should be used more commonly in different types of ESOL programs.

In addition to speaking skills, listening is another ability that is required for communication. Before processing and comprehending aural input information, learners need to first remember or recall what has been heard. Text recall ability is essential for language learners to develop their listening skills. Studies showed that music affects language learners' text recall ability. Rosová (2007) discovered that Czech secondary to adult students recalled greater amount of words, phrases, and sentences in English when listening to text presented through songs than through poems. Another study by Salcedo (2010) corresponded to the previous results: a sung form helped Spanish learners who are American students aged 17-41 years recall text better than a spoken form. After listening to the singing text, students reported the "song stuck-in-the-head" phenomenon. However, the highest text recall ability was only observed when the song text matched students' language ability, suggesting that songs for language learning purposes should have text matched to the students' language abilities.

Although music has positive effects on text recall ability, it does not guarantee learners' listening comprehension. Beasley and Chuang (2005-2006) studied the effects of Web-based American music on Taiwanese college students' English listening skills. They found that simply listening to music did not improve students' vocabulary, listening

comprehension, or cultural conception. They inferred that language acquisition requires more than just listening repetitively to music. These results supported Krashen's (1982) second language acquisition theory "Input hypothesis," which states that language acquisition only occurs when the input information is meaningful for the learners. The researchers suggested that teachers should provide meaningful and interactive music instructions to reinforce language learners' listening skills.

To develop students' English listening skills, teachers from different countries suggested music activities. Teachers from Singapore recommended music activities, such as singing songs, playing rhythms, doing finger plays, and acting out music stories for kindergarten children's English listening comprehension (Gan & Chong, 1998). A teacher from South Africa suggested using music dynamics to develop intonation, timbre to improve sound discrimination, rhythm to enhance sound pattern recognition, and other music activities to increase first graders' English listening abilities (Horn, 2007). A group of teachers from Iran suggested teaching humorous songs to encourage participation and listening comprehension (Rafiee, Kassaian, & Dastjerdi, 2010). A teacher from Turkey suggested using the rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs to create engaged music activities and help primary students internalize aural information (Sevik, 2012). All of these activities show the variety of teaching strategies available to stimulate language learners' meaningful input for listening comprehension.

Music instruction with a target linguistic purpose was found to be beneficial for ELLs' English grammar. Cruz-Cruz (2005) indicated that with careful song selections, second grade ELL students can learn English grammar through singing songs. Results

showed that ELLs' grammar improved more for ELLs through music instruction than through traditional ESOL classes. Fagerland (2006) also indicated that songs are affective for grades 1-4 ELL students to learn grammar. In the study, she first introduced the target grammar structure to the students with a picture. Then, she sang the song designed for the target grammar and had the students sing with her. Finally, she asked students questions about the grammar structures that appeared in the song. Music showed the greatest effect when many repetitions of the target grammar structure appeared in a song, and when the melody of a song matched the spoken intonation. Using a borrowed tune may not be effective due to its inconsistency to the spoken intonation. To help ELLs develop their grammar efficiently, the researcher recommended the use of songs with many target grammar repetitions and with the consistency between melody and spoken intonation.

### **Teachers' Perspectives of Teaching Music**

Because of the benefits of music on language learners' linguistic ability, teachers and language learners have positive attitudes toward using music to learn the second language. Lê (1999) reported that language teachers and second language learners valued music as a useful tool to develop English skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Hejjawi (2007) found that the majority of her secondary and college ESOL teacher participants believed that music can develop students' second language skills. They perceived that the use of music created pleasant and interactive learning environment. Sevik (2011) also indicated language teachers' views about using songs to teach young language learners. He reported language teachers' positive perspectives on using music in English language class. Teachers agreed that music accelerate students'

vocabulary and because of the repetition of songs, students have more opportunities to practice their language skills. Their language abilities therefore were enhanced. Although language teachers have positive attitude toward using music in language classes, it does not mean that they are comfortable using music in their ESOL classes.

Teachers' Confidence to teach music has been considered an important element that affects their willingness to implement music in their classrooms. Many studies revealed different factors that affect non-specialists teachers' perspectives on using music in their classes. Teachers who have more music backgrounds (Gray, 2000; Hejjawi, 2007), who have the ability to play one or more musical instruments (Hallam, Burnard, Robertson, Saleh, Davies, Rogers, & Kokatsaki, 2009), who have enthusiasm and a personal interest in music (Holden & Button, 2006), who receive assistance from their school music coordinators (Holden & Button, 2006), and who receive positive reactions from their students (Hennessy, 2000) show a higher level of confidence in music teaching. On the other hand, teachers who had unsatisfactory music learning experiences (Hennessy, 2000), who perceived their inability to read music notation and little music performance skills (Holden & Button, 2006), and who had limited music teaching opportunities (Mills, 1989), reciprocally, presented a low confidence level to teach music. With the influence of confidence levels on music teaching, Hennessy (2000) found that preservice primary teachers preferred to use music activities which required the least risk of teachers' music performance, such as students' music-making activities. Holden and Button (2006) also found that more than half of the non-specialist teachers in their study

had to rely fully on instructions from a scheme or text to teach music due to their inadequate music knowledge.

In an earlier study, Bresler (1993) indicated that only a few non-specialist primary teachers included music in their curriculum. They did not feel comfortable teaching music because of their lack of music background knowledge and experience. After over a decade of music advocacy in higher education, research has discovered that the majority of preservice elementary classroom teachers have received formal musical training (Morin, 2004). Although primary preservice teachers praised the high quality of music training in England, they still believed the amount of music training is inadequate in order for them to teach music (Hallam et al., 2009). However, despite teachers receiving more music training courses now as compared to decades ago and the more positive attitude toward including music in the regular curriculum, preservice elementary classroom teachers still considered music specialists rather than themselves should have the responsibility to teach music, and they disagreed that they should have the ability to teach music (Hash, 2010).

In addition to teachers' music background, studies also showed the relations between professional music training courses with non-specialists' perspectives of teaching music (Hallam et al., 2009; Hash, 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Jeanneret, 1997; Mills, 1989; Vannatta-Hall, 2010). Preservice generalist teachers who are non-music specialist perceived positive attitude toward music training courses (Hennessy, 2000).

A study reported preschool teachers' perspectives on teaching music after they received professional trainings (Runfola, Etopio, Hamlen, & Rozendal, 2012). The

researchers provided teachers one year intensive development training in musicianship and music teaching. The second year, those teachers taught 20 minutes daily with songs, chants, music activities to reinforce students' literacy skills. Results indicated that teachers felt more comfortable teaching music after receiving the professional training. Children received music instruction by those teachers also developed their oral vocabulary and grammar understanding greater than children who received regular preschool instruction. In a study by Vannatta-Hall (2010), preservice preschool teachers also increased their confidence to teach music after receiving the music training courses. On the other hand, lack of music trainings can lower the confidence level of the preservice primary teachers to teach music (Biasutti, 2010). Although there are many studies about the non-specialists elementary preservice and in-service teachers' perception of teaching music in their regular classes, there is a gap of information investigating the correlation of ESOL teachers' confidence, music training backgrounds, and use of music in their ESOL classes.

### **Language Teachers' Usage of Music**

In the research and theory literature, music has been found useful for language learning. Language teachers and music teachers also provide many suggestions on how to use music in language classes from the practitioners' point of view. In using music to reinforce different areas of language skills, educators recommend music activities, such as singing, listening, creating different verses of song lyrics, clapping syllables, doing body movement, discussing cultures, and doing musical role play (Abbott, 2002; Brown, 2006; Cakir, 1999; Cullen, 1998; Domoney & Harris, 1993; Klancar, 2006; Kramer,

2001; Lems, 2005; Linse, 2006; Medina, 2002; Orlova, 2003; Paquette & Rieg, 2008; Yoo, 2002). In addition to language development, these activities also emphasize the National Standards for Music Education in the United States.

To choose music or songs appropriate for language learning, the music genres recommended by educators include: children's songs (Linse, 2006), nursery rhymes (Brown, 2006), folk songs (Paquette & Rieg, 2008), pop songs (Domoney & Harris, 1993; Murphy, 1992, Paquette & Rieg, 2008), Jazz chants (Cakir, 1999; Graham, 2006; Zhang, 2011), rap songs (Fischler, 2005), and classical music (Albright, 2011).

There are different factors affecting teachers' decisions on music or songs selection for their language classes. Practitioners suggested that language teachers should consider their students' interests (Saricoban & Metin, 2000). Music or songs' difficulty levels should also match students' language abilities (Abbott, 2002). To reinforce language skills, music or songs should emphasize the class objectives (Abbott, 2002; Orlova, 2003; Saricoban & Metin, 2000). Since repetition helps memory, Abril (2003) recommended that teachers choose songs with many repetitions so that students have multiple opportunities to practice.

Good teaching methods lead to successful learning. To achieve affective teaching, practitioners recommended some useful teaching methods, such as introducing vocabulary and background before listening to music or songs (Abbott, 2002), teaching one line at a time and allowing students to follow the song lyrics while singing (Linse, 2006), using activities to reinforce song and music comprehension (Abbott, 2002; Brown, 2006; Cakir, 1999; Lems, 2005; Yoo, 2002), and eliciting conversations after music

experiences (Abbott, 2002; Cakir, 1999; Domoney & Harris, 1993). In Chapter 3, there will be further discussion of music activities, song selections, and music teaching methods that language and music teachers recommend.

### **Teachers' Difficulties of Teaching Music**

Although professional music training courses are commonly provided in college education, non-music specialist teachers still face many challenges using music in their classes. Preservice primary teachers concerned about the lack of resources and methods for teaching music (Biasutti, 2010). Besides the lack of resources, in-service primary school teachers further indicated their confidence level, time restriction, unsupportive teaching environment, and students' age group are the factors hindered them from using music in their class (Holden & Button, 2006).

Similar to elementary classroom teachers, ESOL teachers also reported their difficulties using music in their classrooms. In a study by Edwards (1997), elementary ESOL teachers' indicated the problems they encountered in using music in their classes, lack of money is the main reason, then the lack of training, the limited time to include music, and the unsupportive colleagues and administration prohibited them from incorporating more music in their classes. Hejjawi's (2007) research in United Arab Emirates also supported the previous study regarding the unsupportive teaching environment for music implementation in secondary and college levels. Due to the religious considerations, discouragement from government and administrations, and assumption of students' negative reactions, most of the ESOL teachers disregard music in their classrooms. Kramer (2001) also reported other obstructions for some instructors,

such as difficulty to find appropriate songs and the unfamiliarity of certain music styles, periods, or songs. Like Kramer, Şevik (2011) also stated primary ESOL teachers' difficulties to find appropriate songs for language teaching purposes. Besides the lack of resources, teachers reported a lack of ability to measure students' language success when they used songs in the classroom. Using music in language learning can be challenging for language teachers regarding song selections, and music assessment, as well as for music teachers regarding the reinforcement of language skills.

Preservice primary teachers indicated that music fundamentals courses enhance the willingness for them to teach music (Jeanneret, 1997). K-4 preservice classroom teachers reported the training of music activities with listening, movement, singing, and for classroom management are the most beneficial (Morin, 2004). Early childhood preservice teachers found that the music experience, teaching experience, and observation opportunities they received from the music method course in college enhanced their competence to teach music (Vannatta-Hall, 2010). In-service preschool teachers, however, indicated that the abilities to provide direct musical experiences to students, such as movement, playing rhythmic instruments, leading songs, and teaching creative and listening activities are the most useful skills for music teaching (Kelly, 1998).

Besides in-service and preservice teachers' attitudes towards music training course, they also have expectation from higher education. They believe that colleges should include music training courses to help teachers integrate music with other subject areas (Hash, 2010; Saunders & Baker, 1991). In Saunders and Baker's study (1991), in-service elementary classroom teachers reflected their needs to learn how to choose

recordings and develop listening lessons. Hallam et al. (2009) also indicated preservice primary school teachers' needs of learning lesson ideas, activities, singing, progression information, music reading and theory teaching skills, resources, playing music instructions, and assessment methods in music training courses.

Although there is a good amount of literature that examines preschool and classroom teachers' perspectives and difficulties of using music in classes, the information about current ESOL teachers' perspectives of music teaching and the use of music in their classrooms is still limited. The purpose of this study is to discover the current music teaching phenomenon and teachers' needs to provide information for better elementary ESOL teacher education.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Methodology**

This study was designed to discover ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties in integrating music in their classes. Although several researchers have investigated ESOL teachers' perspectives and difficulties in music implementation, none of these studies has addressed the ways that teachers use music in elementary ESOL classroom settings. The results will be relevant to faculty in teacher preparation and professional development programs, who can use the findings to design appropriate curricula to meet preservice ESOL teachers' needs, and to provide professional development for in-service teachers.

This study was conducted through an online survey. Survey questions were divided into four categories: Teachers' backgrounds, teachers' perspectives, teachers' use of music, and their difficulties using music in their ESOL classes. In order to better understand the population and determine the relationship between teachers' backgrounds and their use of music, teachers' general backgrounds, musical backgrounds, and classroom settings were examined. Teachers' perspectives include their comfort levels toward their own music skills and their attitudes of using music in teaching English. The questions about teachers' use of music are to discover how frequently teachers use music, their music teaching methods, and their music selections. To discover teachers' difficulties using music, teachers were asked to select difficulty areas and indicate their desired additional music training. The findings were intended to advise educators, administrators, and researchers of the current ESOL teachers' use of music in teaching.

## **Research Design**

This research is a quantitative, descriptive study. The study consisted of a survey instrument which was designed by the researcher. The questions in the survey included several multiple choice and one open-ended question regarding teachers' backgrounds, their perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music in their classes. The data was collected through an online survey program. The participants were not randomly chosen. Rather, they were elementary ESOL teachers from the state of Missouri and the teachers' answers of the survey questions were the only data examined.

## **Participants**

The purpose of this study was to discover elementary ESOL teachers' perspectives on using music in their classroom, the materials and how they use them in the classes, and the difficulties they have using music in teaching ESOL classes. Participants were limited to the elementary ESOL teachers in the state of Missouri. Because every state may have different requirements for ESOL programs and ESOL teachers, to combine data from different states might have affected the reliability of the results. Therefore, this study was only conducted in one state. The state of Missouri was chosen because no related research has been conducted in the midwestern region of the U.S.. In addition, all of the ESOL training courses the researcher received were from the University of Missouri which informs the researchers' knowledge base particularly of the ELL educational policies of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. I argue that my familiarity with the ESOL educational system in Missouri would enhance the validity and reliability of this study. Besides limiting this study to one

state, I also restricted the participants to elementary ESOL teachers. Because the focuses of ESOL programs in elementary, secondary, and high schools are different, ESOL teachers from the different grade levels may have varied perspectives, different difficulties, and use music differently in their classes. Because the researchers' background is in elementary music and ESOL elementary education, this study focused on elementary ESOL teachers.

Scientific reasons for focusing on elementary ESOL in Missouri is due to its position as a representative of the mode position of ESOL number of students in U.S. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2009-2010), the state of Missouri had 19,393 ELL students. To date, the majority of the states in the U. S. have between 20,000-100,000 ELL students. Missouri is also one of the second mode states with ELL students representing less than 5% of the public school student population (The U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Therefore, the state of Missouri State is a good representative of teachers' practices in using music and a strong choice for the research. Only focusing on one mode state made it possible to design a study in which it was unnecessary to control for a variety of confounding variables.

To find participants, I accessed the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. There is an English Language Learners section on the website. However, because there was no Missouri ESOL teachers contact information provided, I emailed the ELL state contact person listed, and obtained the Missouri district ELL coordinators' contact information. I received information for 558 Missouri district ELL coordinators, including their names, email addresses, and telephone numbers. I did

not wish to rely on the district ELL coordinators to pass the survey on to the elementary ESOL teachers, but preferred to contact each teacher directly in order to increase the response rate. Therefore, I sent emails to the district ELL coordinators requesting the ESOL teachers' contact information in their district, including full name, school name, and email addresses.

Of the 558 ELL coordinator contact addresses, thirty-three email addresses were invalid. For the ELL coordinators who did not reply to my first inquiry email, I sent the request letter a second time. Many ELL coordinators still did not reply to my request. Among the ELL coordinators who did reply, ninety-six reported that there were either no ESOL teachers or no ESOL elementary teachers in their districts. Two ELL coordinators refused to allow their ESOL teachers to participate in this study. Seventy-three ELL coordinators immediately provided me with their teachers' contact information, and six districts required a research application. After submitting the required documents for the research application, such as the IRB approval letter, survey questions, informed consent, and the recruitment letter, five of the six districts approved my research to be conducted in their districts. I received a total of 177 ESOL teachers' contact information from 78 ELL coordinators. Then, I sent a recruitment letter to invite these teachers to participate in my study. Among the 177 potential participants, 108 teachers chose to participate in this study, which resulted in a response rate of 61%. For survey studies, Babbie (1990) suggested that "A response rate of at least 50 percent is generally considered adequate for analysis and reporting" (p.182). In this current study, the 61% response rate exceeds the

recommended response rate, suggesting that the collected data is sufficient to represent the population.

### **Survey Instrument**

This study was conducted through an online survey. An online survey was used because of its convenience, ease of use, and accessibility. My target participants are all of the elementary ESOL teachers in Missouri. Due to the large number of potential participants and that they are spread over the entire state, an online survey was a more convenient tool for data collection (Fink, 2009).

The design of this survey was based on (a) ESOL teachers' opinions, suggestions, and implications for the use of music in ESOL classes found from the literature, (b) three similar studies of elementary ESOL teachers' (Edwards, 1997), college ESOL teachers' (Bjorklund, 2002), and primary Turkish EFL teachers' (Şevik, 2011) perspectives on using music in their English classes, (c) my personal experience as an elementary music and ESOL teacher, (d) my experiences observing elementary ESOL classes in a small city school district in Missouri, and (e) the opinions of the content and clarification suggestions that elementary ESOL teachers made during the pilot study. The data were collected through an online survey program, Qualtrics, which is available to the faculty and graduate students in the College of Education at the University of Missouri (Qualtrics Labs, Inc., 2012).

The Elementary ESOL Teacher Survey (see Appendix A) consisted of quantitative questions, such as multiple choice, 5-point Likert-type frequency and agreement scales, and a qualitative open-ended question. In this survey, the questions

were divided into four parts; the participants' backgrounds, the participants' perspectives on using music to teach English, the methods and materials they use to teach English through music, and their difficulties in using music to teach English.

**ESOL teachers' background information.** In the first part of the survey, I gathered background information about participants to describe my sample and to examine a few characteristics that could possibly have an effect on how frequently teachers use music to teach English. My first survey items were adapted from a similar study by Edwards (1997). She inquired about participants' age and the length of teaching experience by having the participants select the age group and years teaching group to which they belonged. In my study, participants were asked to identify their age by typing in their numeric age (survey item 1). They also were asked to type in the number of years they have been teaching specifically as an ESOL teacher (survey item 2), rather than the years of general teaching experience as in Edwards' study. To avoid confusion, I gave further instructions to include the current teaching year. This question allowed me to discover if the number of years teaching ESOL had implications for including music in the teaching of English.

In survey item 3, participants were asked to identify if they teach self-contained ESOL classes. According to the draft of *Educating Linguistically Diverse Students: Requirements and Practices* (2006) published by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, elementary ESOL programs have different classroom types: 1) *Structured ESOL Immersion*, where bilingual teachers can rely on ELLs' native language to help them learn in a self-contained class; 2) *Pull-Out ESOL*, where ELL students are

removed from their regular class, and ESOL teachers teach a small group at a time or one-on-one; 3) *Team-Teaching*, where ESOL teachers and subject teachers incorporate teaching in a mainstream classroom; 4) *Sheltered Classroom*, where ELL students learn the mainstream curricula but with extra techniques from ESOL teachers to help them understand the content; and 5) *New Comer Centers*, where ELLs are offered initial English instruction before moving into an English dominant school. Due to teachers' different responsibilities to ELL students, I divided ESOL teachers from these five different types of programs into two categories: Self-contained classes have only one teacher in charge, including *Structured ESOL Immersion*, *Pull-Out ESOL*, *Sheltered Classroom*, and *New Comer Centers*; Non-self-contained classes have more than one teacher in charge, including *Team-Teaching*. Because the Qualtrics online survey program has a branching function to direct participants to the next question based on their answer to a previous question, I set up this survey item so that the teachers who answered "Yes" (i.e., they do teach self-contained classes) were then asked to answer survey items 8-10, while the teachers who answered "No" (i.e., they do not teach self-contained classes) only answered survey items 4-7.

Survey items 4-7 were designed for teachers who teach non-self-contained classes. These ESOL teachers may teach cooperatively with mainstream classroom teachers or provide support to their ELL students in mainstream classrooms. Given that my study focused on how ESOL teachers teach ELLs, in survey item 4, I was only interested in discovering how many ELLs these ESOL teachers were responsible for, not the total classroom size that included native speakers. In survey item 5, I wanted to

discover whether or not ESOL teachers helped their ELL students in the children's music classes. If they did not, the online survey automatically skipped survey item 6. If they did, ESOL teachers were asked to identify the kinds of support they offered for ELLs in the music class (survey item 6). Teachers were able to choose all answers that applied from among the following:

- Explain the music terms and vocabulary to ELLs
- Help ELLs read music and song lyrics
- Assist ELLs to play instruments
- Explain or demonstrate for ELLs how to participate in music activities
- Generally help ELLs to follow the music teacher's instructions
- Other (please specify)

This question had "other" as an option. A space was provided after the choice so that ESOL teachers could type in the different ways that they helped their ELLs in the music class that were not on the list. This option was available for all questions with "Other" as a possible response throughout the survey.

Besides music classes, I wanted to determine what other subject classes ESOL teachers attend with their ELLs, especially for ESOL teachers who did not attend music class with their students. This data allowed me to find if other subjects were perhaps valued as more important than music for ELLs' education (survey item 7). The options were based on the subjects listed in the *Show-Me Standards* (1996) from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

- Communication Arts

- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Fine Arts
- Health
- Physical Education
- Other (please specify)

Survey items 8-10 were for the teachers who had self-contained ESOL classes.

From my elementary ESOL class observation experience, I noticed that ESOL teachers may teach several classes that have students of different ages and language skill levels. In survey item 8, participants were asked to identify the number of self-contained ESOL classes they teach. This survey item allowed me to understand the trend of ESOL teachers' class loads.

According to the draft of *Educating Linguistically Diverse Students: Requirements and Practices* (2006) released by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, each type of ESOL class may consist of different numbers of students. For example, Pull-Out ESOL classes may have fewer students than Structured ESOL Immersion classes. In survey item 9, participants reported the average number of students by group. Knowing the average number of students in each class allowed me to understand the classroom setting of these ESOL teachers.

From my own experience teaching elementary English and music classes, I have learned that the length of the class for groups of ESOL students may affect the way

teachers implement the curriculum. Therefore, in survey item 10, participants were asked to identify the length of time that they teach each ESOL class by typing in the number of minutes their class meets every week. This question allowed me to understand how much time ESOL teachers spend with their ELL students in each class per week.

Survey items 11 and 12 were designed to verify the participants' music backgrounds. Considering previous research had found that the amount of music training that ESOL teachers received affected their usage of music teaching in ESOL classes (Edwards, 1997), ESOL teachers' music backgrounds could be an indicator of their opinions or implications for teaching English through music. In survey item 11, I asked whether or not the participants could play a musical instrument. If they could, they were also asked to identify the length of time they had taken lessons. This question allowed me to understand the relation between teachers' music instrument backgrounds and the usage of music in their classes. Besides musical instrument experience, in survey item 12, there was a list of other music experiences as choices. Participants could choose all that applied:

- High school, College, or Adult Choir
- High school, College, or Adult Band/ Orchestra
- College Music Theory/ History/ Appreciation Classes
- Other (please specify)
- None

In this survey item, I limited the music experiences to high school or above. Some participants may not remember music experiences from when they were younger, so for

the consistency of the data, I chose not to inquire about the participants' music experiences before high school.

**ESOL teachers' perspectives.** Survey items 13 and 22 were designed to determine ESOL teachers' perspectives on their comfort levels with their music skills and their perspectives on the effects of using music to teach English language skills. In survey item 13, participants were asked to indicate their comfort levels with their music skills on a 5-point Likert-type agreement scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree. Singing, teaching songs, moving/dancing to music, and playing instruments are the music skills commonly used in the elementary music classroom, and therefore most possibly used in an elementary ESOL class. Having teachers self-evaluate their confidence in these music skills allowed me to understand whether or not teachers feel comfortable implementing music through these skills.

In survey item 22, the participants were asked to specify their beliefs about whether music has an effect on ELLs' English acquisition, including students' motivation, anxiety, attitudes, participation, and English learning. In a previous study, Sevik (2011) reported that all of his participants, Turkish EFL teachers, agreed that music could motivate their students' English learning. The majority of the teachers in that study also believed that learning English using songs could lower students' anxiety. In another study, ELL students' parents reported that music enhanced their children's participation in English learning (Bird, 2007). For this study, collecting ESOL teachers' perspectives on ELL students' motivation, anxiety, attitudes, participation, and English learning through music allowed me to understand their perception of students' learning.

Before asking how ESOL teachers use music in their classes, it is important to know whether they use music at all. Therefore, the participants were asked to identify how frequently they used songs or music to teach English (survey item 14). If the participants answered that they never used songs or music, they were allowed to skip to survey item 22 rather than answer questions regarding teaching methods and materials using music they do not use. If the participants answered that they used songs or music very often, often, sometimes, or rarely, they would continue answering survey item 15. This question allowed me to evaluate the phenomenon of music used to teach in ESOL classes.

**ESOL teachers' teaching methods and materials.** Survey items 15 through 21 were intended to obtain data about how ESOL teachers used music to teach English and the music materials they used. In survey item 15, the participants were asked to identify how frequently they use music to develop different English language skills. They were asked to indicate with the 5-point Likert-type frequency scale for each of the following English language skill: listening comprehension, speaking fluency, reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and grammar, and cultural awareness.

I included the four language domains, listening, speaking, reading, and writing as the English language skills in this study based on the *Amplification of the English Language Development Standards* (2012). The standards were released by the consortium, World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment, and emphasized four language domains for ELL students' language learning. Additionally, I adapted items from Edwards' study (1997), inquiring about the kinds of music skills being used by the

ESOL teachers, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and grammar, and cultural awareness. To be clear about the pronunciation category, I further identified the pronunciations as vowel/consonant, word stress, intonation, and syllable counting based on Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin's (1996) explanation of the English sound system. This survey item allowed me to access which language skills were most and least frequently taught with music by ESOL teachers.

In survey item 16, the participants identified the kinds of music activities they use in ESOL classes. They were asked to specify the frequency of each music activity listed. The list of music activities were chosen from the *National Standards for Music Education*: a) Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; b) Listening to, analyzing, and describing music; c) Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines; d) Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; e) Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts; f) Understanding music in relation to history and culture. This study is about ESOL teachers' use of music to teach English, but not to teach music. Therefore, some of the music standards are not helpful for English learning, such as improvising, notating, evaluating, and reading music. So, they were not included, and some of the other standards have been adjusted. This survey item was also designed based on the implications suggested by educators. Language teachers could have students sing songs (Lems, 2005; Linse, 2006); listen to songs (Abbott, 2002; Cakir, 1999; Domoney & Harris, 1993; Orlova, 2003; Yoo, 2002), create new verses of song lyrics (Domoney & Harris, 1993; Klancar, 2006; Linse, 2006;), clap to the syllables (Linse, 2006), do body

movement to accompany songs or music (Klancar, 2006; Linse, 2006; Medina, 2002; Paquette & Rieg, 2008), use songs to teach about cultures (Brown, 2006; Cullen, 1998; Kramer, 2001; Medina, 2002; Paquette & Rieg, 2008) and act out music stories or musicals (Cakir, 1999; Linse, 2006; Medina, 2002) to reinforce different areas of language skills. The participants were asked to indicate how frequently each music activity was used:

- Singing songs
- Listening to songs
- Creating song lyrics
- Playing body percussion (clapping, tapping patting, snapping stomping, etc.)
- Dancing to music
- Playing instruments
- Discussing cultures using music or songs
- Playing musical roles
- Other (please specify)

For “other”, the participants could type in any music activity which was not listed and then indicate the frequency of that activity.

Survey item 17 was designed to discover what music genre was most used in ESOL classrooms. The listed genres were selected from Billboard’s (2012) music genres based on my many years of teaching music and English as a second language experiences in an elementary school. Because the participants may implement different genres of music, they were asked to select all that applied from the following choices:

- Children's songs
- Nursery rhymes
- Folk songs
- Country music
- Pop songs
- Jazz chants
- Rap
- Classical music
- Other (please specify)

In survey item 18, I tried to find out how ESOL teachers select songs or music for their ESOL classes. For this question, there were multiple options for the ESOL teachers to indicate the frequency of different music selections: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. Kramer (2001) asserted that language teachers had difficulty choosing songs that they are unfamiliar with. Therefore, the first option in the question was ESOL teachers' personally familiar songs or music. According to other literature, songs selected for language learners should be based on students' interests (Saricoban & Metin, 2000), the songs' difficulty levels (Abbott, 2002), the class objectives (Abbott, 2002; Orlova, 2003; Saricoban & Metin, 2000), and songs with a lot of repetition (Abril, 2003). Therefore, the other options in this survey item were: songs or music students like, songs or music suitable to students' English language levels, songs or music that reinforces current class objectives, and songs that include repetition. From my experience of observing elementary ESOL classes, I noticed that the ESOL teachers mainly used songs

from the school curriculum in their ESOL classes. Therefore, I also included as the last option: songs or music in the ESOL school curriculum. This survey item gave me information about how ESOL teachers select songs or music for ESOL purposes.

In survey item 19, the participants were asked to identify the teaching methods they use to teach English through songs. They indicated the frequency of each listed teaching method. The teaching methods in this item were inspired by the literature. Abbott (2002) suggested that before students listen to music, ESOL teachers should teach the vocabulary and background knowledge of the music. For young learners, Linse (2006) recommended language teachers teach songs one line at a time and have students repeat after. She further indicated the usefulness of the song lyrics chart or poster. With the printed song lyrics, students can follow the words while singing and learn the vocabulary at the same time. I observed that some ESOL teachers asked students to sing along with a CD while they pointed to the song lyrics. So, I included the teaching method of having students sing the song lyrics along with a tape, CD, or video clips. To reinforce language comprehension, Cakir (1999) suggested ESOL teachers let students unscramble song lyrics into the correct order. Lems (2005) asked students to put sentence strips into the correct order after listening to a song. Yoo (2002) used cloze activity to teach sentence structure while Brown (2006) used cloze activity to teach vocabulary to reinforce comprehension. Abbott (2002) recommended games and discussion after listening to songs. Having students describe, analyze, and discuss their feelings after listening to music is another activity recommended by some educators (Abbott, 2002; Cakir, 1999; Domoney & Harris, 1993). Based on the literature, this survey item was

designed to discover the frequency of each method ESOL teachers may use from the following choices:

- Introducing the vocabulary of the song lyrics before singing/playing/listening to the song.
- Introducing the background knowledge of the song before singing/playing/listening to the song.
- Teaching a song line by line and have students echo.
- Asking students to sing the song lyrics along with a tape, CD, or video clips.
- Pointing to the song lyrics word by word while students are singing/playing/listening to the song.
- Using comprehensive activities during or after singing/playing/listening to a song (e.g. putting lyrics in order, completing a fill-in-the-blank worksheet, talking about the meaning of song lyrics, etc.)
- Guiding students to talk about the feeling of music after singing/playing/listening to the song.
- Other (please specify)

In this survey item, the participants also had the opportunity to provide a teaching method that was not listed and indicate the frequency of its usage.

For the music materials, survey item 20 was included to determine the kinds of material ESOL teachers use. Many educators suggested the use of song picture books (Jalongo & Ribblett, 1997; Langfit, 1994; Linse, 2006; Paquette & Rieg, 2008) for language learning. Other music materials, such as recordings, video clips, and musical

instruments may be commonly used in teaching music. Therefore, the participants were asked to choose all music materials that applied in their classes from the following selections:

- Song picture books
- Recordings
- Online video clip, such as Youtube, etc.
- Musical instruments
- Other

In the next survey item, the participants further indicated from where they found the music materials and resources used in their classes (survey item 21). The participants may use professional journals, music lesson plans, mp3s, videos, and other items from the internet; professional books, magazines, and items from bookstores; creative ideas from their students; inspiration from other ESOL or classroom teachers; curricula from school music teachers; textbooks or curricula owned by their school; and ideas or handouts given from workshops. The participants were asked to check all that applied and specify other places they found their music materials or resources.

**ESOL teachers' difficulties.** In this last part, I wished to determine the difficulties ESOL teachers have using music to teach English. Survey items 23 and 24 asked about difficulties and ESOL teachers' perspectives on training courses which may help them use music or songs in their classroom. In survey item 23, the participants were asked to identify their difficulties using music in teaching English. Because teaching English is the ESOL teachers' main objective, some teachers may think that using music

takes time away from English instruction time which affects their scheduled class time. In Edwards' study (1997), the majority of the ESOL teachers reported that the lack of money was the main reason that they were not able to use music in their classes followed by the lack of training they received regarding how to use music in ESOL classes. In Sevik's study (2011), English language teachers' reported that they did not have enough resources to use music or songs. They further indicated that they had difficulty finding appropriate music to reinforce English learning. In an earlier article, Kramer (2001) indicated that instructors had difficulties locating appropriate songs, and their unfamiliarity with certain songs, styles, or periods of music may hinder them from using music in their classrooms. Other research also found that without music training, preservice elementary teachers had little confidence in their music skills to use music in their classes (Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006). Some teachers may not be able to choose their own curriculum because there are different types of ESOL classes in Missouri and each school district may have different requirements for ESOL. Therefore, no control over the curriculum was included in the options. Based on the literature and current teaching situation, I asked the participants to identify their difficulties using music to teach English and check all that apply from the following options:

- Not enough time in class schedule
- Do not know where to find appropriate materials
- Not confident about my music skills
- Not enough money for the materials or resources
- Not enough resources, such as teacher training or workshops addressing this topic

- Do not control the curriculum
- Other

To determine what kinds of music training courses may benefit ESOL teachers, different kinds of music training courses were listed in survey item 24. The ESOL teachers were asked what training they wished they had or that they could receive to help them use music to enhance students' language skills. This included a list of content from music method classes as possible options, such as how to integrate music to English language learning, the introduction of music resources, materials, and activities, how to select appropriate songs for ESOL purposes, and how to lead and teach songs. An early study found that music fundamental courses could affect non-music preservice primary teachers' confidence in teaching music (Jeanneret, 1997). Therefore, I included some music fundamental skills in this survey item, such as how to sing, read music, create music or song lyrics, use rhythm instruments, and body percussion. The participants were asked to select all the skills that apply from the music methods or fundamental training lists that they would like to receive. They were also asked to type in other kinds of training they would like that were not listed.

The last survey item was an open-ended question that allowed the participants to type in responses (survey item 25). I asked the ESOL teachers to provide other concerns or difficulties they may have when using music in their ESOL classes.

### **Pilot Testing**

Three elementary ESOL teachers in the Columbia district were selected to participate in a pilot study. An online survey link was sent to the pilot participants

through email. The three ESOL teachers were asked to first answer survey questions and then provide suggestions for the survey content or clarification in a separate Word document. The online survey program, Qualtrics, automatically recorded each teacher's completion time. Two teachers spent approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey, but the third teacher was distracted while answering the survey and emailed me to explain she thought she should have been able to finish in 10 minutes. In the recruitment letter, the suggested survey completion time was based on this pilot testing. Suggestions given by the teachers from the pilot testing were mainly sentence rephrases to clarify questions or statements. There were very few clarifications of response options. None of the teachers had concerns about the content of the survey. The final survey was revised based on these suggestions on the pilot study.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the accuracy of the research instruments that claim to be measured. Content validity is established by the experts or the individuals from the target population (Vogt, 2007). In this study, the content validity was based on three sources of information. First, the literature reviewed included: previous studies on language teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music in classes; research on the positive effects of learning language through music; and educators' suggestions for the use of music. Second, participants of the pilot study were ESOL teachers in Missouri. Because they all have many years' experience teaching ELLs, and they were part of the target population, I revised the survey instrument based on their feedback regarding perspectives, usage, and difficulties of integrating music in ESOL classes. Third, my four

years of experiences teaching elementary ESOL classes helped me to design the survey instruments from an ESOL teacher's point of view.

### **Procedures**

Before implementing the survey, I sent my research proposal to the campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Missouri for review and approval (see Appendix B). The proposal documents included the invitation letter, the informed consent, the reminder message, and the survey instrument. In the recruitment letter (see Appendix C), I introduced myself and my research project, provided the estimated time for completion of the survey, a statement about the active duration of the survey with a deadline, and invited ESOL teachers to take part in the survey. In the informed consent (see Appendix D), I further explained the purpose of the study, the benefits and risks of participating in the study, the participants' voluntary rights, and the methods I would use to keep the data confidential.

After the campus IRB approved my invitation letter, informed consent, and survey instrument, I sent an invitation requesting ESOL teachers to take part in the research. The invitation included a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) link to access the online survey. The participants were given three weeks to complete it. One week before the survey closing date, I sent another email (see Appendix E) to thank the ESOL teachers who had taken the survey and give a reminder about the upcoming deadline to the teachers who had not yet taken the survey.

## **Data Analysis**

In my study, data collected from the closed-response questions was analyzed through descriptive statistics using means, frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, correlations, and a *t*-Test. The data was exported from the online survey program, Qualtrics, to SPSS to calculate and summarize the statistical values above. Since there are many closed-response questions with “other” as an option, I recorded all of the participants’ text responses from that option and coded the data into new categories. This data was also analyzed using SPSS and summarized.

Data collected from the open-ended question was analyzed using qualitative methods. I followed Creswell’s (2007) three strategies to code the data, combining the codes into themes, and displaying the data. First, I exported the responses into a Microsoft Word document. Then, I highlighted the keywords of each response. Once keywords were marked, I sorted keywords with similar meanings together into subcategories. Related subcategories were clustered as a new theme. After that, I used a peer review method to ensure the reliability of the data. I invited a music education doctoral student who had qualitative data analysis experience to review the open-ended survey responses. I provided a list of themes and subcategories with the survey responses. This reviewer independently coded each response into the appropriate themes and subcategories. At first, we had 82% agreement on the data categories. After discussing the rationales behind our disagreement over the data categories, we achieved 100% agreement. Finally, to analyze the data, I introduced each theme with its subcategories using interpretations and quotations of teachers’ responses.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate current elementary ESOL teachers' perspectives towards, usage of, and difficulties implementing music in their classrooms. Results of this study will inform researchers, educators, and instructors in higher education. There were 177 Missouri elementary ESOL teachers invited to participate in this study. After excluding 5 blank unusable data files which contained no responses to any of the survey questions, the remaining data files represent a response rate of 61% ( $N = 108$ ). Any items that a participant did not complete were considered missing data, resulting in some items with fewer than 108 responses.

#### **ESOL Teachers' Background Information**

In order to better understand the population, this section consisted of information used for describing the ESOL teacher participants. Characteristics reported include the teachers' general backgrounds, musical backgrounds, and their classroom settings.

**Teachers' general backgrounds.** The participants were elementary ESOL teachers in Missouri. The participants' average age was 41.60 years old ( $SD = 11.88$ ), ranging from 23 to 65 years. The average length of these participants' teaching experience as ESOL teachers was 7.78 years ( $SD = 7.06$ ). Their ESOL teaching experiences range from 1 to 44 years.

**Teachers' musical backgrounds.** In survey item 11, the participants were asked to report whether or not they played a musical instrument. More than half of the teachers ( $n = 59, 57%$ ) indicated that they did not play a musical instrument. Teachers who played

a musical instrument ( $n = 44$ , 43%) further indicated the length that they took lessons for that instrument. Table 1 shows that among the teachers who played at least one musical instrument, most of the teachers took lessons for 6-10 years ( $n = 18$ , 41%), followed by 0-5 years ( $n = 15$ , 34%).

Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages of ESOL Teachers who Play a Musical Instrument*

| Years        | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| 0-5          | 15                 | 34%        |
| 6-10         | 18                 | 41%        |
| 11-15        | 5                  | 11%        |
| More than 16 | 3                  | 7%         |
| No answer    | 3                  | 7%         |
| Total        | 44                 | 100%       |

Besides ESOL teacher's experiences of learning a musical instrument, survey item 12 addressed teachers' other musical backgrounds. Participants were allowed to choose more than one listed item. One hundred and three teachers responded, with 35% of the respondents indicating that they had no other musical background. Among the musical background options, *high school, college, or adult choir* (31%), and *high school, college, or adult band and orchestra* (26%) were the most frequent selections. The frequencies and percentages of teacher's other musical backgrounds are listed in Table 2. There were 7 participants who indicated their musical backgrounds as other than those provided on the list. Among the responses, 6 teachers restated their musical instrument experience as their musical backgrounds. They also included dancing, personal interests

in music, childhood lessons, theory lessons, piano teaching experience, vocal performance experience, and participating in a college ethnomusicology class.

Table 2

*Frequencies and Percentages of ESOL Teachers' Musical Backgrounds*

| Musical Background  | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| None  | 36                 | 35%        |
| High school, College, or Adult Choir                                | 32                 | 31%        |
| High school, College or Adult Band/ Orchestra                       | 27                 | 26%        |
| College Music Theory/ History/ Appreciation/<br>Fundamental Classes | 15                 | 15%        |
| College Music Teaching Methods Class                                | 11                 | 11%        |
| Other   | 7                  | 7%         |
| Restate the Music Instrument Experiences                            | 6                  | 6%         |
| Obtain Music or Music Education Degree                              | 3                  | 3%         |
| Church Musical Activities   | 3                  | 3%         |
| Junior High School Choir or Orchestra                               | 2                  | 2%         |
| Total Number of Responses   | 103                |            |

**Teachers' classroom settings.** Survey items 3-10 were designed to discover ESOL teachers' classroom settings. Because there are different types of ESOL classes in Missouri, I divided possible settings into two groups. One is self-contained ESOL classes and the other is non-self-contained ESOL classes. In survey item 3, the participants were asked to identify whether or not they taught a self-contained ESOL class. Among the total of 106 responses, the majority of the participants ( $n = 75, 71\%$ ) indicated that they teach a non-self-contained ESOL class. Only 31 teachers (29%) taught self-contained ESOL classes. Using a branching feature function in the Qualtrics survey program,

teachers who taught self-contained ESOL classes answered survey items 8-10, whereas the other teachers answered survey items 4-7.

Teachers who teach non-self-contained ESOL classes were asked in survey item 4 to specify the numbers of ELL students they were responsible for. Among the total of 74 responses, results indicate that the average number of students per teacher was 44.64 ( $SD = 36.20$ ), ranging from 1 to 279 students. In survey item 5, the teachers were asked whether or not they went to music class with their ELL students. The data indicated that none of the teachers went to music classes with their students. The purpose of the next survey question was to examine how ESOL teachers help their ELL students in their music classes. Given that none of the ESOL teachers accompanied their students to music classes, no teachers responded to survey item 6. In survey item 7 the participants were asked to identify what subject classes they attend with their ELL students besides music. Participants were allowed to check all subject classes that applied. Among the total of 61 responses, results show that communication arts was chosen most often ( $n = 43, 70\%$ ) followed by mathematics, and then science and social studies (see Table 3). Notice that there were 10 teachers who indicated that they do not attend any classes with their students, and one of them specified that he/she provided itinerant services. There were 9 teachers who stated that they have pull-out classes which do not require them to attend subject classes with their ELL students. These results show that these teachers interpret “self-contained” classes different from my expectation. They must have categorized their class type other than self-contained or non-self-contained classes.

Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages of Subject Classes ESOL Teachers Attend with Their ELLs*

| Subject Classes           | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Communication Arts        | 43                 | 70%        |
| Mathematics               | 18                 | 30%        |
| Science                   | 11                 | 18%        |
| Social Studies            | 11                 | 18%        |
| None                      | 10                 | 16%        |
| Pull-out Classes          | 9                  | 15%        |
| Fine Arts                 | 0                  | 0%         |
| Health                    | 0                  | 0%         |
| Physical Education        | 0                  | 0%         |
| Total Number of Responses | 61                 |            |

In survey item 8, ESOL teachers indicated their self-contained class numbers. Twenty-eight teachers who teach self-contained ESOL classes provided information on the number of self-contained ESOL classes they teach, ranging from 1 to 23 classes ( $M = 7.14$ ,  $SD = 5.47$ ). In survey item 9, the teachers further indicated the number of students in each of their ESOL classes. Fourteen (47%) respondents answered that they have 1-5 students in each class, and sixteen (53%) replied that they have 6-10 students in each of their ESOL classes, of the total 30 responses. Besides the number of students and classes, the participants were asked in survey item 10 to identify the length of their ESOL classes. Twenty-nine teachers indicated the minutes they teach each self-contained ESOL class. There were two teachers who reported they teach 1,050 and 1500 minutes per week for each self-contained ESOL class. These teachers may have only one self-contained class.

Because most of the teachers have more than one self-contained class, and the time teachers teach in each self-contained class are relatively much shorter than those reported times, I took out those two teachers' teaching times when computing the average. The rest of the twenty-seven teachers spend between 25 to 230 minutes per week with each self-contained class ( $M = 96.85$ ,  $SD = 64.97$ ).

### **ESOL Teachers' Perspectives on Using Music**

In survey item 13, ESOL teachers were asked to identify their comfort levels of using different music skills in their classes. Participants rated their comfort levels on a 5-point Likert-type agreement scale, *Strongly Disagree*, *Disagree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Agree*, and *Strongly Agree* (For the exact question, see survey in Appendix A). Results indicate that when combining *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* responses, 84% of the participants felt comfortable singing songs with their classes, 79% felt comfortable teaching songs to their students, and 80% felt comfortable moving and dancing to music with their class, although this mean is lower than the mean for teaching songs. Only 22% of the participants felt comfortable playing instruments for their classes (see Table 4).

Table 4

*ESOL Teachers' Comfort Levels of Using Music in Their Classrooms*

| Music Skills                   | 1<br>Strongly<br>Disagree | 2<br>Disagree | 3<br>Neither<br>Agree nor<br>Disagree | 4<br>Agree | 5<br>Strongly<br>Agree | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Singing<br>Songs               | 3<br>3%                   | 3<br>3%       | 11<br>11%                             | 44<br>43%  | 42<br>41%              | 103      | 4.16     | 0.94      |
| Teaching<br>Songs              | 2<br>2%                   | 2<br>2%       | 18<br>17%                             | 41<br>40%  | 40<br>39%              | 103      | 4.12     | 0.90      |
| Moving/<br>Dancing to<br>Music | 2<br>2%                   | 7<br>7%       | 12<br>12%                             | 48<br>48%  | 32<br>32%              | 101      | 4.00     | 0.95      |
| Playing<br>Instruments         | 28<br>27%                 | 34<br>33%     | 19<br>18%                             | 14<br>14%  | 8<br>8%                | 103      | 2.42     | 1.24      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

Survey item 22 asked the teachers to indicate their perceptions of the effect of music on ELLs' English learning. They rated their perspectives of each statement on the same 5-point Likert-type agreement scale (see Table 5). I considered responses of *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* to indicate general agreement. The most agreed to statement was "music motivates ELLs to learn English" (86%) followed by "in general, music helps ELLs learn English" (80%) and "music lowers ELLs' anxiety" (79%). Even the least agreed to statement "music positively changes ELLs' attitudes" has a 69% participant agreement. Notice that very few (0%-2%) of the participants chose *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* with any of these statements.

Table 5

*ESOL Teachers' Perspectives on the Effect of Music on ELLs' English Learning*

| Statement on Perspectives                  | 1<br>Strongly Disagree | 2<br>Disagree | 3<br>Neither Agree nor Disagree | 4<br>Agree | 5<br>Strongly Agree | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--|------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|------------|---------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Music motivates ELLs to learn English      | 0<br>0%                | 0<br>0%       | 14<br>14%                       | 55<br>54%  | 32<br>32%           | 101      | 4.18     | 0.65      |
| In general, music helps ELLs learn English | 0<br>0%                | 0<br>0%       | 21<br>21%                       | 50<br>50%  | 30<br>30%           | 101      | 4.09     | 0.71      |
| Music lowers ELLs' anxiety                 | 1<br>1%                | 1<br>1%       | 19<br>19%                       | 54<br>53%  | 26<br>26%           | 101      | 4.02     | 0.76      |
| Music enhances ELLs' class Participation   | 0<br>0%                | 1<br>1%       | 22<br>22%                       | 57<br>56%  | 21<br>21%           | 101      | 3.97     | 0.68      |
| Music positively changes ELLs' attitudes   | 0<br>0%                | 0<br>0%       | 31<br>31%                       | 52<br>51%  | 18<br>18%           | 101      | 3.87     | 0.69      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

**ESOL Teachers' Usage of Music in Their Classes**

This section of the survey was designed to examine how ESOL teachers used music in their classrooms. The information includes the frequency of ESOL teachers using music, their music teaching methods, and their songs and music selections.

**Frequency.** Participants were asked to identify the frequency with which they used music in their ESOL classes in survey item 14. Responses included *Very often*, *Often*, *Sometimes*, *Rarely*, and *Never*. Among the total of 103 responses, results show that 36% of the participants sometimes use songs or music to teach English. A combined total of 28% of respondents reported that they use music often or very often in their SOL classrooms. However, 37% of participants responded rarely or never using music in their classes. The frequencies and percentages of ESOL teachers using songs or music to teach English are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

*Frequencies and Percentages of ESOL Teachers Using Songs or Music to Teach English*

| Frequency  | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|--------------------|------------|
| Very often | 14                 | 14%        |
| Often      | 14                 | 14%        |
| Sometimes  | 37                 | 36%        |
| Rarely     | 35                 | 34%        |
| Never      | 3                  | 3%         |
| Total      | 103                | 100%       |

To discover whether or not the length of teachers' ESOL teaching experiences affect their use of songs or music to teach English, I computed a correlation between the number of teaching years (survey item 2) to the frequency that teachers reported using songs or music in teaching (survey item 14). Results indicated that there was no significant correlation,  $r(101) = -.09$ ,  $p = .39$ ) between teachers' ESOL teaching experiences and their use of music in teaching English. To examine whether or not ESOL

teachers' musical instrument experience affect their music usage, I used a *t*-Test to compare the mean of music usage between the groups of teachers who play a musical instrument and those who do not play a musical instrument (survey item 11). Results indicated that there was no significant difference in the frequency of using music for the musical instrument playing group ( $M = 2.91, SD = 1.12$ ) and the non-playing group ( $M = 3.05, SD = 1.04$ );  $t(101) = .66, p = .51$ .

**Music teaching methods.** There are different ways that ESOL teachers use music to teach English. In survey item 15, participants were asked to identify the frequency with which they use music to reinforce each English language skill. The skills included on the list were listening comprehension, speaking fluency, reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax and grammar, and cultural awareness. Participants were asked to rate each English language skill in a 5-point Likert-type frequency scale, *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Very Often*. Results show that the means of all language skills are generally low, indicating that music was used infrequently by these teachers to teach these skills. Vocabulary was the most frequently chosen language skill ( $M = 2.89, SD = 1.25$ ), then speaking fluency ( $M = 2.79, SD = 1.13$ ), followed by reading skills ( $M = 2.57, SD = 1.18$ ). Syntax and grammar ( $M = 2.21, SD = 1.06$ ) and writing skills ( $M = 2.00, SD = 1.06$ ) were the least frequently chosen language skills that the participants reported using music to support. Table 7 displays the frequency that ESOL teachers use music in teaching different English language skills in more detail.

Table 7

*The Frequency of ESOL Teachers Use of Music to Teach English Language Sills*

| English Language Skills | 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Often | 5<br>Very Often | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Vocabulary              | 15<br>15%  | 24<br>25%   | 27<br>28%      | 19<br>20%  | 12<br>12%       | 97       | 2.89     | 1.25      |
| Speaking fluency        | 13<br>13%  | 28<br>29%   | 32<br>33%      | 17<br>17%  | 8<br>8%         | 98       | 2.79     | 1.13      |
| Reading skills          | 20<br>21%  | 29<br>30%   | 29<br>30%      | 11<br>11%  | 8<br>8%         | 97       | 2.57     | 1.18      |
| Cultural awareness      | 17<br>18%  | 30<br>31%   | 35<br>36%      | 8<br>8%    | 6<br>6%         | 96       | 2.54     | 1.08      |
| Listening comprehension | 20<br>21%  | 27<br>28%   | 31<br>32%      | 14<br>15%  | 4<br>4%         | 96       | 2.53     | 1.10      |
| Pronunciation           | 25<br>27%  | 28<br>30%   | 21<br>22%      | 13<br>14%  | 7<br>7%         | 94       | 2.46     | 1.23      |
| Syntax and grammar      | 28<br>29%  | 33<br>35%   | 23<br>24%      | 8<br>8%    | 3<br>3%         | 95       | 2.21     | 1.06      |
| Writing skills          | 38<br>41%  | 28<br>30%   | 19<br>20%      | 5<br>5%    | 3<br>3%         | 93       | 2.00     | 1.06      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

Survey item 16 was intended to discover the frequency of different music activities that ESOL teachers use to teach English, including singing songs, listening to songs, creating song lyrics, playing body percussion, dancing to music , playing

instruments, playing musical roles, discussing cultures, and other (write in options). Like the previous survey item question, this question also used the 5-point Likert-type frequency scale. Results show that singing songs ( $M = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ) was the most frequently used music activity, although the mean was not high. Next most frequent was listening to songs ( $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), followed by playing body percussion ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ). The least frequently used music activities were playing instruments ( $M = 1.32$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) and playing musical roles ( $M = 1.26$ ,  $SD = 0.51$ ). Notice that the majority (61%-97%) of the participants rarely or never dance to music, discuss cultures using music or songs, create song lyrics, play instruments, or play musical roles in their ESOL classes (see Table 8). In the “other” option, participants were asked to indicate other kinds of music activities they use that were not listed and then rate the frequency. However, except for one participant who specified using alphabet letter songs as other music activity, the remaining respondents who rated “other” as an option did not specify any other kind of music activities.

Table 8

*The Frequency of Music Activities ESOL Teachers Use to Teach English*

| Music Activities           | 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Often | 5<br>Very<br>Often | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Singing songs              | 4<br>4%    | 26<br>26%   | 32<br>32%      | 23<br>23%  | 14<br>14%          | 99       | 3.17     | 1.10      |
| Listening to songs         | 14<br>14%  | 21<br>21%   | 36<br>37%      | 18<br>18%  | 9<br>9%            | 98       | 2.87     | 1.15      |
| Playing body<br>percussion | 22<br>22%  | 23<br>23%   | 30<br>31%      | 21<br>21%  | 2<br>2%            | 98       | 2.57     | 1.12      |
| Dancing to music           | 30<br>31%  | 29<br>30%   | 25<br>26%      | 13<br>13%  | 1<br>1%            | 98       | 2.24     | 1.07      |
| Discussing<br>cultures     | 40<br>41%  | 26<br>27%   | 23<br>23%      | 6<br>6%    | 3<br>3%            | 98       | 2.04     | 1.08      |
| Creating song<br>lyrics    | 61<br>64%  | 26<br>27%   | 7<br>7%        | 2<br>2%    | 0<br>0%            | 96       | 1.48     | 0.73      |
| Playing<br>instruments     | 74<br>76%  | 18<br>18%   | 5<br>5%        | 1<br>1%    | 0<br>0%            | 98       | 1.32     | 0.62      |
| Playing musical<br>roles   | 75<br>77%  | 19<br>20%   | 3<br>3%        | 0<br>0%    | 0<br>0%            | 97       | 1.26     | 0.51      |
| Other                      | 22<br>85%  | 2<br>8%     | 2<br>8%        | 0<br>0%    | 0<br>0%            | 26       | 1.23     | 0.59      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

In survey item 19, participants further reported the frequency of using music teaching methods to teach English. Based on the literature reviewed, I had identified 7

music teaching methods that were listed as options (see Table 9). Participants rated each music teaching method using the 5-point Likert-type frequency scale. Results show that the most frequent music teaching method chosen by ESOL teachers was having students echo line by line ( $M = 3.21, SD = 1.22$ ), followed by pointing to song lyrics word by word while students are singing/ playing / listening to the song ( $M = 3.16, SD = 1.35$ ) and introducing vocabulary of the song lyrics before singing/ playing / listening to the song ( $M = 3.14, SD = 1.35$ ). The least frequently used music teaching methods were using comprehension activities during or after singing/ playing / listening to the song ( $M = 2.48, SD = 1.27$ ) and guiding students to talk about the feeling of music after singing/ playing / listening to the song ( $M = 1.90, SD = 1.04$ ). More than half (51%-78%) of the participants rarely or never use comprehension activities or guide discussion using music to support English learning. In the “other” option, the majority of the respondents only rated the frequency but did not specify what other music teaching methods they use, except for 4 participants who indicated specific music teaching methods. One reported that instead of the teacher, students point to the lyrics while performing for audiences. One indicated the use of made up songs to fit specific needs. Another stated that he/she sings songs to students every day, and students just “pick up on them,” and the other participant indicated that he/she uses these teaching methods, but does not consider them music teaching methods.

Table 9

*The Music Teaching Methods ESOL Teachers Use to Teach English*

| Music Teaching Method          | 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Often | 5<br>Very Often | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Students echo line by line     | 12<br>13%  | 13<br>14%   | 28<br>29%      | 29<br>30%  | 14<br>15%       | 96       | 3.21     | 1.22      |
| Point to song lyrics           | 14<br>15%  | 17<br>18%   | 26<br>27%      | 18<br>19%  | 21<br>22%       | 96       | 3.16     | 1.35      |
| Introduce vocabulary           | 15<br>15%  | 17<br>18%   | 24<br>25%      | 21<br>22%  | 20<br>21%       | 97       | 3.14     | 1.35      |
| Students sing along            | 19<br>20%  | 13<br>14%   | 23<br>24%      | 24<br>25%  | 17<br>18%       | 96       | 3.07     | 1.38      |
| Introduce background knowledge | 23<br>24%  | 24<br>25%   | 18<br>39%      | 20<br>21%  | 10<br>11%       | 95       | 2.68     | 1.33      |
| Use comprehensive activities   | 28<br>29%  | 21<br>22%   | 26<br>27%      | 12<br>13%  | 8<br>8%         | 95       | 2.48     | 1.27      |
| Guide discussion               | 41<br>44%  | 32<br>34%   | 13<br>14%      | 5<br>5%    | 3<br>3%         | 94       | 1.90     | 1.04      |
| Other                          | 16<br>80%  | 2<br>10%    | 0<br>0%        | 1<br>5%    | 1<br>5%         | 20       | 1.45     | 1.13      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

**Songs and music selections.** One of the purposes of this study was to examine how ESOL teachers select songs and music for language teaching purposes. Survey items

17, 18, 20, and 21 were designed to discover the music genres, the criteria for music selection, the music materials, and from where ESOL teachers find music or songs to teach English. In Survey item 17, participants were allowed to select more than one music genre used in their classes. Table 10 shows that of 95 responses, children's song (94%) is the most commonly used music genre, followed by nursery rhymes (76%). Jazz chants (15%), rap (14%), and classical music (12%) were not commonly used in ESOL classes, while country music (3%) and multicultural or holiday music (2%) were the least used music genres. Participants also were invited to indicate other music genres that were not listed. Ten teachers responded that they used homemade songs, curriculum songs, songs written for ELL purposes, rhythm, content songs and chants, phonetic sounds, and phonics songs. Because they did not identify music genres of those songs, I categorized them into *Educational music*.

Table 10

*Frequencies and Percentages of Music Genres ESOL Teachers Use*

| Music Genres              | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Children's songs          | 89                 | 94%        |
| Nursery rhymes            | 72                 | 76%        |
| Folk songs                | 30                 | 32%        |
| Pop songs                 | 20                 | 21%        |
| Jazz chants               | 14                 | 15%        |
| Rap                       | 13                 | 14%        |
| Classical music           | 11                 | 12%        |
| Educational music         | 10                 | 11%        |
| Country music             | 3                  | 3%         |
| Multicultural music       | 2                  | 2%         |
| Holiday music             | 2                  | 2%         |
| Total Number of Responses | 95                 |            |

To gain an understanding of the criteria ESOL teachers use to select songs or music, participants were asked to rate the frequency of different song selection circumstances in survey item 18. Respondents rated each circumstance on a 5-point Likert-type frequency scale. Songs or music that includes repetition ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ) was the most common response, then songs or music that reinforces class objectives ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) was second, followed by songs or music that is suitable to ELLs' English language level ( $M = 3.19$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ). The least common response was songs or music that was in the school curriculum ( $M = 2.30$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ). Table 11 shows the frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of how teachers select songs or music in more detail.

Table 11

*How ESOL Teachers Select Songs or Music*

| Criteria for Selection           | 1<br>Never | 2<br>Rarely | 3<br>Sometimes | 4<br>Often | 5<br>Very Often | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Include repetition               | 6<br>6%    | 14<br>15%   | 21<br>22%      | 30<br>31%  | 25<br>26%       | 96       | 3.56     | 1.20      |
| Reinforce class objectives       | 5<br>5%    | 14<br>15%   | 25<br>27%      | 26<br>28%  | 23<br>25%       | 93       | 3.52     | 1.18      |
| Suitable to ELLs' language level | 13<br>14%  | 14<br>15%   | 27<br>28%      | 24<br>25%  | 17<br>18%       | 95       | 3.19     | 1.28      |
| Personal familiar                | 12<br>13%  | 17<br>18%   | 28<br>30%      | 22<br>23%  | 15<br>16%       | 94       | 3.12     | 1.25      |
| Students like                    | 16<br>27%  | 22<br>23%   | 30<br>31%      | 21<br>22%  | 7<br>7%         | 96       | 2.80     | 1.18      |
| In school curriculum             | 33<br>35%  | 26<br>28%   | 17<br>18%      | 10<br>11%  | 8<br>9%         | 94       | 2.30     | 1.29      |

*Note.* Not everyone answered all questions, therefore *n* represents the number of responses for each question.

Survey item 20 collected data about the kinds of music materials ESOL teachers use in their classes (Table 12). Among the total of 95 responses, results show that the most common music material is “online video clips” (69%). The second most common was “recordings” (65%), followed by “song picture books” (54%). The least popular material was “musical instruments” (5%). For the participants who further identified “other” music materials, eight teachers responded visual aids as music materials they use,

including song lyrics in power point slides, posters, charts, or Smartboard with pictures, illustrations using “Total Physical Response,” karaoke, traditional clothing, and the book *Side by Side*. Three indicated their own voices as music materials, and one did not identify what materials he/she uses.

Table 12

*Frequencies and Percentages of the Kinds of Materials ESOL Teachers Use*

| Materials                 | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Online video clips        | 66                 | 69%        |
| Recordings                | 62                 | 65%        |
| Song picture books        | 51                 | 54%        |
| Visual aids               | 8                  | 8%         |
| Musical instruments       | 5                  | 5%         |
| Teachers’ own voice       | 3                  | 3%         |
| Other: unspecified        | 1                  | 1%         |
| Total Number of Responses | 95                 |            |

To determine where ESOL teachers find music materials or resources, participants were asked to rate the frequency of different origins of music materials or resources, in survey item 21. ESOL teachers were allowed to choose more than one point of origin. Among the total of 96 responses, results show that the internet (79%) was the most popular place teachers find music materials or resources. The second most popular was from other ESOL or classroom teachers (46%). Teachers (32%) also use school owned music materials or resources in their classes. However, other origins such as from school music teachers, bookstores, workshops, or students are less common ways for ESOL teachers to obtain music materials or resources. Table 13 displays the frequencies

and percentages of where ESOL teachers find music materials or resources. Among the participants who identified “other,” 11 reported using personally owned materials, self-made materials, and personal knowledge, and 3 mentioned that music materials and resources already exist in their curriculum. However, none of these respondents indicated where they obtained the materials they reported. One teacher suggested that the Missouri Migrant Education and English Language Learning (MELL) program should provide music materials or resources to help ESOL teachers teach English, and two other teachers did not provide further information. Because these respondents did not provide origins where they find musical materials or resources other than the list, I put them into the *Other* category.

Table 13

*Frequencies and Percentages of where Teachers Find Music Materials or Resources*

| Where/ Origins                   | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Internet                         | 76                 | 79%        |
| Other ESOL or classroom teachers | 44                 | 46%        |
| School owned                     | 31                 | 32%        |
| School music teachers            | 12                 | 13%        |
| Bookstore                        | 12                 | 13%        |
| Workshop                         | 12                 | 13%        |
| Personal items/ knowledge        | 11                 | 11%        |
| Student-selected                 | 10                 | 10%        |
| In curriculum                    | 3                  | 3%         |
| Other                            | 3                  | 3%         |
| Graduate school program          | 2                  | 2%         |
| Educational store                | 1                  | 1%         |
| Total Number of Responses        | 95                 |            |

## **ESOL Teachers' Difficulties and Needs**

In survey item 23, participants were asked to indicate the difficulties they have experienced with using music to teach English. Participants were able to choose as many responses as they wished. Among the total of 98 responses, respondents report that there is not enough time to use music in their class schedules (76%), "lack of resources" such as teacher training or workshops (41%), and difficulty in acquiring appropriate materials (40%). Table 14 shows the frequencies and percentages of ESOL teachers' difficulties using music in their classes in more detail.

The participants also were invited to list other difficulties they have experienced which were not listed on the survey. Two teachers reinforced the limited class time issue. One teacher reemphasized the lack of materials. This respondent reported that because of the "poor available resources," the teacher had to make his/her own materials. Another respondent did not specify the difficulties. These four responses were sorted into the *Other* category. Three teachers had concerns about students' reactions to the use of music in their classrooms. One indicated that "older students with higher English levels don't want to participate." Another perceived the "resistance from students who do not like to sing or do baby stuff." Still another teacher noted students' reluctance to vocalize, such as speaking and singing. Two other teachers reported that teaching methods other than music teaching methods should be the priority. One wrote that "reading books holds priority" and another said "sometimes music as a teaching tool is not thought of highly," and that "content can be taught more quickly and efficiently through other modes."

Table 14

*Frequencies and Percentages of ESOL Teachers' Difficulties Using Music in Their Classes*

| Difficulty Areas                | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Not enough time                 | 74                 | 76%        |
| Lack of resources               | 40                 | 41%        |
| Lack appropriate materials      | 39                 | 40%        |
| Not enough money                | 32                 | 33%        |
| Lack of curriculum control      | 30                 | 31%        |
| Lack confidence in music skills | 23                 | 23%        |
| Lack of space                   | 5                  | 5%         |
| Other                           | 4                  | 4%         |
| Students' negative reactions    | 3                  | 3%         |
| Not the priority                | 2                  | 2%         |
| Total Number of Responses       | 98                 |            |

The next question, survey item 24, was designed to examine the kind of music training that ESOL teachers wish they had or could have. Participants were allowed to choose more than one desired response. Among the total of 93 responses, Table 15 shows that teachers desire to learn more about how to use music in their classrooms, such as learning about music resources, materials, and activities (77%), integrating music to English language learning (61%), and selecting appropriate songs (61%). However, music method training, such as leading and teaching songs received a low response rate (13%) in this study. Participants also were less interested in obtaining more personal music skills, such as playing body percussion (16%), playing instruments (14%), creating music or song lyrics (13%), reading music (8%), or singing (6%). In the *Other* category,

one specified that learning international dance would be helpful, and another mentioned the need to learn how to upload resources onto an mp3 file for classroom usage. One respondent did not specify the desired music training. There were two respondents who indicated that none of the listed music training is needed.

Table 15

*Frequencies and Percentages of Music Training ESOL Teachers' Desire*

| Music Training Desired                         | Response Frequency | Percentage |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| Music resources, materials, and activities     | 72                 | 77%        |
| Integrating music to English language learning | 57                 | 61%        |
| Selecting appropriate songs                    | 57                 | 61%        |
| Body percussion                                | 15                 | 16%        |
| Playing instruments                            | 13                 | 14%        |
| Creating music or song lyrics                  | 12                 | 13%        |
| Leading and teaching songs                     | 12                 | 13%        |
| Reading music                                  | 7                  | 8%         |
| Singing  | 6                  | 6%         |
| Other  | 3                  | 3%         |
| None   | 2                  | 2%         |
| Total Number of Responses                      | 93                 |            |

**Additional Concerns or Difficulties**

In the last question, survey item 25, I invited the participants to provide additional concerns or difficulties they have when teaching music or songs to ELLs. Thirty ESOL teachers responded to this open-ended question. I coded these responses into three categories: Concerns, Difficulties, and Comments. Because one teacher may have

provided ideas that belonged to different categories, I dispersed the opinions into the three categories. Therefore, the number of comments exceeds the number of respondents.

**ESOL teachers' concerns.** Seven participants were concerned about the classroom settings to implement music in ESOL classes. The location of their ESOL class is one of the main concerns. One teacher reported that “When I have to teach in the hallway that environment doesn’t work well for music. I am either too loud or kids are looking at us as they walk down the hall and it makes my students self-conscious.” Teachers also worry that the sound of the music could be disturbing to others. One participant described that music could be disruptive while teaching a small group within a “push-in” classroom setting. Another teacher claimed that “I am in a room next to 2 teachers who are easily disturbed.” This teacher was concerned that other teachers may not value singing and dancing as important for learning and they would find it disturbing because of the music sounds produced. The classroom settings and space are other factors affecting music implementation. One teacher indicated that the self-contained classroom setting is conducive to music teaching, but is only available during summer school. Another teacher was concerned about not having enough space to dance because he/she doesn’t have a consistent classroom. One teacher was concerned that because his/her classes are in different classrooms or buildings, it is difficult to use music materials which are not easy to carry around. Another teacher stated “I cannot use music with my students other than listening to an occasional song because I travel to 7 schools and do not have a classroom.”

Three teachers were concerned that students may react differently to learning English through music. One of the teachers mentioned that older students, “especially boys” are less likely to participate in music. According to this teachers’ personal teaching experience, he/she believed that “small groups are more inhibited to sing.” Another teacher stated that teaching English through singing should depend on students’ personalities. This teacher reported “ELL students enjoy singing when in an ELL class, but sometimes in whole group setting are too self-conscious, and it hinders their learning through singing.” Another teacher indicated that music can assist students’ learning, and the enjoyment and nuances of a language can be taught in music appreciation class. However, he/she wrote that “I have also had students who do not like to sing and this [singing] has a negative influence on their learning.” This teacher asserted that teachers should attempt to understand their students individually and base their use of music on that understanding.

Two other teachers were concerned more about test scores and specific area learning. While one participant agreed that music helps students learn a language, this teacher is not sure how music could develop students’ test scores. The other teacher also believed that songs are useful for English learning, but reported they need to be practiced in specific areas.

**ESOL teachers’ difficulties.** Among the responses which reflected ESOL teachers’ difficulties, some teachers indicated their challenges in finding appropriate materials and resources, some mentioned time limitation to implement music in ESOL

classes, others revealed their lack of knowledge to use music to teach English, and one reflected on a technical problem.

In the open-ended question, 8 participants specified not being able to find appropriate music materials and resources for ESOL purposes. Among these respondents, some of the teachers revealed their desire to use music in their classes. One teacher stated “I think music is a fantastic way to teach English to students, and I would like to try to incorporate music more into my teaching.” However, finding the right music materials which fit students’ proficiency levels is very difficult for this teacher. Another teacher wrote “I would LOVE to use music while teaching my ESOL students, but don’t know of what musical resources are available for ESOL students.” Still another teacher responded that he/she never thought about using music on a daily basis, but would like to incorporate music more. However, this teacher said “I don’t have many resources and I have trouble thinking of appropriate songs to go with the material I am teaching.” Other teachers had difficulties finding the music materials and resources to support students learning. One teacher indicated struggling to find music materials which can help students’ English learning and success in content areas. Another displayed the need for music and songs which can go along with elementary basic academic themes and lessons. Two other teachers pointed out the lack of music materials for certain levels of students. One teacher expressed his/her need for songs which are designed for upper elementary students. Another teacher struggled to find music materials for students at beginning and intermediate levels. One respondent suggested that songs with content information should be easily accessed and cheap.

Seven participants answered in the open-ended question by discussing time limitations for using music in ESOL classes. Three teachers simply indicated the limited class time with their ELL students. Another teacher said that the limited class time only allowed him/her to assist students in learning new vocabulary and understanding their assignments rather than branching out to other curricular areas. In a similar situation, a teacher indicated that with limited class time, he/she had to fit in reading and writing activities which left no time for music integration. One of the teachers also pointed out that there is too much curriculum that needs to be taught, so there is “no time for extra stuff.” Besides limited class time, one teacher signified the lack of time to look for appropriate music materials.

Two participants revealed their difficulties teaching with music because they do not know how. One teacher responded “I have never taken a music class in my life. All I know to do with music is listen[ing] to it for enjoyment.” Another teacher explained that music can be a powerful teaching tool and enhance children’s brain development. However, he/ she wrote “I have no idea how to incorporate it [music] into my teaching.”

One teacher also reflected on a technical issue. This teacher had difficulty slowing down a recording. He/she would like to learn how to change recordings to slower versions so that students can follow along to the song lyrics, learn to pronounce words, and increase their speaking fluency.

**ESOL teachers’ comments.** Responses other than teachers’ concerns or difficulties are included in the following paragraphs as ESOL teachers’ comments. Two teachers explained their positive music teaching experiences. One teacher stated that,

“There’s never any concerns or difficulties when teaching music or songs to my ELLs. They love music, so they participate, and they retain the information better.” This teacher also indicated that music should not be limited to ESOL, but can also help students learn other subjects. Another teacher described his/her music teaching experiences with elementary students who learned English as a foreign language. This teacher believed that music helps students learn. He/ She taught conversations, grammar, and vocabulary through music as well as choreographed dancing to songs. This teacher showed a desire to further incorporate music into the current ESOL program.

Other teachers also had positive attitudes toward using music in ESOL classes. One teacher indicated that the repetitive characteristics of songs help ELL students learn English more easily. Another teacher mentioned that “I don’t use much music when teaching, but would like to learn more about it.” One teacher stated that with the tight schedule, he/she only uses the songs in the curriculum to teach English. However, by taking this survey, he/she appreciated being reminded that music is a great tool to teach English. The teacher wrote that “I would now like to brainstorm and investigate different ways to incorporate music into my curriculum more even if it’s just a short part of my lesson each day.”

The following two comments are not necessarily about using music in classes, but are personal comments on my work. One teacher said that “You covered it [the concerns and difficulties of using music] pretty well.” The other wrote “I have read your article [(Lin, 2012)] on using music with ESOL students and I loved it.”

A final comment was not related to the usage of music in ESOL classes. The participant simply summarized the responses from the multiple questions in the survey. Therefore, this comment has not been analyzed.

### **Summary**

The data were collected from 108 Missouri elementary ESOL teachers with the response rate of 61%. The average teacher's age is 38.93 years old, and the average length of ESOL teaching experience is 7.57 years.

The twenty-five question items were divided into four sections, ESOL teachers' background information, their perspectives on using music, their usage of music in their classes, and their difficulties and needs. The majority of the teachers (71%) do not teach a self-contained ESOL class. More than half of the teachers (57%) do not play a musical instrument. However, a majority of the teachers felt comfortable singing songs (84%) and teaching songs (79%) to their ELL students. A high percentage of the teachers (86%) perceived that music motivates students' in English learning.

Regarding teachers' use of music in their classes, only 28% of the teachers often or very often use music to teach English. Neither the numbers of years ESOL teachers have taught nor did their musical instrument playing backgrounds affect their use of music in classes. Vocabulary is the English language skill teachers use most frequently with music. Singing songs is the most popular music activity. While teaching English through music, children's songs were the most common used genre. Songs that include repetition is the most chosen criteria for song selection. Teachers like to use online video clips as music materials, and most of them find their materials or resources through the

Internet. Among different music teaching methods, the most popular one used by the ESOL teachers is teaching a song line by line and having students echo.

The difficulty teachers reported to hinder them from using music the most was not enough time in the class schedule. The majority of the teachers (77%) would like to learn about music resources, materials, and activities. More than half of the teachers (61%) would like to learn how to integrate music in English teaching and select appropriate songs for ESOL purposes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to discover ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and needs of teaching English through music. Elementary ESOL teachers in Missouri were invited to participate in an online survey. My goal for this study was to provide researchers and educators with information regarding the use of music by current in-service ESOL teachers.

In order to help the readers better understand the population, teachers' general backgrounds, musical backgrounds, and information about their classroom settings are provided. The participants were 108 elementary ESOL teachers from the state of Missouri. These teachers' average age was 41.6 years, and their average number of ESOL teaching years was 7.78. More than half of the teachers did not play a musical instrument. Among the teachers who played an instrument, most had between 1-10 years of instrument learning experiences. More than one third of the teachers did not have any other musical background. Among the teachers who had additional music backgrounds, most had high school, college, or adult choir, band, or orchestra experience. However, few of these teachers took music or music teaching methods classes in college.

Regarding teachers' classroom settings, only one third of the teachers reported teaching in self-contained classes. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, there are 5 types of ESOL programs. I divided them into two groups: Self-contained classes have only one teacher in charge, including *Structured ESOL Immersion*, *Pull-Out ESOL*, *Sheltered Classroom*, and *New Comer Centers*; non-

self-contained classes have more than one teacher in charge, including *Team-Teaching*, with ESOL teachers attending subject classes with their ELL students. Based on the responses to a following question, some teachers reported that they taught non-self-contained classes and also did not attend other subject classes with their ELL students (16%) or had pull-out classes (15%). This may mean they interpreted the term “self-contained” class differently than intended. Therefore, the exact percentage of participants who taught self-contained or non-self-contained classes remains unclear.

Teachers who reported teaching non-self-contained classes had an average of 44.64 students. None of those teachers attended music classes with their ELL students. The majority did attend communication arts with their students. One third of them went to mathematics classes and a few to science and social studies with their ELL students. These results correspond to Hash’s (2010) study indicating that preservice classroom teachers’ perceived the order of the importance of subjects in the elementary curriculum with the language arts as being the most important, then mathematics, followed by science and social studies. This may explain why the ESOL teachers who did not teach self-contained classes were asked to attend to these subject classes with their students. Because none of the participants reported attending physical education, health, visual art, and music, perhaps these subjects were not considered to be as important, although this is only speculation at this point. An alternative possibility may be that language does not present as great a barrier in these classes. Future research seems warranted to investigate the decision making process in this regard.

## **ESOL Teachers' Perspectives on Using Music**

**Teachers' comfort levels.** Participants demonstrated high comfort levels in singing songs, teaching songs, and moving or dancing to songs. This result supports a study by Pietra, Bidner, and Devaney (2010), who revealed that preservice elementary classroom teachers reported positive comfort levels and a desire to teach music.

Researchers also have indicated that elementary teachers with more musical experiences are more comfortable or have more positive attitudes toward teaching music in their classes (Berke & Colwell, 2004; Colwell, 2008; Özmenteş & Gürgen, 2010; Pietra, Binder, & Devaney, 2010). The teachers' high comfort levels teaching music in this study could be due to the fact that more than half had some sort of musical backgrounds. Also, with the average of 7.78 teaching years, these teachers may no longer have felt self-conscious or embarrassed singing, teaching, and moving or dancing to songs in front of their students. However, participants did not feel comfortable playing instruments for their classes. According to these teachers' musical instrument playing backgrounds, more than half of the participants did not play a musical instrument. Therefore, it is not surprising that they did not feel confident playing an instrument for their students, and it seems reasonable to conclude that teachers would be more receptive to integration activities that use singing or movement.

**Teachers' perceptions.** ESOL teachers indicated high positive perspectives on the effect of music on ELLs' English learning. They believed that music motivates and helps students to learn English, lowers students' anxiety, enhances class participation, and positively changes students' attitudes. Krashen's (1982) theory about the affective

filter says that when second language learners' affective filters are high, they are anxious, have low self-esteem, and will filter out new knowledge. When the learners' affective filters are low, they are motivated to learn, which stimulates the input of language knowledge. Connecting Krashen's affective filter theory to this study, teachers may consider music as a device to motivate students and keep their affective filters low.

Results of this study correspond to the previous studies on teachers' positive attitudes towards using music to teach English (Bjorklund, 2002; Hejjawi, 2007; Şevik, 2011). The reason that teachers held this high positive viewpoint toward music may be due to the large literature base indicating the motivating power of music. Music develops students' self-esteem (Baker & Jones, 2006), motivates and provides students with positive learning experiences (Li & Brand, 2009; Rosová, 2007), and relieves their pressure and stress (Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011). ESOL teachers also have reported that music lowered their students' anxiety (Şevik, 2011), and ELL students' parents have indicated that music improved their children's participation levels (Bird, 2007). Besides the number of studies showing the motivating power of music for students in a variety of settings and grade levels, many studies have also discussed the utilitarian functions of music (Deere, 2010; Li & Brand, 2009; Moreno, Marques, Santos, Santos & Besson, 2009). This body of research has resulted in general agreement in the field of education that music can motivate and help learning. The high positive perspectives also could come from the teachers' own experiences. After using music in their classes, the teachers might have experienced the development of students' motivation and English achievement. The exact reasons for teachers perceived positive perspectives towards

music remains uncertain. Research to investigate the factors influencing teachers' perspectives on using music in learning would be a worthy undertaking.

Although mean responses to all statements regarding the perspective toward music were highly positive, participants reported more positive responses on the benefits of music to motivate and help ELL students' English learning than to lower students' anxiety, enhance participation, or promote positive attitudes. This may be due to their students' personality, age, and gender, as explained by a few participants. Singing in front of peers may be difficult for students in small group settings. Students with shy personalities may be reluctant to even speak, much less willing to sing. Having them participate in music activities could actually increase their anxiety rather than decrease it. According to a few respondents, some upper elementary students, especially boys, may be unwilling to sing or join in music activities because they view those as activities for younger children. Teachers should be sensitive to their students' individual needs and design curriculum based on those needs. However, there remains a gap in knowledge of what kinds of music different age and gender groups prefer, what kinds of music activities are effective for ELL students, and what kinds of music activities are appropriate for students who are shy or have limited speaking abilities. To redress this insufficiency of information, studies regarding ELL students' music preferences and effective music activities for students with different personalities require further research.

### **ESOL Teachers' Usage of Music in Their Classes**

One important aspect of this study was to understand how ESOL teachers used music in their classes. This section will discuss how often the teachers used music, what

music teaching methods were used, and how they selected music to teach their ELL students.

**Frequency.** The frequency of the participants' use of songs or music in teaching English was low. Less than one third of the teachers reported they often or very often used music in their classes. More than one third of the teachers rarely or never used music in their classrooms. These results support previous studies that found classroom teachers infrequently used music in their classes (Bresler, 1993; Propst, 2003). In comparison to a previous study by Edwards (1997), this study's results indicate a slightly lower frequency of ESOL teachers using music. Why this is the case would require more investigation and further research. Considering that the teachers reported high comfort levels in singing, teaching, and moving/dancing to songs, it is surprising that they indicated such a low frequency of using music in their classes. These results reveal that the comfort level is not a good predictor of ESOL teachers' use of music. Researchers may wish to investigate reasons other than comfort levels influencing teachers' use of music.

**Factors of teachers' decision.** The number of years participants had taught did not correlate to their use of music in their classes. This result corresponded to a previous study (Giles & Frego, 2004) indicating that there was no connection between the number of years of elementary classroom teachers' teaching experience and the amount of time they used music activities in their classes. Based on the results of this study, there might be other concerns that are more important than the number of years ESOL teachers have taught that affect their decision about using music in their classrooms.

Additionally, playing a musical instrument did not affect these teachers' use of songs or music. Teachers who are able to play a musical instrument should be more familiar with music than teachers who do not play any musical instrument. According to Pietra, Binder, and Devaney (2010), preservice elementary teachers who had more extensive musical backgrounds showed a more positive attitude toward using music than those who had less musical backgrounds. It seems that the ability to play an instrument would have an impact on teachers' decision making about using music, however, this study's results failed to indicate a connection. This may be because preservice and in-service teachers' perspectives on using music are different, and again, that these in-service ESOL teachers' use of music was affected by factors other than their musical backgrounds.

Based on the participants' responses regarding their difficulties, a majority of participants was concerned about time limitations for using music in their classes. Many teachers reported that the tight class schedule hindered them from integrating music into English teaching. This seems to explain why these teachers, even with high comfort levels in music skills, still reported a low frequency of using music in their classrooms. These results may indicate that time limitations have a larger influence on teachers' decisions regarding using music than does teachers' years of teaching experience and their musical instrument backgrounds. Perhaps here are ways that using music in ELL classrooms can actually lead to time efficiency, however, and this would be a fruitful topic for further investigation.

**Music teaching methods.** Learning what teaching methods the participants found most useful can help guide preservice and in-service teachers to develop their teaching strategies. The study participants reported a low use of music activities. The music activities that participants used the most were singing and listening to songs, then playing body percussion, dancing to music, and discussing culture, followed by creating song lyrics, playing instruments, and playing musical roles. These results corresponded to Morin's (2004) study reporting that preservice classroom teachers rated singing and listening to music as the most useful music skills. These results also support other studies (Giles & Frego, 2004; Saunders & Baker, 1991) indicating that singing was the most frequently used music activity by elementary classroom teachers. Playing instruments and composing music, on the other hand, were found to be the least important music standards rated by preservice and in-service elementary teachers (Byo, 1999; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Colwell, 2008). For ESOL teachers, playing instruments and composing music may not be affective music activities to reinforce language learning, and therefore, were not used as often. In Lee's (2008) study, music drama was the least frequent activity used by preschool teachers. Consistent with these previous studies, it is not surprising that creating song lyrics, playing instruments, and playing musical roles were the least frequent music activities used by ESOL teachers in this study.

The reason that the music activities were used in this particular order of frequency may be due to teachers' music abilities in each music skill. Notice that the use of music activities follows the order of teachers' comfort levels reported in this study: singing songs, then moving/dancing to songs, and finally playing instruments. Another study by

Byo (1999) also reported that the order of elementary classroom teachers' perceived music abilities from the most to the least were history/cultural perspectives, singing, listening/ analyzing, playing instruments, and composing. When comparing the use of music activities in this study and teacher's perceived abilities in Byo's study, the results are identical, except for the discussion of culture. Singing and listening to songs could be the most basic music abilities for ESOL teachers, and songs with words provide the most direct musical activity through which students can learn and reinforce language skills, including vocabulary, rhyme, and fluency. Responding to music, such as playing body percussion, dancing to music, and discussing culture, requires that teachers have additional music training and have the ability to lead students in these music activities, while creating song lyrics, playing instruments, and playing musical roles require even more advanced music and music teaching skills—and these activities are not clearly related to language learning goals.

The frequency with which these teachers used music to teach English in every category of language skills was generally low. As discussed, time limitations may be responsible for this result. Edwards' (1997) study investigating whether or not ESOL teachers used music to teach English skills, such as vocabulary, cultural awareness, or pronunciation, had very similar results with the current study. However, this study's participants reported a higher percentage of teaching reading skills, syntax and grammar through music in this study than in Edwards' study. Specific reading skills are currently receiving more emphasis, and this could be due to the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), which relates school funding to students' yearly progress in reading skills. One reason

that syntax and grammar had a higher percentage as taught through music in the current study could be due to an ESOL pedagogical method known as “functional grammar” (Jones & Lock, 2011), which may have increased educators’ teaching of grammar. However, because it is not a mainstream trend in ESOL education, its impact is difficult to determine, and reasons for this study’s results are unclear.

The results of this study indicated that the ESOL teachers used music to teach English language skills in the following frequency order: vocabulary, speaking fluency, reading skills, cultural awareness, listening comprehension, pronunciation, syntax and grammar, and writing skills. Edwards’ study (1997) may explain the rationale for this particular order. She reported that ESOL teachers received training in different categories with vocabulary being the most emphasized, then cultural awareness, followed by pronunciation, and finally reading and grammar. In the current study, the frequency with which the teachers used music in each language skill matched the amount of training teachers received in each category in Edwards’ study, except that using music to teach reading skills was reported more frequently than expected. As discussed earlier, the No Child Left Behind Act may have affected the results. In this study, the list included some English language skills that were not examined in Edwards’ study, such as speaking fluency, listening comprehension, and writing skills. Considering that teachers reported limited time with ESOL classes, it is reasonable that teachers use music less to support writing skills. Because developing writing skills itself is time-consuming, teachers may feel pressured to have students finish a writing task during short class periods with no

time left to use music. Further research should investigate ESOL teachers' rationales for which skills they do or do not teach through music.

There is little research about ESOL teachers' music implementation. In this study, teachers reported moderate use of music teaching methods. Having students echo line by line was the most frequently used music teaching method reported. This method follows the step-by-step strategies in English teaching. Because ELL students have limited English abilities, echoing line by line not only provides demonstration but also the opportunity for students to listen and reproduce the language. The second most popular music teaching method was pointing to song lyrics word by word while students are singing/ playing/ listening to songs. Visual aids are very important for language learning. With the lyrics presented and teachers pointing to the lyrics word by word allows ELL students to follow along. This method is similar to language teaching wherein teachers read aloud and help students follow the words by pointing, which can help develop students' reading skills, word recognition, word pronunciation, sentence structure, and sentence intonation. Participants' responses indicated that they often introduced the vocabulary of song lyrics before singing/playing/listening to songs. Considering that teachers in this study reported teaching vocabulary skills through songs more than other English language skills, it is not surprising that they explained the vocabulary first so that the students would have a better understanding of the meaning of the song lyrics.

Having students sing the song lyrics along with recordings was the next chosen music teaching method. This method was not used as frequently as having students echo line by line. It is hard for teachers to monitor students' achievement in song lyrics and

melody by simply singing along with recordings. It can be difficult for students to follow the recording without the visual representation of the words, especially those with limited English language abilities. However, having students sing the song lyrics along with recordings is easier for teachers who do not know how to teach songs or who are unfamiliar with the songs. Participants indicated infrequently introducing the background knowledge of the song before singing/ playing/ listening to songs. However, one study indicated that English learners demonstrated better listening comprehension skills when introduced to background knowledge rather than to vocabulary before listening to spoken text (Chang & Read, 2006). Perhaps it is unfair to compare a study of listening comprehension of spoken text with the current study of sung text, however, because the goals of the two activities are different. The effect of the introduction of background knowledge and vocabulary on ELL students' listening comprehension of songs still requires more research and investigation. Guiding students to talk about the feelings music gave them after listening to songs received the lowest rating, suggesting that this teaching method may not be useful, or may require teachers' more in-depth music knowledge. ESOL teachers may feel uncomfortable guiding music discussions because of an insufficient knowledge of music elements. Additional courses introducing music elements, such as tempo, dynamics, or pitch may alleviate this difficulty. Further, their ELL students may not have sufficient speaking skills to discuss about the feelings music evokes. Therefore, the majority to the teachers rarely or never used this music teaching method. Perhaps if they were provided with musical examples and discussion guides

aimed at students with limited English vocabulary they might find this type of activity more useful.

**Songs and music selections.** Several educators have suggested different ways to select songs for ELL students. However, there is little research indicating how current ESOL teachers select songs or music for their classes. The results of this study revealed the criteria for music selection, music genres, the kinds of music materials, and the origins of music materials that these ESOL teachers used to teach English.

***Music selection criteria.*** In order to better understand ESOL teachers' use of music, it is important to discover the criteria they used for song selection. One of the most important criteria for these participants was a song that includes repetition. Songs with repetition have the potential to increase ELL students' input of the English language, and are easier for students with limited English abilities to recall and reproduce. These teachers also preferred songs that reinforced class objectives. Because teaching English is the main focus for ESOL classes, it is understandable that teachers select songs for language learning purposes. Learning through songs that reinforces class objectives will provide ELL students extra opportunities and a different, motivating way to master each of the learning goals.

The secondary criteria were that the songs are suitable to the ELLs' English levels and personally familiar to the teachers. It is surprising that teachers rated suitable level as less important than song repetition and objective reinforcement. However, the reason could be that ESOL teachers may teach students at different language levels in the same class. It would be difficult for teachers to choose songs that match each student's

language level. Participants indicated that their familiarity with songs was a less important criterion than students' English level. Preservice teachers indicated in Barry and Walls' (1999) study that their personal music preferences might not necessarily be appropriate for classroom usage. This could explain why personal familiarity was not as important a song selection criterion for this study's participants.

Participants' responses indicated an even lower desire to include the songs or music that students liked, or those included in the school curriculum. The main reason the teachers used music or songs in classes was for teaching purposes. Student-selected songs would be based on students' personal interests rather than for ESOL purposes, however. Teachers reported selecting songs and music from the school curriculum as the least frequently used criterion. According to the results to a following question, the teachers indicated the lack of appropriate music materials and resources. ESOL teachers may infrequently select music from the school curriculum because there are either insufficient music or songs in the school ESOL curriculum, or perhaps these are not included in their curriculum at all. The development of resources for connecting songs and music activities to school ESOL curricula would appear to be a valuable undertaking.

***Music genres.*** The music genres participants selected reflected the music selection criteria they used. The most popular music genres, used by a large majority of respondents, were children's songs and nursery rhymes. This likely is because children's songs and nursery rhymes have repetitive features, which increase the language input for ELL students. Children's songs and nursery rhymes always include simple sentence structures, which can be used to reinforce class objectives, and ELL students can

reproduce them relatively easily. They also have age-suitable contents, which help students relate song contents to their daily lives. In addition, children's songs and nursery rhymes may be the most familiar genre to the ESOL teachers and the most comfortable for them to sing. That a high percentage of ESOL teachers used children's songs and nursery rhymes also corresponds to Barry and Walls' results (1999). They found that preservice education students preferred to use children's songs in their classrooms in comparison to other music genres. Those teachers also preferred to select music that could be linked easily to classroom usage.

About one-third of the teachers reported using folk songs to teach English. Most folk songs use repetitive forms with variations, which display the repetitious nature of the genre. However, it is possible that because of changing lyrics in verses, ESOL teachers may find folk songs more "wordy" and difficult than children's songs or nursery rhymes. Also, the lyrics of folk songs may reflect certain ethnic groups, social issues, or rural working lives which could be difficult to understand or outside of the experiences of ELL children. These are probably the reasons folk songs are used less frequently than children's songs or nursery rhymes, but more often than other genres. Although it could be beneficial and motivating if students were exposed to a variety of music genres, other music genres such as pop songs, jazz chants, rap songs, classical music, or country music were not often used by these teachers. The fact that the teachers reported using pop songs less frequently contrasts with a study by Bjorklund (2002), who found that ESOL teachers used pop songs the most. However, Bjorklund investigated college instructors' music usage, rather than elementary teachers'. The lyrics of pop music are more likely to

be appropriate and meaningful for adults than for children. Therefore, it is understandable that ESOL teachers from college levels use more pop songs than teachers in elementary schools. The study by Barry and Walls (1999) described preservice teachers' doubts about using pop music in elementary classrooms because they were not sure how to use them appropriately for educational purposes. One of the concerns for ESOL teachers might relate to the way the language is used, such as unusual pronunciation, sentence structure, or the grammar used in popular music, which may not be suitable for learning purposes. In addition to concerns about inappropriate topics for elementary school, some concerns with the lyrics may be the use of slang, incomplete sentences, or incorrect grammar, which can confuse or provide bad models for ELL students.

These participants did not use jazz chants often. Even though a music/ESOL educator, Carolyn Graham (1979, 1999, 2002, 2006), has published many books regarding how to use jazz chants to teach English as a second language, it seems that they have had little influence on these teachers' decisions on music genre selections. Jazz chants share the similarity of rhythms, stress, and intonation patterns with English spoken language. It could be beneficial for ELL students to learn English through jazz chants, but the idea of using jazz chant to support English learning probably was not been incorporated into these ESOL teachers' education programs. The teachers did not seem to be familiar with the Graham materials, and seemed to lack knowledge of how to incorporate jazz chants.

In this study, rap songs received even lower responses than pop songs or jazz chants. A similar result was found from Barry and Walls' study (1999), showing that rap

songs were rated very low because teachers did not believe any form of rap music can be appropriate for elementary classroom usage. Also, the nature of rap requires fast tempo spoken skills, which can be difficult for ELL students with limited English language ability. Teachers may be concerned that rap songs often contain violent and profane language not suitable for educational purposes. These participants almost never used country music in the classroom, either, perhaps also because the lyrics may not be children-friendly.

This study's participants reported using classical music infrequently. This is similar to the results of the study by Bjorklund (2002), in that none of the ESOL college instructors in her study used classical music in their classes. To lead ELL students to listen to classical music, and further, have students discuss the music requires the teachers' understanding of classical music and its cultural backgrounds. Due to the lack of training reported by participants, it could be too challenging for ESOL teachers to use classical music for language teaching purposes.

A few teachers wrote in that they used multicultural and holiday music, genres that were not listed in the survey. It is understandable that ESOL teachers use these genres to introduce cultures or holidays. Because multicultural and holiday music were not included as choice options in this study, it would be interesting for future researchers to discover how frequently teachers use these two music genres in their English teaching.

***Music materials.*** Online video clips were the most popular music materials selected by the participants. Perhaps this is because many online video clips are free and easily accessible through the Internet. With the tight educational budgets and limited

class preparation time, online video clips serve as a convenient way for teachers to search for music materials. In addition, video clips may serve as helpful visual aids for ELL students who have insufficient listening skills to comprehend the content of songs based on aural information only.

Besides online resources, recordings, followed by song picture books, were the most popular music materials. These results correspond to Giles and Frego's (2004) study of the music materials used in elementary classrooms. Recordings and song picture books may not be as economical and accessible as online video resources, however, the results in this study seem to show that the teachers considered those materials beneficial, necessary, and frequently useful. Very few participants indicated that musical instruments were the kinds of music materials they used in class. As the results indicated, these teachers did not feel comfortable playing musical instruments for their students and rarely played them, so it is not surprising that they did not use musical instruments frequently. Clearly, their focus was on music that used words.

Some participants also listed "visual aids" as music materials. They reported presenting song lyrics with visual aids, body language, karaoke, and other props. This seems to indicate that the participants understood the importance of visual support for language learning. However, because visual aids were not listed as music materials that could be checked-off in this study, it is unclear how many teachers actually used them. For future research, it will be worth examining current ESOL teachers' experiences using music-related visual aids to teach English, and whether it would be useful for music teachers to help provide these materials for their use.

*Music origins.* The majority of ESOL teachers reported using the Internet to find music materials and resources. In contrast, only a small percentage of the teachers used materials from bookstores. This is similar to results of a study by Lee and Downie (2004), who reported that adults preferred to use the Internet to find music information rather than print sources. Even though Lee and Downie did not focus on teachers, their study and my study both illustrate that online sources have replaced physical stores and become the main search media for people to find music related information.

Nearly half of the participants indicated that they found music materials or resources from other ESOL or classroom teachers. However, only a small number of the teachers reported asking school music teachers for help. Similar results were found in a study by Holden and Button (2006), who indicated that non-music specialist teachers rarely received support or help from the music specialist or music coordinator at their schools. Few ESOL teachers may seek help from music teachers because they have different criteria for choosing songs or materials, and music teachers may have insufficient training on working with ELL students. ESOL teachers may be uncertain whether music teachers understand ELL students' needs or whether they would be able to recommend appropriate music materials or resources. Another possibility is that ESOL teachers may feel more comfortable seeking help from familiar teachers rather than unfamiliar ones. Many participants reported that they have to travel each day between different classrooms or even schools. They may have limited time to interact with music teachers, but have more contact with other ESOL or classroom teachers regarding curriculum and students' progress. Thus, they reported receiving music materials and

resources more from other ESOL or classroom teachers than from music teachers.

Further investigation about ESOL teachers' attitude towards seeking help from music teachers is warranted. The findings would help teacher preparation programs in music education develop preservice teachers' abilities to help teachers select songs for ESOL purposes and to help ELL students in learning English through songs.

Music materials and resources were obtained by these teachers from other origins. About one third of the teachers reported that they used school owned music materials or resources. School is not a popular origin for teachers to obtain music materials because as discussed earlier, school owned materials may not be sufficient or suitable for ESOL purposes. Participants also reported infrequently using workshops as a source of music materials or resources. It is likely that there are not many workshops addressing the topic of using music to teach English. If true, more workshops related to this topic are needed in school districts and at ESOL teacher conferences.

### **ESOL Teachers' Needs**

There are many reasons that could prevent ESOL teachers from teaching English through music. The results of the study indicated teachers' needs from two points of view: their difficulties integrating music in their classes and their desire to receive different kinds of music training courses.

**ESOL teacher's difficulties.** Participants reported that insufficient time was the most difficult issue limiting their use of music, followed by lack of resources and appropriate materials, lack of money, curriculum control, and confidence in their music skills. The possible factors impeding elementary teachers' use of music in their

classrooms have been investigated by many researchers, with similar results. Elementary teachers also reported the lack of time (Abril & Gault, 2006; Bell, 2003; Byo, 1999; Edwards, 1997; Giles & Frego, 2004; Hejjawi, 2007; Holden & Button, 2006), insufficient training (Byo, 1999; Edwards, 1997; Hejjawi, 2007; Holden & Button, 2006; Şevik, 2011), lack of suitable materials (Bell, 2003; Byo, 1999; Hejjawi, 2007; Saunders & Baker, 1991; Şevik, 2011), insufficient money (Abril & Gault, 2006; Edwards, 1997), lack of control over curriculum (Abril & Gault, 2006), low confidence in music skills (Holden & Button, 2006), and a lack of space (Bell, 2003) as reasons hindering them from using music in their classes.

In this study, the majority of the teachers reported that they did not have sufficient time in the class schedule for music. Some of the teachers further specified that they already had too tight schedules to teach the entire curriculum. Several teachers indicated that they focused on teaching new vocabulary, reading, writing, and helping students understand their assignments, which left no time for music. A few teachers identified the lack of preparation time to look for suitable music materials. These results correspond to previous studies (Bresler, 1993; Byo, 1999; Giles & Frego, 2004), which have revealed that time limitation was the most frequently listed factor for the exclusion of music by elementary classroom teachers.

Time pressures in the present ESOL educational environment may cause teachers to eliminate music in their curriculum. According to Giles and Frego (2004), elementary classroom teachers felt they lacked time for music. They focused their teaching mainly on preparing students for the proficiency tests required by No Child Left Behind. Because of

this, teachers strive to improve students' scores on academic assessments in reading and math, including the scores of their ELL students. In order to help ELL students meet the same academic achievement as native English speaking students, ESOL teachers need to focus their teaching to develop students' abilities in the areas being assessed. Therefore, a few participants indicated that music was not a priority for ESOL classes. These teachers were concerned about students' test scores or reading abilities and believed that teaching methods other than music were more efficient and effective.

Time pressures on ESOL teachers also may derive from the language assessment of ELL students. The *Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) for ELLs test* is an English language proficiency assessment for students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. ELL students are required to show their yearly progress on this assessment. The assessment was designed based on the five *World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA): English Language Development Standards* (2012). The standards require students to demonstrate their abilities using general language in classroom and school settings, and the language of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In order to prepare students for this assessment, ESOL teachers are pressured to help their students in all of these different content areas within limited class time. Although music is suggested as one of the complementary materials in the standards documents, it is not included in the assessment. This likely explains why many teachers decide not to incorporate music in their classes. As a result, in this study, the teachers did not use music as frequently as expected.

Time limitation was not the biggest concern of the ESOL teachers in Edwards' (1997) study, however, the lack of money was the most difficult issue, then the lack of training, and finally the lack of time to include music in the class schedule. By comparison, in the current study, the position of time and money were switched, while training was in the same position. These changes may result from the different ESOL educational environments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including the increased use of the Internet. ESOL teachers can find free materials and resources through the Internet even with limited budgets. Therefore, the lack of money may not be as large a concern as decades ago.

The responses of this study's participants indicated that the lack of music materials and training resources were the second greatest concerns. With limited music teaching method backgrounds, several participants reported that they did not know where to find appropriate music materials or resources that matched their students' proficiency levels, supported ESOL objectives, helped students in content areas, or were designed for specific levels of ELL students. These results demonstrate an ESOL teacher knowledge gap. ESOL teachers need assistance in choosing appropriate music materials and suitable techniques to teach English through music. A majority of participants indicated that they would like to receive more education on how to find appropriate music resources, materials, activities, and songs, suggesting that more courses or resources in this field should be developed and provided.

Lack of curriculum control as a difficulty received one third of the responses. The ESOL curriculum may need to focus on how to help students pass the proficiency tests

and ELLs' ACCESS test. Because music is not one of the subjects being assessed, it may not be included in the curriculum. In addition to teachers' pressure due to time limitations, it is possible that these ESOL teachers need to emphasize teaching the existing curriculum, rather than including "extracurricular" materials. Therefore, the lack of curriculum control can be an obstacle preventing these teachers from using music in their classrooms.

A few participants were concerned about the lack of space for students to learn English through music. These teachers did not have appropriate classroom space. They taught in hallways, in shared classrooms while other students were studying something else, in classrooms with poor sound-proofing, or in schools where they would need to carry musical materials from room to room. Under these situations would be difficult for ESOL teachers to include music. This may illustrate a need for ELL students' learning environments to be improved.

**Helpful music training courses.** A high percentage of these participants reported a desire to learn music teaching methods, including how to find music resources, materials, and activities, how to integrate music into English language learning, and how to select appropriate songs for their ELL students. These results also correspond to the study by Saunders and Baker (1991) who reported that in-service classroom teachers perceived the abilities of integrating music and selecting appropriate songs as two useful music skills. In this study, a few teachers indicated that even though they had a positive attitude towards music, they did not know how to teach English through music and incorporate music into their curriculum. Although the teachers in this study reported high

comfort levels teaching music in ESOL classes, more than half still felt the need for instruction in integrating music to English language learning. However, only a few teachers indicated the need to learn how to lead and teach songs. This implies that simply helping teachers to teach songs may not meet ESOL teachers' needs. Rather, instruction about how to support English learning through music and songs would be more helpful.

The participants in this study viewed training in music teaching methods as much more important than training in music skills. They reported a low desire to learn how to play body percussion, instruments, create music or song lyrics, read music, and sing. These results support a previous study by Propst (2003), indicating that teachers' music performance experience in music methods classes, such as singing, playing instruments, and teaching songs by rote did not affect in-service elementary classroom teachers' use of music in their classes. In addition, elementary classroom teachers viewed playing instruments and composing music as the least important music standards (Byo, 1999; Colwell, 2008), and reading music notation as the least important topic among teacher preparation courses (Saunders & Baker, 1991). These studies could explain that instructing teachers in music skills is not helpful for non-music specialist teachers' use of music in their classrooms, including ESOL teachers.

### **Implications**

**ESOL Teacher preparation.** Developing the music teaching skills of ESOL teachers will be more beneficial than enhancing their music skills. In this study, participants' responses reflected high comfort levels in singing songs, teaching songs, and moving/dancing to songs. We may conclude that current teacher development

programs do not need to provide additional instruction of music skills in those areas. In addition, these teachers did not feel comfortable playing instruments in front of their students, did not use instruments for music activities or for music materials often, their music instrument playing experience did not affect their use of music in their classes, and only a few of them indicated a need for training in playing instruments. Although instrument playing can be motivating for ELLs, due to its lack of language related features, it may not be helpful in reinforcing language objectives. Therefore, it may not be an effective use of time or resources to develop ESOL teachers' instrument playing skills in teacher preparation programs.

ESOL teachers need more instruction in teaching strategies using music.

According to this study, the length of participants' teaching experience was not related to their use of music, and very few teachers reported that they took music or music teaching method courses in college. This may be because music instruction for ESOL teachers has not increased in the past decades, and is still insufficient. The majority of participants indicated their needs for music teaching coursework, especially in how to integrate music to reinforce English learning and in choosing appropriate music materials for ESOL purposes. The administrators in higher education programs should include music methods as a requirement for ESOL preservice teachers so that all teachers will have the music teaching skills to implement music in their classes.

In the music methods content, focusing on how to integrate music for English teaching, especially emphasizing the content areas in which students will be assessed, is recommended. Teacher preparation programs should demonstrate how to use music

activities to reinforce ELLs' language abilities in classroom and school settings, with an emphasis on the language used in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Music activities should be provided to teach ELLs vocabulary, to enhance students' listening comprehension, to improve students' speaking skills, to develop students' pronunciation and reading skills, and to reinforce sentence structure for grammar points and writing skills. In addition, the teacher preparation programs should provide successful music teaching methods, such as the ways to help ELLs learn song lyrics, activities to introduce vocabulary and background knowledge for students' comprehension of song lyrics, methods to include music elements to elicit discussion about music, and the techniques to lead song lyrics creation activities. Then, ESOL teachers would have the teaching skills to integrate music in their classrooms.

Teaching ESOL teachers how to choose appropriate music materials and resources is another topic that should be included in the music methods preparation. Because ESOL teachers appear to have a lack of knowledge in this field, college instructors and workshop instructors should understand English language learning procedures and develop a curriculum that helps ESOL teachers select appropriate music and songs. Instructors could provide lists of useful weblinks, online video clips, recordings and song picture books so that ESOL teachers have appropriate music materials and resources easily at hand. Instructors could also teach the techniques of choosing appropriate songs and music, including those that have repetition and are easy to sing. They also could include those that match English learning objectives, such as music or songs that can reinforce students' vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar,

listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, especially song lyrics that relate to the assessed areas. In addition, they could teach how to choose songs and music that are suitable for students' different English levels. For example, to teach students with lesser speaking abilities, ESOL teachers will learn to choose activities such as playing body percussion or dancing to music that require minimum speaking skills. These are ways in which ELL students can express themselves and demonstrate their understanding of music or song lyrics. To teach students with more advanced English abilities, teachers will learn to choose songs or music for activities such as singing, listening, song discussion, and song lyrics creation, which can reinforce ELL students' language comprehensive and reproduction skills.

However, fixed music selection criteria may not be appropriate for all ELL students. To encourage individual student's positive music experiences, teachers should learn how to choose songs based on students' personality, interests, age, and gender. The ESOL teachers participating in this study mainly used children's songs and nursery rhymes to teach English, however, upper elementary students may not be interested in these materials. Helping teachers to explore varied music genres seems necessary. Folk songs, pop songs, jazz chants, rap songs, classical music, or country music can be more difficult for ELL students than are children's songs and nursery rhymes, and the language may not be appropriate for ESOL purposes. Therefore, teacher preparation programs should provide ESOL teachers with strategies on how to modify or simplify the song lyrics or how to use parts of songs from diverse music genres to meet different groups of ELL students' needs. These music teaching techniques can be very helpful and

motivating for English learning and should be contained in the ESOL teacher preparation curriculum.

The integration of music in teaching English may reduce the teaching time needed. Time limitations were the main concern reported by the participants about using music. Instead of taking extra time, teaching English through music may promote ELLs' effective English learning. As discussed earlier, music motivates students learning. Because of the motivating power of music, ELL students will be more likely to stay on task and input their language knowledge effectively. This could solve the problems of time limitation reported by the ESOL teachers.

**ESOL support resources.** Besides ESOL teacher preparation programs, there are other resources that can provide support to teachers for the inclusion of music in their classes. One support resource is music materials provided in the ESOL school curriculum. Participants reported rarely using the school curriculum as a resource for music materials. Textbook and methods book authors could include songs and music that can reinforce English objectives and are suitable for students' at various English levels. District curriculum coordinators should develop curriculum materials libraries to better meet ESOL teachers' need.

Having ESOL classes meet in hallways or push-in classes provides an unequal learning environment for non-native students and may hinder effective learning. According to the No Child Left Behind Act, every student should have an equal opportunity to learn and be successful. Therefore, elementary administrators should put

more effort into developing suitable learning environments for ELL students and providing ESOL instructors better teaching environments.

Music advocacy in higher education could help to develop a supportive atmosphere for music in elementary schools. Given the tendency in elementary education to integrate multiple subjects, college instructors in the education field should advocate the benefits of music in their own courses. Therefore, not only ESOL teachers, but classroom teachers and subject teachers would also understand the benefits of including music in their curriculum, and they may be more understanding and supportive of the music sounds produced by ESOL classes.

Music education programs in higher education also can develop their preservice teachers' abilities to assist ESOL teachers and to teach ELL students themselves. Due to the increasing numbers of immigrant students, more and more ESOL teachers are needed. However, those teachers do not have music or music teaching skills such as music teachers do. ESOL teachers may struggle to teach their students' English through music. To develop the music environment and help ESOL teachers, college music education classes should include more curricula addressing how to use music to teach ELL students. Music education instructors can invite visiting scholars to the music class to instruct in the teaching of ELLs. They can design programs that require preservice music teachers to work collaboratively with preservice ESOL teachers. They can also assign projects that require preservice music teachers to design lessons that include the needs of ELLs. Teachers with both ESOL and music backgrounds should also collaborate to provide workshops at music conferences to help college music instructors teach their preservice

teachers how to help ELLs learn in music classes. Then, music teachers would be able to assist ESOL teachers in selecting songs or music appropriate for ESOL purposes, and also to use music to help their ELL students learn in music classes.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

Generalization of the results of this study is limited by the teachers who were provided the opportunity to participate. Participants were recruited through the Missouri ESOL district coordinators, some of whom were unable to cooperate with the study by providing teacher contact information, so the ESOL teachers from those districts missed the opportunity to participate. Although the participants seem to represent a variety of different types of school districts and teaching situations across the state, the results may not be a representative sample of ESOL teachers in the state of Missouri.

Additionally, this study only focused on Missouri elementary ESOL teachers' use of music. Every state may have different requirements and types of ESOL classes for ELL students. Their requirement for teachers' training in music or music methods skills may be different, as well. These variables may affect teachers' attitudes and decision making toward using music in their classrooms. Further research should investigate the use of music by ESOL teachers' in other states and examine whether or not teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of teaching English through music are similar to the results of this current study. English also is taught to non-native English speakers in other countries, so an international perspective would also be informative.

The ESOL teachers who chose to participate in this study may not be representative of the current ESOL teacher population. Teachers who have more

experience or comfort in teaching English through music may have been more willing to participate in this study, and perhaps even be eager to, whereas the average ESOL teachers may have declined to participate. Therefore, it may be inappropriate to generalize the data as representative to the entire population.

Another limitation of this study is that teachers' reported data may differ from the reality of music usage in their classes. Wang and Sogin (1997) indicated that teachers' self-reported times for music activities were greater than the actual time being recorded. Because this current study was conducted simply through an online survey, the collected data relies completely on teachers' self-report. Future studies should include more data collection methods, such as videotapes, interviews, and observations, to verify the accuracy of teachers' self-report information regarding ESOL teachers' use of music.

With waivers being given to states for implementing No Child Left Behind, the results of ESOL teachers' use of music may only apply to the current school setting which still was under the influences of that policy.. In 2010, President Barack Obama proposed a *Blueprint for Reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. To date, 34 states, including Missouri, have received waivers exempting the state from following the No Child Left Behind Act (The U.S. Department of Education, 2013). This means that schools and teachers from these states have the flexibility to develop and implement effective instruction that enhances students' competence for future jobs. It will be worthwhile for future researchers to investigate ESOL teachers' use of music after the new educational policies are implemented.

Due to the lack of research about ESOL teachers' use of music, this study relied on the literature base of many previous studies of in-service and preservice non-music specialist classroom teachers. ESOL teachers and classroom teachers are similar in that neither are music specialists and both must teach their own specialty rather than teach music. However, in schools with tight budgets, classroom teachers are more likely to be asked to replace music teachers than are ESOL teachers. Also, classroom teachers may have different music or music methods training requirements than do ESOL teachers. The available music materials or resources for subject matter integration and for ESOL purposes also may vary. These variables may account for different uses of music by ESOL and classroom teachers. More research is needed to investigate ESOL teachers' use of music, and especially the effects of music on English learning, to determine its best use for the increasing numbers of ELL students in the United States.

### **Conclusion**

Music can be an effective tool to help ELL students learn English skills. ESOL teachers in this sample were confident in using music and had positive attitudes toward teaching English through music. However, in order to further provide students with effective English learning experiences through music, enhancing ESOL teachers' abilities to successfully implement music in their classes is necessary. Teachers need appropriate music materials and resources that can reinforce their English teaching objectives. Instructors of teacher preparation programs should consider including music teaching methods in the ESOL teacher curriculum, and workshops should be offered on topics based on ESOL in-service teachers' needs, as found in this study. Administrators and

education policy makers also should be made aware of the potential benefits of music in language learning, and provide ESOL teachers more freedom to implement instruction through the use of music.

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APPENDIX A  
Elementary ESOL Teacher Survey

1. What is your age?  
\_\_\_\_\_ years old
2. How many years have you been teaching as an ESOL teacher (including this year)?  
\_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Do you teach a self-contained ESOL class?  
 Yes  
 No

If “Yes” is selected, then skip to Question 8.

4. In total, how many English Language Learners (ELLs) are you responsible for?  
\_\_\_\_\_ students
5. In general, do you go to music class with your ELL students?  
 Yes  
 No

If “No” is selected, then skip to Question 7.

6. How do you help your ELL students in their music classes? Check all that apply.  
 Explain the music terms and vocabulary to ELLs  
 Help ELLs read music and song lyrics  
 Assist ELLs to play instruments  
 Explain or demonstrate for ELLs how to participate in music activities  
 Generally help ELLs to follow the music teacher’s instructions  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
7. What subject classes do you attend with your ELL students? Check all that apply.  
 Communication Arts  
 Mathematics  
 Science  
 Social Studies  
 Fine Arts  
 Health

- Physical Education
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Now skip to Question 11.

8. How many self-contained ESOL classes do you teach?  
\_\_\_\_\_ class(es)
9. On average, how many students are in each of your ESOL classes?
- 1-5
  - 6-10
  - 11-15
  - 16-20
  - Over 20
10. On average, how many minutes do you teach each self-contained ESOL class?  
\_\_\_\_\_ minutes a week
11. Do you play a musical instrument?
- Yes How long did you take lessons? \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
12. What other musical background do you have? Check all that apply.
- High school, College, or Adult Choir
  - High school, College, or Adult Band/ Orchestra
  - College Music Theory/ History/ Appreciation/ Fundamental Classes
  - College Music Teaching Methods Class
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
  - None

13. How comfortable are you with your music skills when using music in the classroom?  
Please rate using the following scale.

|   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I am comfortable singing songs with my class.           |                |       |         |          |                   |
| I am comfortable teaching songs to my class.            |                |       |         |          |                   |
| I am comfortable playing instruments for my class.      |                |       |         |          |                   |
| I am comfortable moving/dancing to music with my class. |                |       |         |          |                   |

14. On average, how often do you use songs or music to teach English?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

If “Never” is selected, then skip to Question 22.

15. How often do you use music to teach the following language skills to your ELL students?

|  | Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Listening comprehension  |            |       |           |        |       |
| Speaking fluency   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Reading skills   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Writing skills   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Vocabulary   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Pronunciation, including vowel/consonant, word stress, intonation, and syllable counting |            |       |           |        |       |
| Syntax and grammar   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Cultural awareness   |            |       |           |        |       |

16. What kind of music activities do you use to teach English? Please indicate the frequency on the following scale.

|  | Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|--|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Singing songs  |            |       |           |        |       |
| Listening to songs   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Creating song lyrics   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Playing body percussion (clapping, tapping, patting, snapping, stomping, etc.) |            |       |           |        |       |
| Dancing to music   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Playing instruments  |            |       |           |        |       |
| Playing musical roles  |            |       |           |        |       |
| Discussing cultures using music or songs                                       |            |       |           |        |       |
| Other (please specify): _____  |            |       |           |        |       |

17. What music genres do you use to teach English? Check all that apply.

- Children's songs
- Nursery rhymes
- Folk songs
- Country music
- Pop songs
- Jazz chants
- Rap
- Classical music
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

18. How do you select songs or music for your ESOL class? Please indicate the frequency on the following scale.

|   | Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|---|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Personally familiar songs or music                          |            |       |           |        |       |
| Songs or music students like                                |            |       |           |        |       |
| Songs or music suitable to students' English language level |            |       |           |        |       |
| Songs or music that reinforces current class objectives     |            |       |           |        |       |
| Songs that include repetition                               |            |       |           |        |       |
| Songs or music in your school curriculum                    |            |       |           |        |       |

19. How often do you use the following teaching methods in your ESOL class? Please indicate the frequency on the following scale.

|   | Very Often | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|---|------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Introducing the vocabulary of the song lyrics before singing/playing/listening to the song  |            |       |           |        |       |
| Introducing the background knowledge of the song before singing/playing/listening to the song   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Teaching a song line by line and have students echo   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Asking students to sing the song lyrics along with a tape, CD, or video clips   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Pointing to the song lyrics word by word while students are singing/playing/listening to the song   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Using comprehension activities during or after singing/playing/listening to a song (e.g. putting lyrics in order, completing a fill-in-the-blank worksheet, talking about the meaning of song lyrics, etc.) |            |       |           |        |       |
| Guiding students to talk about the feeling of music after singing/playing/listening to the song   |            |       |           |        |       |
| Other (please specify): _____   |            |       |           |        |       |

20. What kind of materials do you use to teach English through music? Check all that apply.

- Song picture books
- Recordings
- Online video clip, such as Youtube, etc.
- Musical instruments
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

21. Where do you find materials or resources to teach English through music? Check all that apply.

- Internet
- Bookstore
- Student-selected
- Other ESOL teachers or classroom teachers
- School music teachers
- School owned
- Workshop
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do you think that using music in the ESOL classroom has or could have an effect on ELLs' English learning? Please indicate on the following scale.

|   | Strongly agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Music motivates ELLs to learn English.      |                |       |         |          |                   |
| Music lowers ELLs' anxiety.                 |                |       |         |          |                   |
| Music positively changes ELLs' attitudes.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| Music enhances ELLs' class participation.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| In general, music helps ELLs learn English. |                |       |         |          |                   |

23. What difficulties have you experienced when using music to teach English? Check all that apply.

- Not enough time in class schedule
- Do not know where to find appropriate materials
- Not confident about my music skills
- Not enough money for the materials or resources
- Not enough resources, such as teacher training or workshops addressing this topic
- Do not control the curriculum
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

24. What training do you wish you had or could have to help you use music to enhance ELLs language skills? Check all that apply.

I would like to learn:

- how to integrate music to English language learning
- about music resources, materials, and activities for ESOL purposes
- to select appropriate songs for ESOL purposes
- how to lead and teach songs
- how to sing
- how to read music
- how to create music or song lyrics
- how to play instruments
- body percussion (clapping, patting, etc.)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

25. Please share other concerns or difficulties you have when teaching music or songs to your ESOL students.

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX B



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FAX: (573) 884-0663

January 7, 2013

Principal Investigator: Lin, Pei-Ying  
Department: School of Music

Your Application to project entitled *Elementary English for Speakers of Other Languages teachers' perspectives and usage of using music in their classes* was reviewed and approved by the MU Campus Institutional Review Board according to terms and conditions described below:

|                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| IRB Project Number                | 1205590                     |
| Initial Application Approval Date | January 7, 2013             |
| IRB Expiration Date               | January 7, 2014             |
| Level of Review                   | Exempt                      |
| Project Status                    | Active - Open to Enrollment |
| Regulation                        | 45 CFR 46.101b(2)           |
| Risk Level                        | Minimal Risk                |

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
2. All unanticipated problems, serious adverse events, and deviations must be reported to the IRB within 5 days.
3. All modifications must be IRB approved by submitting the Exempt Amendment prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce risk.
4. All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
5. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date.
6. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.
7. Utilize the IRB stamped document informing subjects of the research and other approved research documents located within the document storage section of eIRB.

If you have any questions, please contact the Campus IRB at 573-882-9585 or [umcresearchcibr@missouri.edu](mailto:umcresearchcibr@missouri.edu).

Thank you,

Charles Borduin, PhD  
Campus IRB Chair

APPENDIX C

January 9, 2013

Dear {FirstName}{LastName},

My name is Pei-Ying Lin. I am a doctoral student in music education studying at the University of Missouri. I am working on my dissertation about elementary ESOL teachers' perspectives, usage, and difficulties of using music to teach English. I look forward to discovering ESOL teachers' needs that will allow me to provide suggestions to enhance the quality of ESOL teacher training programs in higher education, as well as possibilities for professional development. Your name was given to me by your district ELL coordinator {FirstName}{LastName}. I am hoping to enroll all of the elementary ESOL teachers in Missouri as participants in my study.

I am writing this letter to request your help in completing an online research survey. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in the research is voluntary. I assure that your name and your school will remain anonymous in the presentation of any findings. The Informed Consent Form will be provided as the first page of the survey.

To take this survey, you must be an elementary ESOL teacher.

If you are interested in this research, please click the link below to access the survey:

<https://XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

(If this link does not open, please copy and paste this link into your browser's address bar.)

The survey link will be active from January 9 to January 30, 2013. If you have any questions, please contact me via [XXXXXX@mail.missouri.edu](mailto:XXXXXX@mail.missouri.edu). Questions about your rights as a research participant may be addressed to the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board at 573-XXX-XXXX.

Your help is greatly appreciated!!

Sincerely,  
Pei-Ying Lin

## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent

The purpose of this research study is to acquire data concerning elementary English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers' perspectives, the materials and activities that teachers use, and the difficulties the teachers meet using music to teach English in Missouri. You were contacted because you are an elementary ESOL teacher in Missouri. It is unlikely you will experience any risks from participation in this study. The benefits are that the survey results will provide information and ideas that will be useful for the instructors of the ESOL training courses in higher education and the presenters of workshops in conferences to address in-service ESOL teachers' needs of using music in class.

Please complete the short questionnaire that follows. This should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. While I hope you will complete the whole survey, you will be free to decline to answer any items, as you choose. You may remove yourself from the research at any point without penalty. Your responses to the survey questions will be completely confidential – there will be no way for me to connect survey responses with respondents. Your answers to the survey will be downloaded only to the researcher's computer, which is password protected.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 573-XXX-XXXX, or my doctoral advisor, Dr. Wendy Sims, 573-XXX-XXXX. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this research.

Thank you very much,  
Pei-Ying Lin

Pei-Ying Lin

To begin the survey, please click the "Next" button below.

APPENDIX E

January 22, 2013

Dear {FirstName}{LastName},

If you have already responded to my survey regarding to *Elementary ESOL Teachers' Perspectives and Usage of Using Music in ESOL Classes*, I thank you very much. Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated!

If you have not yet responded, please accept this final reminder as an invitation to participate. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. This link listed below will direct you to the survey:

<https://XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX>

The survey will only remain active by **January 30**. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,  
Pei-Ying Lin

## VITA

Pei-Ying Lin was born in Taipei, Taiwan. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in music at Tunghai University in Taiwan, and a Master of Arts degree in music education from the University of Missouri. After receiving her Master's degree, she returned to Taiwan where she taught music and ESOL at Wego Elementary School for four years. Then, she returned to the University of Missouri to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy in Learning, Teaching, and Curriculum with an emphasis on early childhood and elementary general music education and a support in ESOL. She earned her PhD. in May, 2013. During her doctoral studies, Ms. Lin was an instructor for the University of Missouri, teaching a music fundamentals course and music teaching methods courses with separate sections for elementary education and early childhood education majors. Her research interests are music preferences, music integration, music teaching methods, and teacher effectiveness for English language learners and students of diverse backgrounds. She has presented her research at several conferences, including the 2012 national conference of the National Association for Music Education.