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

Pei-Ying Lin

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.