Minor in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at Muskingum University!

Q. What is TESL?
A. TESL stands for Teaching English as a Second Language. The TESL minor at Muskingum University enables students to teach English to non-native English speakers all over the world.

Q. Why TESL?
A. The world is becoming “smaller” as globalization is spreading and more people are immigrating to English-speaking countries. Many institutions, both American and overseas, are in need of qualified people to teach English at all levels of study.

Q. What does the TESL minor consist of?
A. The TESL minor consists of 16 hours. To earn a TESL minor, students must successfully complete the following courses: WRLD 200: Cross-Cultural Communications, WRLD 300: TESL Materials and Media; ENGL 361: Language: Structure and Use; WRLD 397: Methods in Teaching Foreign Language; and either FREN/GERM/SPAN 211. Advanced proficiency in a second language not taught at Muskingum University will also be considered as a substitution for FREN/GERM/SPAN 211. While it is not part of the TESL minor requirements, students may benefit from taking basic Education courses, such as EDUC 110 or EDUC 112.

Q. What can I use TESL for?
A. Many of our study abroad students get jobs overseas as English instructors, but being a native-English speaker is not enough to prepare you teach the language. Many situations require potential teachers to have a TESL minor or certificate in order to teach English. Having a TESL minor can prepare you pedagogically to teach the language. If you are planning on studying abroad, working on or having a TESL minor can give you valuable skills to offer to non-native English speakers as an English tutor. You can also use your TESL minor after you graduate. There are opportunities to teach English all over the world. TESL can open up many new opportunities for employment.
Q. What majors does TESL match up with?

A. The TESL minor matches well with any major; it is a great complement to degrees in Education, World Languages, International Affairs, International Business, and many others. Adding TESL to your current major simply gives you another skill set to offer.

Q. Is TESL important if I am working on or have an Education degree?

A. Yes! Chances are, at some point in your teaching career you will encounter a bilingual student in your classroom, and these students have different needs than monolingual students. All too often, bilingual students are wrongly placed into special education classrooms because administrators do not understand their particular needs. Having a background in TESL can help you to identify with and aid bilingual students in their struggles and successes in pursuing English as a second language.

Q. Can I major in TESL?

A. Right now, Muskingum University does not offer a TESL major. However, the courses offered in the TESL minor will give you a solid background for pursuing a graduate degree in a number of fields such as linguistics or applied linguistics, foreign and second language education, bilingual education, and others.

Q. Is there a need for ESL teachers?

A. Yes! English is a world language and people all over the world want to learn English for many different reasons. Some want to learn English in order to get jobs in global industries. Some want to learn English in order to move to an English-speaking country. Others have immigrated to the United States and need to develop better communication skills. In many areas of the United States, immigration is increasing at a large rate and schools are not equipped to deal with the special needs of bilingual learners. Having a TESL minor can help you step into positions to teach bilingual students and will give you an advantage because of the skills you will possess.

Q. Is teaching ESL rewarding?

A. Absolutely! If you speak a second language (or third, or fourth . . .), you know how challenging it is to learn a foreign language. Sometimes having an understanding and supportive teacher can be the difference between a student struggling and failing or being challenged and persevering. As a teacher, you impact your students’ lives. You may not realize it, but your students impact your life as well. It is extremely satisfying to see a student’s progress and to be able to celebrate this with him or her. ESL students are a special group, and you will begin to notice this quite soon after working with them. It is a gratifying experience for both student and teacher.

Q. How can I get more information on the TESL minor?

A. For more information, you can contact any of the Modern Language professors and lecturer (Dr. Morris, Dr. Wehage, Dr. Alzate, Dr. Butler, or Meri Linn McCollum). We can advise you on the sequence of study for the minor and answer any other questions you have.