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Taylor-based ESL Program Advances Language Training in Marion

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A Marion-based center that teaches the English language to men, women and children who do not speak it as their primary language has its origins at Taylor University.

The ESL Tutoring Center for Adults and Young Children in Marion, Indiana, provides one-on-one assistance to adults who are trying to learn English to enhance their everyday lives. The Center is in its fourth year in operation and currently is expanding its training programs.

Renata Kantaruk, instructor of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Taylor, started the program in October 2013 after years of teaching language studies in the [English Language Teaching program](#) at Taylor. She said people had been reaching out to Taylor in hopes someone there could teach English to non-native residents. Students began teaching English to community members who desired to learn the language, but because the students often left campus for summer vacation time, holiday breaks, or to take part in distant internships, there was a problem with continuity.

Seeing this disconnect, Kantaruk began to think about ways to make an official program—one that could be more long-term and consistent.

The Center was founded with four goals in mind:

1. To promote adult immigrants' personal and professional success;
2. To challenge and support immigrant students in primary grades (ages 4-9);

3. To equip college students for better service through practical professional training and improved intercultural skills, and,
4. To provide professional development opportunities for upper-level elementary education students and students preparing to teach English as a second language (TESOL).

Today, the Center is partnering with tutoring programs on the Taylor University campus and in Marion's elementary schools.

Students attend a two-hour session each week, where they work through a curriculum alongside tutors. The tutors primarily are Taylor students, although additional volunteers are Indiana Wesleyan University TESOL majors and other community volunteers. The first time potential students come in, they take an assessment to measure their level of ability in various English skills. They are asked questions about their personal goals. The idea behind the program is to help students use English in their daily lives and to gain confidence in their communication abilities. A one-on-one approach is used to best meet these needs, and to allow a greater range of people from the community an opportunity to volunteer. Childcare is also provided, and the childcare coordinator, an elementary education major at Taylor, is in the process of developing a three year curriculum for elementary-aged children.

One goal is to find a way to make the program sustainable so that it can continue regardless of any sudden changes that may arise. This summer was the first time this organization operated year-round.

As the ESL Center moves into its fifth year, the hope is to reach more students throughout Grant County.

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