

Primed for the global industry

The challenge of teaching English to speakers of other languages



It is estimated that there are 1.5 billion English language learners globally. As English continues to bolster its role as the language of international commerce, communication, diplomacy and culture, this number is set to grow exponentially in the coming years.

This growth has fuelled the need for teachers trained in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Tesol), so much so that a number of countries worldwide have registered an increased demand for qualified teachers of English. Besides teachers, the Tesol industry also needs managers to run schools, trainers to upskill an organisation's staff, consultants to provide assistance with a range of projects and services, and various other roles.

Tesol has become a multi-billion-euro industry worldwide and the success of private entities wishing to play a role in it depends largely on the quality of the products or services they offer.

If an organisation bases its business on tuition then it needs to bank on the availability of highly qualified Tesol professionals.

Such professionals ensure that the services offered by an organisation are of the highest calibre, thus providing it with an edge over its competitors. Malta and a number of other countries are experiencing a dearth of professionals who hold more than an entry-level qualification in Tesol.

In response to this situation, the University of Malta, through the Centre for English Language Proficiency, is offering a Master of Arts in Tesol.

This taught programme was designed in consultation with stakeholders from the thriving Tesol industry in Malta and with international experts familiar with a range of English language teaching contexts worldwide.

The MA in Tesol provides an opportunity for closely mentored postgraduate learning and research in the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject.

The programme aims to assist in the development of a better informed cadre of professionals who are well equipped to research and contribute to course design and delivery, training and professional development, Tesol management, and language policy.

Malta is experiencing a dearth of professionals who hold more than an entry-level qualification in Tesol

It enhances awareness of issues surrounding the learning of English by speakers of other languages in different contexts around the world and it leads to a range of career paths in the international Tesol industry.

The MA offers focused and scholarly engagement with current theory and practice in second language acquisition, the learning

of language skills and systems, the evaluation of English language proficiency, the use of digital technology in Tesol, and English for Specific Purposes.

One of the distinctive features of the programme is that it provides students with the opportunity to conduct fieldwork in the private English language teaching industry.

The MA benefits from the expertise of specialist tutors of international repute with knowledge and experience of the global English language teaching sector.

The programme furnishes students with the knowledge and skills needed to occupy a variety of academic and managerial roles worldwide.

Besides continuing to welcome applicants with a first degree in English, as from October, entry into the programme is also available to applicants with a first degree in other subjects.

Applicants without any teaching experience will be provided with the opportunity of acquiring the necessary level of knowledge and practice before enrolling on the programme.

The Endeavour scholarships scheme is now available and prospective students may apply for a scholarship in order to read for this MA, as the degree falls within the Group A priority area.

Daniel Xerri, Odette Vassallo and Sarah Grech teach on the MA in TESOL at the University of Malta.