

Keightley Dudgeon, B.A. Arabic, minoring in Teaching English as a Second Language, 2019

By Caitlyn Woitena

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ESL and Citizenship Instructor at Kentucky Refugee Ministries



“English is really an international language; for me, it has been vital to relate to people with whom I do not share a first language.”

Keightley Dudgeon graduated from Western Kentucky University in May 2019 with a bachelor’s degree in Arabic, and a minor in Teaching English as a Second Language. Dudgeon, originally from Crestwood, Ky., has since relocated to Louisville Ky. where she works for a non-profit.

Dudgeon currently works as an ESL and Citizenship Instructor at Kentucky Refugee Ministries, a non-profit agency located in Louisville, Ky. She guides Louisville area immigrants and refugees with intermediate to advanced English language fluency on their path to U.S. citizenship. Dudgeon achieves this through teaching 12-week courses that focus on early and recent American history, the Constitution, U.S. government, rights and responsibilities of a U.S. citizen, and the process of naturalization. In addition to this course, she also teaches introductory ESL for refugees to “ease their adjustment to the United States.” The ESL course includes practical topics such as employment, housing, health, and community resources.

When asked how English applies to her current profession Dudgeon explains, “Studying English at WKU better equipped me to serve populations who need this language to adapt and survive in their new home: the United States.” Dudgeon believes her job is rewarding because she is able to watch her students become success stories. “[I] witnessed a Congolese immigrant with a secondary level of education and absolutely zero English upon arrival to the U.S. eventually complete his GED, and a

Cuban immigrant fleeing from her home country's restrictive communist regime achieve U.S. citizenship after studying constitutional principles and U.S. history diligently for over a year." Dudgeon asserts that none of this would have been possible without the skills she learned in the WKU English Department.

Before Dudgeon started her current profession, she worked as an English professor at two Moroccan universities for the Fulbright Program. She quickly realized she would have to utilize what she learned in the WKU TESOL program to be successful in this position. By doing this, she was able to make her lessons more engaging, interactive, and student-centered.

Dudgeon has recently been named a Rangel Fellow and plans to further her education in the future. As of right now, her plan is to pursue her master's degree in a field closely related to her area of study at WKU and hopes to work as a foreign service officer for the U.S. Department of State.

