

TIRF TODAY

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Promoting research and effective practices in English language education for the global knowledge economy in the 21st century

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Interview with Dr. Steven Talmy



TIRF's first DDD recipient, Dr. Steven Talmy

TIRF: *In 2002, you were the first recipient of a TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant. The topic of your study was "Student Resistance to Learning ESL: A Critical Ethnography of an Urban High School ESL Program." What were your main findings?*

Dr. Talmy: The study examined student resistance to ESL and looked at how the low-prestige, or "stigma," associated with ESL was accomplished in the everyday life of the ESL classroom.

Regarding the first point, quite a lot of applied linguistics research is based on the presumption that students *want* to be in the ESL classroom and are invested in learning English. But that research often doesn't concern youth in compulsory educational settings, where ESL tends to be stigmatized as "remedial". My study concerned a public high school context and a population of long-term ESL students ("generation 1.5" ESL learners) who were not only well aware of the stigma associated with ESL, but also had the English proficiency and interactional competence to make their often disparaging views about ESL publicly known. I argued that many of the behaviors these students displayed about how ESL wasn't "cool" constituted their resistance to it.

The second point follows from the first: looking at *how* the stigma of ESL in a public high school is produced and circulates in actual classroom contexts. Although a lot of research about public school (or Kindergarten-12th grade) ESL acknowledges the low-prestige associated with ESL, much less has examined how it actually occurs in the classroom. I linked my analysis of how the stigma of ESL occurred in the classroom to broader negative societal views about bi- and multilingualism, immigration, and diversity, and how they connect with linguistic prejudice, the native speaker myth, and national identity.

TIRF: *What did receiving the Doctoral Dissertation Grant mean to you?*

Dr. Talmy: The Russell N. Campbell Doctoral Dissertation Grant helped me purchase digital recording equipment to replace the creaky, ill-tempered analog machine I had been using for collecting data. Most important, it helped off-set the costs of paying translators to help me understand and transcribe a good portion of the hours of Korean, Mandarin, and Cantonese language data I had recorded in classrooms. Intellectually and socially, I benefited from the opportunity to meet and share my work with a wide range of established scholars in TESOL, as well as other TIRF awardees, for example, at the TIRF meetings that were held at the TESOL conventions. I also know that the grant positioned me well when I was on the job market.

TIRF: *Did receiving the grant give you more confidence?*

Dr. Talmy: A critical ethnography about student resistance to learning in a public high school was definitely *not* the most common kind of study that was being done when I was a doctoral student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I was a bit of an oddball topically, theoretically, and methodologically speaking. So when I read the email from TIRF notifying me that I had received the grant, there was happiness, of course, excitement, some relief, but most of all, the strongest sense of affirmation, that an organization like TIRF, which was established by and composed of so many major scholars in the field, recognized that my study could merit the award of the Russell N. Campbell grant. It was a huge legitimization. So, yes, absolutely, receiving the grant gave me a lot more confidence.

"...When I read the email from TIRF notifying me that I had received the grant, there was...the strongest sense of affirmation, that an organization like TIRF...recognized that my study could merit the award.... It was a huge legitimization."

The full interview with Dr. Steven Talmy will soon be posted on TIRF's website.

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Mailing Address:

177 Webster St., P.O. Box 220
Monterey, CA 93940 USA

Email Address:

info@tirfonline.org

Visit TIRF online at www.tirfonline.org



**Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF**

TIRF Trustees Re-Elected

TIRF Trustees serve three-year terms as volunteers. At the September 2010 meeting, three TIRF Trustees were re-elected to the Board: Mike Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL; David Nunan, Professor Emeritus at the University of Hong Kong and Academic Vice President at Anaheim University; and Kensaku Yoshida, Professor at Sophia University and Director of the Sophia Linguistics Institute for International Communication. In addition, Dennis Hogan, President of Heinle Cengage Learning, was re-elected as TIRF's Treasurer, and Kathi Bailey, a professor at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, was re-elected as President. David Nunan and Lorraine de Matos, General Manager of Cultura Inglesa in São Paulo, Brazil, were both re-elected as members of the Executive Committee.



Mike Milanovic



David Nunan



Kensaku Yoshida



Dennis Hogan



Lorraine de Matos

Lawrence Corwin Named US State Department Representative to TIRF

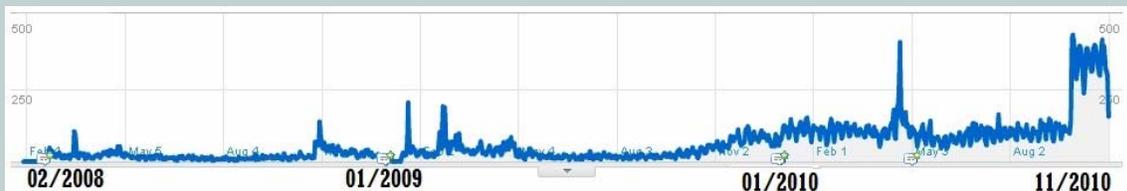


**Lawrence
Corwin**

Lawrence Corwin has been named as the US State Department's representative to the TIRF Board of Trustees. Larry has served as the Director of English Language Programs at the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Exchanges since July, 2009. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1985 and was selected into the Senior Foreign Service in 2006. Starting with the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) before its merger into the State Department, Larry has spent 25 years in the Public Diplomacy side of foreign policy, including assignments in the press or cultural exchange fields in Belgium, Pakistan, Barbados, Haiti, Cuba, Colombia, and Kosovo. In assignments in Washington he has run elements of several cultural exchange programs, served as press liaison for European affairs, and most recently was in charge of public diplomacy resources for the Western Hemisphere. His ex-

officio position on the TIRF Board will enable him to advise the foundation on how research findings about language learning and teaching can influence policy makers around the world.

Report from the Chair — TIRF's Website Upgrade



Visitors to TIRF's website tracked by Google Analytics from February 2008 - November 2010

Last night as I was handing out candy to "trick-or-treaters" for Hallowe'en, something special happened for TIRF. Somewhere in the world, someone logged into the foundation's website and became its fifty-thousandth visitor since we started tracking our website activity in February 2008 through Google Analytics.

What an amazing tool a website can be! Over the years we have gradually added more features to www.tirfonline.org, including a search function, Google Translate, RSS feeds, video clips, and more varied content.

We are pleased to announce that

we will soon be unveiling TIRF's newly upgraded website. Our URL will remain the same, but the look of the website and some of its features will be changed. For instance, the website will feature new items in the "Resources" section. In addition to links to other like-minded organizations and the growing collection of reference lists, that section will now include access to key journals in our field. Another new feature is that the website will allow interested parties to engage in discussion on topics of current interest.

The foundation team is grateful to the helpful and energetic staff members of Byte Technology ([www.byte-](http://www.byte-technology.com)

[technology.com](http://www.byte-technology.com)), who have worked closely with us to improve TIRF's website. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Mara Haslam, who served as our webmaster while she completed her PhD at the University of Utah. Dr. Haslam worked with TIRF for several years and we wish her a bright future in her new career.

When the new website is unveiled this November, we will send out an announcement to everyone on TIRF's newsletter mailing list. We hope that you will find the website useful and attractive, and that you will tell your colleagues about it too.

Kathi Bailey