

Promoting research and best practices to improve the use of English in the emerging global knowledge economy of the 21st century

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# TIRF TODAY

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## TIRF DDG Recipients Thank Donors for Support

In many parts of the world, the month of November is a time for giving thanks for all the wonderful things in our lives. True to the spirit of the times, we have invited some of our Doctoral Dissertation Grant (DDG) recipients to share with our readers how the DDG funding has impacted their studies and lives. Our grant recipients' messages are printed below, and links to their studies are provided.



**Tasha Darbes:** The DDG funding has allowed me to truly grow as a researcher in my profession. I was able to collect data, purchase and become competent in data analysis programs and methods, and share my findings at conferences. I will take these skills with me into the field of English language education and share them with my future students. There is too little funding available for the type of research TIRF sponsors in contrast to the immense importance it can have for the lives of teachers and students learning English in the US and abroad. Language learning is fundamental for educational attainment in any discipline, and fosters multicultural communities and global awareness.

**Weiwei Yang:** My DDG funding assisted the collection of my dissertation data from 375 Chinese EFL university students. The funding allowed me to (1) hire qualified raters to score the EFL essays collected and (2) to hire students to type up the hand-written essays and to assist in the linguistic analysis of essays. The grant provided money for me to travel to two international conferences to present my work. Without the DDG funding, I would not have been able to do all the work I wanted to do for my dissertation.



**Patsy Vinogradov:** My research focused on refugee and immigrant adult students with little or no formal education. Such learners are new to the US and new to English, and they are adults learning to read for the first time in their lives. Linguists and textbook companies have long ignored these learners, and teachers have little guidance in their practice. I was so thrilled to receive this grant, not only as support for my own project, but as proof that the tide is turning. No longer are these learners and teachers pushed aside – an organization like TIRF and its donors have deemed them valuable and worth investing in!



**Bedrettin Yazan:** I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your financial support. I do not believe that I will adequately be able to put into words how much receiving this grant means to me. Thanks to your support, I will be able to complete my doctoral dissertation without worrying about the financial issues during the phases of data collection, analysis, and dissemination of findings, which is a great relief. Your donations clearly provide tremendous assistance for emerging scholars and promote their contributions to English language education.

**Katie Bernstein:** Thanks to the contributions from TIRF's donors, the DDG grant provided me with support for things like high-quality equipment for filming children's classroom interactions, interpreters to assist with interviewing parents in their preferred languages, and travel to conferences to share my research. Above all, winning the DDG was a confirmation that my research is of value to others in the field and was also great motivation to continue this line of inquiry into the future.



**Jaehan Park:** TIRF DDG funding allowed me to pay for my travel to professional conferences to share my research and interact with scholars who have similar interests. It also allowed me to concentrate on writing my dissertation instead of working part-time. The TIRF DDG grant gave me important confirmation about the value of my dissertation research and greatly encouraged me to finish my study. Please consider giving to TIRF so that more hard-working researchers of English language education may also receive such recognition and encouragement. Your donation will be a significant contribution to their successful completion of their research and degrees.

**Nick Zhiwei Bi:** As a PhD student from far down under, traveling to the most prestigious conferences in our field, such as AAAL and TESOL, has always been a dream due to my current financial limitations. The TIRF DDG will allow me realize this dream and present my research at these conferences, which will also allow me to receive very valuable feedback. TIRF is a truly international organization, having been supporting some of the best doctoral research projects in applied linguistics/ TESOL worldwide for some time. Your generous gifts are not only helping promising PhD students to achieve their dreams, but are also likely to cultivate the new generation of researchers in applied linguistics and TESOL. Furthermore, DDG-funded projects all focus on the most cutting-edge issues in English education research and they will have significant impacts on English learning, teaching, and testing. Therefore, your contributions to TIRF may have massive returns for years to come.



**Joyce Kling Soren:** The DDG grant allowed me to attend two conferences abroad, one in the Netherlands and one in Finland. Having resources that provided me with the opportunity to network outside my home university in Denmark was indispensable for me in the final stages of my doctoral work. With this funding I was able to get feedback on my research and, therefore, complete my PhD within the scheduled timeframe.



We would like to add our thanks by extending our sincere gratitude to the many individuals who have supported TIRF's DDG program in the past. Thank you, donors!

## A True-or-False TIRF Quiz: Just How Lean is the Foundation?

We have a bit of Foundation fun for you in this month's edition of *TIRF Today*. See if you can correctly guess the answers to the following questions about TIRF. Good luck!

- 1). The work of the Foundation is carried out by five full-time employees. T or F?
- 2). In 2012, the Foundation spent just under \$5,000 on airfare for the Executive Assistant. T or F?

- 3). The TIRF office at 177 Webster Street #220, Monterey, California is a spacious three-room suite overlooking the Monterey Bay. T or F?
- 4). In order to make more use of video recordings, TIRF has purchased video recording equipment and useful editing software. T or F?
- 5). Each TIRF Trustee is paid a modest honorarium of \$1,000 per year. T or F?

- 6). TIRF has ample funding to carry out all the projects and fund all the doctoral dissertation grants we would like to support. T or F?

The answers to these questions can be found on page two, in Kathi's *Chair's Report*.



# TIRF

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Kathleen Bailey,  
Chair of TIRF

## ETS Supports TIRF with Outstanding Gift



We are delighted to announce that the [TOEFL Program at Educational Testing](#)

[Service](#) (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey has once again made a very generous donation to TIRF. The latest TOEFL Program gift of \$25,000 will support TIRF's work during 2014.

The mission of ETS, a nonprofit organization, closely aligns with TIRF's. According to its website, ETS seeks to advance "quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research." The issue of assessment in language education has been one of TIRF's research priorities for many years, and like ETS, the Founda-

## Reinforcing the "I" in TIRF: Mapping TIRF's History & Alumni

To reinforce the "I" in TIRF, we are pleased to announce that we have recently posted [two maps and timelines to TIRF's website](#). Using the services of Dipity, we have created a map and timeline to provide a chronology of TIRF's activities over the years.

We created a different map and timeline to show the hometowns of [TIRF's many grant recipients](#). While TIRF has offered various types of grants in the past, we currently fund just our Doctoral Dissertation Grants competition. To date, the DDG program has resulted in 46 grantees from 13 countries: Canada, China, England, Iran, France, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, Sudan, Taiwan, Turkey, and the United States. A preview of the TIRF Grant Recipients map is provided on the right, which includes other TIRF grant recipients as well.

Both maps and timelines are embedded on TIRF's website. When visiting that section of our site, the default view is the timeline, but there are clickable options in the upper-left corner of each map, which allow you to view the map as a timeline, among other options.

tion's mission is grounded in the importance of research.

"The TOEFL Program has been a supporter of the work of TIRF for many years", said Eileen Tyson, Executive Director of Global Client Relations at ETS. "We're honored to be associated with TIRF and we are pleased that our contributions support excellent research on topics of global interest," she added.

Donna Christian, the Foundation's Treasurer, said, "Thanks to the generosity of ETS, TIRF's ability to pursue its mission is strengthened, so that we can bring research-based information to bear on important issues in English language education around the world."

We hope that you find the timelines and maps to be informative about TIRF's activities. We will periodically update the contents in the months ahead, as TIRF continues to work for the betterment of our global profession.



## Conference and Award Opportunities: Deadlines Quickly Approaching

### News from NHLRC at UCLA

[The National Heritage Language Resource Center](#) at the University of California, Los Angeles will be holding its [Second International Conference on Heritage/Community Languages](#) from March 7-8, 2014. This conference aims to forge international collaboration, expand the scope of research into heritage/community languages, and broaden the field's understanding of issues facing researchers and educators.

The conference will focus on heritage/community language studies as a multi-disciplinary field. Papers, posters, and panel presentations will include a range of issues relevant to heritage language studies from disciplines including anthropology, demographics, linguistics, sociology, applied linguistics, policy, psychology, bilingualism, education, and assessment.

We would also like to point out that at the 2014 conference, the NHLRC will be presenting for the first time their "Russ Campbell Young Scholar Award in Heritage Language Education." The award has been established in honor of Professor Russell Campbell, a founding member of TIRF, whose work was instrumental in launching the field of heritage language studies. We are pleased to see the impact Russ had on the field being recognized in this way.

Registration for the NHLRC conference opened on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and a discounted rate for early registration will be

offered through February 6, 2014. For more information on registration, please [click here](#). For more information about the conference, please contact [nhlrc@international.ucla.edu](mailto:nhlrc@international.ucla.edu).

### LTTC-GEPT Research Grants Program

[The Language Training and Testing Center](#) (LTTC) in Taipei, Taiwan is accepting applications for the LTTC-GEPT (General English Proficiency Test) Research Grants program for 2014-2015. Educational institutions and individual researchers with relevant experience are invited to apply for funding of research related to the GEPT. The formal call for proposals can be found [by clicking here](#).

Grants of up to NT \$1,800,000 (approximately US \$60,000) per research project will be awarded to qualified proposals this year. Identified areas of research include validation, assessment and learning, test use, and test impact. For suggested topics, guidelines, and application forms, please [click here](#).

Applications should be submitted via email on or before December 16, 2013. Completed applications should be submitted to [geptgrants@lttc.ntu.edu.tw](mailto:geptgrants@lttc.ntu.edu.tw). The decisions of the review committee will be final. For further information, please contact [geptgrants@lttc.ntu.edu.tw](mailto:geptgrants@lttc.ntu.edu.tw).



## Chair's Report — It Turns out TIRF is Very Lean

Here are the answers to our quiz on page one. How well did you do?

**#1: False.** TIRF has one full-time employee, Ryan Damerow (right). He works as the Foundation's Executive Assistant.

**#2: False.** In 2012, Ryan's airfare to the TIRF Board meetings was covered entirely by frequent-flyer miles contributed by TIRF supporters.

**#3: False.** The TIRF address at 177 Webster Street in Monterey, California is actually a postbox. The TIRF office space consists of a 14' x 11.5' room that Ryan shares with me here at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, rent-free. Ryan's portion of the office is a chair and a desk made out of a door laid across two filing cabinets.

**#4: False.** TIRF has no video recording equipment or software. We use Ryan's camera, his personal laptop, and his copy of Windows Live Movie Maker.

**#5: False.** Trustees do not receive any honorarium for their Board service. In fact, they are expected to donate substantially themselves and/or to leverage financial contributions from their home organizations.

**#6: False.** TIRF could do so much more if we had a larger donor base and greater financial gifts. Each year, there are doctoral dissertation grants that we would love to fund but cannot. This year, our monetary donations have come primarily from five organizations and approximately 35 loyal individuals.

Won't you please help? We are in the midst of our 2013 year-end appeal. I hope you either passed this True-False quiz with flying colors, or that by learning more about the Foundation's extremely lean budget, you will be highly motivated to give to TIRF. Thank you very much.



Kathi Bailey