

# TIRF TODAY

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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's Free Online Resources Updated

We are pleased to share with our readers that we have made some major updates to the [various resources on our website](#). Since the academic semesters in many parts of the world are well underway, we hope that these updates are both timely and useful for you.

As you may be aware, TIRF stores information on its website about various language-related conferences being planned around the world. This list by no means includes all of the excellent professional development opportunities taking place in our field around the globe, but we trust that through sharing such information with our readers, some will be able to take advantage of networking opportunities available to them. Several conferences added to our site recently include the Sixth International Conference on Immersion and Dual Language Education in Minnesota (USA), the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Free Linguistics Conference in West Sumatra (Indonesia), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pan-American Interdisciplinary Conference in Buenos Aires (Argentina). [Click here](#) for more information.

Updates were also made to the "Requests for Papers" section of the Foundation's website. The purpose of this valuable section of the TIRF site is not only to help promote the efforts of publishers in our field, but also to help individuals become aware of opportunities for them to share their ideas in print. Two examples of the newly added publication opportunities posted to TIRF's website are *Reexamining and Reenvisioning Criticality in Language Studies* (Taylor & Francis) and *Indigenous Language Teaching, Learning, and Identities* (*Canadian Modern Language Review*). [Click here](#) to read more about these and other publishers' requests for papers.

Several new resources were posted to TIRF's web section on "Teachers' Resources." With this

section of our website, we aspire to help teachers across various contexts in different ways. We group certain types of resources together in order for teachers to find specific tools they need. These new resources include podcasts, recommended readings, technology tools for teachers, and others. [Click here](#) to view our newly added resources.

The last area of our "Resources" section of TIRF's website recently updated was information about grants and awards. We wish to share as much information about grants/awards in our field as we possibly can, so that our constituencies can apply for funding for their important projects. Three new awards were posted to our site, including opportunities from *Canadian Modern Language Review*, SMU-TESOL, and the Spencer Foundation. [Click here](#) to learn more about these opportunities.

We would like to encourage our readers to share with us information about resources we do not currently have on our website. We recognize there are many opportunities in our field that would benefit our colleagues around the world, but access to such information is not always easily accessible for all. If you would like to suggest a resource for posting to TIRF's website, we would be happy to consider your recommendation if you write to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org).

Making connections in our field is vitally important. Therefore, we would be ever grateful if you would please help us, so that we can help others!

### Access to Resources



### Alatis Prize Competition Deadline Quickly Approaching

According to the fourth point of [TIRF's mission statement](#), the Foundation will "influence the formation and implementation of appropriate language education policies, recognizing the importance of indigenous languages and cultures worldwide, and of English as an international language." Given the particular interest our founding Trustee James Alatis had in language planning and policy, and in remembering his many contributions to the Foundation since its inception, TIRF has established the James E. Alatis Prize for Research in Language Planning and Policy in Educational Contexts.

The prize will be awarded annually to an outstanding article or chapter written about language planning and/or policy. Along with the recognition, it will bestow a prize of US \$500 to the winner, beginning in 2016. The initial commitment will be for five years of funding dedicated to awarding this prize.

Here are some further details about the Alatis Prize. First, the articles/chapters submitted for consideration may focus on policy and planning issues related to various languages. Second, the articles/chapters submitted must be published in English. Third, the first prize will be awarded in 2016, and papers to be considered for that first competition will have been published in 2014 or 2015. For the next several years of the competition, it is anticipated that articles/chapters published over the previous two years will be eligible for nomination. Lastly, the public presentation of the first Alatis Prize will take place at the 2016 TESOL Convention.

The deadline for nominations is November 16, 2015. For further information, please [click here](#). Please help us publicize TIRF's Alatis Prize competition widely by sharing this information with your colleagues.

# TIRF

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**Kathleen Bailey,**  
Chair of TIRF

## TIRF Receives Significant Contribution from ETS

We are extremely pleased to share with our readers that the TOEFL Program at [Educational Testing Service](#) (ETS) has recently provided TIRF with a significant donation to support its programmatic and operating activities. The gift ETS has given to TIRF is much needed and greatly assists the Foundation with its fundraising efforts, especially as we near the end of the year.

ETS has been a long-time supporter of TIRF over the years. Our two organizations' mission have much in common, as both seek to improve the landscape of English language education. Especially with regard to English language assessment, ETS and TIRF both have significant programmatic activities which seek to improve upon assessment standards that help to provide equal opportunities for English language learners around the world.

According to ETS' website, the organization seeks to advance quality and equity in education for all people worldwide. ETS strives to provide innovative and meaningful measurement solutions that improve teaching and learning, expand educational opportunities, and inform policy.

On behalf of TIRF's Board of Trustees and our constituents, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Eileen Tyson, Director of Global Client Relations at ETS, and her wonderful colleagues for making possible the contribution to TIRF.



## Chair's Report — The Day I Cured Russ Campbell of the Hiccups

According to Wikipedia, *hiccups* (also spelled *hiccoughs*) are involuntary contractions of the diaphragm. This contraction is followed quickly by the vocal cords closing, which causes the recognizable, repeated "hic" sound. A serious bout of the hiccups can be annoying and even painful.

There was a time in the mid-1970s—it might have been 1977—when I was the Coordinator of the ESL service courses at UCLA. The Department Chair was Russ Campbell, one of TIRF's founders. He was a great supporter of the ESL program and a wonderful help to me as the most junior administrator on his team.

The dean of the college that housed our program contacted Russ in the spring term and told him that for the following fall term, there was a need for six more classes in advanced academic writing for non-native graduate students UCLA. Russ and I made decisions about graduate student teaching assistant assignments for the following fall semester on the basis of the dean's request. The most senior and most experienced TAs were selected to teach these additional writing courses, while the less experienced TAs were assigned to teach the courses for ESL students at lower proficiency levels.

So far, so good. But when it came time to schedule our fall semester courses, the dean discovered that in spite of his earlier request, he did not have the funding to pay for the six sections of advanced ESL writing he had requested (and that Russ and I had assigned) a few months earlier. I received this message three weeks before the fall term was to start, by which time Russ and I (representing the university) had already made a contractual agreement to employ those six TAs in those advanced writing

courses. Now we had no funding to support them!

To complicate matters, Russ had spent the summer working in Mexico. He was still there when the dean broke his promise. Shortly before the fall term was to begin, Russ and his wife Marge drove back to Los Angeles from Mexico City—a journey of at least 32 hours (with no stops and no traffic) by car.

This long car journey resulted in Russ having some serious back problems, for which his doctor recommended total bed rest. I am not sure about cause and effect in what followed next, but after an extended period of several days of bed rest, Russ developed a serious case of the hiccups, which lasted for days. Everyone in the department was advised about the seriousness of his back problems and the added complication of the hiccups. We were supposed to leave him in peace so that he could recuperate from the dual affliction. But I was in trouble too: As a junior administrator, I was caught between the need to fulfill our promise to support these six TAs and the dean's negation of his promised funding. I didn't know what to do, and had I known what to do, I would not have had the power to do it. At a loss for solutions, I broke a rule of our department culture: I called Russ at home.

On that call, I explained our dilemma to Russ. As always, he listened carefully and then made a few specific suggestions about how we could employ the six graduate students the dean had at first requested as TAs and then failed to support. This part was not surprising: Russ had an uncanny talent for pulling funding rabbits out of academic project hats. What was surprising was that after we had talked for about 30 minutes, Russ realized that the hiccups had stopped. He laughed and said, "Kathi, you're a miracle

worker. You and your staffing problems have cured me of my hiccups! Now what can you do about my back pain?"

I am no miracle worker. Wikipedia states that folk remedies for curing the hiccups include eating peanut butter, drinking a large glass of water, breathing into a paper bag, or placing sugar under the tongue. Suddenly scaring the afflicted person is also a common practice. Curing Russ of the hiccups was simply a matter of him concentrating on, tackling, and having a lengthy conversation about a serious problem in the program that he loved. By the time school started a few weeks later, Russ was back on his feet. Furthermore, he had managed to find interesting and professionally rewarding work for all six of the graduate students whose funding had been at risk.

I often think of Russ and his case of the hiccups when I'm stuck on a problem or can't seem to get past an obstacle. Sometimes it just takes concentrating on a dilemma and talking it through with a trusted friend and colleague to resolve apparently insurmountable issues.

These days, my TIRF Board colleagues are often the source of counsel I need to move past dilemmas I face in my professional life, especially those related to the Foundation. Without the valuable experiences and unique background each Trustee brings to the table, I would find myself unable to move past certain hiccups I encounter in my duties as TIRF's President. I am forever grateful for the contributions of TIRF's Trustees, past and present, because without their collective efforts, the Foundation would not be what it is today.

*Kathi Bailey*