

# 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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## Announcing TIRF's Inaugural Alatis Prize Awardee



Dr. Shondel Nero

During TIRF's spring Board meeting last year, Trustees unanimously voted to establish the [James E. Alatis Prize for Research on Language Policy and Planning in Educational Contexts](#). The prize was created both to promote research on language planning and policy and to honor long-standing TIRF Trustee, Dr. James "Jim" Alatis, who passed away in February 2015.

After several months of soliciting and adjudicating nominations for the prize, we are pleased to share with our newsletter readers the results of the competition. Dr. Shondel Nero, Associate Professor and Director of the Program in Multilingual Multicultural Studies in the Department of Teaching and Learning at New York University, has been selected as TIRF's inaugural Alatis Prize recipient. Her paper, "[De Facto Language Education Policy through Teachers' Attitudes and Practices: A Critical Ethnographic Study in Three Jamaican Schools](#)", was chosen from among an impressive group of articles and chapters that were submitted for review. The article is openly accessible at the link just above until April 22nd. Many thanks to our colleagues at Springer for making Dr. Nero's article available in this way.

Dr. Nero is an applied linguist whose work focuses on the education of second language and second dialect speakers. Her research examines the politics, challenges, and strategies of educating students who speak and/or write in nonstandard varieties of English, World Englishes, and Creoles.

### Dr. Nero was recently a Fulbright scholar at the TIRF Trustee Joe Lo Bianco to Give TIRF Talk at TESOL 2016



Dr. Joe Lo Bianco

[TIRF Trustee Joe Lo Bianco](#), a Professor at the University of Melbourne, is scheduled to present on behalf of the Foundation at the 2016 TESOL convention in Baltimore, Maryland. His talk, "Teacher Voices, English, and Multilingualism: Building Peace through Language Planning," will be given on Wednesday, April 6, 2016 from 10:30am to 12:00pm. He will be presenting at the Hilton Baltimore, Room Holiday 1.

Dr. Lo Bianco offered the following description of his talk: English and English teaching are implicated in complex multilingual policy work in many multi-ethnic societies. This talk will share the multiple presences of English in conflict-affected SE Asian contexts, where language choices, methods, and symbolic practices often form part of contested and sometimes violent relations between groups of people. In extreme cases, teachers and schools are the

University of the West Indies, Jamaica, where she researched the implementation of the Jamaican Language Education Policy with respect to Creole speakers. She also directs a study abroad program in the Dominican Republic as a means of developing teachers' linguistic and intercultural competence. She earned her doctorate in applied linguistics from Columbia University's Teachers College.

When asked about what receiving the award meant to her, Dr. Nero said, "I'm truly gratified and humbled to have received the Alatis Prize. My heartfelt thanks go to the TIRF Board of Trustees and the reviewers for this incredible validation of my work. I imagine there were many important articles and chapters in the competition, so I'm honored to be selected as the first recipient of this award. I hope that in the coming years, the James Alatis Prize will focus more attention on language planning and policy research in educational contexts, doing justice to Jim's core belief that other people's languages and cultures are as equally valid as ours."

The Alatis Prize bestows a gift of US \$500 on Dr. Nero. We will be presenting her with an award and a check at TIRF's presentation during the TESOL Convention in Baltimore in April. The date, time, location, and topic of TIRF's talk can be found in the piece just below. We would be most delighted to have you join us as we congratulate Dr. Nero on her excellent work.

The TIRF Board members plan to offer the Alatis Prize annually for at least four more years, depending on the interest among scholars and students, as well as the availability of funding. We hope you will help us share news about the Alatis Prize in future competition years. Details pertaining to our next competition will be released later this summer.

targets of killing. The talk will describe a decision-making approach to language education that involves teachers, community representatives, and officials in 'facilitated dialogues.' This dialogue-based language planning aims to mitigate violence and offer students access to the resources and opportunities of English.

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Lo Bianco to Maryland to present his ideas on the important topic of language planning for peace. We hope you will consider joining us for this presentation. Many of our Trustees will be in attendance there as well, and would be very pleased to have the opportunity to talk with you.

As has been our tradition for the past several years, we will be offering our attendees coffee and tea. We would like to thank Trustee Lorraine de Matos and her team at the Cultura Inglesa in São Paulo, Brazil for their continued support of the coffee and tea offered at TIRF presentations.

See you in Baltimore in April!

# TIRF

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**Kathleen Bailey,**  
Chair of TIRF

## TIRF Trustees to Convene for Spring 2016 Board Meeting

As springtime is just around the corner in the northern hemisphere, TIRF and its Trustees are busily preparing for their Board meeting in Baltimore. The Foundation's Board members meet twice each year, and their spring gathering typically coincides with the annual [TESOL International Convention and English Language Expo](#). This year, our Trustees are heading to Baltimore, Maryland for their meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2016.

TIRF's meetings always include reports from committee chairs and officers, as well as discussions on a range of issues influencing TIRF's activities for the future. It is expected that the Board will cover such issues as the progress being made on TIRF's second study regarding online language teacher education, developments with TIRF's grantees' work on an upcoming *Studies in Second Language Testing* volume (published by Cambridge English Language Assessment), our ongoing part-

nership with Routledge, the future of the Alatis Prize competition, and much more.

The Foundation's Board meetings provide an excellent opportunity for Trustees to work together face-to-face to determine how TIRF can both build upon its existing programs and find new activities to further promote its mission. TIRF's volunteer Trustees continue to pay their own ways (i.e., transportation and lodging) to attend the Foundation's Board meetings. Since the inception of the Foundation, it has always been a policy to not reimburse Trustees for their Board meeting-related expenses. We remain indebted to our Board members for this continued financial commitment, which helps ensure TIRF's viability for years to come.



## British Council Releases Volume on Early Childhood Education and Care



The British Council has announced a new publication edited by

Dr. Victoria A. Murphy and Dr. Maria Evangelou, who are both professors at Oxford University. The volume, *Early Childhood Education in English for Speakers of Other Languages*, is free to download and can be found by [clicking here](#).

The following is a description of the volume, which can be found on the Council's website: Increasingly around the world children are engaging in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC; aged 0-7) before entering primary school. At the same time, there is an increase in the extent to which non-English-speaking children are taught English through educational provision. This volume brings these two issues together by offering both evidence-based global reviews and more localised research-oriented reports on current issues in teaching children English through ECEC internationally. Specifically, it provides an over-arching discussion of pertinent issues, research findings, and concerns and challenges related to the educa-

tion of children between zero and seven years old through the medium of English (EMI) or through EFL instruction. The first section of this volume presents critical discussion of key issues related to specific 'global perspectives' with contributions from North and South America, Europe, Africa, India, Australia, and East Asia from researchers and/or language teaching and learning professionals. The second section of this volume presents more local discussion of particular projects related to ECEC in English across the world. These 'case studies' are sub-divided into those relevant to the EMI or EFL contexts and show us the considerable variability in how researchers, teachers, and other language professionals are working within this growing international area.

Early Childhood Education in English for Speakers of Other Languages  
Edited by Victoria A. Murphy and Maria Evangelou

The British Council has many other helpful resources and publications of interest to individuals in our field. [Click here](#) to see other "Books and Resource Packs" offered from the Council.

## Chair's Report—A Leap Year Proposal



What is Leap Year? According to an [internet source](#), a leap year is any year that has 366 days instead 365. This year, the *leap day* February 29<sup>th</sup>, occurs this coming Monday.

Apparently, this addition to the calendar was made in 45 BC by the Roman emperor, Julius Caesar, to make the calendar correspond to the time it takes the earth to make its annual journey around the sun. History notes, however, that the Egyptians knew of this need even earlier. In 238 BC, King Ptolemaios III Euergetes added one more day every year to the calendar. In modern times,

this additional day occurs every fourth year.

There are some interesting [traditions associated with Leap Year](#). Supposedly in Ireland, St. Bridget complained to St. Patrick that it was unfair that a woman had to wait for a marriage proposal from a man. Under pressure, St. Patrick decided that on February 29<sup>th</sup>, women could propose marriage. This part of Leap Year history continued in Scotland, where, in 1288 Queen Margaret said women could propose marriage. If a man refused a proposal, he had to buy the woman something—a new dress or some gloves—or at least give her a kiss. Of course, I'd like to think we



could start a new Leap Year tradition for TIRF's stakeholders. Wouldn't it be grand if—instead of me hounding our readers to support the Foundation in this month's newsletter—everyone would leap up (I couldn't resist!) and [donate online or write a check](#) to the Foundation?

I could boldly even suggest, like the brave Irish and Scots women who were my ancestors, that those of us who are employed could calculate our earnings for February 29<sup>th</sup> and donate that amount to TIRF. If everyone who reads this Chair's Report would make that kind of contribution, it would be a huge help in enabling us to sustain and grow the Foundation's initiatives.

*Kathi Bailey*