

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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Five Ways to Support TIRF

How can you support TIRF? Opportunities to help the Foundation are abundant and are certainly not limited to making a monetary donation. Whether you have a reference list from research you have conducted, or are able to talk with someone about the work we do at the Foundation, your support is warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated. Listed below are five ways you can help us further our mission.

1. Share *TIRF Today* with Your Colleagues: Many friends of TIRF have already shared TIRF's e-newsletter, *TIRF Today*, with their colleagues. For example, Professor Sara Weigle shares the monthly newsletter with her graduate students and her colleagues at Georgia State University. Mr. Mark Algren at the University of Kansas sent us the names and email addresses of some colleagues he thought would enjoy receiving this monthly newsletter. And TIRF Trustee, Lorraine de Matos, forwards our monthly newsletter to all the staff in the program she directs at the Cultura Inglesa in Sao Paulo. If you would like to suggest individuals who would benefit from being added to our newsletter mailing list, please send an email to info@tirfonline.org.



Ms. Heidi Laidemitt

2. Link to TIRF on Your Website: One of our supporters, Ms. Heidi Laidemitt, added a link to TIRF's website on her personal site. That linkage has generated nearly 100 hits on TIRF's site. When asked why she chose to create the link, Ms. Laidemitt replied, "The English language teaching community is filled with problem-solving and globally-minded individuals in search of reliable sources, ideas, and opportunities for teaching and researching. I refer to TIRF regularly for news, bibliographies, and events, so I decided to link to the TIRF website through mine, which is directed towards English language teachers and researchers. The wide-reaching functions of TIRF's website may be helpful to my site visitors."

While the added traffic to TIRF's website is of great value to the Foundation, the visitors who were referred by Ms. Laidemitt's site have also spent a greater amount of time on our website, which has helped us decrease our bounce rate because those visitors viewed more than one page on tirfonline.org. Thus, we believe that this kind of linkage is helping us raise awareness of the Foundation, while assisting our constituencies with their language research needs. Thank you, Ms. Laidemitt!

3. Become an External Reviewer: TIRF is accepting applications to join our team of external reviewers. We welcome the help of qualified reviewers in the adjudication process for our annual Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) program. When asked why she chose to become an external reviewer for TIRF, one reviewer who participated in this year's DDG review, had this to say: "In principle, I find myself morally obliged to serve the academic community. One way, for example, is through reviewing manuscripts, proposals, and grant applications. It's an opportunity to refine one's critical skills and to be informed of the current state of research in the field. In my view, it's a must-have experience for academics." For more information on becoming an external reviewer, please [click here](#).

4. Give to TIRF: TIRF Trustee, Dr. Jun Liu, had the following to say about why he contributes to TIRF: "I donate to TIRF because I benefit from and believe in the Foundation. As a Past President of TESOL, I have witnessed the enthusiasm our young professionals and graduate students demonstrate when doing research and sharing their results with larger professional communities. I have also joined other researchers in seeking external funding to support large-scale research. But the problem we face in the field is the lack of funding." He continues, "Through my years of involvement on TIRF's Board of Trustees, I am convinced that our individual contributions, when pooled together, will make a difference. TIRF needs us and we need TIRF. I feel that to donate to TIRF is a way to empower ourselves. I highly encourage you, my colleagues in language education, to seriously consider giving to TIRF. Regardless of the amount, your gift shows engagement and hope." Dr. Liu concluded, "Perhaps most of all, our donations demonstrate our commitment to empowering individuals worldwide through language teaching that has been informed by research." [Read more](#) from Dr. Liu.



Dr. Jun Liu

5. Learn More about TIRF: TIRF Board members are constantly attending conferences and giving presentations. Consider attending TIRF presentations in conjunction with the following conferences if you can:

- [National Teachers Conference](#), November 2-3, 2011; Guatemala City, Guatemala; hosted by [Instituto Guatemalteco Americano](#)
- [TESOL International Convention](#); March 28-31, 2012; Philadelphia, PA, USA
- [BRAZ-TESOL National Convention](#); July 16-19, 2012; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; hosted by [Cultura Inglesa](#)

As you can see, there are numerous ways to support TIRF. If you would like to contribute, please do so by taking action as described above, or by writing to us anytime at info@tirfonline.org. We appreciate all the support we have received to date, and look forward to your future assistance!

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**Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF**

Report from TIRF's Administrative Assistant

Editor's note: The following article was written by TIRF's Administrative Assistant, Mr. Ryan Damerow. In his piece, he reflects on his work with the Foundation over the past six months.

Working at the grassroots level in the nonprofit world, and especially in the field of English language education, requires a great deal of resourcefulness and support from anyone who is willing to help. Over the past several months in my work for TIRF, I have come to understand what it means to be resourceful and how a large impact can be made when people pull together to accomplish their goals. I would like to take a look back at the past six months or so and reflect on how I've learned these lessons.

As a foundation, we have greatly benefited from the work that the Byte Technology team (our web consultants) did for us several months ago. The added functionality they created for our website helps our constituencies find information more quickly and allows us to operate in more efficient ways. Specifically, our web consultants helped us by allowing us to link to journals, websites, and images throughout our website. Thus, information that we make available online is now only a few clicks away.

In terms of helping the Foundation gain greater visibility, a number of organizations have posted TIRF's URL on their websites. Although our number of fans remains limited, we continue to build a presence on Facebook. I feel confident that as we continue to seek opportunities to engage like-minded organizations and social media, the good work the TIRF Board does will become more visible in the future. We now are in need of more "Likes" on Facebook to assist our future advertising cam-

aign. Again, if we were to receive just a little help from you, we would be in a stronger position to extend our presence in the social media domain. If you would like to support our efforts on Facebook, please [click here](#) and "Like" us.

Our first mid-year appeal was a success in terms of the funds raised and the groundwork laid for future appeals. This past summer, we were able to grow our donor base while refining the system we use to conduct our fundraising efforts. I appreciate the gifts that all of our donors made, especially considering that those gifts were given during the worst financial times my generation has seen. Simply put, thank you.

If any persons or organizations needed to learn how to be resourceful, they could easily turn to TIRF and our Board of Trustees. I have seen firsthand how hard each of our Board members works to carry out TIRF's mission. The success of their work hinges upon the collective efforts the entire Board puts forth, and the Trustees work tirelessly as volunteers because they are passionate about what we seek to accomplish. Their dedication is something that should not go unnoticed nor should it be under-appreciated. I am grateful, too, for the Trustees and their diligence.

The road ahead will surely involve much of the same energy and creative thinking the past several months have required. We are growing more excited each week as we anticipate the publication of our commissioned report on English language workforce training programs. We are also eager to begin our next project on online language teacher education. In the meantime, I will look forward to helping raise awareness about TIRF, so that we can serve those individuals who need us most.

New Reference Lists Available on TIRF Site

We are pleased to announce the addition of three new reference lists to TIRF's website. One on [rating scales in language testing](#) and another on [voice in writing](#) were contributed by Dr. Cecelia Guanfang Zhao of Shanghai International Studies University. A massive reference list on [writing in L2 contexts](#) was given to TIRF by Dr. Tony Silva of Purdue University. Our thanks to both scholars for their valuable contributions to our reference list collection.

Report from the Chair — Matching Challenge Renewed for Year-end Appeal

This past summer for the first time, we produced a mid-year report, along the lines of the year-end report that the TIRF Chairs have traditionally sent out with the year-end appeal. I am pleased to tell you that the Foundation's mid-year appeal was a success!

Along with the mid-year appeal, a fundraising challenge was offered for the first time. The challenge was that for any new donor who contributed \$50 or more during August or September, 2011, a Board member would contribute \$100 to TIRF as a matching gift.

The total amount raised during August and September came to **\$33,725**. These funds were contributed by 28 donors, of whom 17 were first-time contributors to TIRF. Thus the matching challenge generated **\$1,700** from the Board member who was supporting this initiative.

Included in the funds raised during the mid-year appeal is a substantial gift from a corporate donor. The \$25,000 donation means that all the individual contributions came to a total of \$8,725.

Given the success of the matching challenge,

we will repeat the strategy for our year-end appeal. As a result, for the first 45 new donors who contribute \$100 or more to TIRF during November and December, 2011, some Board members have committed matching funds in the amount of \$4,500.

One year ago, I told you in my October 2011 Chair's report that we had had 50,000 unique visitors to TIRF's website. I am pleased to tell you that today the number of visitors to the website (since we began tracking the hits in February 2008) increased to 121,000. This figure represents over a 200% increase in the past year.

I take these two sets of data—the financial results of the mid-year appeal and the increased traffic on TIRF's website—as signs that the Foundation's visibility is growing. I hope you will engage in one or more of the "Five Ways to Support TIRF" described on page one of this newsletter. By working together, we can promote the growth and sustainability of the Foundation.

Kathi Bailey