

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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## Ten Years of DDGs: 2011 Awardees Announced

The beginning of the academic school year and the start of fall means it is the time of year for us to award TIRF's annual Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG). Awardees are provided up to US \$5,000 to help them complete their research.

We are celebrating our tenth year of awarding DDGs, and are thankful to all of the generous donors who have helped us reach this milestone.

Each year, the Foundation solicits proposals from doctoral candidates who are investigating topics that align with TIRF's research priorities. (For more information about TIRF's DDG program, [click here](#).) This month at the Board of Trustees meeting, the Research Advisory Committee recommended that we fund six applicants. We are extremely pleased with the results of the competition.

We recognize the highest rated applicant each year by awarding the Russell N. Campbell DDG, which honors one of TIRF's founding Board members. This year, Beth Clark-Gareca of New York University has received the Russell N. Campbell Award. Her doctoral supervisor, Dr. Lorena Llosa, was asked to comment on her advisee



Dr. Llosa (left) and Ms. Clark-Gareca

winning the award. Dr. Llosa said, "I was moved when I learned that Beth had received the Russ Campbell DDG. Russ created many wonderful opportunities for me early in my career. He was an amazing person and professional who was brilliant, enthusiastic, optimistic, innovative, and always supportive. Through this award, he continues to inspire and encourage students to do great work in the field."

The following text provides the awardees' names, the titles of their studies, and brief biographical statements.



**Beth Clark-Gareca**, New York University

**Dissertation title:** Assessing ELL content knowledge in the mainstream classroom

**Bio:** Beth's interests include language assessment, second language acquisition, and teacher education. Before beginning her doctoral studies, Beth taught ESL at the K-12, undergraduate, and graduate levels. Her dissertation explores classroom-based assessment practices at the elementary level in the areas of math and science.



**Ali Fuad Selvi**, University of Maryland, College Park

**Dissertation title:** A quest to prepare English language teachers in diverse teaching settings

**Bio:** Ali serves as a graduate teaching and research assistant. He is also the current president of the Washington Area Teachers of English to the Speakers of Other Languages Nonnative English Speaking Teachers Caucus.



**Kristen M. Lindahl**, University of Utah.

**Dissertation title:** Exploring an "invisible medium:" Teacher language awareness among pre-service teachers of English language learners

**Bio:** Kristen's research focuses on pre- and in-service educators of English language learners in US public schools. The study highlights teacher language awareness, second language teacher education, and educational leadership.



**Larry Davis**, University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

**Dissertation title:** Rater cognition and behavior in speaking assessment

**Bio:** Larry has taught both ESL/EFL and teacher training courses. His professional interests include speaking assessment, language program evaluation, and how professional expertise develops. His dissertation examines how rater judgments of speaking ability change with experience, and whether comparisons with other examples of performance influence rater decisions.



**Liang Guo**, Georgia State University

**Dissertation title:** Product and process in TOEFL iBT independent and integrated writing tasks: A validation study

**Bio:** Liang's dissertation focuses on comparing TOEFL iBT integrated and independent writing tasks by exploring both the writing products and the writing processes. The study aims to clarify the link between the expected scores and the underlying writing abilities being assessed.



**Sara Smith**, University of Oxford

**Dissertation title:** Exploring differential collocational knowledge among native and nonnative English-speaking children

**Bio:** Sara is particularly interested in the understanding of non-literal phrases (for example: 'take a break', 'on the other hand') by children for whom English is an additional language. Her doctorate explores children's knowledge of multi-word expressions at different stages in the children's cognitive and linguistic development.

We would like to congratulate all of the 2011 DDG winners and extend our heartfelt thanks to Cambridge University Press and Cambridge ESOL for their ongoing support of our DDG program. We are also extremely grateful to the many donors who contributed to the Russell N. Campbell fund.

If you would like to support the DDG program with a contribution, please [visit TIRF's donor page](#).

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#### Mailing Address:

177 Webster St., # 220  
Monterey, CA 93940 USA

#### Email Address:

[info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org)

Visit TIRF online at  
[www.tirfonline.org](http://www.tirfonline.org)

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Kathleen Bailey,  
Chair of TIRF

## Some Observations about TIRF after Ten Years

**Editor's note:** Donald Freeman, former TIRF President, was honored at TIRF's Board meeting this month. In this piece, he shares his parting thoughts about TIRF as he completes his terms of service on the Board.



Trustee Joanne Dresner presents Donald Freeman with a plaque recognizing his service to TIRF

It has been an honor and a pleasure to be a member of the TIRF Board for the last ten years. I recall [the original research priorities meeting](#), held in the winter of 2001, at which the scope and possibilities of TIRF as a new entity were articulated. Or perhaps I should say *first* articulated, since that insistent challenge has been with TIRF as an organization as long as I have known it. This challenge of definition has been and continues to be manifest in terms of how we understand and define TIRF's mission, how we set up the organizational structure, how and from whom we raise funds, and how we deploy our modest resources.

For me, at the heart of the definition is a syllogism that runs something like this: We know language matters to pretty much all forms of human activity. And we know that despite its ubiquitous nature, it has always been hard to convince people that commonsense ideas – which can find their ways into policy – often differ from what is known about language learning and teaching through close study and disciplined research. We also know that the English language in particular holds a uniquely powerful and problematic place as a language in today's world. Put the ubiquity issue together with this misleading sense of commonsense transparency and you have a tough sell: This is the case even though the role that English plays in economic and social access, and as a means to shift the dynamics of such access, is obvious and fairly widely accepted.

These days, TIRF faces a new and renewed set of challenges. I mention "new" because of the economic state the world is in, which impacts the organizations and individuals that have been our traditional major benefactors; "renewed" because the question of positioning continues to challenge TIRF and the Board. While the Foundation can continue to do the worthwhile things it is doing now — [DDG's](#), [the workforce research papers](#), the website, and [occasional events](#) — I think we are bound to ask ourselves the following questions, both individually and as an organization: How and to whom do we want these things to matter? What difference do we intend to make? To what ends, and in which spheres? And, as with any set of difficult questions, there will be different views.

It has been quite a decade. I have learned a great deal and enjoyed the personal and professional friendships that I have gained through this service, and I know both those friendships and the Foundation itself will persevere.

## Updates to Reference Lists

We are pleased to announce that a new reference list has been posted on the [References](#) section of TIRF's website. Leo van Lier and Stephen Nakamura Hofstee contributed references on [first language use in the second language classroom](#). We have also recently received a large addition to the reference list on [language teacher education](#), which was provided by Fiodhna Gardiner-Hyland. If you would like to contribute a new reference list, or new references for existing lists, please send them in a Word document in APA format to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org).

## Report from the Chair — September Again

A popular song from the musical, "The Fantasticks" (by Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt), tells us to "try to remember the kind of September when life was slow and oh, so mellow!" But was there ever such a September in our profession?



Board members Ana Silvia Ramirez (left) and Donna Christian discuss the upcoming IGA Conference

For many (but not all) teachers and researchers around the world, September is a busy month because new school terms begin. For TIRF, it is a VERY busy month because we have our mid-year Board meeting and we announce the winners of the annual Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) competition. As you can see from our lead story, this is the ten-year anniversary of the DDG program, and this year's recipients are a stellar group of young researchers investigating topics of great importance in our field.

One order of business at our recent Board meeting was the election of Trustees and Officers. Trustees who were re-elected were James Alatis, Donna Christian, Mary Ann Christison, Lorraine de Matos, Joanne Dresner, and myself. As for the officer positions, Donna Christian was re-elected as Treasurer. She, Lorraine de Matos, and David Nunan were re-elected as members of the Executive Committee. I am honored to have been re-elected as President of the Foundation and Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

This coming November, along with TIRF Board members MaryAnn Christison and Ana Sylvia Ramirez, I will be pleased to represent TIRF at a [conference at the Instituto Guatemalteco Americano \(IGA\)](#) in Guatemala

City. I want to stress, however, that TIRF does not pay Board members' expenses when they attend such events. It is part of the responsibility of serving on this Board that every Trustee pays his or her own way to conferences and Board meetings.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the many contributions of Donald Freeman, who has completed ten years of service to TIRF, most recently as the President and Chairman. Over the past two years, he has served as my mentor in this role. Donald has always been available to talk by phone or respond to emails, in order to help me understand the history of various decisions and to think through demanding problems. I appreciate his support very much.

I am also very happy to tell you that this is the anniversary issue of *TIRF Today*, our monthly e-newsletter. It is a joy for me to work with Ryan Damerow, TIRF's Administrative Assistant, to compile news of TIRF for you each month. Doing so allows us to reflect on the month gone by and to think about what we want to accomplish next. We hope you find the newsletter informative and helpful. If there is someone you know who might like to receive it, please send the person's name and email address to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org) and we will add that information to the mailing list.

Meanwhile, I hope that your life this past month has been mellow, if not slow.

*Kathi Bailey*



Trustees Jun Liu (left) and David Nunan discuss future directions for TIRF's website