Announcing TIRF’s 2015 DDG Recipients

As summertime in places north of the equator begins to wind down, TIRF’s work starts to pick up. One reason for this is because the change of seasons from summer to fall in the US typically marks the time of year we make our Doctoral Dissertation Grant (DDG) award decisions.

The Foundation has been offering its DDG program since 2002. Since the inception of the program, including this year, we have made awards to 75 individuals through our DDG program. These awardees have come from Cambodia, Canada, China, England, Iran, France, Japan, Korea, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Sudan, Taiwan, Turkey, the United States, and Vietnam.

We remain ever grateful to Cambridge English Language Assessment for their annual support of TIRF’s DDG program. We would also like to point out that the DDG program has continued to receive support from the British Council. Collaborating with the Council in this way has allowed TIRF to focus on awarding candidates who are from low-resource countries. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with our wonderful colleagues at both Cambridge English Language Assessment and the British Council.

Each year, we designate the highest ranked applicant as our Russell N. Campbell DDG awardee. This recognition is done to honor one of TIRF’s founders, Dr. Russ Campbell, who played an integral role in establishing the Foundation. We continue to be grateful for our donors who help to support the award made in Russ’ name each year. This year’s Russell N. Campbell awardee is Ms. Yi Mei, whose study is highlighted on the next page.

Bai Ying is a PhD candidate in the School of Language and Linguistics at the University of Melbourne in Melbourne Australia. Ying’s research is entitled “A Student’s Perspective on a High-stakes Test and its Effects on Test Performance.” For more information about this study, please click here.

Emily Evans Faaneian (left) is a PhD candidate in Teacher Education/ESL at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her professional experiences include teaching language learners of all ages and conducting educational research to investigate ways to support classroom teachers of ELLs, particularly around issues of assessment literacy and language development. Emily’s current work with pre-service and practicing teachers focuses on supporting and challenging their understandings of serving English language learners within mainstream classrooms.

Freek Olaf de Groot (pictured in next column, top) is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of English at City University of Hong Kong. His research focuses on the digital literacy development and English language learning practices of student teachers in Thailand and the role mobile and digital technology plays in facilitating the development of these practices.

Jin Bi is a PhD candidate from the University of Utah. Her dissertation research explores the cognitive processing differences among individuals with varied second language (L2) proficiency levels and from different learning contexts. Findings from this study will help to clarify the influences of ultimate L2 attainments and learning contexts on the cognitive benefits of learning additional languages.

Jookyoung Jung is a PhD candidate in the UCL Institute of Education, UK. She was previously an English teacher in Seoul, Korea. She obtained her BA and MEd at Korea University and the Advanced Certificate in TESOL at New York University. Her research interest lies in the interface between SLA and instruction, task-based language teaching, L2 reading, and the role of individual differences.

Le Duc Manh worked as a language lecturer and teacher trainer in Vietnam. He is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Education at University of New South Wales, Australia. His project is entitled “English Primary Teachers’ Agency: A Case Study of Vietnam.” The study aims to investigate how English teachers with limited resources exercise their agency in response to a new language policy.

Rooh Ul Amin is a doctoral candidate in Applied Linguistics at the University of Memphis, Tennessee. Prior to beginning his graduate studies, he was working as faculty member at one of the public sector universities in Pakistan for the last ten years. His ongoing research concentrates on teachers’ and learners’ identity in ESL, language policy and planning, and ESL pedagogies.

Takahiro Yokoyama is a senior lecturer in Japanese at...
Labci Conference Recognizes 30 Years of Operations

Six hundred participants, teachers, managers and coordinators from the seven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) that form LABCI – The Latin American English Language Assessment Center – celebrated the 30 years of existence of the group last month in Montevideo at the biannual congress. Many educational suppliers and guest speakers from mainly the UK were also in attendance.

The main plenary themes were personalization, blended learning, flipped classrooms, emotional engagement, intuitive teaching, and visual literacy. There was also a plenary on Learning Oriented Assessment by Graeme Harrison of Cambridge English Language Assessment. In addition, LABCI Directors had the special privilege of meeting the new CEO if Cambridge English Language Assessment, Saul Nassé, for an innovative chat on the future of exams.

Chair’s Report — A Nice Dilemma to Face

There is so much TIRF news to report in this month’s newsletter that there is no room for a Chair’s Report. What a wonderful dilemma to have!