

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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Interview with Dr. Fíodhna Gardiner-Hyland



Dr. Fíodhna Gardiner-Hyland

Editor's note: In this interview, we catch up with Dr. Fíodhna Gardiner-Hyland, a 2008 TIRF Sheikh Nahayan Fellowship recipient.

TIRF: What were the main findings of your study?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: My study explored the perceived and observed impact of shaping and contextualizing teacher education reading pedagogy upon an evolving system of knowledge, beliefs, and teaching of reading styles in a UAE college context, working with Emirati female student teachers. The findings suggest that by attending to a Vygotskian constructivist-based contextualized EFL model of second language teacher education pedagogy, and by practicing what we preach as lecturers and establishing concrete links between theory and practice, we can increase the capacity to teach reading successfully and enact pedagogic change in government schools. However, while all the participants in my study aspired to become agents of change by distinguishing themselves from past behaviorist-style teachers, I noted differences in teaching styles in classroom observations for varying ability groups of student teachers, ranging from eclectic to behaviorist styles.

TIRF: What did receiving a Sheikh Nahayan Fellowship mean to you?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: Receiving a Sheikh Nahayan Fellowship was beyond my wildest dreams. It validated my research in teacher education pedagogy and supported the contribution my study could make in promoting effective teaching, learning, and curriculum development in the Arab world and beyond. It also created links with international researchers and experts in the field of language teacher education. At one such event, the 2010 TESOL Arabia conference in Dubai, I co-presented with three TIRF Trustees: Professors Yehia El-Ezabi, Kathi Bailey, and David Nunan. By giving me a sense of professional confidence, the Fellowship also confirmed that I was embarking on a lifelong research journey.

TIRF: One of the main purposes of the Sheikh Nahayan Fellowships was to promote effective teaching and learning of English in the Arab world. How did your study contribute to that goal?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: Outdated curricula and methodologies, reliance on rote learning, and a lack of qualified teachers all present threats to the quality of education in the UAE. My PhD research was directly related to one of His Excellency's priorities -- focusing on redirecting, improving, and investing in the UAE primary educational system. In order to achieve this goal, there is a need to educate competent teachers by investing in teacher education programs. My study investigated the rationale behind shaping

and contextualizing a teacher education reading methodology course in a large, country-wide, federal college system. As a result, it has begun the process of reform in teacher education pedagogy for better literacy teaching across UAE schools, the results of which have been embraced by six UAE teacher education colleges.

TIRF: What are your current research interests, and how did your dissertation influence them?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: My research interests and experience focus on three main areas, all of which are an extension of my PhD research: innovative realistic teacher education delivery approaches and curriculum review, educational reform and education methodology, and interactive literacy teaching for young learners. Since completing my PhD, I have published a number of academic and professional articles along with five book chapters and an online methodology module for MacMillan publishers. I have also co-edited a book entitled *Contextualizing EFL for Young Learners: International Perspectives on Policy and Practice*. In applying my research, I have worked as a consultant and presented lectures and workshops on issues relating to curriculum development and reform, teacher education, literacy teaching, and EFL teaching methodologies at international and regional conferences, faculty forums, and schools. As chair of TESOL Arabia's Young Learner Special Interest Group (SIG) (www.yl-sig.com) in 2010-2011, one of my priorities was ensuring that professional development activities were provided to the association's members across the Middle East.

TIRF: What does your current work involve?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: I am currently working as a lecturer in general education methodology, and as supervisor for both graduate and undergraduate students in their teaching practice placements. I am also involved in curriculum design and review for the development of teaching practice placements, mentoring practices, and the reconceptualisation of education methodology. I aspire to be a model of best practice for developing student teachers' educational thinking and therefore the types of teachers they become. It is a challenging task, but one I am passionate about. For example, I not only teach about a range of pedagogical approaches such as scaffolding and problem-based learning, but also teach through these pedagogies, trying to model excellence and relevance in a manner that is developmentally appropriate for new teachers.

TIRF: What would you say to someone who is considering donating to TIRF?

Dr. Gardiner-Hyland: Contributing to TIRF is such a worthwhile endeavor! It's one way that an individual can make a difference in improving the quality of research into English language teaching worldwide.

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Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF

Award Information & Conference Announcements

Cambridge ESOL Funded Research Program



The University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations is making grant funding available for small-, medium-, and large-scale research projects to be conducted during 2013. Educational institutions and qualified researchers are invited to submit proposals on topics related to the Cambridge ESOL examinations and teaching qualifications. Applicants should be familiar with the Cambridge English exam or teaching qualification that they intend to research.

Successful proposals will be funded of up to GBP 2,000; GBP 5,000; or GBP 15,000, including institutional overheads. Project duration is for nine months and a research agreement must be signed before the research can commence.

The deadline for submission of proposals is October 1st. To apply, download and complete [the application](#). All applications and queries should be sent to validation@cambridgeesol.org with the subject line "EFRP Round 4." For more information, please [click here](#).

3rd FLLT Conference in Bangkok

"Research, Renovation and Reinforcement: Enhancing Quality in Language Education" is the theme of the 3rd Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT) conference. The event will be held March 15-16, 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Organized by the Language Institute of Thammasat University, Thailand, the Conference aims to bring together researchers, practitioners, and educators from around the world, with common interests in language learning and pedagogy at all levels. This biennial conference will promote the dissemination of research in related fields, so that theory is effectively applied to classroom practice and the quality of language teaching can be strengthened.

New Reference Lists Available

We are happy to announce that several new reference lists have been added to TIRF's website. They are all posted as Word documents in APA format, and can be downloaded for free by anyone.

The newly posted lists cover the topics of literature in language teaching; specific purpose language assessment; Arabic learners of English; the Montessori method; technology in language assessment; and listening comprehension in language teaching and learning. In addition, we have updated more than [thirty of the other reference lists](#), which cover a range of topics. We are grateful to Muhammad Abdel-Latif, Mansoor Al-Surmi, Kholoud Al-Thubaiti, Alicia Brill, Kasey Carmichael, Tim Cauller, Carol Chapelle, Andy Curtis, Peter

Report from the Chair — Mulligans, Control Z, and "NOT!"

In golf, there is a tradition that if you hit a poor shot off the first tee, you can have another chance — a do-over — which is called a "mulligan."

As I often need a do-over myself, my favorite command in word processing is "control Z." It allows me to undo what I have just done — like accidentally deleting a paragraph I'd struggled to write. My hip young friends tell me that "to control Z" is actually used as a verb!

A few years ago, young people were using "NOT!" as an emphatic clause-final negator. For example, a teenager might say, "I really like

that guy — NOT!"

What do all of these issues have in common? They all let us undo or redo a past action.

Now here I am, at the start of another school year, wondering why I didn't finish even half of the summer projects I'd planned. It's a pity I can't have the summer to do over. September starts tomorrow, which means there are only four months before the end of 2012.

Here's where you come in. If you were to start now and save US \$12.50 per month for four months, you could make a \$50 donation to TIRF in December. And if you are a

The deadline to submit an abstract is November 16, 2012. The notification of acceptance is December 21, 2012. For more information about the conference, please [click here](#).

Interlanguage: 40 Years Later

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of one of the most influential ideas in the field of Second Language Acquisition — *interlanguage* — Teachers College Columbia University is bringing together experts in the field for a special symposium to discuss the impact, scope, and role played by interlanguage in research and practice 40 years after its inception.

The symposium will be held October 5-7, 2012 at Teachers College Columbia University in New York, New York. For registration details, please [click here](#). For general information about the symposium, please [click here](#).

ECOLT 2012 Conference

With the support of the [Center for Applied Linguistics](#), [Second Language Testing, Inc.](#), [Georgetown University](#), and the [National Capital Language Resource Center](#), the [East Coast Organization of Language Testers](#) (ECOLT) will hold its eleventh annual conference this fall, November 2-3, 2012, at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

ECOLT represents individuals on the East Coast of the US who are professionals, scholars, and students involved in language testing projects and research. One of the organization's goals is to support connections between academia, K-12 education, government, and for-profit and not-for-profit testing organizations.

For information about registration and other conference-related details, please [click here](#). Early registration ends on October 1st.



DeCosta, Hassan El-Nabih, Aymen Elsheikh, Fatima Esseili, Fíodhna Gardiner-Hyland, Lynn Goldstein, Stephen Hall, Jeff Hamilton, Enas Hammad, Sky Lantz-Wagner, Alan Maley, Melanie Newman Morrow, Cicely Rude, Laila Rumsey, Luke Slisz, and Melanie van den Hoven for their recent contributions to TIRF's collection of reference lists.

We continue to welcome additions to existing reference lists as well as bibliographies on new topics. We would also be pleased to know about any topics for which you would like us to develop reference lists. If you wish to contribute a new bibliography or add to an existing reference list, please send your contributions in APA format to info@tirfonline.org at any time.

new donor, your \$50 contribution would turn into \$150, because once again, TIRF Trustees have agreed to respond to each new-donor contribution of \$50 or more by adding another \$100, in addition to their own regular donations to TIRF. Wouldn't it be great if there were so many new donors in December that those Board members would wish they could "control Z" their generous offers, since their wallets and purses would be emptied in making good on this wonderful pledge?



Kathi Bailey