

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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TIRF TODAY

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Interview with Doctoral Dissertation Grant Recipient Dr. Kristen Lindahl



Kristen Lindahl with her son, Otto

Editor's note: In this interview, 2011 TIRF DDG recipient Dr. Kristen Lindahl talks about her dissertation, current work, and research interests. Dr. Lindahl completed her doctorate at the University of Utah earlier this year.

1. What were the main findings of your study?

My study investigated the analyst and teacher domains of teacher language awareness (TLA) among preservice K-12 educators of English language learners (ELLs). I found that, overall, the teachers' degree of TLA before directed coursework in L2 methodology was low, but improved with treatment in the form of a course that adopted a deliberate, explicit approach to the development of TLA. In addition to quantitative analyses, I conducted focus group interviews with participants to determine how their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences might have influenced their TLA development. The results suggest that deliberate approaches to developing knowledge about language are necessary for K-12 mainstream teachers. Results also imply that teacher educators may need to adopt an explicit approach to developing TLA in L2 methods classes, in order to help preservice teachers integrate TLA as a critical component of their pedagogical content knowledge.

2. What did you learn about doing research in the process of completing your dissertation?

I learned that research is incredibly dynamic — part of what makes it so interesting to me! Looking back upon my initial study design, I marvel at how much it evolved from start to finish. In the future, I will continually remind myself of the cognitive flexibility and creativity that quality research requires.

3. Where are you currently working and what does your position involve?

This month, I started working as an Assistant Professor in The University of Texas at San Antonio's Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies. The department's interdisciplinary focus includes bilingual and second-language teaching, Mexican-American studies, multiculturalism, migration, transnationalism, and ethnic studies. My position will involve conducting research and teaching courses at the graduate and un-

dergraduate levels for the TESOL cohort.

4. What plans do you have for future research and how did your dissertation influence them?

My dissertation is the foundation for my future research program, which will continue to focus on teacher language awareness. Currently, I am analyzing data in response to the question of how TLA influences the activities that teachers design for ELLs during lesson planning phases. I am also collaborating with a colleague in New York to examine how teacher supervisors' TLA manifests in their feedback to preservice teachers.

5. What did receiving the TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant mean to you?

The TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant was a very important professional milestone for me. What became more important than the funding itself was the recognition of my research by a community of established scholars and educators — it gave me great confidence and motivated me to produce a worthwhile dissertation. I have made excellent networking connections via TIRF, and I am sure they will be invaluable to me as I begin my career in higher education.

6. What advice would you give people who are just beginning their doctoral research?

I would say, "Find the balance." With this statement I mean, try to find the balance between carefully designing your research but not taking forever, and between selecting a topic that truly interests you and choosing one that is needed in the field. Balance must also be found between narrowing your topic and producing enough information to contribute to the knowledge base, and between conducting research in general and not letting it overwhelm you. Easier said than done, however!

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

I would strongly encourage professionals in our field to donate to TIRF! Dissertation grants and other types of funding are highly competitive and hard to come by, and PhD students in linguistics and TESOL-type fields are often competing with many other disciplines in the humanities. Receiving a grant directly from specialists in our field both assists with the costs of research, and also denotes recognition from scholars who have deep levels of expertise and interest in grantees' doctoral research foci that align with TIRF's priorities.

ELT Conference in Santo Domingo

The Dominico Americano Language School in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic will be hosting its annual conference for teachers of English on September 24, 2013. The Language School is the division of the Instituto Cultural Dominico-Americano bi-national center, which is dedicated to the teaching of the languages and cultures of the Dominican Republic and the United States of America.

The conference, themed "[ELT Going through Changes](#)," is a one-day event that will feature Dawn Wink as the plenary speaker. For more information on her session, please [click here](#). For information about registration, [please click](#), or write to ido-mas@icda.edu.do. The presenter's proposal form can be downloaded by visiting this link. A preview of the conference may be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

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Newsletter Editor:

Ryan Damerow

Email Address:

info@tirfonline.org

Mailing Address:

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

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**Kathleen Bailey,
Chair of TIRF**

ETS Announces Jacqueline Ross TOEFL Dissertation Award Competition



The [TOEFL Program](#) at [ETS](#) is now accepting applications for the 2014 Jacqueline Ross TOEFL Dissertation Award. The award recognizes doctoral dissertation research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge about second or foreign language tests and testing and/or the use and development of such tests and testing. The award consists of US \$2,500 and round-trip economy airfare, paid expenses, and hotel accommodations for three nights at the Language Testing Research Colloquium, where the award is presented.

To be considered for the award (1) the candidate's institution must have accepted the dissertation within three years before the date of the award application; (2) the research must have been completed as part of

the requirements for a doctoral degree, or its equivalent, at a university within or outside the United States; and (3) although the dissertation under consideration must be in English, the research may be related to second- or foreign-language testing of any language.

ETS recommends noting the following key dates. September 16th is the deadline for the receipt of a summary and abstract, a letter of support from one's advisor, and official proof of dissertation acceptance. For the finalists, ETS will release the call for submission of dissertations on October 21st. The deadline for receipt of dissertations is November 8th. The final selection of the award recipient will be announced on January 31, 2014. Please [click here](#) for information on how to apply. Please write to TOEFL_awards@ets.org with further inquiries.

TESOL International Academy in São Paulo, Brazil

TESOL is pleased to announce an International Academy it will be hosting on September 27, 2013 in São Paulo, Brazil, regarding English for specific purposes (ESP). With the growth of English language education worldwide – particularly in rapidly growing economies like Brazil's – ESP plays an increasingly important role as a key specialty area of the TESOL field. This academy combines lively plenary sessions and knowledge-sharing opportunities with hands-on workshop training.

This academy is organized by the TESOL International Association, in partnership with BRAZ-TESOL and APLIESP (São Paulo State Association of Teach-

ers of English). The academy will take place at [Universidade Metodista de São Paulo](#). This professional development opportunity is aimed at a range of individuals: (1) ELT teachers and administrators in the Americas, with a special focus on Brazil; (2) those who are interested in learning how to teach ESP; and (3) ESP teachers and trainers in the Americas, with a special focus on Brazil, who are seeking to enhance their ESP knowledge and skills, including as trainers.

[Click here](#) for an overview of the academy program. For more information about registration, hotels, and so on, please [click here](#). Further inquiries may be addressed to edprograms@tesol.org.

Free Downloadable Books on Innovation from the British Council



We are happy to share information about three edited books published by the British Council, all of which are free to download and relate to innovations in ELT. The first of these was written by Gary Motteram and is entitled [Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching](#). This publication offers a different approach to the uses of learning technologies in the language classroom. It considers primary, secondary, and adult learners, as well as the areas of Business English, and English for Specific Purposes, English for Academic Purposes, as well as language assessment using technology.

The second book we are highlighting was edited by David Mallows. The collection, entitled [Innovations in English language teaching for migrants and refugees](#), aims to stimulate thinking and experimentation by pro-

viding ideas and international experiences in English language teaching for migrants and refugees. It is written from the perspective of those working with and teaching this diverse group of adults and children, who are often from very different geographical areas, with differing educational experiences and reasons for leaving their home countries.

Lastly, we wish to share a book edited by Julian Edge and Steve Mann, [Innovations in pre-service education and training for English language teachers](#). This publication brings together a wealth of innovative, practical experiences and ideas from differing contexts across the world. The collection is aimed at anyone who is involved in planning and providing education and training for teachers of English before they take up their positions in educational institutions.

For other free publications from the British Council, please [click here](#).

Chair's Report — Resources for the Start of a New Semester

The end of August marks the beginning of a new semester for me, and perhaps for many readers of *TIRF Today*. If you are working as an academic and are preparing your upcoming courses, I want to tell you about some potentially helpful resources from TIRF.

One set of resources that will be of use to you, your students, and your colleagues is [TIRF's collection of reference lists](#). There are over 115 reference lists on topics of current interest stored as free, downloadable Word documents. There are also links to [several professional organizations](#) around the world, as well as [slidecasts about TIRF presentations](#) on a variety of topics.

In addition, you can find links to a number of [journals in our field](#) that may be outlets for you and your graduate students to consider as possible publication opportunities. The journals are sortable by various tags related to the focus and scope of the journal (e.g., for program administrators, teachers, researchers, etc.). Many of the smaller international publications are actively seeking contributions.

If you are teaching research methods courses, you and your students will find [TIRF's annotated bibliography about research methods](#), classroom research, and action research to be useful. You can also access the training provided by the US National Institutes of Health

about [protecting human research participants](#).

Finally, you can find a link to some free software about ["R" – for computing statistics and creating graphics](#) using statistical data. The *Guide for Doing Statistics in Second Language Research Using R* can be found by [clicking here](#).

Please share this information with your students, your colleagues, and with people in other organizations. And if you are starting a new term, I wish you every success with the coming semester.

Kathi Bailey