

Editorial

“We are talking about new forms of ‘research’, until recently an elite practice — we need professors to back off a little to create communicative space”¹

“Orlando Fals Borda is one of the great leaders of the participatory action research (PAR) movement in South America. Moreover, he has succeeded in making his work and ideas known in the northern hemisphere. This is no mean feat when ideas have tended to flow from north to south. One of Borda’s great skills has been his ability to network educationalists and intellectuals from the world of education across the boundary that divides the so-called ‘developed world’ from the ‘underdeveloped world’. His work has particularly attracted the attention of university-based educationalists trying to reconstruct educational research in a form that places it at the service of hope for greater social justice”²

The quotes above gather some of the lessons we have learned from some of the most well-known pioneers of teacher research. Their ideology, as well as those of the practitioners, researchers, professors, and preservice teachers who have developed an array of papers, unites many people all over the world and has been the steering force to maintain our publication.

Our efforts to strengthening investigation in the area of English language teaching have in turn had an impact on communicating what is done by professionals of different educational levels and with different degrees of expertise in the teaching and research arenas. More and more contributors have evidenced their interest in our journal by sending their contributions and thus accepting the norms of our evaluation process. Thanks to their reliance on PROFILE as a communicative space and the rigor and dedication of the members of our advisory and editorial committees, I can now introduce the contents of this year’s number.

1 McTaggart, R. (2007). The role of professors in participatory action research. Seminario internacional investigación acción y educación en contextos de pobreza. CD Memorias. Bogotá: Universidad de la Salle.

2 Elliot, J. (2007). Reinstating social hope through participatory action research. In C. O’Hanlon, J. Elliott, O. Zuber-Skerritt, S. Grundy, R. McTaggart, & S. Kemmis. Action research and education in contexts of poverty. A tribute to the life and work of professor Orlando Fals Borda (pp. 35-47). Bogotá: Universidad de la Salle.

I am very pleased to welcome professors Robin McTaggart (James Cook University, Australia) and John Elliot (University of East Anglia, United Kingdom). Their ideas have been vital for those of us who practice classroom research and believe in the possibility of working together to make education stronger through investigation, academic discussion and sharing.

Encouraging practitioners, with little or no experience in writing academic reports, to publish the results of their classroom inquiries has been the cornerstone of our publication. To do so, teachers who have participated in the teacher development programmes led by the Foreign Languages Department of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, need constant communication with their tutors and assistance. This is precisely the support given by Elizabeth González and María Eugenia López. Many thanks to them too.

The eleven articles contained in this number reflect teachers' interests in areas such as the implementation of given methods, innovations, and teacher education. Let us take a look at the aspects they address.

Our first section – Issues from teacher researchers – begins with two papers by school teachers who carried out action research in public schools in Bogotá. Two teachers share with us their analysis of children's English language learning evidences when engaging in project work. Their paper is the result of an attempt to explore this approach by integrating the contents of the syllabus for fifth grade. The other paper tells us how a group of teachers used the skimming technique as a means to guide students in decoding written texts.

The next three articles inform us about the handling of certain issues with adolescents in different teaching contexts. We present the results of an action research project carried out to minimize discipline problems and negative class participation in a language school in Brazil. After that we can learn about the way an inquiry project was developed as an alternative to promoting a meaningful learning context. Then, we come across another action research report on the use of cooperative learning strategies to improve students' oral production in the English class.

The last two articles of the first part of our journal are written by teacher educators. Observing the professional development of a group of foreign language teacher educators and preservice teachers constitutes the focal point of an investigation that accounts for the knowledge, skills and attitudes these teachers developed through their participation in a study group. Reference is also made to the skills and attitudes the facilitator of the study group developed through her role in it. Then, we include the results of an exploration of public schools in-service

teachers' implementation of cooperative learning. The study uncovers how a group of teachers set the conditions to create a cooperative learning environment as well as some perceptions their educators have of themselves as initiators in guiding their students in this pedagogical experience.

The section on issues from novice teacher researchers makes us think not only on the importance of disseminating the work carried out by teachers who are just finishing their undergraduate studies, but on the way they could work collaboratively to help solve problems faced by their own partners. I would like to draw your attention to the paper included in this part of our journal, because it focuses on the course of action undertaken in a tutorial plan to support the English speaking skill of an Inga indigenous student who had difficulties learning English as a third language in an initial teacher education programme.

We close this number with three papers referring to innovations conducted in three different countries. We find two experiences on the design and implementation of in-service programmes for primary school teachers. To start with, a holistic professional development program for elementary school English teachers in Colombia directed towards target language improvement and pedagogical reflection is described. School-based and learner-centered, the program is characteristic of a synthetic, progressive, process-oriented curriculum which, according to the authors, can be considered as a viable professional development effort at the elementary school level in our country. After that, we present a paper which examines how the Common European Framework of Reference was employed as a tool for the purpose of devising a language certificate meant to assess the competence needed for effective teaching at primary school level in Italy. I am sure these two papers will generate rich discussion and reflection upon the definition of ongoing teacher-education programmes. I hope they also shed light on decisions to adopt tailor-made programmes or to account for those created on the basis of knowledge of our teaching realities and local expertise.

The last paper touches on an important aspect in English language teaching: pronunciation. Though we cannot deny that working on intonation in a foreign-language learning environment may pose a serious challenge for teachers whose mother tongue differs from the target language, the author highlights the importance of the intonation system for formal pronunciation teaching and challenges us to try out David Brazil's Discourse Intonation approach with beginners.

Finally, I wish to share with all of you that our journal has been indexed in SciELO-Scientific Library Online. This is not only a

Cárdenas Beltrán

recognition of our scientific standards, but an opportunity to guarantee universal visibility and accessibility on the Internet. From now on, you can read our traditional printed version as well as the full papers by accessing http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php/script_sci_alphabetic/lng_pt/nrm_iso

I do hope you enjoy this publication and look forward to your continuing contributions and comments on our work.

Melba Libia Cárdenas Beltrán
Journal Editor