

Editorial

It seems incontrovertible that the purpose of research in the field of education is to improve the quality of education that students receive. But how often does research actually improve the educational experiences of those who take part in research? Clearly, there are many ways in which this goal can be served, including research on equitable provision of resources, modes of governance, and procedures for accountability. (p. 51)¹

Welcome to the fifteenth volume of our journal which, as pointed out by Wells (2009) above, is committed to the enhancement of education. In connection with this goal, we cannot assert that a publication like ours can measure the extent to which such improvement has been accomplished. Nonetheless, most of the works included in our issues provide accounts of pedagogical interventions and inquiries carried out within the premises of given educational contexts. In turn, the satisfaction of having attained the goal of getting published adds to the many experiences we gain when we participate in innovative and/or research projects. This is expressed or inferred in the authors' reflections as well as in studies we have conducted in order to examine the genesis and evolution of our journal. Also, the same has been confirmed by academics based in other countries and by academic forums.

In all those cases, the authors' perceptions, which have provided feedback on the processes they have gone through to get their manuscripts published, have proved valid to inform about teacher growth. It is hoped that their efforts do not only get recognition in institutional indicators needed to get accreditation, but get rewarded via more funding for project development, better working conditions, and consideration when defining educational policies.

Since the main purpose of the *PROFILE* journal is to give voice to teacher-researchers, it is expected that the rate of contributors will continue increasing as we have witnessed in the past few years. This activity, as we know, demands more participation by reviewers, whose contributions are highly appreciated by *PROFILE*. Fortunately, we have received positive responses from distinguished academics who have joined our committees. I wish to welcome the following members of our editorial review board: Luis Fernando Gómez (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Colombia), Shaofeng Li (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Kevin Carroll (The University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, Puerto Rico), and Gary Barkhuizen (University of Auckland, New Zealand). Their feedback, together with the expertise of the peers who have accompanied us for several years, will continue helping us carry on our work in tune with *PROFILE*'s mission and vision.

¹ Wells, G. (2009). Dialogic inquiry as collaborative action research. In S. E. Noffke, & B. Somekh (Eds.), *Educational action research* (pp. 50-61). London, UK: Sage.

We open the *Issues from Teacher Researchers* section, as usual, with a paper by grassroots schoolteachers. This time, Yuly Yinneth Yate González, Luis Fernando Saenz, Johanna Alejandra Bermeo, and Andrés Fernando Castañeda Chaves report on a study conducted at a private Colombian school. The article depicts the results of an action research study which focuses on the role of collaborative work in the development of elementary students' writing skills. The pedagogical intervention involved the monitoring of two cycles which, in turn, let them examine the role strategies based on collaborative work play in fostering students' productions, task completion, language development and interest in writing.

Then, we gather three articles concerning current English language teaching policies in Colombia. First we can read the account written by Marlon Valencia, who presents a critical analysis of Colombia's National Program of Bilingualism. In line with other local academics, the author examines the ideologies behind it and draws our attention towards the way it facilitates the manufacture of Colombian citizens' consent for foreign intervention through free trade agreements. Attention is also given to the effects on the progressive disassembling of public education due to the interests of transnational companies and the urgent need to fulfill the government's educational goals despite local realities.

Identity-forming discourses is the topic addressed by Wilder Yesid Escobar Alméciga, who examines power relationships and uneven conditions in English language education exerted via identity shaping discourses in an official document issued by the Colombian Ministry of National Education and related documentary evidences containing issues that have to do with policymaking processes and English language teaching in the country. The author remarks that discourses are being strategically employed by the Colombian government to change or preserve ideologies and to widen gaps between socio-economic groups to protect the interests of just a few.

Afterwards, Orlando Chaves and Fanny Hernández, from Universidad del Valle, Colombia, expound on some results of a study about the profiles of the methodological practices of 220 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in primary and secondary schools in Cali, Colombia. The use of surveys, interviews and institutional documents allowed them to portray teachers' approaches or methods, lessons, activities, objectives, curricula, syllabi and evaluation and draw implications for teacher education and language policies, among others.

I hope these three papers contribute to expanding knowledge about what is happening in countries like Colombia, where there is an urgent need to strengthen the level of English and to have an impact on the evaluation of current action plans for different educational sectors. Needless to say, *PROFILE* invites other academics to document what is happening with English language policies implementation and to take an active part in its discussion.

Teacher education is the common area of the following two articles. I am sure the readers will find in them key information to be considered in both initial teacher education and teachers' professional development. The portrayal of pre-service teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning at different stages of instruction while they were taking the

teaching practice courses in a BA program at a Mexican university is the focus of the article by Sofia D. Cota Grijalva and Elizabeth Ruiz-Esparza Barajas. This was done through the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings tell us about the links students made between theory and practice, some changes in previous beliefs, and their awareness and understanding of processes involved in teaching and learning. Next, José Vicente Abad informs about a qualitative study concerning the pedagogical factors that influence English teaching in four public schools in Medellín, Colombia. The in-service teachers provided information about three linguistic principles: communicative competence, native language effect, and interlanguage. It was concluded that factors like teachers' linguistic ego, views of their teaching role, and attitudes towards English have a bearing on English teaching and teachers' education.

Subsequently, we can read three articles around teaching issues. We start with the findings of an exploratory study that gives us the opportunity to acquire more knowledge about psychological and pedagogical factors affecting ELT (English Language Teaching) at the university level. The investigation was led by Mexican authors Mariza G. Méndez López and Argelia Peña Aguilar, who explored the role of emotions as learning enhancers of foreign language learning motivation. Among the salient points of their study, I can mention the confirmation of the role of negative and positive emotions in enhancing and diminishing motivation. Furthermore, the fact that the findings of this study show that negative emotions serve as learning enhancers can shed light on further discussions and research in other teaching contexts.

We continue with the work by Madhumathi Pasupathi who presents a study that aimed to find out the effect of technology-based intervention in a language laboratory to improve listening skills of first year Indian engineering students as well as to learn the views of the students about using teacher-suggested websites for acquiring listening skills. Interestingly, it was concluded that the use of technology in a language laboratory for training students in listening competences reduces, in said context, the anxiety of the students when listening to English and contributed to the improvement of students' listening skills when assisted with technology-based resources and pedagogical processes. Afterwards, in the last paper of the first section of this edition, we have Myriam Judith Bautista Barón's article. It draws on an action research project aimed at improving the reading comprehension and vocabulary of the undergraduate students of an English for specific purposes course at a Colombian police training institute. The study implied the design of reading comprehension workshops based on the cognitive language learning approach. Results showed their effectiveness in strengthening students' reading skills and in fostering their autonomy through the use of learning strategies.

The second section, *Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers*, contains the paper written by Hollman Alejandro Rativa Murillo, who did an exploratory study as part of the fulfilment to opt for the B.A. degree in English language teaching. He reports a study carried out with sixth grade students at a public school located in Bogotá, Colombia, with

the purpose of adapting features of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in lesson delivery. The main findings, derived from data collected through lesson plans and a diagnosis of students' needs, evidenced that use of the English language was increased thanks to the implementation of the SIOP and the development of vocabulary activities.

Two papers written by Colombian teachers are contained in the *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations* section. Judith Castellanos Jaimes shares with us a review of studies on pre-service teachers' beliefs about teaching. Departing from the assumption that pre-service teachers come into the teaching profession with set beliefs about teaching and that they are not always aware of those beliefs, the author derives key conclusions worth considering in teacher education programs and in further research in the field.

Finally, we have the article by Martha Isabel Espitia Cruz and Anna Kwinta, who present an account of a pedagogical innovation carried out at a Colombian university to support online interaction. The description of the process and the results reveal the role of a peer feedback strategy to foster such interaction and some strategies that might be effective when working with technology in ELT.

As always, I hope you find *PROFILE* useful. I also hope we can continue moving forward in our attempts to maintain a professional space for teacher educators, new teachers, researchers, innovators, and grassroots teachers committed to make their work public via academic journals.

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Journal Editor