

Editorial

“If teachers are to commit themselves to research, they need to know that there is the possibility that their inquiries will be made public so that others can benefit from their findings. Moreover, as most academic researchers acknowledge, the prospect of publication is a major incentive for conducting a study. Thus, a final condition for teacher research is that mechanisms be in place to disseminate the results of the research”.¹

The growing importance of teacher research and the necessity to make our investigations, innovations and reflections public have positively influenced the work we have been doing in PROFILE for nine years. More and more teachers of English now submit their works to evaluation, evidencing a willingness to receive feedback from peers and more experienced academics and to reach a wider community through publications. In addition to this interest in having their work published, teacher researchers demonstrate as Borj (2006) states, that they are sure others can benefit from their findings.

Visibility of teacher researchers' work published in our journal goes beyond the printed documents we circulate. Recently, our journal was included in the LLBA - Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database. This will surely contribute to universal visibility and accessibility on the Internet.

The increasing interest of the English language teaching (ELT) community, who steadily submit more and more papers to our journal, has been the steering force in changing the periodicity of our journal. Hence, from this number on, PROFILE will be published twice a year, thanks to the support of the Publications Division of the Human Sciences Faculty at our University. To face this new challenge, I must count on the continued support of our evaluators, reviewers, and administrative services assistants.

Editing two issues per year implies more collaboration from our advisory and editorial boards, to which I am very grateful. In order to ensure peer reviewing, we have extended invitations to colleagues from other universities in Colombia and overseas. This time I want to welcome professors Richard Smith (University of Warwick, U.K.), Nilton Hitotuzi (Secretaria de Educação do Estado do Amazonas, SEDUC-AM, Brazil), Franca Poppi and Marina Bondi (University of

¹ Borj, S. (2006). Conditions for teacher research. *English Teaching Forum Online*, 44(4). Retrieved February 10, 2008 from <http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/vols/vol44/no4/p22.htm>

Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy). I also want to welcome Claudia Ordóñez and María Eugenia López from Universidad Nacional de Colombia. I offer many thanks to them for having accepted to accompany us in this academic endeavour.

This number gathers thirteen articles concerning ELT and language policies, which are the result of systematic research and innovation processes as well as of careful revision and analysis of pertinent bibliography in their fields of study.

We begin with eight issues from teacher researchers. In the first two articles we can get acquainted with projects carried out in secondary schools while their authors took part in the professional development programmes led by the PROFILE research group at Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá. Adriana Norato Peña and Jeny Mirella Cañón tell us how they used reading of short stories with sixth graders in order to develop their learners' cognitive processes. Then, Rocío Amparo Buitrago Tinjacá and Ruth Ayala Contreras report on a study implemented in a public school to explore some learning strategies to overcome speaking fears and anxiety. As part of their findings we can mention some possible strategies to reduce those drawbacks and to promote oral interaction in the classroom. The next paper, written by Odilia Ramírez Contreras, shows the results of research dealing with sixth-graders' perceptions of English language learning and the impact of active learning approaches in a public school in Manizales, Colombia. It also points out the effect the model had on the language learning process, particularly in the increase of students' participation, language production, and class interaction.

After that, in a report written by Sergio Antonio Duarte and Leonardo Alberto Escobar, we can learn about the use of adapted material and how it influenced, in a positive way, university students' motivation. This article is followed by two papers dealing with writing. The first one is a preliminary evaluation of the impact of a writing assessment system on teaching and learning at university level. In it, Ana Patricia Muñoz and Martha E. Álvarez describe the kind of improvement observed in students' writings. They also remark that teachers need to provide a better response to students by appropriately using the required assessment tools. Afterwards, we can read Judith Castellanos' action research account which was conducted with pre-service teachers in an upper intermediate English as a foreign language class and who had the chance to experience journal writing and its benefits.

The next two papers belong to the pre-service teacher education area too. Gerrard Mugford investigated from a critical perspective what happened when he worked with teacher trainees to make them aware of different ways of presenting and practising cognates and loan words in the second-language classroom. The study stresses that cognates are a productive resource for second-language users at all stages and levels of language learning and not just a tool for the random recognition of words. This argument is supported by practical ideas we can employ to make language students take control of language learning. Subsequently, we present the experience of a novice English teacher and her development of autonomy. The authors, Diana Pineda and Cristina Frodden, describe how reflection, collaborative work and critical thinking were promoted and enabled the teacher to find alternatives in her teaching, to gain a new understanding of this approach, and to develop autonomy.

In the section, Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers, we include an article that focuses on the use of rock music as a teaching-learning tool. In Camilo Morales' study we can find how he documented his experience working with two adult students in private classes in which the materials were based on the lyrics of rock songs. Once more, we can confirm that classroom research has also captured novice teachers' attention who not only endeavour to investigate as regards their teaching job, but to share their findings in scientific journals.

Next, we have four papers based on reflections and innovations. Ana Clara Sánchez and Gabriel Vicente Obando's concerns about the Colombian government's policy that attempts to implement programs like "Colombia Bilingüe" (Bilingual Colombia) draw our attention towards several factors which have to do with academic requirements and issues. The authors examine the academic needs that have to be met in order to achieve the government goals in a fair and rewarding way for teachers, students and stakeholders.

Then we present two innovations in the area of technology that have been systematized by university teachers. On the one hand, Aaron Rogers informs us how we can foster the innovative use of word processing software, process writing and interaction among adult students. This experience is supported with relevant literature and a lesson plan containing stages and examples on how technology can be implemented in practice. On the other hand, Amparo Clavijo, Nicolas Alexander Hine and Luz Mary Quintero write about the virtual forum as an alternative way to enhance foreign language learning. They tell us how a web-based story sharing forum has been established to provide

students in Bogotá (Colombia), New Brunswick (Canada), and Dundee (Scotland) with the opportunity to exchange cross-cultural stories as a complement to the regular ELT curriculum and as a means to promote student involvement and language development through the use of ICTs.

Finally, I wish to share with you that our journal has been indexed in the LLBA – Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts database. This is another opportunity to guarantee visibility on the Internet.

As can be seen, an important number of teachers are committed not only to doing research, but to making certain their inquiries will be made public so that others can benefit from their findings or establish some kind of dialogue around the views available in periodicals like ours. I wish you a good reading of this first issue of 2008 and hope you can find inspiration in our colleagues' work so that more voices can be heard in future numbers of our publication.

Melba Libia Cárdenas Beltrán
Journal Editor