

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

*"... Teachers, by reporting on their research, become both critical consumers and disseminators of research".<sup>1</sup>*

Our readers might have seen several changes in the layout and organization of our journal in the last three years. This has been done not only to fulfil the requirements of international scientific journals, but to respond to the increasing interest of pre and in-service teachers from Colombia as well as from other countries, and those who want to learn about the teaching and learning experiences reported in our publication. This has shown, as Ann Burns states, our teacher community acknowledges our work and, in turn, has been encouraged to publicize projects carried out in our field.

In 2004, 180 teachers from Bogotá and Cundinamarca, Colombia, took part in in-service programmes led by the PROFILE Research Group<sup>2</sup>. They promoted the development of projects around innovation and research in English language teaching. In tune with the idea of encouraging the publication of projects carried by school teachers, this issue contains six articles which report on classroom research.

We begin this issue with an article which describes and analyses the concerns of EFL secondary school teachers who do, or who would like to be doing research in their classroom practices, and whose concerns are still not being accounted for in mainstream TESOL. This paper is followed by three articles about the writing processes in secondary schools in our country.

The first one determines the way process writing is taught, focusing especially on the planning, composing, and revising activities, and based on the understanding of writing as a process-oriented activity. The findings indicate that writing and reading are product oriented, and that class activities privilege listening and speaking over writing and reading. The second article reports on an experience about the use of some strategies of the process-oriented approach with a group of low-achieving teenagers, whereas the third one accounts for the process of writing a text by using cooperative learning principles, which enhanced

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<sup>1</sup> Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> This group, officially recognized by Colciencias (a Colombian Research Agency), has worked in the areas of pre-service and in-service teacher education, evaluation, and ELT for young learners. Its expertise has been the result of the group's participation in the three main activities Colombian universities are expected to integrate: teaching experience, extension courses and activities, and research projects.

production and reduced writing anxiety. Then, two teachers tell us how English language learning can be developed from reading processes that also involve the other language skills. The results place reading as a useful alternative to enable students to learn English more easily and accurately.

Another familiar topic, oral communication, is addressed in the following three articles. We can find how teachers used task-based learning to help secondary school students improve oral interaction. In connection with the same area, another look at the topic of teacher talking time in the EFL classroom, based on a piece of classroom research conducted in Brazil, is presented by Nilton Hitotuzi.

A novel approach to using students' analysis in teaching public speaking for business at a University in Oman is reported on afterwards. As we will read, this investigation examines its role in improving and promoting learning effectiveness in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom discourse.

In this issue we also present some reports pertaining to teachers' decision-making and perceptions. An article written by two in-service teachers tells us what happened at a school as teachers engaged in a study group to reach general agreements about a common approach to teach English. After that, we include a paper concerning some characteristics of the autonomous learner, especially in the foreign language classroom and the most common profiles observed in a particular

group of pre-service teachers. The following pages deal with an experience in which observation was given an alternative perspective in the preparation of future teachers. Explanations account for the student teachers' use of this preparatory tool. Next, two novice teacher-researchers look at the experiences of four primary-school student-teachers during their practicum, the difficulties faced and the way they dealt with the problems.

The section about issues based on reflections and innovations starts with the major considerations and problems one may come across when developing an online teacher education program, as witnessed in a study conducted in Iran. Finally, there is an item on the mediated learning experience, its conditions, the mediator's profile, and some pedagogical implications.

As you can see, we've rounded up a variety of articles for this issue. We hope you enjoy reading them. And remember: You can become a critical consumer and a disseminator of research by publishing in upcoming issues.

Finally, I am very pleased to welcome professors Isobel Rainey de Díaz, Ann Burns, Penelope Robinson, Jill Burton, Raúl Alberto Mora Vélez, Gloria Cardona, Alvaro Quintero, and Maria Helena Vieira to the Advisory Board. I also want to thank all the members of the editorial committee and the advisory board whose suggestions and evaluations have made this publication possible.

**Melba Libia Cárdenas Beltrán**

Journal Editor