

## Editorial

*In memory of Dr. Susan E. Noffke*

*Many educators are working in projects that . . . seek educational change by working from a grass-roots base as individuals and in groups. This belief in the power of communities participating in social change is often regarded as a fundamental component of democratic living as well as of action research. (p. 6)*

*Clearly, an understanding of action research that transcends the traditional divisions between practitioners and scholars is needed. (p. 2)<sup>1</sup>*

Peer-reviewed journals depend, to a large extent, on the support of the members of editorial committees. All the reviewers who have joined *PROFILE* along its 14 years of life have contributed from different angles and countries. A few of them have left due to workloads; but most of them have kept a steady presence and continued to accompany us despite the many responsibilities they have in their workplaces. Their contributions are always very much appreciated.

Sadly, I recently learned about the passing of Dr. Susan Noffke, on June 1, 2013. Dr. Noffke was an associate professor of the School of Education at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, USA, and was a committed member of *PROFILE*'s Editorial Board.

Very much concerned with democracy and social justice, she inquired into action research and what it has to do with creating democracy in schooling. She claimed that work in action research, in conjunction with democracy, was a way to "making life in educational situations better" (1995, p. 2). This view, which has been supported by other scholars and practitioners, was one of the driving forces for the creation of our journal, with works mainly by schoolteachers who had been involved in a teacher development programme. Soon after it started, we moved forward toward making the participation of both practitioners and scholars possible in the same forum. In doing so, we also opened doors to different approaches to investigating the English language classroom as well as to issues related to teacher education.

Words are not enough to thank Dr. Noffke for the encouragement she gave me since we met in 2006, when she first came to Colombia. She showed great interest in our publication and supported not only the editorial processes, but encouraged us to maintain the work we do in the *PROFILE* research group with pre- and in-service teachers of English.

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<sup>1</sup> Noffke, S. E. (1995). Action research and democratic schooling. In S. E. Noffke & R. B. Stevenson (Eds.), *Educational action research. Becoming practically critical* (pp. 1-10). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

A biography of Dr. Noffke as well as a memorial notice can be found on the School of Education webpage of the University of Illinois.<sup>2</sup> There you can find a bunch of testimonies of appreciation, as expressed by former students, mentees, colleagues, and researchers from all over the world. You are also invited to record there your recognition to her and to continue working towards attaining the goals that inspired her academic career.

No doubt, *PROFILE* was honoured to have such a great woman, intellectual, and human being on our review board. Dr. Noffke was and will continue to be an inspiration to carry on working towards social justice and to make English teachers' initiatives visible through publishing.

Welcome to the second number—of the fifteenth volume—of our journal which, as pointed out by Noffke (1995), is committed to transcending the divisions between practitioners and scholars by opening doors to authors from different contexts. With this idea in mind, we have gathered 13 articles this time by authors from Colombia, Chile, and Mexico.

We open the *Issues from Teacher Researchers* section with an article by schoolteacher Ximena Becerra Cortés, who reports on an innovation conducted at a public Colombian school and which was monitored by following the action research approach and by gathering data through field notes and a questionnaire. The study sought to examine the use of the dictionary and prior knowledge by Colombian high school students as strategies that could help them improve their reading comprehension of short scientific texts.

Then, we gather five articles concerning teacher education in Latin-American contexts, where the readers can find key information that can expand our knowledge in both initial teacher education and teachers' professional development. First we can read the account written by Norma Constanza Durán Narváez, Sandra Patricia Lastra Ramírez, and Adriana María Morales Vasco. They report on an investigation carried out with students of an undergraduate English teaching program at a Colombian university with the purpose of exploring student-teachers' beliefs through the use of autobiographies. Then, Alba Olaya and Luis Fernando Gómez Rodríguez tell us about a qualitative research project that focused on pre-service English teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward the aspects of culture and intercultural competence addressed in their English classes in the undergraduate programs at three Colombian universities. Following, we can read another paper on pre-service teacher education. Leidy Tatiana Báez Dueñas and Leidy Marcela Chacón Vargas inform about a study conducted at a Colombian public school. They aimed at examining the role of student-teachers' teaching techniques concerning their pupils' extrinsic motivation while engaged in communicative speaking activities.

Teachers' beliefs is the topic addressed by Chilean authors Claudio Díaz Larenas, Paola Alarcón Hernández, Andrea Vásquez Neira, Boris Pradel Suárez, and Mabel Ortiz

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<sup>2</sup> <http://blogs.education.illinois.edu/dean/2013/06/03/passing-of-a-colleague-and-friend-susan-e-noffke-june-2013/>

Navarrete, who examine the role of 30 Chilean university teachers' beliefs about their own role in the teaching and learning of English in university environments. Afterwards, Diego Fernando Macías expounds on the extent to which the sources of English as a foreign language teachers' pedagogical knowledge are acknowledged and addressed in a teacher education program of a public university in Colombia.

Subsequently, we can read four articles around teaching issues, namely reading, writing, and assessment. We start with a report on a case study based on a Colombian university context. It is authored by Sergio Lopera Medina, who examined to what extent the diary entries evidence the teaching practices of a foreign language reading teacher. We continue with two works concerning the development of writing skills. First we present the work of Colombian authors Pedro Antonio Chala Bejarano and Claudia Marcela Chapetón. Their article presents the findings of an action research project conducted with a group of Colombian pre-service teachers on the role of genre-based activities in the writing of argumentative essays in English. Afterwards, we can read the paper by Chilean authors Roxanna Correa Pérez, Mariela Martínez Fuentealba, María Molina De La Barra, Jessica Silva Rojas, and Mirta Torres Cisternas. They report on a study conducted with high school students and two teachers to examine the impact of feedback on content and organization in writing tasks. Then, we have the last article of the first section of this edition, by Hugo Nelson Areiza Restrepo. This Colombian author shares with us the findings of a study that deals with the role of systematic formative assessment on students' views of their learning.

The second section, *Issues from Novice Teacher Researchers*, contains the paper written by Leonardo Rivas Rivas, who did a narrative inquiry as part of the fulfilment to opt for the BA degree in TESOL at a Mexican university. Interestingly, the author presents an account of factors that have influenced the identity of pre- and in-service returnees who have been caught in between two worlds: Mexico and The United States.

We close this edition with two papers written by Colombian teachers and contained in the *Issues Based on Reflections and Innovations* section. First, Sonia Patricia Hernández-Ocampo and María Constanza Vargas share with us a pedagogical experience carried out at a Colombian university to help pre-service teachers at an intermediate level of English to improve their aural comprehension. Then, we can read the article by Carolina Cruz Corzo, who focuses on formal grammar instruction and presents a reflection concerning theoretical aspects that are considered essential to teach formal grammar as part of the curriculum.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *PROFILE* and find it useful. As always, you are very welcome to submit your manuscripts to any of the three sections that characterise our publication. Finally, I wish to invite our readers to help us spread the word about our work among your colleagues, student-teachers, and research groups.

*Melba Libia Cárdenas B.*  
Journal Editor