Editorial

It is a real pleasure to present the second number of this year's volume which complies with the idea of becoming a biannual publication as announced in 2013. This has been possible, to a large extent, due to the support of the members of our editorial committees, the ASOCOPI Board of Directors, and our editorial team. All the reviewers who have joined HOW during the past few years have understood the reasons behind our decision to attain international standards of academic publications i.e. the Colombian policies established by Colciencias-Publindex and contributions from different areas and countries. We appreciate their continuous backing despite the many responsibilities they have in their workplaces.

Sustaining a publication that is edited by an association that depends upon voluntary work is not easy. Nonetheless, the commitment of novice teacher researchers, MA students and graduates, as well as teacher educators, has been evident in the number of contributions we submit to peer-reviewing processes. This, together with the constructive feedback provided by the evaluators who understand our faith in providing opportunities to a diverse number and profiles of teachers to get published, has proved vital toward bringing out HOW twice a year and on time.

Welcome to the second number of our twenty-first volume. In it, we have gathered seven articles this time by authors from Colombia and Mexico.

We open the *Research Reports* section with an article by Diana Ballén, who reports on a study carried out at a Colombian public university with the purpose of portraying the way in which technology-based activities may shape and characterize students' awareness of their own learning processes and their understanding of autonomy. Findings show that technology-based activities can be conceived of as a starting point in students' autonomous decisions about their learning and provide hints for further actions for language teaching.

Then, we can read about the impact of project work on writing production. In her work, Marcela Díaz Ramírez concentrates on the outcomes of an investigation that sought to examine the process and characteristics of the implementation of the project work

methodology and a process approach in order to improve writing production in an English class of Colombian university students. Bearing in mind their low performance in the written production, the author considered four factors to be relevant in the process of guiding students to learn to write while engaged in project work: accuracy, fluency, integrative language skills, and a positive perception towards writing.

Finally, we have an article authored by Martha Isabel Díaz concerning an action research study. It focuses on the development of learner autonomy through project work in a Colombian ESP class. The investigation was conducted at a regional and public university with engineering undergraduates and suggests that learner autonomy can be developed by means of cooperative work in order to achieve common interests and to ensure mutual support. The development of the course also provided information about students' self-regulation to face failures through learning strategies and the role of intrinsic motivation on the accomplishment of learning objectives.

The second section, *Reports on Pedagogical Experiences*, contains three articles. First we can read the account written by Mexican teachers Luz Edith Herrera Díaz, María de los Milagros Cruz Ramos, and Mario Alberto Sandoval Sánchez. It deals with the use of various personal portable devices (cellphones, tablets, laptops, and netbooks) by a group of university students, who showed that those devices affected their concentration in the English class. We can learn about the action research project the researchers engaged in in order to incorporate such technological tools into the development of the class activities and the students' perceptions about the role those devices play in their learning process.

Following that article, Wilder Yesid Escobar Alméciga and Reid Evans report on a pedagogical experience that sought to respond to the English language writing needs of a group of Colombian university-level students pursuing a degree in bilingual education with an emphasis in the teaching of English. Their pedagogical intervention consisted of a methodology intended to increase academic writing proficiency. It included the use of mentor texts and coding academic writing structures, together with the promotion of awareness of international standards of writing and an understanding of the inherent structures of academic texts. Interestingly, the authors explain and illustrate the contributions of mentor texts and the coding of academic writing structures on the production of students' academic writing—an area that is of considerable concern among students, teachers, researchers, and teacher educators.

Using SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) as a tool for analyzing students' narratives is the topic addressed by Colombian teachers Doris Correa and Camilo Domínguez. In their work, the authors report the insights that one instructor of a Colombian teacher education programme gained once he began using such tool to analyze a narrative text produced by one of the students in his class. As can be read in the article, systemic functional linguistics is a

useful approach to teach students from both teacher preparation and regular programs how to write academic texts in English.

We close this edition with a paper written by Colombian teachers Bertha Ramos Holguín and Jahir Aguirre Morales and contained in the *Reflections and Revision of Themes* section. They gather some considerations about the benefits and challenges we face in terms of materials development in the Colombian context and highlight some implications for teachers, students, and teacher education programs.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *HOW* and find it useful. As always, I invite you to submit your manuscripts to any of the three sections that comprise our publication and to help us disseminate our work among your colleagues and potential authors.

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