

# Editorial introduction & contents

Darío Banegas: Hi Richard. How did this idea of a Special Issue on/of Innovative Writing in English Language Teacher Education and Development emerge?

Richard Smith: Hi Darío. That's a good question – it seems quite a long time ago now that we first discussed this. I think it was in the context of ideas for how to celebrate the 20th anniversary of *ELTED* (in 2015). We decided to mark that anniversary by designing and moving to a new website and issuing a call for a special issue of/on innovative writing. The idea of exploring new genres was very much in my mind at that time because of work I was doing as coordinator of the IATEFL Research SIG – I was keen to break out of the mould of conventional research report-writing with some things I was editing, to encourage teachers to write about their research in a more empowered way and to see if we could publish more pieces that teachers might like to read themselves. To be quite honest, I'd personally got a bit tired of

reading conventional applied linguistic research reports myself and wanted to see if we could push the boundaries a bit in *ELTED* – with the playful intention of just seeing where it could take us really, but also the serious desire to make research-writing more accessible to practitioners!

DB: I hear you. Personally, when I think of innovative writing in *ELTED* I think of democratising and flexibilising the way in which research and experiences are linguistically coded and shared. Innovative writing for academic purposes may encourage colleagues to merge academic writing with creative writing and multimodality. How did you envision innovative writing, though?

RS: One of the images in my mind was that we should be exploiting the possibility of hyperlinking and bringing in a visual dimension much more – those are things we had talked about before in the *ELTED Journal* committee, e.g.

linking to video of classrooms or training events from within articles. In fact, looking back, as early as volume 11 (in 2008) we [published a piece which mentioned how we'd like to publish this kind of more innovative writing](#) (as Ema Ushioda said there/then, 'Perhaps we'll be the ones pushing the boundaries' (p. 54)!). Interestingly, that was a slightly innovative piece of writing itself, being an edited transcript of a conversation. In a way, we're realizing that hope finally with this special issue (and this dialogue-

editorial that you've initiated is a continuation of that innovative thread, too)!

Beyond these specific ideas I was open and looking forward to seeing what we might get sent in! That's when I asked you if you might be interested in editing with me – and you came up with a great call for papers that matched the spirit of what we were aiming to do very well. Shall we reproduce it here?

DB: Voilà!

The purpose of this special issue is to help break the mould of conventional research report writing and explore new ways through which teachers and teacher educators can exercise their voices and selves. Engaging with innovative and less conventional writing may help us expand our understanding of both the object under scrutiny and the writer.

We are interested in innovative contributions around ELTED whose formats illustrate how freedom of expression and creativity can contribute to sharing teachers' stories, theories, and practices. Contributions may take the form of stories, podcasts, short fiction, poems, hyperlinks, integration of modes, and comic strips, among other options.

**Expressions of interest** should be sent by 10 September 2015 to

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Your expression of interest (around TWO HUNDRED words) should state the content of your contribution, its basic structure and what makes it innovative in terms of format.

All expressions of interest and full contributions will be peer-reviewed.



Notifications of acceptance: 10 October 2015

Submission of complete contributions (no word limit): 10 February 2016.

DB: So, let's take a look at what this Special Issue contains. There are contributions from all corners of the world plus a book review of a small and interesting collection of stories written by teachers, followed by an 'anti-review'.

RS: And what do you think is innovative about the contributions?

DB: The way some of them are written: a comic strip, concrete, or patterned, poetry, a diary, thick descriptions of classroom practices, a more personal tone from the authors and participants, collaborative writing between a tutor and her students, an article written like a 'blog' with pictures and hyperlinks ...

RS: Do you think, overall, the articles are just innovative for the sake of it or is there a serious purpose behind it all?

DB: Well, we can say there are degrees of innovation, like an exercise, a first attempt. Some of the contributions included here do break the mould in terms of format and writing style. Others do so in terms of content and the use of visuals, for example photos of students' work. Others keep a more traditional structure but hey! they're more personal, like diaries, a type of writing that is more intimate. Lots of I's here and there that would make tutors of academic writing

go 🤔.

RS: Of course, there's the issue of maintaining quality, too. Being innovative doesn't mean 'anything goes', and maybe it's important to say that we

got everything peer-reviewed, as we always do in *ELTED Journal*, declining some proposed contributions in the process. We also encouraged contributors to share reflections on *why* they were doing whatever they were doing in their pieces.

DB: Still, because we're used to one mould, unfamiliar types of communication in a journal may sometimes be hard to digest, to process. I must confess that I found some of the pieces a bit difficult to read myself, but then I realised that my brain was formatted to one type of research paper only, and I had to walk out of that mental representation and start a different journey.

RS: There is apparently a dictum among editors of journals that 'You publish what you get, and you get what you publish!'. I'm really happy we've got so many interestingly innovative contributions to share in this special issue and sincerely hope it will encourage others involved in English language teacher education and development to write or otherwise contribute in more innovative ways in future 'ordinary' issues!

DB: Yes - so let this be a call for interestingly innovative contributions for future 'ordinary' issues, too!

Thanks to all the contributors to this special 20th issue, and a belated very happy 20th birthday to *ELTED Journal*!

Darío Banegas and Richard Smith

# Kontents

<i>Darren Elliot</i> . Exploring the possibilities of reporting teacher research through comics.....	1
<i>Mark Wyatt</i> . Surrendering during a bad research interview; Hamming it up in an observed lesson.....	7
<i>Ana Inés Salvi, with Cong Wang, Yu Li, Chenhao Lu, Yidan Wu, Shenyu Ye, Yimeng Zhao, Kaizhen Qiu and Wenxin Cui</i> . Involving EAP students in sharing their educational experience and development via arts-enriched methods.....	9
<i>Mandana Arfa Kaboodvand</i> . Dear diary.....	25
<i>Mark Wyatt</i> . Expressing research experience through pattern poetry.....	51
<i>William M. Sughrua</i> . Alternative academic writing in ELT research: Backstepping into the narrative turn so as to render issues of teacher professionalization..	60
<i>Ribut Wahyudi</i> . Becoming an empowered EFL teacher: A critical self-reflection of professional development.....	83
<i>Patrick Mthethwa</i> . Expanding English language teachers' knowledge repertoire.....	97
<i>Miguel Cerna</i> . Reflective innovations to overcome challenges in a Chilean action research project: My personal reflections.....	107
<i>Richard Smith, Deborah Bullock, Paula Rebolledo and Andrea Robles López</i> . 'By teachers for teachers': innovative, teacher-friendly publishing of practitioner research.....	116
<i>Darío Luis Banegas</i> . Book review of <i>Teacher Stories: Stories from the Edges of Language Teaching</i> , eds. Paul Walsh and Theresa Gorman, 2015, Grassroots Press.....	126
<i>Richard Smith</i> . Anti-review to an anti-review.....	127