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RaPAL

Family Learning



Journal

The Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Network

Who we are

RaPAL is an independent national network of learners, teachers, managers and researchers engaged in adult literacies and numeracy. Our support is generated by membership subscription only, and we are therefore completely independent in our views. RaPAL is the only national organisation focusing on the role of literacies in adult life.

What we do

- Campaign for the rights of adults to have access to the full range of literacies in their lives
- Critique current policy and practice where it is based on simplistic notions of literacy as skill
- Emphasise the importance of social context in literacy
- Encourage collaborative and reflective research
- Believe in democratic practices in adult literacy
- Create networks by organising events (including an annual conference) to contribute to national debate
- Publish a journal three times a year

RaPAL Officers 2013 / 2014

Chair	Sallie Condy
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Journal Co-ordinator	Naomi Horrocks
Production Editor	Kieran Harrington
Reviews Editors	Sarah Freeman
Membership Secretary	Yvonne Spare
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Editorial Information

The editorial group for 2013/14 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner-researchers: Sam Duncan, Julie Furnivall, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, Kieran Harrington, Naomi Horrocks, Linda Pearce, Anne Reardon-James, Irene Schwab, Yvonne Spare, Peggy Warren and Alison Wedgbury.

RaPAL members are involved in the compilation of the journal as editors, reviewers and referees.

We are a friendly group – open to new members and new ideas. Please contact us with any contributions (views, comments, reports and articles) and do not be put off if you are new to the field or if you have not written for a publication before. The journal is written by and for all learners, tutors/teachers and researchers who want to ask questions about this field of work. It does not matter if the questions have been asked before. We want to reflect the many voices within adult literacy and numeracy work and to encourage debate.

Why not join us?

Further information can be found at our website: www.rapal.org.uk

The RaPAL Journal is also available from EBSCO Information Services.

The RaPAL Journal expresses a variety of views which do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial group. The RaPAL Journal has been printed by Image Printing Co., Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire.

RaPAL Membership form

Help Us to Double RaPAL's Membership in 2013-14!

We are always keen to attract new individual and institutional members. Please join us and consider passing this to friends, colleagues and libraries / resource centres and encouraging them to join RaPAL now!

Members' Benefits

Membership brings:

- three RaPAL journals per year
- discounted attendance at RaPAL conferences
- participation in the RaPAL JISCLIST

We are happy for our members to participate in the journals and conferences and the organisation and administration of RaPAL.

How To Join

To join, please complete this form and email to membership@rapal.org.uk or post to:

RaPAL Membership, c/o Yvonne Spare, Sysondale, Anslow Lane, Rolleston on Dove, DE13 9DS, UK.

By joining, you confirm you sympathise with RaPAL's aims as stated in the Constitution.

Your Details

Full name: _____

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Please tick if you do NOT wish your email to be used in the RaPAL network

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To set up a Standing Order, please provide the name and address of bank or building society:

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Alternatively, you may post a cheque for £ (see below for the appropriate fee)

Fees 2013/14

Our membership year runs August to August. Please tick the appropriate subscription rate:

Digital Editions

Individual Membership

£40 Full-time £25 Low waged, unwaged or student

Institutional Membership

£90 this includes multiple electronic access to the journal and discounted attendance for one employee at the conference

Please tick here if you require an invoice

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Editorial

Early in 2013 we started planning this themed edition of our journal. We are delighted now to include RaPAL's usual mix of research, practitioner articles and learner contributions. We cover some history of policy making, a review of European research and articles from different regions of England, Scotland, Wales, The Republic of Ireland and The Netherlands.

What is family learning?

*'Family learning' refers to any learning activity that involves both children and adult family members, where learning outcomes are intended for both, and that contributes to a culture of learning in the family. That is the definition at the start of the Family Learning Works: The Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales (NIACE, October 2013).*¹The Inquiry video on YouTube is very striking and many RaPAL members will be familiar with this learner's experience from page 7 of the report:

I didn't know how to deal with my money or anything. I was really struggling. My confidence had hit rock bottom... Family learning made me feel human again. It gave me hope for the future. I was a single parent. I realised I did have options and I wasn't alone anymore ... My kids see me learning now. We all sit down and do our homework together and they understand how important it is to listen at school. It's such a good feeling as a parent to be involved in your children's education.

What is in this journal

We start with **Naomi Horrocks'** interview with **Andrea Mearing**, one of the key government advisors on the original family learning policy and strategy in England and Wales. Andrea comments on the growth of family literacy, language and numeracy as it has developed into areas including offender learning, homeless learners, travellers and the workplace. We include a video on family learning in a prison ([link to HMP Wolds video](#)) to illustrate this. Next is an article by **JD Carpentieri** from the Institute of Education, London, a member of the Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales. His research article on developments in European family literacy policy offers a wide perspective and comments on *'the tyranny of*

effect sizes' when policy makers respond to questions of impact.

Then we offer accounts from practitioners. In England and Wales they focus on family literacies in both urban and rural areas. They highlight the enduring benefits for learners, the creativity and flexibility of practitioners and the challenges of managing changes in policy, funding and requirements for outcomes. From England, **Lisette Veit** describes family learning in Cambridgeshire, **Gill Sargent** outlines her work with travellers and **Sarah Burkinshaw** takes us through developments in Derbyshire. From Wales, the land of song and storytelling, **Eirwen Malin** describes a NIACE Family Storytelling Weekend. From **Scotland**, family learning in North Lanarkshire is illustrated by a video ([link to video provided](#)). In The Netherlands **Christine Clement** is a Programme Leader for *Taal voor het Leven* (Language for Life). Together with RaPAL member **Claire Collins**, she explains their work. Their video, *The Story of Lisa (in English)* illustrates this. ([link to video provided](#)).

Next we celebrate the diverse teaching, learning and life experiences that exist in literacies provision. We include original writing from **Margaret Kelly**, a learner in the Republic of Ireland, and **Louise Walsh** and **Maddie Tyack**, both teachers in Wales. We are delighted to include their winning entries from the recent RaPAL web launch writing appeal.

Finally **Sarah Holmes**, **Anne Power** and **Sheila Scott** review a 2013 book from NIACE *Pass the New Life in the UK Test* by Celine Castelino.

1. NIACE (2013). Family Learning Works: the Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales. The report can be accessed at <http://shop.niace.org.uk/family-learning-inquiry-report.html> (accessed 2 December 2013).