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RaPAL

Impact and Innovation



Journal

The Research and Practice in Adult Literacies Network

Welcome

Research and Practice in Adult Literacies (RaPAL) is the only UK-wide organisation that focusses on the role of literacies in adult life. We promote effective and innovative practices in adult literacies teaching, learning and research; and support adult literacies practitioners and researchers. We enjoy engaging in debates that touch on English language and literacy, numeracy and digital skills across homes, communities and workplaces. Through our members, digital journals, conferences and fora, policy and advocacy work, we are active in Europe and have international links.

What we do

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

RaPAL Officers 2016 /2017

Chair	Tara Furlong
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Editorial Information

The editorial group for 2017-2018 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner-researchers: Gwyneth Allatt, Claire Collins, Samantha Duncan, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, Julie Furnivall, Sue Lownsbrough, Anne Reardon-James, Irene Schwab, Yvonne Spare, Brian Street and Rachel Stubbley.

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 literacies 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 various subscription services: EBSCO, LMInfo and Prenax. The RaPAL journal expresses a variety of views which do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial group. The RaPAL journal was designed by Image Printing Company, Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire



RaPAL Membership form

Help us to double RaPAL's membership in 2018/2019!

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 events
- participation in the RaPAL JISList

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 the form on our website (rapal.org.uk/join-us). You can also use the form below and email it to membership@rapal.org.uk or post to: RaPAL Membership, c/o Jo Byrne, 8 Phillip Drive, Glen Parva, Leicester, LE2 9US, UK. By joining, you confirm you sympathise with RaPAL's aims as stated in the Constitution.

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Fees 2017/2018

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

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£40 Full-time

£25 Low waged, unwaged or student

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50% discount per additional 5 sites or each additional 10,000 FTE people (staff and students)

Institutional membership allocates two votes at our AGM; and two member participation free or discount at events

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Editorial

Welcome to Journal 94, which focuses on the joint RaPAL, Learning and Work Institute, UCL Institute of Education, UCU, and NATECLA conference held on 9th November 2017 at UCL Institute of Education, London. The annual conference on English, maths and ESOL was entitled *Impact and Innovation* and contributions on the day showcased innovation in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL practice as well as providing concrete examples of the positive impact of language, literacy and numeracy learning on individuals, communities and the wider economy.

Given the impact of technology on people's lives and the new policy announcement of digital as a 'third basic skill', Journal 94 also explores some of the issues surrounding digital literacy.

This edition includes contributions from practitioners and researchers who gave presentations and led workshops at the conference. There are also articles and book reviews related to the twin themes of the conference as well as contributions relating to digital literacy.

Katie Schumuecker's article, which opens this conference edition, argues for a new approach to basic skills education. She suggests the current *outputs* based model, which tends to focus on accreditation, should be replaced by an *outcomes* based model. Katie argues that this approach would reveal the positive impact of basic skills education on people's lives.

This is followed by Tara Furlong's summary article on the most popular workshop at the conference: *Making Space: social practices, participatory and creative approaches* where Tara concludes by examining the role of RaPAL in supporting these approaches.

Graham Hall, working in Wales, where English and Welsh have equivalent official status under the *Welsh Language Act*, provides an example of practitioner research used to determine the most suitable of four different approaches, to use when offering a bilingual Foundation Degree in applied computing. He concludes that each has its merits depending on circumstances.

A further article concerned with multilingualism is provided by Professor Li Wei. This article discusses the concept of *Translanguaging*, where all the language resources available to students are used in learning. The teacher becomes a facilitator who supports critical reflection and both teacher and learner contribute to knowledge construction. A very thought provoking article for those who reject the concept of 'banking education'.

The final article in this section is from Stephen Evans who believes strongly in the power of adult education to address many of the challenges faced by our society. Stephen argues this can be done by gathering evidence of success (a similar argument to Katie's); disseminating them widely and taking collective action.

Catherine Gray challenges all of us to consider whether One Size Fits All. She has seen huge changes in F.E. Colleges as a result of the change in education policy - compulsory

attendance up to the age of 18. Previously, learners attended because they chose to continue their learning, but no longer; disengaged learners appear in the classroom at the start of the academic year. Catherine reports on the nurture group that she has started. I don't want to give the game away but her story brought me to tears.

Renata Fraser and her wonderful team of literacy tutors from Perth inspire with their stories about the impact of learning on their students. A reminder of why we started the job we do/did. The editorial team wanted to highlight the work of Stewart's Cigar Box project in prison as being innovative and the impact of his approach is that a group has wanted to return to develop their skills and gain accreditation.

Sarah Freeman in a reflective piece considers the benefits to students, of different kinds of literacies. She also raises the question of who brings literacy to the classroom and the answer is not necessarily what we think.

What is Digital Literacy? Having asked 50 + people the response from 49 was silence, then, 'I'll get back to you.' It took a while for people to consider the concept.

'Digital literacy is being able to use the internet for what you want / need and being competent at getting the computer to do what you want it to do.'

'Digital literacy is understanding what a secure connection means; in the context of banking, payment details, being able to send and reply to emails, being aware of phishing scam tactics.'

'Digital literacy does not mean that you are able to code or understand the inner workings of a computer.'

This section explores the experiences of three practitioners – the editorial team. Digital Literacy is mentioned in Section 1 by both Katie Schumuecker and Stephen Evans as an essential tool. Here we pick up on more personal and local issues.

Juliet McCaffery takes the reader through concerns that computer users face as they negotiate everyday life.

In addition, an ex-teacher, now a computer technician, was interviewed to explore the issues seen on a daily basis by a local computer repair shop.

Julie Collins' starts with the arrival of a BBC computer with 32 mb RAM. She has to wait a further 17 years before capital funding allows her to embed literacy in IT courses at a homeless hostel. In another five years the computer is being used as a creative tool for learning: to record, research, communicate, share ideas and aid critical thinking and reflection.

The idea of digital literacy as a third basic skill is picked up by Toni Lambe.

In our peer-reviewed article Irene Schwab returns to the area of multilingualism and presents her research on the teaching of reading in literacy classes, where many of the students were multilingual. This research raises a number of very important questions about

the suitability of current training for literacy tutors, given the changing student cohort, and the challenges faced by teacher educators in designing suitable programmes.

The two books reviewed for this edition provide much to think about given the current challenging times. Julie Collins reviews *Populism, Media and Education: Challenging discrimination in contemporary digital societies*. This is an edited book which will be of interest to those who seek ways in which to counteract populism through education as well as those who are interested in the role of education and citizenship in the digital era. Vera Hutchinson reviews *Literacy and Multimodality across global sites* a book in which Maureen Kendrick revisits her previous work in light of current developments in the area of multimodality.

This edition closes with Tara Furlong's round up of news from the sector.