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Editorial

Toni Lambe and Julie Collins

Welcome to Journal 97, which focuses on the joint RaPAL, Learning and Work Institute, UCL Institute of Education, UCU, and NATECLA conference held on 14th November 2018 at Westminster Kingsway College, London. The annual conference on English, maths and ESOL was entitled *Rethinking Participation* and contributions on the day provided wide ranging perspectives on how to increase and widen both participation and provision in the area of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Concrete examples of the positive impact of language, literacy and numeracy learning on individuals, communities and the wider economy were also provided.

This edition includes contributions from practitioners and researchers who gave presentations and led workshops at the conference and a student, Andrew Humphries, who inspired us during his plenary interview with Stephen Evans. There are also articles and book reviews related to the theme of the conference as well as contributions highlighting interesting and innovative ways of working with students.

Sue Pember OBE, a former senior government official, currently HOLEX Director of Policy and External Relations and a former lead Director for Adult and Further Education in the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), provided the key note at the joint conference and her article opens this conference edition.

Calling for a new Adult Basic Skills Strategy Sue reflects on the success of the original Skills for Life Strategy and the important legacy left behind. She provides a nine-point plan for this new strategy arguing for a renewed commitment to adult literacy and numeracy at Government level.

This is followed by Jo Dixon's reflection on adults writing in the digital age, which leads her to some interesting observations regarding student autonomy and students understanding of the role of the tutor.

Valeria Panyko, a maths teacher, also provides a reflective piece. In this instance relating to her experience of working towards Advanced Teacher Status (ATS)*. There were some unexpected outcomes for Valeria which caused her to rethink certain aspects of her teaching and as with Jo's earlier piece, student autonomy and tutor role were not far from the surface.

**ATS was launched in 2017 by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). It offers a significant step up from Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and in November 2018 it was announced that those who achieve Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) will be conferred with The Chartered College of Teaching's Chartered Teacher designation. Further information can be found by following this link.*

<https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/membership/ats-advanced-teacher-status/>

The next four articles all provide either ideas for good practice or discussion and links to some excellent resources for tutors. Smith, Peacock and Bartrip's article discusses the authors' experience of trialling erasure writing with their students of English; concluding that this approach to creative writing is accessible to students across a range of abilities. This article brings to mind Frost and Hoy's adage 'a beginner writer is not a beginner thinker' (1985) and our efforts in the late 1990s to convince trainee adult literacy tutors that creative writing with students was both possible, and a 'good idea'.

A further article concerned with student writing is provided by Judith Kirsh who tells us about the production and publication of student writing in the form of reading books for active citizenship.

For anybody interested in the whole area of student writing, Tom Woodin's 2008 "'A beginner reader is not a beginner thinker': student publishing in Britain since the 1970s" is an excellent read and is available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230701865629>.

Richard Rossner, a member of the Council of Europe's coordination group for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LIAM), takes us through the Council's online toolkit. Here we find extensive, free, resources that can be used in the preparation and provision of language support for refugees.

The next article by Casey, Gardner and Greller, is thought provoking and should certainly cause much discussion amongst practitioners. Their initial argument is that to participate in the digital world students need to be able to read and write. They then put forward some suggestions about ways in which digital technology, by way of a smartphone 'app' they are developing, could be used by students outside class to support and practise their learning; a development that would seem to answer some of the questions raised by Jo Dixon as to the possible uses of technology in writing development.

Where their ideas may be more challenging, particularly for literacy tutors, especially those who adhere to the social practice model, is their suggestion that what they call the 'nuts and bolts' of literacy should be taught as a standalone skill as opposed to 'in context' as currently practised.

Kathy Jones challenges us in a different way when she talks about literacy provision for homeless adults and suggests that even without Government help there are possibilities for improvement within the current context.

Storytelling and reading aloud are the topics of our final two articles. Sarah Telfer and Amanda Turner provide an analysis of trainee teachers' experiences of incidental learning, using storytelling, in the English as a Second Language (ESOL) classroom in the Further Education and Skills sector, advocating for the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogic tool in teaching and learning.

Sam Duncan discusses the Reading Aloud in Britain Today project and encourages us to think about what we mean by reading, reminding us of the importance of keeping students at the centre of the process. Further ideas can be located through the UCL Read Aloud website, or the reading agency blog. <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/blog/>

If you wish to contribute information to the project then you can complete their questionnaire here. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/sites/ioe/files/everyday-reading-questionnaire.pdf>

Finally, Andrew Humphries and Lorraine Powney, in conversation, discuss the benefits and barriers involved in returning to learning.

The two books reviewed for this edition provide much to think about for those concerned with equity and social inclusion. Graham Hall reviews *Numeracy as Social Practice*. This is an edited book which will be of interest to those who are interested in numeracy in an international context, as well as those who seek to understand how numeracy is being used to maintain and reproduce dominance/inequality. Juliette McCaffery reviews *Identity and Resistance in Further Education*, another edited book and one that challenges and critiques prevailing norms of policy and practice and the 'marketisation' of further education.

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

Note from the Journal Coordinator

Yvonne Spare

Yvonne can be contacted on journal@rapal.org.uk

Hello fellow RaPAL members

We hope you enjoy this, our conference edition of the Journal. Our next edition will be on the theme of **Creative Responses to Literacies Policies**, a subject dear to the hearts of many adult literacies and numeracy tutors! If you have any thoughts on articles that you would like to see in this edition, now is the time to let us know – a call for papers went out to the Rapallist in March and we would like to see drafts or even just outline ideas by the end of April.

Any comments about this or other editions, or ideas for future content can be sent to journal@rapal.org.uk and don't forget that most Journal editions contain articles by new writers. There are guidelines on our website on the [Write for Us](#) page and we offer as much support as you feel you need. We are also interested in hearing what you think about your Journal. There is a feedback section on the website so that you can comment on anything you have read in this or previous editions. Follow the link to our comments space at the bottom of the page, which needs the password that has been circulated with this edition.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that the articles we publish are not necessarily representative of the views or position of the membership body, and we do not advocate any given course of action in any given context. We do, of course, support freedom of speech and of academic liberty, and the pragmatic achievement of objectives as a negotiated consensus.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Yvonne