

# RaPAL

Research and Practice in Adult Literacy

Rom n Joolz: texting and literacy

Community of enquiry in a prison environment  
Extraordinary achievement  
Skills for Life for staff at Lewes Prison  
A moment not to be missed - Quick Reads, RaW and all that

How can adult literacies provision be made accessible to  
and meaningful for profoundly Deaf adults?

English for Speakers of Caribbean Languages (ESOCL)

Policy developments in Literacy & Essential Skills: can the  
Peace Process in Northern Ireland provide a way forward?

Making it work together - The challenges of delivering ALNIS  
in a rural area in Scotland.

Findings from the 'Evaluation of the Scottish Adult Literacy  
and Numeracy (ALN) Strategy' (Scottish Executive, 2006)

What's underpinning Scotland's literacies policy?

Don't look north through rose-tinted spectacles: tensions,  
struggles and guiding lights in Scotland - a reflection.

Lizard dressed as lamb? A cautionary reading of the discourse  
of the Scottish Adult Literacies Initiative

Journal

## The Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Network

### Who we are

RaPAL is an independent national network of learners, practitioners, 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 Management Group 2006-2007

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(\* denotes Officer)

### Editorial Information

The Editorial Group for 2005-2006 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner researchers: Yvon Appleby, Amy Burgess, Maxine Burton, Jim Crowther, Azumah Dennis, Linda Eastwood, Ellayne Fowler, Alison Gorf, Barbara Hately-Broad, Mary Hamilton, Gaye Houghton, Alex Kendall, Hugo Kerr, Fiona Macdonald, Jane Mace, Deirdre Parkinson, Sarah Rennie, Irene Schwab, Ralf St. Clair, Alison Tomlin, Karin Tusting, Carol Woods. Overseas members of the Editorial Group include: Jean Searle, Rosie Wickert, Stephen Black, Australia; Mary Norton, Bonnie Soroake, Sheila Stewart, Canada; Janet Isserlis, Elsa Auerbach, Steve Reder, USA; and Cathy Kell, New Zealand

Members are involved in the compilation of the journal as reviewers/referees and editors.

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. This Journal is written by and for all learners, tutors 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 in?

### Further information can be found at our website: [www.rapal.org.uk](http://www.rapal.org.uk)

The RaPAL Journal expresses a variety of views which do not necessarily reflect those of the editorial group.

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This Summer's 2006 edition of the journal contains a mixture from practice, information about research linked to practice and discussion of policy. We were interested and intrigued that our requests for articles relating to policy drew a big response from Scotland and little from elsewhere. This could reflect a particular moment in Scottish policy, which is being reassessed, or that people want the space for a critical dialogue about something that has perhaps been uncritically accepted as better than elsewhere. We hope that this honest self-reflexive dialogue will stimulate similar discussion about how ALN policy is developed and implemented in Wales, Northern Ireland, The Republic of Ireland and England. There may be interesting comparisons to be made between them.

In Section One Kath Schofield describes working with young adults using texting imaginatively as a way of making Shakespeare come alive in the classroom. As she comments, people code switch all the time and texting is one choice within a repertoire of written communications that people use in their lives. Vanessa Braidwood writes about her work using a Community of Enquiry approach in a prison in Northumberland. She describes how this approach enabled the men attending the session to consider how literacy skills were an important part of their survival in the outside world. Vicky Duckworth makes the link between people in the real world and her classroom showing how this connection helps to support learners achieve their goals. Robert Nuden also takes up the theme of prison education and describes a project that The Network are running in Lewes Prison to support work based learning for staff. Gievee Clarke and Kay Jackman provide an update on the Quick Reads and RaW (Read more and Write better) campaign to support adult reading.

In Section Two Jill Little describes her practitioner research project working with deaf adults. She provides insights into the culture of the deaf community, the significance for working with deaf people and the importance of using British Sign Language (BSL) along with BSA bi-lingual tutors. Liz Millman also identifies the need to recognise and respond to learners' languages in her piece on speakers of Caribbean languages. Liz points out the history of work in this area and the need to keep this issue on the agenda. Rob Mark offers an overview of policy in Northern Ireland and the importance of ALN policy to the Peace Process. This provides insight into the links between ALN and conflict resolution in other

parts of the world too. Mary Rhind gives an account of work in rural Scotland where to deliver Scottish policy effectively in the Highland area they have explored and developed ways of working with information and communication technologies (ICTs). Tackling the difficulties of distance, little transport and time ICTs provide a good mode of communication for practitioners as well as learning opportunities for people in rural areas.

Section Three concentrates on Scottish policy providing an interesting forum for self reflection and critical debate. It starts with an official evaluation of the Scottish Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN) strategy by Lyn Tett and colleagues. They describe the impact of the strategy based upon their data showing that lives are transformed and communities sustained by participation in ALN. In the piece that follows Deirdre Parkinson asks what underpins Scottish policy, questioning the influence of the international adult literacy surveys and the move towards employability within its development. The next article from Kathy Maclachlan argues that to secure what she calls the 'remarkable' aspects of a policy based upon social practice principles there needs to be an honest and sometimes difficult debate about how well it is understood and applied. The Scottish policy is felt by many to be inspirational, and therefore important, but, as Aileen Ackland cautions in her article, it still operates within wider new managerial discourses that focus on performance indicators. This persuasive discourse, supported by the discourse of employability, she argues needs to be acknowledged before it can be resisted.

### **Yvon Appleby, Jim Crowther and Sarah Rennie**

*Yvon Appleby is a Research Fellow at Lancaster Literacy Research Centre. She is a full time researcher in the field of literacy, numeracy and ESOL and is committed to practitioner research and linking research with practice.*

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## **RaPAL Journals 2005-2006 themes, deadlines and editors**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>General Theme</b>	<b>Copy deadline</b>	<b>Editors</b>
Autumn 2006	Conference 2006 Edition: Transforming Literacies	Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2006	Fiona Macdonald; Deirdre Parkinson