

# RaPAL

Research and Practice in Adult Literacy

**This Summer Edition focuses on international perspectives in practice, pedagogy and policy in adult literacy. Articles describe work in refugee camps, in isolated rural communities and with different migrant communities. It covers family literacy, teaching maths, issues surrounding second language acquisition and local reading and writing schemes. Articles come from Thailand, Cameroon, Ireland, Canada, Uganda, Cambodia, England, Australia and Malta.**

**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 Officers 2007 - 2008

Chair	Amy Burgess, University of Lancaster
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### Editorial Information

The Editorial Group for 2007-2008 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner researchers: Yvon Appleby, Sue Bates, Amy Burgess, Maxine Burton, Ellayne Fowler, Tara Furlong, Barbara Hatley-Broad, Mary Hamilton, Kieran Harrington, Gaye Houghton, Fiona Macdonald, Colleen Molloy, Deirdre Parkinson and Sarah Rennie. 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.

The RaPAL Journal has been printed by Image Printing Co., Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire. Matlock, Derbyshire.



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# Editorial



Welcome to the summer edition of the RaPAL journal that looks at international perspectives on practice, pedagogy and policy. Indeed, articles in this edition range from work in a refugee camp in Thailand to a family literacy project in East Timor. Along the way we visit Cameroon, Ireland, Canada, Uganda, Cambodia, England, Australia and Malta.

Reflective practice means that we often focus, perhaps too much, on what we are doing in the context in which we work. How well did that go? What would I change next time? What these international perspectives offer us is the opportunity to look outwards and see the points of similarity and difference. You might find some ideas that you can apply to your own practice or research. Or you might be using similar activities within a very different context. Either way, this glimpse into other countries and other policy settings gives us pause for thought.

With such an open call for papers it is interesting to see that some general themes emerge. For example, family literacy is explored in section 1 in terms of practice and also in section three in terms of a comparative study into projects in England, Ireland and Malta. There is also a focus, as you should expect with RaPAL, on practitioner research. Overall though lies the question, asked specifically by more than one contributor whose literacy? Whether we are working in multi- or mono-lingual settings, which literacy or set of literacy practices are we teaching and researching?

In section 1 Delia Bradshaw describes the collective and collaborative writing group in Australia which led to the creation of the book *Fancy Footwork*. Mary Patience introduces us to a family literacy project in East Timor, which starts with photos as the basis for creating meaningful books for the learners to read. Sarah Rennie looks at activities used to train teachers and school leavers in a refugee camp in Thailand. The schemes in East Timor and Thailand are looking to train people who will

continue the literacy work started by projects, whether they are mothers or teachers.

In section 2 Ian Cheffy questions what the focus of adult literacy should be in developing countries, with a particular focus on Cameroon. Should the focus be on the individual or on changing the community? Kieran Harrington presents practitioner research exploring attitudes towards a particular group of immigrant learners within ESOL classes in Ireland. Kate Nonesuch reports on a process for exploring what teachers see as good practice in teaching numeracy in Canada. Another contribution from RiPAL in British Columbia, Canada looks at a collaborative process between practitioners, researchers and students of developing programme evaluation tools. Linda Pearce looks at the evaluation of a bi-lingual education programme in Cambodia, raising questions such as, 'whose literacy anyway?' Contributions in this section range then from a focus on what we should be teaching to reporting on processes that can lead to change in attitudes or pedagogy.

In section 3 Yvon Cloutier takes up the themes of multilingualism and immigrants with his review of research on L2 acquisition of Canadian immigrants. Anthea Rose reports on a comparative study of family literacy programmes in Europe, looking at similarities and differences between Ireland, England and Malta. George Openjuru links theory, practice and policy in his review of work in Uganda.

As editors, we are very grateful for the contributions of participants and it is just worth noting that editorial meetings have happened in a virtual environment as we are spread across the United Kingdom. Enjoy these articles and let them help you reflect on what you are doing, inspire you to try something new or take that first step into practitioner research.

*Yvon Appleby  
Ellayne Fowler  
Sarah Rennie*

## **RaPAL Journals 2007 Themes and Deadlines**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>General Theme</b>	<b>Copy deadline</b>
Autumn 2007	Conference 2007 edition: Learning journeys - voices and identities in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Fri 28th Sept 2007