See Inside for details of our October Conference!

Volume No. 83
Summer 2014

RaPAL
Health Literacies, Partnerships and Workplaces

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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 2014 / 2015

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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 designed by Image Printing Company, Lumsdale, Matlock, Derbyshire
Help us to double RaPAL's membership in 2014-15!
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
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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 2014/15
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
Contents

Editorial
Claire Collins, Sarah Freeman and Peggy Warren

1

An overview of health literacy for adult literacy practitioners
Jonathan Berry

3

Literacy education and NEETs: skills-based versus socially situated approaches to curriculum
Victoria Wright and Rob Smith

7

The harder the struggle, the sweeter the victory!
Peggy Warren and Jenica Richards

15

RaPAL literacy conference 2014 - rapporteur’s report
Steph Taylor

22

Window to RaPAL Conference - a composite, digital anthology of presentations, events and video/audio materials from RaPAL Conference 2014
Compiled by Claire Collins

24

Reading changes lives
Genevieve Clarke

25

Workplace texts: what do they tell us about the ways in which writing is used in small businesses?
Sue Grief

27

Juggling digital communication and exploding paperwork: women in the Global Care Industry
Video Key note speech by Sondra Cuban

32

Patient Stories
Rebecca Ferriday

33

An Australian perspective: literacies, lifelong Learning, health, well-being, partnerships and workplaces
(A digital, photographic and text based compilation from a range of Australian settings)
Isabel Osuna-Gatty and Ros Bauer

35

REVIEWS

Reading for Pleasure and Reading Circles for Adult Emergent Readers, Insights in Adult Learning by Sam Duncan
Reviewed by Vicky Duckworth

37

Learning Trajectories, Violence and Empowerment Amongst Adult Basic Skills Learners by Vicky Duckworth
Reviewed by Shelley Tracey

38

Deskilling Migrant Women in the Global Care Industry by Sondra Cuban
Reviewed by Peggy Warren

40

RaPAL Journal No. 83  Summer 2014
Claire Collins, Peggy Warren and Sarah Freeman

The Conference 2014 edition of the Journal revolves around the themes of Health, Well-being, Partnerships and Workplaces. The event took place at City Hospital, Birmingham and boasts a number of firsts: it was the first time in RaPAL’s history that we have held a conference in a hospital setting, and for the first time RaPALers interacted live with literacy colleagues in Australia. We were also treated to a video keynote by Professor Sondra Cuban from West Washington University, USA - another new event for RaPAL. Steph Taylor's “Rapporteur's Report” reveals the essence of the day from the delegates’ point of view. Workshop facilitators and keynote speakers have contributed material to read and watch and there is an innovative new space called “Windows to the Conference”.

The first article by Jonathan Berry from the Community Health and Learning Foundation, guides the reader straight to the connection between promoting well-being and partnerships. He draws attention to the need for more joined-up thinking between literacy programme leaders, practitioners and personnel involved in public health programmes.

The theme of situated literacies is drawn on strongly throughout the Journal, focussing attention on the need to weave in curriculum approaches that resonate with the lives and practices of those in learning. Victoria Wright and Rob Smith focus on learners who are “not in education, employment or training” (NEET). They outline first-hand research they have undertaken with student literacy teachers.

Bob Read's presentation from the conference (shown in “Windows to the Conference” section) provides an example of how embedded learning can also support health-care professionals in their training and development.

Central to RaPAL is its wide agenda for inclusiveness in curricula and in literacy policy. We are proud of our history of creating space for students' voices in our publications and conferences. Peggy Warren provides us with a powerful account of how non-traditional students can enhance and make literacies used in higher education settings more accessible. Along with Jenica Richards (a student), Peggy provides us with an illuminating perspective on the “widening participation” agenda. In this, the first of our multimedia articles, the reader can relive aspects of the workshop delivered by Peggy and Jenica, which included poetry, music and a first person narrative.

You can view the second of our Keynote presentations by Professor Linda Lang through our “Window to the Conference”. Professor Lang spoke about the concept of Lifelong Learning in the health sector, focussing on a recent development in a University Technical College (UTC) in the Midlands. Building on the idea of partnerships between health and literacy practitioners, you can watch the illuminating Australian video article from Ros Bauer and Isabel Osuna-Gatty, especially made for the RaPAL event. This describes successful education schemes that embrace health and literacies in outlying, widespread communities and shows that strong partnerships are critical to implementing literacy programmes across Australia. Their literacy projects and training programmes, underpinned by a combination of social practice and skills-based approaches, not only develop people's personal and workplace literacies, but also enhance their general well-being.

The NHS and wider health contexts (work places) have historically been sites of educational disparities and injustices, particularly for migrant groups. Sondra Cuban's visual presentation and the review of her book by Peggy Warren, highlight some of the literacy challenges adult learners navigate whilst undertaking work-based and other forms of learning.
Shelley Tracey reviews Vicky Duckworth’s book, *Learning Trajectories, Violence and Empowerment amongst Adult Basic Skills Learners*, a detailed insight into the lives of sixteen adult literacy learners in Lancashire, which draws attention to how their situations hampered their progress in education but didn’t deter them from being able to learn how to express their predicaments and those of their local communities.

It was at this conference that we agreed to transition the ‘L’ in RaPAL from *Literacy* to *Literacies*. We outlined the path that took us to this decision in Claire’s (1985) presentation and this gem is embedded in “Window to the Conference”. Following the same theme – that of seeking the literacies that are in sync with participants’ life experiences - Genevieve Clarke’s article, “Reading changes lives” and Vicky Duckworth’s review of Sam Duncan’s new book, *Reading for Pleasure and Reading Circles for Adult Emergent Readers*, both remind us of the life-transforming nature of reading. Genevieve illustrates how working on reading in partnership with unions and NHS trusts is creating positive social opportunities, as well as contributing to mental wellbeing. Further to this, Sue Grief’s article highlights aspects of “taken for granted” writing practices undertaken in small businesses – the literacies which we barely notice, but which are key to everyday local life.

What a privilege it has been to work on such important and topical areas. As RaPAL aspires to keep abreast of the digital age, we have also been reminded of the impact of what practitioners do and strive to do. As a professional body we promote the engagement of learners where they feel comfortable, and minimisation of the barriers they encounter as they engage in learning. Likewise, we are committed in our support of practitioners who endeavour to make learning meaningful in the field of adult literacy.

**Details of our October Conference!**

**Motivated or mandated:** engaging adults in learning and supporting them to succeed

**Joint annual conference with NIACE, NRDC, RaPAL and UCU to support adults with maths and English**

**Date:** 20th October 2014  
**Venue:** London

*UCU Office, Old Bakery, Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH*

**Ref:** C3253/1014  
**Fee:** Non-members fee - £140  
Members of UCU, NIACE, NRDC and RaPAL - £65  
Part-time Tutors - £54  
(Includes lunch, tea/coffee)

**Contact**

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