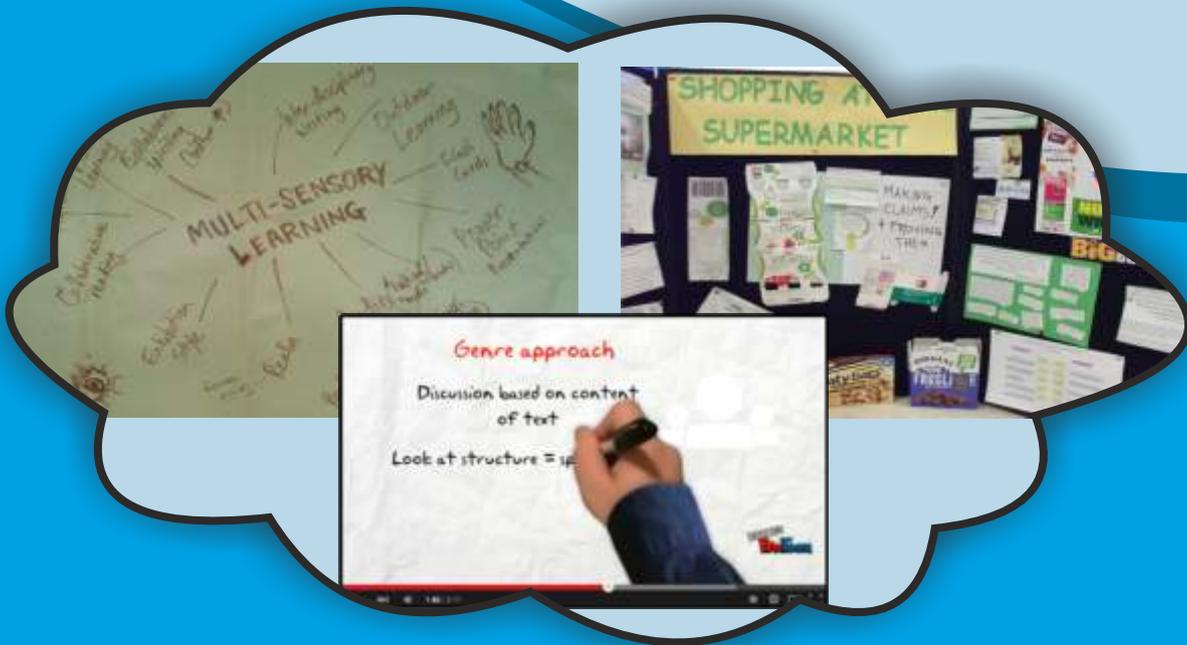


RaPAL

Learning Literacies



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 2015

Chair	Sallie Condy
Secretary	Claire Collins
Treasurer	Alison Wedgbury
Journal Co-ordinator	Yvonne Spare
Production Editor	Claire Collins
Reviews Editor	Sarah Freeman
Membership Secretary	Yvonne Spare
Website Manager	Tara Furlong

Editorial Information

The editorial group for 2015 includes the following researchers, practitioners and practitioner-researchers: Sam Duncan, Julie Furnivall, Sarah Freeman, Tara Furlong, 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

RaPAL Membership form

Help us to double RaPAL's membership in 2015!

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 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 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

Full name: _____

Email: _____

Please tick if you do NOT wish your email to be used in the RaPAL network

Address: _____

County: _____ Postcode: _____

Country: _____

Mobile / work / home telephone numbers: _____

To set up a standing order, please request a form from us to send to your bank

Alternatively, you may post a cheque for £ (see below for the appropriate fee)

Fees 2015

Our membership year runs July 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

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Compiled by Irene Schwab and Rachel Stubbley

Editorial

Rachel Stublely and Irene Schwab

Hello and welcome to this edition of the RaPAL journal, which focuses particularly on the process of professional development for adult literacy practitioners. We, the editors, are both adult literacy teacher educators, and over the years we have worked to support trainee tutors in becoming skilled and dedicated teachers of language and literacies. Since the millennium, we have seen how gaining a subject specialist teaching qualification has helped many practitioners develop skills and understanding and move into a close and committed community of practice.

In the last 2 or 3 years, policy changes across the UK (e.g. following the publication of the Lingfield Report in 2012) have meant that qualifications are not valued as they once were, and funding for training has disappeared. Nevertheless, many teachers, both new and experienced, still value the opportunity for literacy specialist professional development, and many colleges and other employers still recognise the value of well-trained staff. We believe that professional development is a marvellous opportunity to extend and deepen practice. Such views are supported by research, which shows that being involved in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) supports good practice in teaching (Block and Mangieri, 2009; Fletcher, 2014).

The articles in this issue of the RaPAL Journal are examples of how Initial Teacher Education and CPD can promote reflection on issues of concern to teachers, and support creative thinking about how to deal with these. Section 1 starts with Helena Gannon's moving response to a learner's progress into work, and how her learner's life has been changed by becoming more confident with reading and writing. Jonathan Mann discusses how CPD has supported his development as a teacher of English on vocational courses; Joanne Sutton and Katie-Jane Knight reflect on how their perceptions have changed as they develop their teaching skills and become participants in their community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991); and Sonia Morris describes how, moving away from formal support mechanisms, using What's App offers peer support and empowerment.

In section 2, we can see further development of creative and innovative ideas through the work of Linda Ruas who considers how to cover sensitive and controversial issues in the classroom critically. Both Clare Tyrer and Sarah Telfer reflect on collaborative learning approaches, Clare through technology and Sarah through creative writing. Qasir Shah outlines his journey through a range of courses and what he has learned about literacy and his learning along the way

Section 3 (our academic peer-reviewed section) contains an extended piece by Angela Cahill. This is a fascinating and thoughtful description of her research project (conducted in the context of a Masters course), which explores the teaching of phonics with a small literacy group in Ireland within an overall social practices approach.

We believe these pieces are evidence of the value of CPD and reflection in helping us keep our practice dynamic and responsive. Professional development challenges us to take risks in our teaching, which is not easy. However, the writers in this issue of the Journal show us that the rewards can be considerable.

Finally, the editors have put together a list of some of their favourite and recommended resources for "learning literacies". This is followed by the review section, which looks at two very different new titles. We hope the contributors to this edition of the RaPAL Journal will have inspired you to do some additional reading and/or professional development yourselves!

References

Block, C. C. and Mangieri, J. N. (2009). *Exemplary Literacy Teachers: What schools can do to promote success for all students*. New York and London: The Guilford Press

Fletcher, J. (2014). 'A review of effective reading literacy practices for young adolescent 11 to 13 year old students'. *Educational Review*, 66 (3), 293-310.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Note from the Journal Coordinator

Hello fellow RaPAL members. This is just to introduce myself as your new Journal Coordinator. Firstly I have to say how much I have enjoyed reading this issue, thanks to the efforts of the editing team, Irene and Rachel. In our recent survey we found that the aspect of RaPAL that members most valued was the Journal and this certainly reflects my own experience. Through my time as tutor, manager, tutor-trainer and research fieldworker, I have looked forward to each new edition of the Journal and have never failed to find something interesting and informative. However, we can't do this without you. Our editorial team is made up of a small group of volunteers, some from the management group and others just interested in helping to produce the Journal. We meet once a year in the autumn to make plans for the following year and to allocate editors for each edition. This year we are in need of new members for the editorial group. Our next meeting is in September and we would like to invite anyone who has an interest. This is an open invitation and you would not be committing yourself to joining the group, although of course we would be delighted if you did.

Additionally we can't produce the Journal without writers. We encourage submissions from everyone, and this edition includes contributions from both new and experienced writers. We offer as much support as you feel you need, and there are guidelines on our website on the "[Write for Us](#)" page, so come forward with anything from an initial idea to a finished article. We would love to hear from you. For both of these, you can contact me on journal@rapal.org.uk.

At our recent AGM we appealed for new volunteers for our management group. As some of our members have come to the end of their time in various roles, we need people to replace them, in particular as Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer. If you feel able to step forward or even just want to talk about it, please contact any of us – our details are in the Journal and on our website www.rapal.org.uk. Our next big event is our joint conference in October – perhaps you would like to play a part in it.

Whether you are reading this as a RaPAL member or someone who is thinking about joining us, I hope you enjoy it as much as I have.

Yvonne