

RaPAL AGM 2022

Chair Report

2022 culminates my two terms in office as Chair, and the Journal Co-ordinator alongside me. I would like to express my deepest appreciation for Yvonne's tireless consistency in ensuring members receive the journal three times a year. This has been a particular challenge since Spring 2020 when the country went into lockdown, and out of which we are only surfacing in recent weeks.

Research

Over the last triennium, RaPAL have been involved in two to three significant research projects. For the 100th edition of the RaPAL journal, and the 2019 Centenary Commission on Adult Education, we launched the RaPAL 100 project. This was a largely qualitative survey of adult literacies provision nationally. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we extended this research to include the effect of lockdown on adult literacies teaching and learning. This research produced a now archived data set, three journal editions and an online event. The team were extremely persistent in following through on these activities, and I would like to extend recognition to Dr Sarah Freeman for leading the project, which concluded summer 2021.

Since 2020, RaPAL has worked in close collaboration with BALID (British Association for Literacy in Development) to support a BAICE (British Association for International and Comparative Education) funded comparative case study of the impact of lockdown on adult education provision in Afghanistan, the Philippines and the UK. A dedicated international edition of the journal is being published at the present time.

Events

RaPAL continue to partner with Learning and Work Institute, UCL IoE Post-14 Centre, UCU and NATECLA to run an annual autumn joint conference, which adopted a new format in response to the COVID-19 crisis:

- *No One Left Behind: The Future For Adult Basic Skills*, Westminster Kingsway College, 2019
- *Adult basic skills: building back better*, online, 2020
- *A Higher Ambition for Adult Basic Skills*, online, 2021

The free, online events have seen a significant uptick in registrations and reach since moving to a virtual half-day format.

The RaPAL 100 Project concluded with an online event summer 2021, Chaired by Greg Brooks, Emeritus Professor, School of Education, Sheffield University and with presentations by Dr Sam Duncan, Associate Professor, Education, Practice & Society, UCL Institute of Education; and Dr Philida Schellekens, Head of English and ESOL at the Education and Training Foundation.

In response to the COVID-19 lockdowns, Regional Advocate Donna Moore initiated *Space on a Page*, which ran approximately six times and provided practitioners with an accessible online forum to share teaching and learning challenges, ideas and responses to lockdown.

Similarly, online *PhD Colloquia* ran periodically through 2020 and 2021, which PhD candidates found a valuable forum for discussing their research projects with peers.

Stories of Resilience – a 'live' book corner was initiated by Ordinary Member Amanda Jane Derry July 2019 and run once or twice a month until September 2020. This was increased to most weeks during lockdown, where the online social contact and interweaving of literacy and life was appreciated by members and non-members alike.

Website

RaPAL has invested significantly in curating a new website, which is launching shortly.

European Basic Skills Network (EBSN)

RaPAL joined EBSN last year. Members receive copies of EBSN's newsletters and are welcome to engage in their activity.

Publishers Licensing Society (PLS)

RaPAL extended their collective licensing contracts with PLS to include managing copyright requests for republication.

Elections

We are delighted to have in key constitutional positions, Toni established as Secretary, and Paul as Treasurer since last year.

Chair

I have completed 2 terms and the position of Chair is due to be elected.

Journal Co-ordinator

Yvonne has completed 2 terms and the position of Journal Co-ordinator is due to be elected.

Membership Secretary

Lorraine has been supporting us in holding the role of Membership Secretary but would be very happy to handover. This role is now an Officer role, though Lorraine has not accepted it in this capacity. The membership year has been adjusted to start from October to accommodate members, rather than the original August date.

Regional Advocate Co-ordinator

This Officer role has stood vacant for a while now.

Web

This Officer role has stood vacant for a while now.

Ordinary Members

Three annual ordinary member roles are available for election.

Financial

RaPAL has consolidated a secure financial position and is in a position to invest carefully in its strategic aims, which have been hampered somewhat by the instability of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

We have committed to making funding available to the sector for small-scale projects. The working group for this has been light as we have come out of the pandemic. However, RaPAL anticipates taking this forward in the near future.

A management group 'away day' was held summer 2019 and another is planned for autumn 2022. The away days are a valuable opportunity for the management group to meet face-to-face, work together, and review RaPAL's aims, objectives and achievements in planning future projects.