

RaPAL AGM 2021

Chair Report

This year's AGM completes my fifth year as Chair of RaPAL. Next year will mark the end of two terms, and as ever, succession planning is a priority.

Officer Roles (3 years)

Treasurer

We are very grateful to Sarah Freeman for managing this critical role as well as the RaPAL 100 project; and to Paul Sceeny for stepping in in an acting capacity in recent months.

Website Manager

We have been unable to fill this role this year, which has prevented our web and digital development strategy going ahead. It is a great opportunity to work with RaPAL's digital presence and offer to members, with plenty of support available.

Regional Advocate Co-ordinator

This officer role was created a few years ago but has not been refilled since its original post-holder had to step back due to other commitments. It is a great opportunity to talk with adult literacies people across the nations, with plenty of support available.

Membership Secretary

We are very grateful to Lorraine Durcan for covering this role in an acting capacity and keeping our membership ticking over. Lorraine is not an adult literacies specialist and is not looking to take on an officer role, so would be very happy to support someone in the field into role.

Ordinary Members (1 year)

It has been wonderful to have new faces participate in RaPAL's management and activity over the last year. Ordinary Member roles are a great opportunity to become familiar with the RaPAL team and become involved in projects and activity generally for one to two years.

Sarah Freeman has returned as Reviews Editor, sourcing excellent texts from publishers for members to review. Claire Collins has been Production Editor for more years than I can count now, publishing the digital journal each term, as well as editing journal 101 this year. Jo Byrne continues to send out the RaPAL Newsletter for us. RaPAL is completely dependent on its members volunteering their time around work and personal commitments, and we are very grateful to all of them.

RaPAL 100

We have been delighted to hold two editorial meetings this year, and publish two further journals on the RaPAL 100 project (100ii and 102) as well as a special edition on practitioner research (101) in the new year. Many thanks to Sarah and the whole team for the huge amount of work sustained over two years.

We marked the end of the RaPAL 100 project with an online event on the 29th April which registered interest from 121 attendees, over half of whom made it on the day. We were honoured to have the event chaired by Dr Greg Brooks, Emeritus Professor, School of Education, University of

Sheffield as well as discussion-focussed presentations looking ahead 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. Feedback was very positive, with participants appreciating the discussion and development space.

COVID-19

We ran ad hoc 'Space on a Page' meets for practitioners into the autumn. RaPAL has also been supporting BALID (British Association for Literacy in Development) with a funded BAICE (British Association for International and Comparative Education) project looking at the impact of COVID-19 on adult education provision in the UK, Afghanistan and the Philippines. A dedicated journal spring 2022 has been proposed, welcoming papers looking at the impact of COVID 19 and lockdown on adult literacies education in the UK and abroad.

Conference

2020's annual autumn joint conference with the Learning and Work Institute, UCL IoE Post-14 Centre, UCU and NATECLA was on the theme of *Adult basic skills: building back better*, held online for the first time, and was very well-received with a bumper number of registrants. The conference edition of the digital journal is planned for this summer, combining inputs from both of RaPAL's events this academic year.

Financial

We have committed to invest in RaPAL's website, digital presence, and membership services; and print expenses for hard copies of periodic Taster journals and an academic print run.

RaPAL has consolidated a secure financial position after an initial decline attributable to agreed overheads which have since been cut and careful management of running costs. We are in a position to invest carefully and on a small scale basis in RaPAL's strategic aims in the UK adult literacies sector.

Proposals

I propose firstly that over the course of the next year, RaPAL quantify a security buffer, the prior financial commitments outlined above, and establish the funding available to invest in sector aims. This may include reviewing membership fees, down as well as up.

I propose secondly that RaPAL support defined voluntary participation from outside the sector, such as virtual placements for work experience and a reference. This is to meet RaPAL's strategic objectives, to extend reach, and co-working with other sectors.

Lifetime Honorary Membership

We were delighted that Professor Emerita Mary Hamilton, who was a founder member of RaPAL and has been very supportive of the organisation for the last 36 years, accepted lifetime honorary membership last year... and joined us online on the 29th April.

Thank you.