

RaPAL AGM 2020

Chair Report

It has been an extraordinary year.

RaPAL 100 and COVID-19

The RaPAL 100 project has been going very well, with a lot of work! The first project edition was published recently and a second is in planning.

We have amended focus and extended the project in the light of the coronavirus crisis. We have recently reissued a compact survey to review the impact of lockdown on adult literacies learning, now and in the longer-term. While the digital divide is an ongoing cause of concern, rays of hope are found in accounts of learners who had been excluded from adult literacies learning now finding they can participate through digital inclusion. Reasons range from childcare and working commitments to distance from formal classes.

Many thanks to Sarah and the rest of the team for the huge amount of work they have put in.

We have been running online membership and extended community meets over the last year and have stepped up this activity since the coronavirus crisis. We have been experimenting with different platforms. Thank you to Donna Moore for getting the 'Space on a Page' teaching and learning meets started, and to Amanda Derry for her dedication to organising the regular Friday morning 'Stories of Resilience' meets for almost a year now. They are a wonderful community platform and dialogue forum.

Officer Roles

Membership Secretary

The management group have long felt that this role should have officer standing on the management group, and are therefore recommending an amendment to the constitution.

Regional Advocate Co-ordinator

This officer role was created recently, and occupied by Sam Duncan until she was obliged to step down due to other commitments. It has sat vacant since. In the light of converting the Membership Secretary role into an officer role, we may wish to consider removing this role in order to keep the same number of officers.

Web

We have been very sorry to lose Julie Collins to other commitments, which has prevented our web development strategy going ahead. We look to progress this with new officers on board.

Journals and Editorial

RaPAL celebrates 35 years this year, and its hundredth journal edition. The digital journal was a paper publication for many years, originating as a paper bulletin. In the last year, we've digitally published *Creative Responses to Literacies Policies*, a *Conference Edition*, and a *2020 Special Edition* marking RaPAL's milestones. As ever, many thanks to the editors and contributors: every edition is an incredible feat carried out by dedicated volunteers.

Each edition of the journal has a different team, supporting co-working and development across our membership and the sector. A hardcopy academic edition of peer reviewed papers is planned to co-incide with the REF cycle. This cycle, which was due to renew at the end of this year, is on pause due to the coronavirus crisis. Publication of the hardcopy is therefore on hold until cycle dates are confirmed. RaPAL are a nominating body to the REF and have nominations

on hold, again due to the coronavirus crisis.

We subscribe to collective licensing agreements to ensure our journal content is widely available for educational purposes nationally and internationally, and are in the process of arranging for the Publishers Licensing Society to manage copyright requests for more extended extracts and republication of works.

We have sustained a monthly newsletter, and would be delighted to encourage more contributions to the RaPAL blog.

We look forward to our Annual Editorial Meeting on the first Saturday of September.

Conferences

2019's annual autumn joint conference with the Learning and Work Institute, UCL IoE Post-14 Centre, UCU and NATECLA was on the theme of *No-one Left Behind: the future for adult basic skills*, held at Westminster Kingsway Further Education college for the second year running, and was very well-received. In-house catering and service by adult learners is a highlight of the event. A bumper digital journal of conference articles turned around very promptly, publishing early in the new year. We look forward to this autumn's conference and are canvassing for themes and contributions which are relevant for our members now and in the immediate future.

Membership

We're sorry to have lost Jo Byrne, our long-standing Membership Secretary, this year to other commitments, and are very pleased Lorraine Durcan has taken on the role. Lorraine's been getting in contact with members to introduce herself and will be starting the process of pruning the membership list of members we've unfortunately lost contact with or who haven't renewed with successive reminders.

As part of her work, we are looking to add the automatic subscription renewal to the Paypal function. We're hoping this will make it easier for members to renew, and reduce the admin overhead for Lorraine. We are looking to move start of the membership year to Oct 1st.

Financial

RaPAL has been consolidating a secure financial position and is in a position to invest carefully in its strategic aims.

We committed to invest in RaPAL's website, digital presence, and membership services; print expenses for hard copies of Taster journals and an academic print run; and a development 'away day' for the editorial and/ or management group.

The 'away day' was held last summer and was a valuable opportunity for the management group to meet face-to-face, work together, and review RaPAL's aims, objectives and achievements.

Lifetime Honorary Membership

As many of you will know, Professor Emerita Mary Hamilton was a founder member of RaPAL, and has been very supportive of the organisation for the last 35 years! I would like to formally propose awarding lifetime honorary membership to Mary in recognition of her lifelong commitment. I can't believe it is now 6 years since Mary formally retired.

Thank you to all the team – permanent and fleeting – who contribute to RaPAL's achievements and to persevering with supporting adult learners to improve their literacies across their lives. It is the end of my fourth year as Chair, I am working to continue to drive forward this agenda, and look to hand over in the not too-far-distant future to an individual who can continue to take RaPAL forward.