

RaPAL AGM 2018 Chair's Report

In 2017/18, we have held two conferences. In November, we co-organised our annual joint autumn conference in London with the Learning and Work Institute, UCL Post-14 Centre, UCU and NATECLA entitled *Impact and Innovation*. The most popular session, held in the main hall and over-subscribed in advance, was the RaPAL initiated workshop around participatory, creative and social practices approaches. In March, we co-organised a conference with members at the University of Bolton entitled *Collaboration and Connections*, which had much higher attendance than RaPAL-only conferences of recent years. These served very distinct audiences and geographical regions. London had high engagement with teachers, institutions and policy-makers. Bolton had far higher representation of trainee teachers.

We have sustained publishing three excellent digital journals by different editorial teams on a termly basis, supported by our conference work. The *Global Literacies* edition has been made free access on the UCU Transforming Lives website, directing interested parties to the RaPAL website. EPALE are similarly directing interested parties to RaPAL's website for the *Impact and Innovation* edition. *Resilience: Stories of Adult Learning* continues to sell at sector events, and the hardcopy Taster journals remain popular with trainee teachers and event participants.

The digital journals are now in a free publishing format, which releases limited funds for alternative RaPAL development investment. While sector activity and membership is gradually healthier and increasing after a long slow decline, fully paid up membership remains a challenge. We have a significant increase in concessionary memberships. RaPAL is increasingly operating on very tight financial consideration with reduced capital balance.

Website traffic activity has shown a 23% fall over the last year, attributable in large part to not sustaining levels of social media and other publicity activity which direct online interest to the website. We have been unable to recruit a Website Manager or Digital Media Lead. However, March, with conference bookings and publication of the previous joint conference edition, showed our highest level of web traffic since the publication of *Resilience: Stories of Adult Learning* in September 2016. *Resilience: Stories of Adult Learning* remains the eighth most popular page, after conference, home and journal pages.

Over and above co-working with conference partners, we have sustained background interaction with a range of national and international organisations and stakeholders in the field, such as EPALE (European Platform for Adult Learning in Europe), Isrn (Learning and Skills Research Network), TELL (Teacher Education in Lifelong Learning network), and BALID (British Association for Literacy in Development). The current edition of the Society for Education and Training members' magazine is carrying a supplement dedicated to English andragogy, which lists RaPAL as the first resource bank in its first double page article.

We have had some change across the management group, with Sam Duncan leaving us as Regional Advocates Co-ordinator, subsequently Ordinary Member; and Toni Lambe joining us as Acting Secretary. We have removed our admin support officer role after difficulties matching costs to outputs. We would like to thank Sam and Toni for their time, effort and commitment but also the standing management group who have been offering stability and standards to RaPAL's values and operations on a voluntary basis for many years.

RaPAL's future directions and investment opportunities are current items for consideration at the AGM.