RaPAL Members' Survey 2016

Question 1: Please rate the following RaPAL activities in order of their importance.

Order of importance	Activities
1	Termly publication of the digital journal
2	Participation in consultations, such as the last literacy and numeracy standards or Functional Skills
3	Participation in literacies related events and networking across the sector
4	RaPAL-only events held at a single site, such as our national conferences in the regions
5	Annual joint conferences (for example with Learning and Work Institute, UCU, UCL IoE Post-14 Centre, NATECLA, etc.)
6	Monthly publication of the email newsletter
7	RaPAL-only events held across multiple sites, such as our multi-hub, part-virtual Regional Colloquia
8	The website
9	Social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, GooglePlus) and JISClist email

Question 2: Is there anything you would find helpful as a change or development in any of these members' activities or as additional services?

- RaPAL establishing/ getting involved in a cross-party Parliamentary Group on English & Maths
- Updates on policy and accreditation changes, more chances to hear voices across the sector
- Wider promotion of the journal
- Updates on research activity in the field
- Many teachers cannot attend conferences during the working week, so a conference at the weekend would enable us to come.
- I assume 1 is highest and 9 is lowest ?
- More opportunities to discuss/publicise research and share ideas.
- Just to say that for the list above, it would have been helpful to give things an equal rating

Question 3: If you could choose three specific areas of professional development to help you in your practice, what would they be?

	Specific Areas of Professional Development
1st Choice	• More CPD events • Greater focus on developing students' critical awareness • Sources of non-mainstream funding • Digital literacy skills and knowledge of tried and tested resources • Sharing ideas with other teachers • TOT • Networking and sharing bast practice/discussing research. • Confident articulation of Literacies practice when in other professional fora • ESOL literacies • Teaching ESOL to learners with literacy needs (i.e., little or no literacy)
2nd	• Consultation on standards

Choice	• Running reading groups and reading events • Literacies and young people • Embedding of literacy/ESOL within teaching content • Mentoring • Tutor profiles • CPD - perhaps online video-conferencing sessions? • Increased expertise in use of digital technology to help literacies learners • tools to assist with specific learning disabilities
3rd Choice	• Running regular writing and blogging workshops • Literacies and assistive technology • Encorporating additional learning needs such as mental health issues • Practitioner research • Recent literature • Looking in more detail at delivery and learning of literacies in other countries/areas. • Professional discussions about the philosophies behind Literacies practice • Discussions with international counterparts

Question 4: We would be very grateful if you could spend a moment on what you and/ or your institution have found most successful in empowering and enabling learner ownership of learning:

- Research on multiple literacies, including digital literacies
- Most empowering for all students in my experience is to feel that they have genuinely succeeded in doing something they couldn't do before.
- Being small enough as an organisation for students to truly belong, to know and be known.
- Learner focused individual learning plans on which tutors write meaningful feedback about individual learning and on which learners can reflect on their progress etc.
- Reflection on learning leading to learner autonomy
- I work with craft tutors to embed English. (One student is writing a story as part of his work in Art, for example, and has also started writing other fiction via an app on his phone.) This has helped learners move away from narrowly associating English with Functional Skills and exams! It has also helped the college culture.
- Discussion - open ended
- Involving them in the initial screening/assessment and interview process at the beginning, as well as asking fro input for the scheme of work. Encouraging the learners to work on areas and topics that they feel are most relevant to them.
- Use of Individual Learning Plans and learning planned and driven forward by the goals of the learners, rather than working through any curricular format.
- Using creative ideas in learning, rather than straightforward grammar/spelling type learning
- practitioner research

Question 5: If you could imagine any three areas of "open blue skies" development specifically related to empowering learners' ownership of learning, what would they be?

- More learner involvement in research
- Reading groups in safe (non-judgmental) situation Students' own writing workshops Non-accredited literacy classes or short courses in every library
- i wish I could!
- using a coaching approach, which is learner-led. This would require a change of mindsets from tradition tutor led delivery 2) Carrying out more holistic + personal induction of learners where the learners drive forward the course content 3) Overhaul of tutor role to facilitator.
- Learner network
- Free classes

- Remove the link between accreditation and funding. Devise different forms of assessment so that learners who don't suit GCSE English, for example, don't have to continue to resit and fail. Create extra opportunities for learners to express their views. (What does empowerment look like for them?)
- Learner full participation
- For them to take more charge of their learning through collaborative forums (not always possible depending on time and resources available). Letting learners decide on their level, topic and qualification. Allowing learners the opportunity to focus on skill development, rather than solely focusing on outcomes relating to achieving qualifications.
- Being able to offer anything learners want to do, money no object!

Question 6: What do you see as the greatest challenges in today's adult literacies sector and to what extent is RaPAL providing a forum (through the journal, events, digital and networking, etc.) for you to voice professional critique and how could we improve?

- Challenges: funding; compulsory GCSE resits Professional critique: RaPAL could engage more with Parliamentarians and decision makers to encourage evidence based practice
- we need a coherent 'hub' to represent adult literacy teachers, with more practitioners and researchers involved
- Greatest challenge is the constriction on adult literacy development due to ongoing increase in strictly funded, higher-levels-only programmes which the providers are compelled to run. The journals can document this but the consultations and conferences have the most potential to draw attention to the degradation of ad. lit. provision.
- A bit of a cliché, but it has to be the use of IT, social media etc. and how people communicate and interact.
- Challenge is equating literacy learning with employability training. RaPAL should promote alternative and various ideas of literacy e.g. performance
- Funding
- Firstly, there is a demoralising focus on exams, and creativity is actively discouraged in many FE colleges. For instance, all lecturers have to teach from the same PowerPoint in sessions for E3-L2 learners. What is celebrated within RaPAL and some ITT departments (e.g. IoE) is a million miles away from the everyday reality. Often the teachers who put their heads above the parapet, experiment or differentiate are the very same ones who end up off sick with stress. Within RaPAL there are opportunities to critique but only other RaPALers seem to be listening. We need to find a way of widening our audience. Secondly, but related to the first point, are we simply like-minded people talking to each other? Perhaps we need to seek out journal content (articles/books to review) that challenges our ways of thinking. One book that immediately comes to mind is 'Battle Hymn of the Tiger Teachers', which is all over Twitter (#Michaela).
- Digital literacies
- Finances and government cuts e.g. Essential Skills in the Workplace no longer being funded. The fallout from Brexit and less European money to pay for apprenticeships etc. Effect of the apprenticeship levy? RaPAL has the potential to act as a forum and voice for learners/tutors, but needs to become more politically engaged I believe, in order to make a real difference.
- Funding, lack of focus by government on adult literacy, government jumping ship on previous initiatives when a new flavour of the month comes up. RaPAL gives you the feeling you're not alone and networking is great for ideas.
- An increasingly 'school like' model in adult literacies provision: big classes, exam orientated, and fewer options for the learner who does not 'achieve' on a pre-ordained timescale.

Question 7: How many years have you worked in:
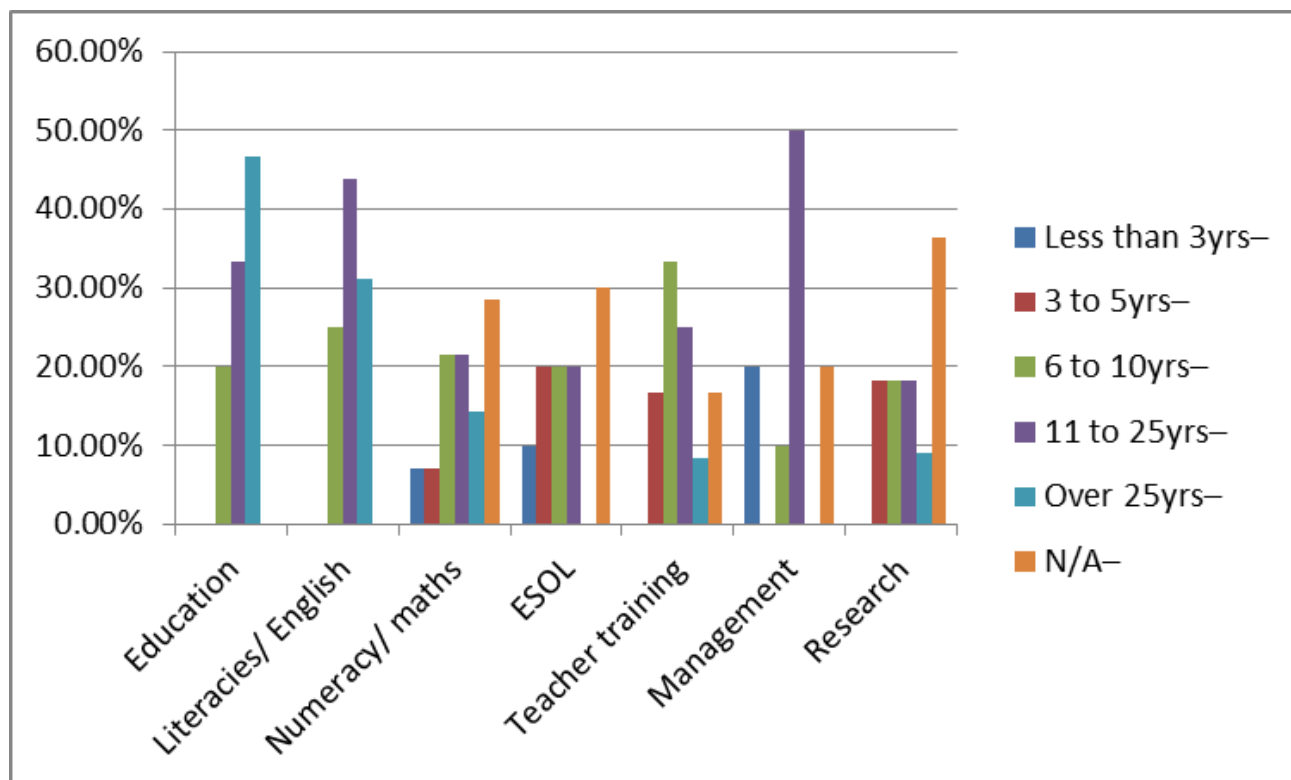
Question 8: Please rate the areas of learning/ research in order of their importance to your practice:

Order of importance	Areas of learning/ research
1	Adult literacies as social practices
2	Literacies integrated into subject content
3	Digital learning
4	English QCF entry level equivalents
5	English QCF levels 1 and 2 (compulsory matriculation) equivalents
6	ESOL
7	Academic literacies
8	Maths QCF levels 1 and 2 (compulsory matriculation) equivalents
9	Maths QCF entry level equivalents

Question 9: Please rate the following sub-sectors in order of their importance to your practice

Order of importance	Sub-sectors
1	Community learning
2	Further Education
3	Workplace learning
4	Teacher training
5	Practitioner research engagement
6	Offender learning and secure care
7	The voluntary sector
8	Apprenticeships
9	Academic research engagement
10	Academic literacies

Question 10: Have you ever