



Recommendations to Further the Field of Low-educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition – for Adults In the areas of Research, Practice, and Public Policy

These recommendations were proposed by an international group of eminent researchers, practitioners and policy makers that work with the LESLLA population in different regions of the world during a culmination session at a forum held at Virginia Commonwealth University, in Richmond, Virginia, on November 2-3, 2006.

Research

- In order to guide practice and policy more research must be done on:
 - ✓ Culture specific oracies or literacies among the target population and the process of second language acquisition by non-literates and low literate learners in their own culture;
 - ✓ The role individual cognitive and/or socio-cultural differences play in disparities in success rates in learning to read;
 - ✓ How non-literate or low literate adults process print and how they approach text;
 - ✓ What L2 oral competence level has to be reached to support L2 decoding-phonemic awareness by non-literates and whether there is an equivalent threshold literacy in L1 that transfers to L2 in adults;
 - ✓ How non-literate or low literate adults process oral language input; and
 - ✓ Specific approaches and instructional strategies.
- Various types of research (e.g. ethnographic, longitudinal, cross-sectional, case studies) are needed from a variety of perspectives (e.g. linguistic, anthropologic, social, educational, neurological)
- Funding sources for this research needs to be identified.
- Not only should classroom teachers and graduate students be encouraged to pursue research in the specific issues that second language and literacy learners present, but all LESLLA related research should be advanced through multi-disciplinary, collaborative and international efforts.

Practice

- Analyze the existing instructional resources for working with this population and fill in the gaps with new research-based materials and curricula.

- Create an electronic warehouse on the LESLLA website that includes a teacher network (listserv), and a listing of available instructional resources and academic publications categorized by relevance to practitioners.
- Language instruction programs and/or government entities need to provide quality professional development and support for teachers working with the LESLLA population. This should include training in effective research-based methodologies for instruction in second language and literacy acquisition.

Policy

- International (e.g UNESCO) and national agencies (e.g. O.V.A.E. of the United States) need to compile and report data on the LESLLA population. These data should include information on ethnicities, countries of origin, and years of schooling in home country of literacy level learners.
- International, national and local public officials or figures who already support immigration and second language/literacy learning should be identified and contacted in order to support our efforts.
- Researchers and practitioners should develop vehicles/connections to inform international and national leaders that define policy towards immigration and the LESLLA population.
- The general public should be informed of the issues and concerns surrounding the LESLLA population.