

FOREWORD

The second annual Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition (LESLLA) Forum was held in November 2006 at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, co-hosted by The Literacy Institute at VCU and the American Institutes for Research. LESLLA was founded in 2005 by Martha Young-Scholten (Newcastle University, UK), Jeanne Kurvers (Tilburg University, Netherlands) and Ineke Van de Craats (Radboud University, Netherlands) in order to fill the investigative gap on the increasingly topical subject of language acquisition by adult immigrants who have little or no schooling in their native language. The inaugural workshop was held at Tilburg University. The forum in Richmond, which focused on the three areas of Research, Practice, and Public Policy, brought together researchers and practitioners from various countries with the ultimate aim of using research to improve instructional practice and inform second language education policy in the countries where the adult immigrants most needing educational support settle.

This volume collects contributions from many of the presenters at the 2006 Forum. Mr. Jeff Chenowith, Division Director of National Programs at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), opened the plenary session with a presentation on his *A More Perfect Union: A National Citizenship Plan*, which provided a crucial analysis of the implications surrounding immigration issues and language acquisition. Also, in plenary session, Joy Kreeft Peyton, Vice President of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and Director of the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA), described the challenges that states and local adult education programs face in developing a professional staff to support the needs of immigrant adults with limited literacy.

Following the plenary sessions were a variety of presentations, panel discussions, and the U.S. premiere of Noureddine Erradi's award-winning film "Newcomers in Morocco," all of which succeeded in furthering the body of knowledge surrounding the acquisition of literacy and language for our target population. On the final day, working groups developed critical lists of research and action recommendations for helping low-educated L2 adults throughout the world to acquire the necessary literacy and language skills for successful integration in their new communities.

In order to follow the original intent of the forum, we have sequenced the contributions according to one of the three areas of interest: research, practice, and policy. A few of the articles could fall into two of the categories. The decision to include them in one or another of the categories was based on their relevance or importance to furthering the discussion in that particular area.

In addition to the materials collected in this volume, there were several enlightening presentations from experts in the field who were unable to contribute. These presenters were: Edwidge Crevecoeur-Bryant, Mary Ann Florez, Deborah Jones, Alan Juffs, David Red, Robin Schwarz, Heide Spruck Wrigley, Lynda Terrill, and Anne Whiteside.

Hopefully, this collection of scholarly works will contribute to the very critical but neglected field of second language and literacy acquisition for those adults that lack the necessary skills and knowledge to fully participate in their new countries and will provide a firm foundation upon which further informative research can be carried out.

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