

# NC Piedmont Literacy News Brief

Fall 2010  
Volume 1, Issue 1  
QUARTERLY

ADULT EDUCATION  
NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

~ Ensuring the best possible education for adult learners through creative solutions! ~

## From our Regional Director

*Laura Coffee, Alamance Community College*

Over sixteen adult education program leaders gather quarterly in the Piedmont Region to discuss issues, challenges, and opportunities facing central North Carolina related to adult literacy. Lay-offs and company closings continue to be announced daily in our region while we struggle with record unemployment along with record attendance in adult education classes – these are extraordinary times.



- 43% of adults with low literacy skills in the US live in poverty. (NC Literacy Resource Center)
- 75% of unemployed adults in the US have reading or writing difficulties. (NC Literacy Resource Center)

These are times for innovation and times of opportunity. This is the time for our region to pool our resources, ideas, and people to share and implement best practices to meet the challenges we face. This newsletter will highlight key adult education issues in our region as well as ideas about how to engage learners and our community in improving literacy skills in central North Carolina.

## Student Success Story

*Alamance Community College*

Since the summer of 1998, Alamance Community College (ACC) has offered Career College, an innovative job training program for high school students who graduate with the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) diploma. To accomplish this, ACC met for more than a year with representatives from the local K-12 schools, OE Enterprises, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Some ABE and CED students have also successfully completed the program.

When students complete high school, some enroll at ACC. Unfortunately, low placement test scores place these students in pre-college developmental math and English courses, where some remain stuck until they become discouraged and drop out. Career College is our answer to the problem. The program offers Basic Skills, HRD, and career training as an Automotive Assistant or Health & Public Services Assistant. Over 70% of the students who complete the program acquire jobs in the field.

- 24% of Alamance County's population has less than a high school diploma (2000 census).
- 20% of adults in Alamance County perform at the lowest literacy levels – 5th grade or lower reading level. (NC Literacy Resource Center).

## Welcome to the 1st Edition!

### **“NC Piedmont Literacy News Brief”**

*This newsletter will focus on  
advocacy for Basic Skills Education  
relating to impact and jobs as well as  
tips and resources.*

*We value your readership and  
support for education.*



Career College Graduates, ACC, 2010

## Community-Based Agency

By Jennifer Gore, Reading Connections

What is a community-based organization (CBO) and our relationship to the community college system? A community-based agency is a private, non-profit organization usually arising from a history of grassroots, volunteer efforts to reduce illiteracy. CBOs focus on providing individualized instruction through one-to-one volunteer tutors or in some cases paid instructors. Typically small in size, these agencies are able to respond very quickly to emerging community needs – from health concerns in new immigrant populations to employment issues for adults in this new economy. CBOs follow National Reporting System (NRS) guidelines, use state-approved standardized tests and testing procedures, provide regular instructor/tutor training and help keep the radar focused on the needs of adult learners. With a mission to promote adult literacy through a variety of programs such as family literacy, health literacy, workplace literacy, etc., these agencies are key community college partners. In the NC Piedmont ,

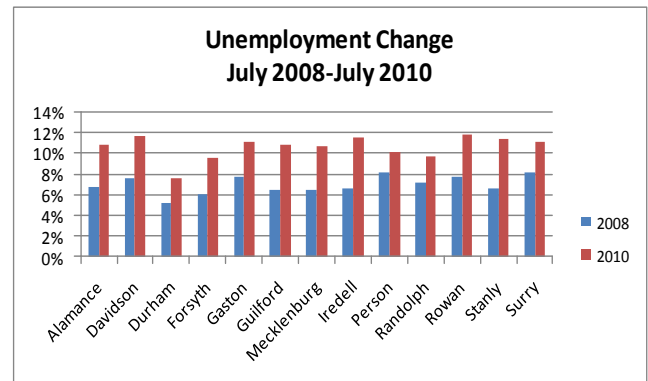
- ◆ Approx. 12% of adults lack basic literacy – *State average 14%*
- ◆ Approx. 16% of adults age 25+ lack a high school diploma – *State average 14%*

### Resource Links

[www.proliteracy.org](http://www.proliteracy.org)  
[www.joblink.com](http://www.joblink.com)  
[www.act.org/workkeys/index.html](http://www.act.org/workkeys/index.html)  
[www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Basic\\_Skills/index.html](http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/Basic_Skills/index.html)  
[www.nccs.cc.nc.us/basic\\_skills/DocumentsLoad/Legislation%2009%20Conference%20Final.ppt](http://www.nccs.cc.nc.us/basic_skills/DocumentsLoad/Legislation%2009%20Conference%20Final.ppt)  
[www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/report.html](http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/report.html)  
[www.ncsdae.org](http://www.ncsdae.org)

## Job Issues & Challenges

By Jennifer Gore, Reading Connections



## Frequently Asked Questions

By Diane Cooker, Stanly Community College

### Who benefits from dollars spent on Adult Literacy?

Everyone! People who return to school and earn a GED or Adult High School diploma:

- Earn higher wages.
- Takes one more person (or family) off public assistance.
- Puts money back into the community/economy.

### What do students coming to literacy programs need?

Some need:

- reading or grammar instruction,
- math instruction,
- to improve English language,
- to learn life skills.

The common thread among all literacy students is the need to become a more productive member of society. As the students begin to improve their skills, they begin to feel better about themselves. Literacy education is not an option! It changes lives.

*A collaborative effort produced and edited by adult literacy educators in the NC Piedmont Region.*

### NCCCS—Piedmont Region Community Colleges

[www.alamancecc.edu](http://www.alamancecc.edu)  
[www.cpcc.edu](http://www.cpcc.edu)  
[www.davidsoncc.edu](http://www.davidsoncc.edu)  
[www.durhamtech.edu](http://www.durhamtech.edu)

[www.forsythtech.edu](http://www.forsythtech.edu)  
[www.gaston.edu](http://www.gaston.edu)  
[www.gtcc.edu](http://www.gtcc.edu)  
[www.mitchellcc.edu](http://www.mitchellcc.edu)

[www.piedmontcc.edu](http://www.piedmontcc.edu)  
[www.randolph.edu](http://www.randolph.edu)  
[www.rowancabarrus.edu](http://www.rowancabarrus.edu)  
[www.stanly.edu](http://www.stanly.edu)  
[www.surry.edu](http://www.surry.edu)

### Community Based Organizations

[www.readingconnections.org](http://www.readingconnections.org)

### Our Mission

To inform, educate, and promote Adult Literacy Education in the NC Piedmont Region