

Sometimes the hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings. ~Eric Hoffer

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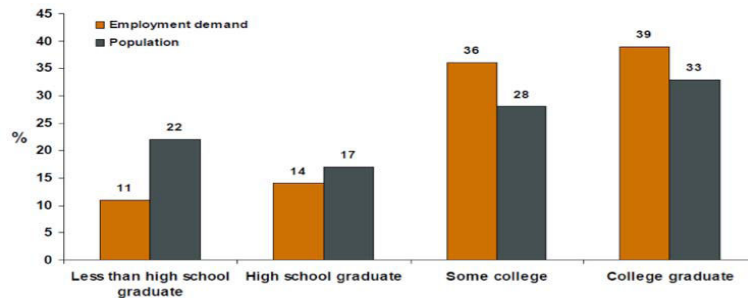
The "Gratitude" Issue

November 23, 2009

Retooling

By Gina Muller

Is it time for Adult School teachers to "retool"? One of the frustrations of recent economic news is the idea that all of our efforts to obtain an education including graduate degrees and credentials might not offer us the job security that we assumed. Unfair? Yes! But this may be our reality. In my own case, I remember when my job as a tenured middle school counselor in Sacramento ended suddenly and I had no backup plan. My school counseling credential wasn't worth much in those days of early Prop 13 changes. The future was daunting. After lots of worry I decided to do two things: learn Spanish and get a single subject BCLAD credential. That credential has been key to landing all of the jobs that I have had since then. It's time for all of us to look at our options and prepare for the changes that might come. Having a plan empowers us to deal with the stress of these times. My door is always open if I can help.



Comparison of workforce need and worker preparation

Adult Education; More necessary now than ever before

In the last issue of TP I talked about recent reports and analyses that ask us to think about the kind of developmental education we do in adult education. I pointed out that the GED was no longer the key to good employment it has been in the past. A couple teachers engaged me and asked if I was diminishing the importance of the literacy and GED level skills development we do. *On the contrary*, the kind of developmental skill-building experiences adult school offers are more important now than ever before. Education, and specifically adult education, is the bridge from the workforce that exists to the workforce that is needed. Our nation and state's economic recovery is dependent on what we can do. See the chart above to see the critical gap between the educational level that workers have, and what the workforce needs. I hope that those who fund us, and those who make decisions about our funding, understand the critical economic need to raise the skills of adults who are already in the workforce. Quite literally our common future depends on it.

Calendar

Nov 25—Pre-Thanksgiving

(most classes not held)

Nov 26-28—Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec 5—SAS Symphony Night

Dec 10—Leadership Team Meeting

Dec 17—All Staff Holiday Potluck

Dec. 18—Last day of Fall Term

Jan 11—First day of Winter Term

21 Billion

Last week the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) in Sacramento released information that confirmed what had been suspected for several months. The state's revenues continue to run below what was projected last summer. The "creative" accounting from last year's crisis needed state revenue to increase, not continue to fall. The bottom line is that the LAO estimated that the state will run a deficit of 21 billion dollars by June, 2011. Obviously this is of great concern to everyone in California and it is not good news for adult education. While it's almost certain the state will further reduce funding for education, how and by how much is unknown. Whatever happens in Sacramento, local school district's will get squeezed more, and the funding for adult education will be more vulnerable to be "swept" by school boards for K-12 needs. These are exceptional times (I know, I know, you are tired of hearing me say this) and we'll need to balance advocacy for adult learners, and flexibility to help our mother districts.