The Developmental Education Program at BCCC has been named the best in the state

A college degree was not in JoLinda Cooper's plans when she was laid off from the textile industry after a 20-year career. After being out of school for so long, her return to the classroom was not an easy one — it was "like entering a foreign country," she said.

As part of the admissions process at Beaufort County Community College, Cooper took placement tests that are used to determine a student's starting point for college work. And like more than half of all students entering BCCC, Cooper learned from her test results that she needed some remedial work to ensure her success in college classes.

As a result, Cooper enrolled in College Study Skills, ACA 118, a course in study skills and student orientation, one of the core courses in BCCC's Developmental Education program.

"They really got me off to a good start and helped me in all my later courses," said Cooper, who will graduate in May with an associate's degree in Office Systems Technology.

In part, because of its success in helping students like Cooper, the Developmental Education Program at BCCC has been named the best in the state by the North Carolina Association for Developmental Education. The program will receive the award for Outstanding Program for 2006 in November at the association's conference in Wilmington. As a result of the state award, the BCCC program will vie for 2007 national honors from the National Association for Developmental Education.

"BCCC's developmental faculty and staff are excited to receive this award from their peers and deservedly so," said Dixon Boyles, chairman of BCCC's Arts and Sciences Division, which includes the developmental program. "They are a dedicated and passionate team who work hard to provide students the skills they need to achieve their educational and career goals."

NCACDE is the professional organizational of developmental educators in post-secondary education in the state. Its members include instructors and professors at community colleges as well as four-year colleges and universities.

BCCC's Developmental Education Program was created in 1989 under a Title III grant. It was comprised of two English courses, two reading courses, a computer-assisted instruction laboratory and one computer-equipped classroom dedicated to teaching