

**PROJECT
CREATE** **FINAL REPORT**
of SC

**CENTERS FOR THE RE-EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF
TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, 2006-07
YEAR 4**

Personnel Preparation Project for
Growing a Highly Qualified Special Education
Teacher Force in South Carolina

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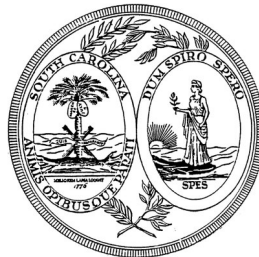
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT CREATE—YEAR 4

Since 2003, the mission of CREATE has been to reduce the number of non-certified special education teachers, while simultaneously growing a highly qualified special education teacher force in the State's public schools. With joint funding provided by the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Exceptional Children and Division of Educator Quality and Leadership, qualified participants receive course scholarships that covered tuition and textbook costs to pursue add-on, alternative, or initial certification in special education. For 2006–2007, the project operated centers at Clemson University, College of Charleston, Francis Marion University, Lander University, SC State University, University of South Carolina Columbia, University of South Carolina Upstate, and Winthrop University.

This Executive Summary highlights principal findings from the Year 4 final report that follows, specifically, (a) participants; (b) appropriateness of courses; (c) adequacy of course content; (d) progress of participants; (e) perceptions of participants; (f) enrollment in courses; (g) program completers; (h) recruitment, selection, and advising; and (i) employment of participants.

Participants. The project enrolled 152 participants employed at 53 of the State's 89 (61%) school districts. The participant cohort was largely female (89%) and new (86%) to the project. Fully one-third (33%) were African-American. Of the declared areas of special education certification that participants were pursuing, the majority were Emotional Disabilities (40%) or Learning Disabilities (37%).

Appropriateness of Courses. In order to reach a greater number of qualifying participants, particularly, those in remote areas of the State, we varied the format delivery of courses to include on-campus courses, distance/ETV courses, and online courses. Course content, as outlined in course syllabi, was evaluated in light of Council for Exceptional Children standards, and determined to be appropriate. For the year, the eight CREATE centers collectively offered 13 certification courses a total of 91 times.

Adequacy of Course Content. An overall mean rating of 3.40 (1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree) on course evaluations revealed that participants agreed that courses taken through the project, when compared with previous special education courses taken elsewhere, (a) provided more knowledge and skills about instruction in special education, (b) made more relevant applications to the real-world of the classroom, (c) broadened their perspective more in how to teach students with disabilities, and (d) significantly contributed to their overall preparation. The Introduction to Exceptional Learners and Characteristics courses received the highest ratings from participants.

Progress of Participants. Progress was calculated by dividing the number of courses that the participants completed through CREATE by the number of courses stipulated in their respective certification programs. The average progress of participants seeking alternative certification in the PACE program (n=58) was 66.9% (range of one to three courses). Similarly, the average progress of participants pursuing add-on certification (n=69) was 62.7% (range of one to nine courses). The average progress of participants enrolled in initial certification programs (n=25) was considerably less at 16.8%; however, the range of needed course work was 11 to 28 courses. Academically, the participant cohort successfully completed 97.5% of all courses taken, with 94% resulting in final grades of A or B.

Perceptions of Participants. Mean ratings on the 30-item online course evaluation ranged from 3.26 to 3.51 (1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree). Items reflecting Interaction Skills of the Instructor trended toward Strongly Agree. Mean ratings for the remaining categories of items (i.e., Teaching Skills of Professor; Course Requirements; Evaluation of Learning; Course Syllabus; Course Content, and Impact of Course) fell in the Agree range, with a total course evaluation mean rating of 3.45 (Agree). No mean item ratings fell below the Agree rating; therefore, we judged the teacher perceptions of courses sponsored by CREATE as generally positive.

Enrollment in Courses. Participants enrolled in 279 courses, which represented 47.6% of the 586 available course scholarships for the year. The number of course scholarships awarded per participant ranged from one to seven. Across the CREATE centers, the number of course scholarships awarded per semester was 20 (Fall 2006), 101 (Spring 2007), and 158 (Summer 2007).

Program Completers. Data indicate that 52 participants completed all course work for their respective certification programs. The completers were overwhelmingly female (85%), and one-third (33%) were African-American. Almost half (46%) finished course work in Emotional Disabilities certification, followed by Learning Disabilities (39%), Mental Disabilities (13%), and Multi-categorical Special Education (2%). Other than 2% who were employed as general education teachers, the remaining 98% were currently employed as special education teachers with a restricted alternative certificate (54%), or special education teachers in the PACE program (44%). The Francis Marion University Center (26%) and the South Carolina State University Center (25%) collectively contributed the majority of the course work taken by the program completers during Year 4.

Recruitment, Selection, and Advising. Recruitment and selection of participants for the project was accomplished by (a) a statewide mailing each semester from the SC Office of Exceptional Children to district special education directors, directors of personnel, and school principals and (a) phone and email campaigns. Advising qualified participants on which certification courses would meet their needs was accomplished via phone and email. All of the 152 participants approved for enrollment in the project for Year 4 were verified to be non-certified in special education and employed full-time in a public school.

Employment of Participants. We verified the 2007–2008 employment of the 52 program completers who finished their course work in 2006–2007. We determined that 100% of the completers were still employed in the State’s public school system. Only four (7.5%) had relocated to a different school district than the one in which they were employed when they were initially enrolled in CREATE. That 92.5% of the completers have remained employed in their respective sending districts is a positive sign that districts have adopted the concept of “growing their own” special educators.

In sum, project personnel have evaluated the success of Year 4 of CREATE as satisfactory. Data collected and discussed in this report that support this conclusion follow:

- ▶ Available course scholarships: 586
- ▶ Awarded course scholarships: 279
- ▶ Participants enrolled: 152
- ▶ School districts represented: 53
- ▶ Participants completing course work: 52

The four-year total of 277 program completers is compelling, empirical evidence that CREATE is accomplishing its mission of reducing the number of non-certified special education participants in South Carolina, while simultaneously growing a more highly qualified special education teacher force.

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FINAL REPORT

PROJECT CREATE—YEAR 4

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

In 2002–2003, South Carolina public schools employed more than 400 special educators who were not appropriately certified to teach students with disabilities. Looming was the federal mandate of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) that all states were to employ properly credentialed and highly qualified teachers by July 1, 2006. In an effort to curtail the burgeoning population of non-credentialed special educators, the South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE) Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) funded Year 1 of Project CREATE in 2003–2004. Continuation funds from both OEC and the SCDE's Division of Educator Quality and Leadership were provided in 2004–2005 (Year 2), and again in 2005–2006 (Year 3). From the outset, the chief mission of CREATE has been to reduce the number of non-certified special education teachers, while simultaneously growing a highly qualified special education teacher force in the State's public schools. By underwriting both tuition and textbook costs, qualified participants were able to complete needed course work in order to obtain add-on or alternative certification in special education, thereby better preparing them to teach students with disabilities more effectively. A brief summary of the project's success for Years 1, 2, and 3 follows:

Year 1 (2003–2004). CREATE operated centers at three colleges, and enrolled 100 teachers from 33 of the State's 89 (37%) school districts, who collectively completed a total of 121 certification courses. Progress toward completion of add-on certification averaged 37%, based on the number of courses completed out of the number of needed courses stipulated in their programs of study. Of the participants, four completed all required content course work for certification.

Year 2 (2004–2005). CREATE expanded its consortium to four colleges, and matriculated 246 teachers from 59 school districts (66%), who collectively completed a total of 411 certification courses. Progress toward completion of add-on certification programs averaged 63%. Of the participants, both new and returning to the project, 74 completed all required content course work for certification, for a two-year total of 78 program completers.

Year 3 (2005–2006). CREATE increased its college centers by 50% to six, and enrolled 197 teachers from 63 school districts (71%), who collectively completed a total of 288 certification courses. Progress toward completion of add-on and alternative certification programs averaged 79%. Of the participants, both new and returning to the project, 147 completed all required content course work, for a three-year total of 225 program completers.

YEAR 4 OPERATION

The mission of CREATE has remained unchanged. For 2006–2007, we targeted four groups of individuals from which a highly qualified special education teacher force could be grown: [a] currently-employed special educators holding a restricted alternative certificate (RAC); [b] currently-employed teachers of students with emotional disabilities enrolled in the State's *Program of Alternative Certification for Educators* (PACE) program; [c] general education (GEN) teachers who expressed interest in making a career change into special education; and [d] special education teacher assistants (TA) wanting to upgrade to full certification. Qualified participants pursued certification in special education through two primary approaches: [a] add-on/alternative certification (RAC, PACE, and GEN); and [b] initial certification through a bachelor's or master's degree program or a non-degree/certification-only program in special education (TA).

As in previous years of the project, qualified participants were awarded course scholarships, which provided financial assistance to pay for tuition and textbook costs. Courses were delivered in various formats and reflected add-on/alternative and initial certification needs of participants. Courses were scheduled during the Fall 2006, Spring 2007, and Summer 2007 semesters at CREATE centers established at the following eight colleges/universities in the State, all with NCATE/State-approved programs in special education teacher preparation: Clemson University (Dr. Janie Hodge, director); College of Charleston (Dr. Michael Skinner, director); Francis Marion University (Dr. Shirley Bausmith, director), Lander University (Dr. Dava O'Connor, director); SC State University (Dr. Tasha Louis-Nance, director); USC Columbia (Dr. Kathleen Marshall, director); USC Upstate (Dr. Holly Pae, director); and Winthrop University (Dr. Brad Witzel, director). Dr. Joe Sutton (Bob Jones University) continued his post as project director for Year 4.

PARTICIPANTS

We processed 673 applications of individuals employed in South Carolina public schools during 2006–2007, from which documentation was submitted to qualify 205 (30%) for course scholarships. Representing 53 of the 89 (61%) school districts in the State (see Table 1), 152 of the 205 (74%) qualified applicants enrolled in one or more courses during the three semesters. Enrollees were predominantly female (89%; see Figure 1) and, as first-year participants, were overwhelmingly (86%) new to the project (see Figure 2). About as many were seeking Emotional Disabilities certification (40%) as were seeking Learning Disabilities certification (37%; Figure 3). The remaining 23% were pursuing Multi-categorical, Mental Disabilities, Severe Disabilities, or Visual Impairments certification. Representation by race/ethnicity included African-Americans (33%), Caucasians (66%), and Hispanics (1%; see Figure 4). Participants held a variety of full-time positions including special education teacher assistants (18%), general education teachers or long-term substitutes in special education (16%), special education teachers with restricted alternative certificates (28%), and special education teachers enrolled in the State's *Program of Alternative Certification for Educators* (PACE) program (38%; see Figure 5). Most of the participants were enrolled in add-on/alternative certification programs in special education (84%), with a smaller percentage (16%) enrolled in initial certification programs in special education, including non-degree/certification-only, bachelor of arts/science (BA/BS) degree, or master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree programs (see Figure 6).

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The evaluation design described in the initial 2003–2003 proposal required preparation of a final report after each year of operation. Like previous years, the final report for Year 4 addressed the following questions (data for each evaluation question is provided and discussed in subsequent sections):

1. How appropriate were the selection of courses in relation to certification course needs of the qualifying participants?
2. Has the content of the coursework been adequate in providing instruction for needed skills and competencies?
3. Are participants progressing at an appropriate rate toward completion of add-on certification?
4. What are the participants' perceptions of the project?
5. Has anticipated enrollment been maintained throughout the project period?
6. What percentage of the initial qualifying group completed certification?
7. How effective is the recruitment, selection, and advising process? and
8. Have the participants been employed in positions appropriate to their new add-on certification areas?

Table 1. *School District Affiliation of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60	3	Horry 01	8
Aiken 01	6	Jasper 01	1
Allendale 01		Kershaw 01	2
Anderson 01	1	Lancaster 01	1
Anderson 02		Laurens 55	3
Anderson 03		Laurens 56	1
Anderson 04		Lee 01	
Anderson 05	2	Lexington 01	2
Bamberg 01		Lexington 02	2
Bamberg 02		Lexington 03	2
Barnwell 19		Lexington 04	
Barnwell 29		Lexington 05	4
Barnwell 45	1	Marion 01	2
Beaufort 01	2	Marion 02	
Berkeley 01	5	Marion 07	
Calhoun 01	1	Marlboro 01	
Charleston 01	12	McCormick 01	
Cherokee 01	1	Newberry 01	4
Chester 01	1	Oconee 01	3
Chesterfield 01	1	Orangeburg 01	
Clarendon 01	1	Orangeburg 02	
Clarendon 02		Orangeburg 03	
Clarendon 03		Orangeburg 04	1
Colleton 01	2	Orangeburg 05	1
Darlington 01	6	Orangeburg 06	
Dillon 01		Orangeburg 07	
Dillon 02	1	Pickens 01	1
Dillon 03		Richland 01	6
Dorchester 02		Richland 02	5
Dorchester 03		Saluda 01	2
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 01	2
Edgefield 01		Spartanburg 02	
Fairfield 01	1	Spartanburg 03	
Florence 01	6	Spartanburg 04	1
Florence 02	1	Spartanburg 05	2
Florence 03		Spartanburg 07	2
Florence 04		Sumter 02	1
Florence 05		Sumter 17	1
Georgetown 01	2	Union 01	2
Greenville 01	13	Williamsburg 01	2
Greenwood 50	6	York 01	2
Greenwood 51	2	York 02	1
Greenwood 52		York 03	2
Hampton 01		York 04	
Hampton 02	3	SCSDB	3
		TOTAL	152

Figure 1. Gender of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007

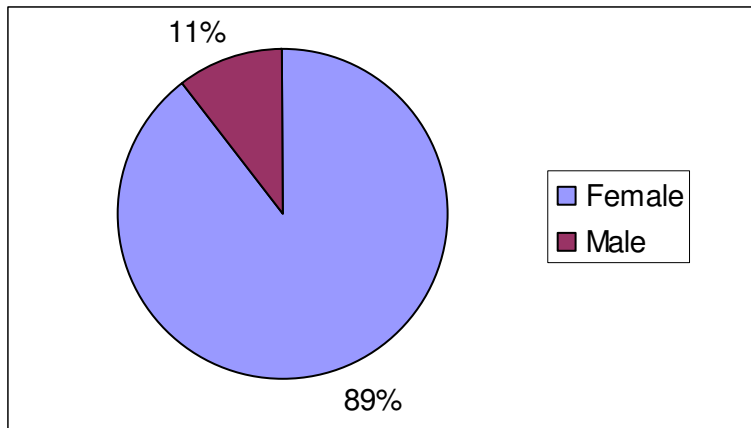


Figure 2. New or Returning Status of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007

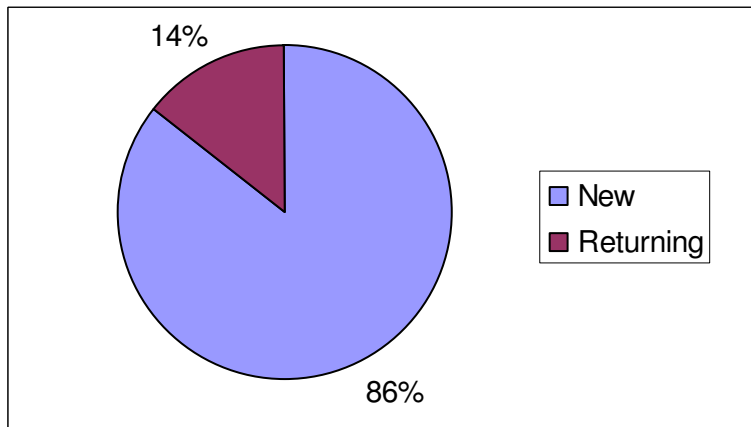
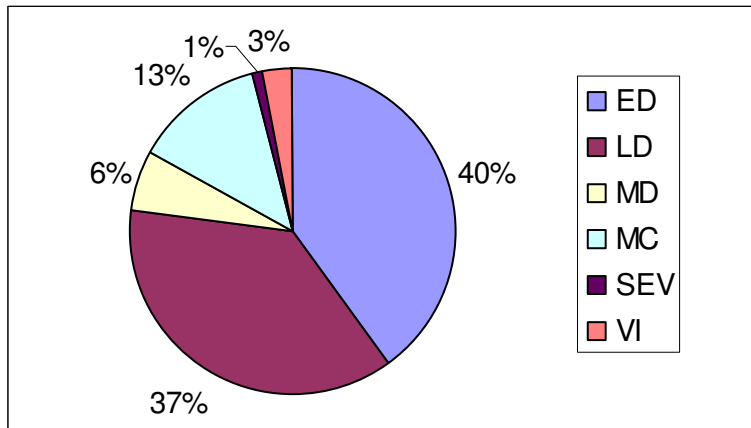


Figure 3. Declared Certification Area of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007



ED=Emotional Disabilities; LD=Learning Disabilities; MC=Multi-categorical; MD=Mental Disabilities; SEV=Severe Disabilities; VI=Visual Impairments.

Figure 4. *Race of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

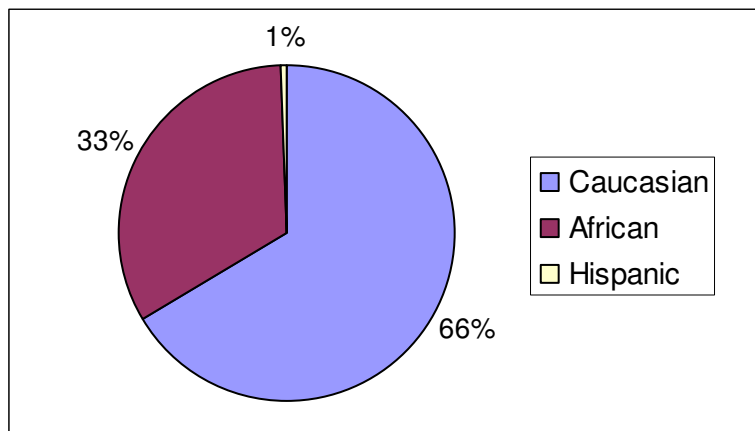
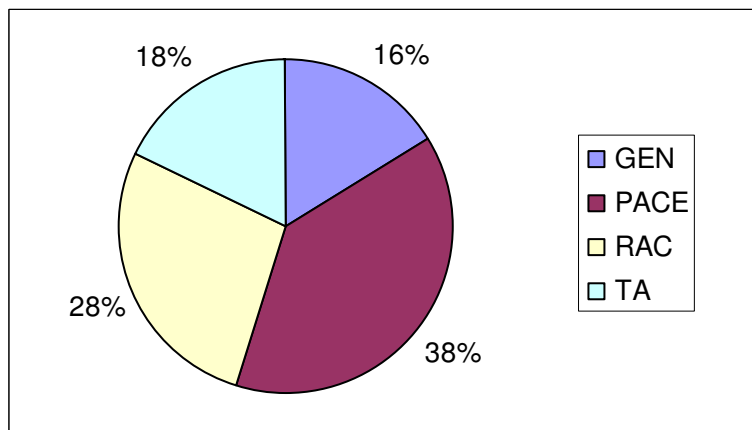
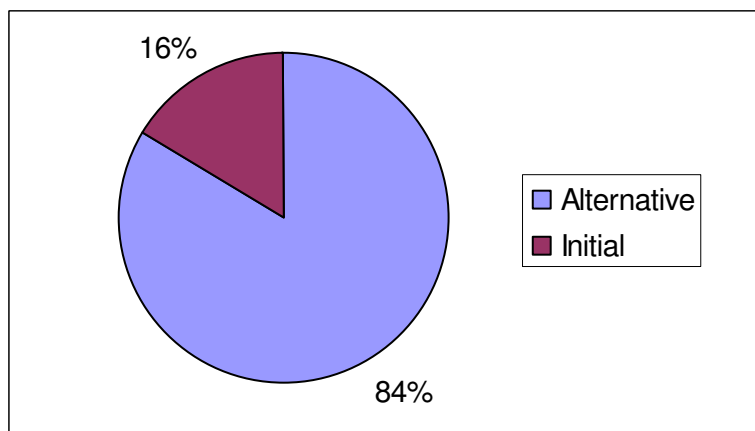


Figure 5. *Employment Status of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*



PACE=Program of Alternative Certification for Educators–Emotional Disabilities (Special Education); RAC=Restricted Alternative Certificate (Special Education); GEN=General Education participants/Long-term Substitutes; TA=Special Education Teacher Assistants.

Figure 6. *Certification Approach of Participants, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*



APPROPRIATENESS OF COURSES

Access to Courses. Qualified participants resided in disparate geographic regions of the State. Appropriateness of courses from one perspective, then, was evaluated by determining the extent to which the project provided participants with access to courses, whether they resided within driving proximity of a nearby CREATE center or whether they lived in rural, more remote areas of the State. We believe the project maximized the opportunity for virtually all qualified participants to avail themselves of needed course work by offering three course formats, including (a) regular campus courses, (b) distance/ETV courses, and (c) online courses. Through use of tuition vouchers, participants were able to join other teachers-in-preparation in *regular campus courses* offered as part of a university's late afternoon/evening semester schedule. Some of the CREATE centers also offered regular courses on a contract basis at their main campus or extension, enrolling up to 25 participants. *Distance/ETV courses*, which had the capacity to serve a Statewide audience of up to 100 participants, broadcasted live instruction from a campus studio class to numerous extension public school or public library sites. *Online courses* enrolled 18 or more participants across the State and allowed participants to learn at-home via Internet.

Range of Courses. Appropriateness of courses also was evaluated by determining the extent to which the project offered a range of needed add-on certification courses to participants. Course contributions for each CREATE center and corresponding formats are provided in Table 2. For the year, CREATE centers collectively offered 13 certification courses 91 times, 22 of which were either online or distance/ETV in format.

Content of Courses. Course appropriateness was determined by evaluating course content, as outlined in course syllabi, and determining the extent to which it corresponded with the professional standards of preparation for special educators from the Council for Exceptional Children, as adopted by the South Carolina Department of Education. Center directors and the project director reviewed course syllabi and concluded that content was appropriate. Overall, we judged the access, range, and content of available courses as appropriate to meet the course needs of participants.

ADEQUACY OF COURSE CONTENT

We assessed the adequacy of course content in meeting competency needs of participants through the project's course evaluation process. When prompted with the statement, "In comparison with other special education courses I have taken, this course..." participants used a four-point Likert scale to rate the following four (of 30) items on the course evaluation survey that specifically addressed course content:

- ▶ Provided more knowledge/skills about instruction in special education.
- ▶ Made more relevant applications to the "real-world" of the classroom.
- ▶ Broadened my perspective more in how to teach disabled learners.
- ▶ Significantly contributed to my overall preparation in special education.

Table 3 provides the mean ratings of these four items from 133 of 136 submitted, usable course evaluations (of the 279 course scholarships awarded for the year; 49% response rate), where the course could be identified. Results of the course evaluations were collapsed into five special education preparation content areas: Assessment (As), Behavior Management (BM), Characteristics (Char), Introduction to Exceptional Learners (EL), and Procedures/Methods (Proc). We interpreted the individual and overall mean ratings as follows: 3.51–4.00=trending toward Strongly Agree; 2.51–3.50=Agree; 1.51–2.50=Disagree; and 1.50 or less=trending toward Strongly Disagree. The overall mean ratings for the Characteristics and Introduction courses were trending toward Strongly Agree.

Table 2. Certification Courses and Course Formats Offered at Centers, Project CREATE, 2006–2007

College ►		Clemson University			College of Charleston			F. Marion University			Lander University			SC State University			USC Columbia			USC Upstate			Winthrop University		
▼ Course	Semester ►	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm	F	Sp	Sm
Intro. to Excep Learners		R	R	O	R		R		R	R	R	O	O	R	R	R		O			O				
Characteristics of ED		R				R					R		O			D	D							R	
Characteristics of LD		R		O		R		R	R	R	R		O				R						R	O	
Characteristics of MD		R				R							O										R		
Characteristics of SEV																									
Methods for ED			R		R											D		R					R		
Methods for LD			R		R			R	R						R			R			R	O	R		
Methods for MD			R		R				R									R					R		
Methods for SEV							O											R							
Behavior Management			R		R	R	R	O	O	O			O				D	R					R		R
Teaching Reading						R		R	R	R	R												R	R	R
Lang./Com. for Excep. Ls.																	R								
Assessment for Excep Ls.		R			R	R		R	R	R	R		O		R			D		R					R

F=Fall 2006; Sp=Spring 2007; Sm=Summer 2007; R=Regular campus course; D=Distance/ETV course; O=Online course.

The Assessment, Behavior Management, Methods, and initial certification courses (i.e., bachelor's and MAT program participants) received overall mean ratings in the Agree range. These collective results suggest that participants viewed course content generally as sufficient in meeting their professional preparation needs.

Table 3. *Mean Ratings of Course Evaluation Items Reflecting Adequacy of Course Content, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

Certification Program ►		Alternative/Add-on					Initial	Total n=133
▼ Course Evaluation Item	Course ►	As n=12	BM n=41	Char n=30	EL n=7	Meth n=23	All n=20	
Provided more knowledge/skills about instruction in special education.		2.92	3.44	3.63	3.71	3.30	3.35	3.41
Made more relevant applications to the real world of the classroom.		2.83	3.46	3.57	3.57	3.30	3.45	3.40
Broadened my perspective more in how to teach learners with disabilities.		2.83	3.39	3.57	3.86	3.30	3.25	3.37
Significantly contributed to my overall preparation in special education.		3.08	3.44	3.60	3.71	3.30	3.30	3.41
Overall Means:		2.92	3.43	3.59	3.71	3.30	3.34	3.39

As=Assessment for Exceptional Learners; BM=Behavior Management; Char=Characteristics of Emotional/Learning/Mental Disabilities; EL=Introduction to Exceptional Learners; Meth=Methods for Emotional/Learning/Mental Disabilities, and Teaching Reading. Means are based on a 4-point Likert rating. Data reflect 133 course evaluations.

PROGRESS OF PARTICIPANTS

We awarded 279 course scholarships to 152 participants during 2006–2007. We evaluated the extent to which participants progressed at an appropriate rate toward completion of alternative/add-on or initial certification by calculating the following:

- Percentage of participants who earned satisfactory grades of A, B, or C in their course work for the three semesters (See Table 4); this data represents academic progress of participants.
- Percentage of courses that participants completed out of courses stipulated in their respective certification programs (See Table 5); this data describes individual progress of participants.

Final grades were available for 273 of the 279 completed courses. Table 4 shows that more than two-thirds (70%) of participants earned A grades, and about one-fourth (24%) earned B grades, with both grades indicating a high level of competency. Less satisfactory competency was demonstrated by 4% of participants with C grades. Less than half of 1% of participants earned D/F grades. These data suggest high academic progress of participants.

Perhaps the best measure of participants' individual progress toward completion of certification is a comparison of *completed* courses versus *needed* courses, as stipulated in participants' programs of course work. For example, a teacher seeking add-on certification, and who completed two courses out of four needed courses for LD certification, would demonstrate 50% progress (i.e., $2 / 4 = 50\%$).

The average progress of participants seeking alternative certification in the PACE program (n=58) was 66.9% (see Table 5). PACE participants are required to take three graduate courses for their certification requirement. Similarly, the average progress of participants pursuing add-on certification (n=69) was 62.7% (see Table 6). The number of courses required for add-on certification range from one to nine. The average progress of participants enrolled in initial certification programs was 16.8% (see Table 7). The range of required courses for those enrolled in initial certification program ranged from 11 to 28 courses; therefore, it was expected that the progress would be considerably less. Overall, these data suggest that the participants are demonstrating satisfactory progress toward completing certification.

Table 4. *Participant Final Grades from Program Course Work, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

Course	Final Grades*					Total
	A	B	C	D/F	Other	
Introduction to Exceptional Learners	10	1				11
Characteristics: Emotional Disabilities	17	1	1		1	20
Characteristics: Learning Disabilities	14	7				21
Characteristics: Mental Disabilities	2	1				3
Characteristics: Visual Impairments	4					4
Anatomy/Physiology/Function of Eye	3	1				4
Methods: Emotional Disabilities	26	1			1	28
Methods: Learning Disabilities	14	2				16
Methods: Mental Disabilities						0
Methods: Severe Disabilities		1				1
Teaching Reading	1					1
Behavior Management	34	38	4		3	79
Assessment for Exceptional Learners	12	4	1			17
BA/BS degree courses–All	50	9	4	1	1	65
MAT degree courses–All	9					9
Total	196	66	10	1	6	279
Percent	70%	24%	3.5%	0.3%	2.2%	100%

*Data available on 279 courses. *Other* category comprises unavailable/incomplete grades and withdrawals.

PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS

We assessed the perceptions of participants by gathering their views and opinions through an online course evaluation survey (provided in the Appendix). The course evaluation was voluntary and anonymous, and administered at the end of each semester. The survey included 30 items which participants rated using the following four-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; and 4=Strongly Agree. Survey items were subsumed under the following categories: Teaching Skills of Professor; Interaction Skills of Professor; Course Requirements; Evaluation of Learning; Course Syllabus; Course Content, and Impact of Course (Note: Results of the category of survey items, Impact of Course, was presented and discussed earlier in this report.).

Table 5. *Progress of Participants (n=58), Based on Completed Courses in PACE Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

No. Courses in Program ▼	Courses Completed					
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
1 Course	100%	6				
2 Courses	50%	17	100%	8		
3 Courses	33%	12	67%	8	100%	7
Total		35		16		7

Table 6. *Progress of Participants (n=69), Based on Completed Courses in Add-on Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

No. Courses in Program ▼	Courses Completed*							
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses		4 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
1 Course	100%	11						
2 Courses	50%	9	100%	13				
3 Courses	33%	4	67%	5	100%	2		
4 Courses	25%	5			75%	1		
5 Courses	20%	3	40%	4	60%	2		
6 Courses	17%	1	33%	2	50%	2		
7 Courses			29%	1				
8 Courses								
9 Courses	11%	2					44%	1
Total		35		25		7		1

*One of the 69 participants earned an incomplete grade in one enrolled course out of five in her program, which could not be recorded as completed at the time of this report; therefore, data was available on 68 participants.

A summary of mean item ratings from 136 of the 279 course evaluations (49% response rate) is provided in Table 8. We interpreted mean ratings as follows: 3.51–4.00= trending toward Strongly Agree; 2.51–3.50=Agree; 1.51–2.50=Disagree; and 1.50 or less=trending toward Strongly Disagree. The mean item ratings ranged between 3.26 and 3.51. The overall mean rating for Interaction Skills of Instructor trended toward Strongly Agree. Overall mean ratings for the remaining four categories of items fell in the Agree range, with a total course evaluation mean rating of 3.45 (Agree). With no mean item ratings falling below the Agree rating, we judged the teacher perceptions of courses sponsored by CREATE to be generally positive.

Table 7. *Progress of Participants (n=25), Based on Completed Courses in Initial BA/BS or MAT Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

No. Courses in Program ▼	Courses Completed*													
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses		4 Courses		5 Courses		6 Courses		7 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
11 Courses			18.2%	1										
13 Courses					23.1	1								
14 Courses							28.6%	2						
16 Courses							25.0%	1			37.5%	1		
17 Courses					17.6	2								
18 Courses	5.5%	1					22.2%	2						
19 Courses			10.5%	1										
20 Courses													35.0%	1
21 Courses	4.8%	1					19.0%	1						
22 Courses	4.5%	1	9.1%	1	13.6	1	18.1%	1						
23 Courses	4.3%	1	8.7%	1	13.0	1	17.4%	1						
25 Courses	4.0%	1												
28 Courses					10.7	1								
Total		5		4		6		8				1		1

*Data available for 24 of 25 participants with verifiable initial BA/BS or MAT course worksheets.

ENROLLMENT IN COURSES

Of the 586 course scholarships available for Year 4, the project awarded 279 (47.6%). Table 9 displays the number of course scholarships awarded out of available course scholarships for each of the eight CREATE centers. Enrollment for individual centers ranged from 2.3% (Winthrop University) to 95.6% (Lander University). Figure 7 shows the number of course scholarships awarded for each of the three semesters across all CREATE centers. The Summer 2007 session drew the greatest participation, with 56.6% of all course scholarships awarded for the year (i.e., 158 of 279). Table 10 provides a distribution of course scholarships awarded per school district. The five school districts that received the greatest number of course scholarships were Greenville 01 (24 course awards), Greenwood 50 (20 course awards), Charleston 01 (20 course awards), Florence 01 (14 course awards), and Horry 01 (14 course awards). The reason these districts received more course awards was either because (a) they had more participants who qualified for the project; and/or (b) their participants expressed greater interest. The project operated under a first-come, first-serve policy for awarding course scholarships, and had the ability to award more course scholarships to other districts in the State, had they expressed more interest.

PROGRAM COMPLETERS

Data indicate that 52 participants completed all course work for their respective certification programs. Other than Greenville 01 District and Charleston 01 District, each with five completers, the remaining 24 of 26 school districts yielded one to three completers each (see Table 11). The completers were overwhelmingly female (85%; see Figure 8), and fully one-third (33%) were African-American (see Figure 9). Figure 10 shows that almost half (46%) of the completers finished course work in Emotional Disabilities certification, followed by Learning Disabilities (39%), Mental Disabilities (13%), and Multi-categorical Special Education (2%). Other than 2% who were employed as general education teachers, the remaining 98% were currently employed as special education teachers with a restricted alternative certificate (54%), or special education teachers in the PACE program (44%; Figure 11). Most (43%) took two courses during Year 4 to complete certification program requirements (see Figure 12). The Francis Marion University center (26%) and South Carolina State University Center (25%) contributed the majority of courses taken by the program completers during Year 4 (see Figure 13).

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND ADVISING

Recruitment. The process of recruitment for CREATE was the joint responsibility of the SCDE Office of Exceptional Children, the project director, and all CREATE center directors, assisted by their graduate/office assistants. Recruitment was initiated prior to the start of each of the three semesters by SCDE, who mailed a letter of information about the project, with accompanying course schedules, flyers, and contact information, to all district directors of special education, directors of personnel, and school principals in the State. Subsequently, more targeted recruitment efforts each semester included direct phone/email campaigns and postcard mailings to individual participants, who either had (a) enrolled in the project the previous year or (b) submitted a new application to CREATE. We evaluated the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts as satisfactory.

Selection. Appropriate selection of teacher participants hinged on both fairness and viability factors. With regard to *fairness*, we continued Year 4 operation of the project on a “first-come, first-served” policy for selection of participants for enrollment, while ensuring representation from all school districts in the State. We believe this guideline was successful and equitable in the long-run in guaranteeing broad participation. A review of Table 1 reveals that we enrolled one or more participants from 53 of the State’s 89 (61%) school districts. More important, no qualifying participants from any district were rejected. As for *viability* of participants, the mission of the project was to select and enroll only participants who were

Table 8. Mean Ratings from Course Evaluations, Project CREATE, 2006–2007

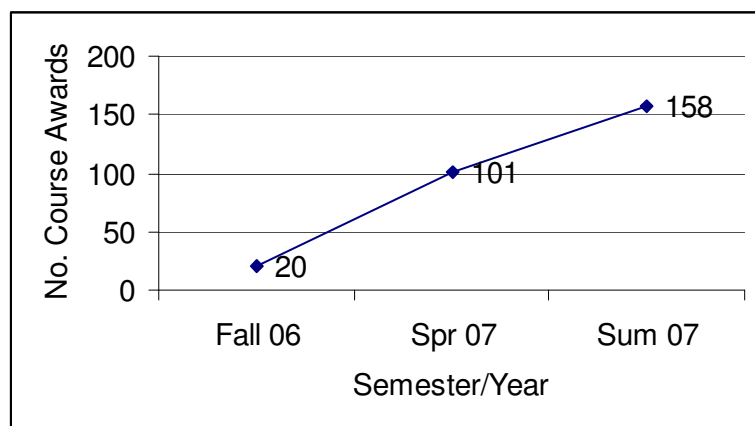
Course Evaluation Items	Mean	Rating
<i>Teaching Skills of Instructor:</i>	3.41	A
Communicated subject matter clearly	3.43	A
Caused me to think critically	3.51	SA
Showed enthusiasm and made classes interesting and engaging	3.38	A
Used examples, illustrations, and/or demonstrations to explain ideas	3.45	A
Embellished/expanded on textbook material, rather than just repeated it	3.40	A
Used allocated class time for critical, more important material	3.39	A
Presented information in an organized, logical, and sequential manner	3.43	A
Integrated media, guest speakers, and/or other resources with lecture	3.26	A
Inspired, motivated, and stimulated a desire to want to learn more	3.39	A
<i>Interaction Skills of Instructor:</i>	3.51	SA
Showed genuine interest in students' success	3.51	SA
Was available during office hours (or by phone/e-mail) for consultation	3.44	A
Showed respect towards the opinions of students	3.54	SA
Encouraged student participation in class	3.57	SA
Responded to student questions in a clear, supportive manner	3.50	A
<i>Course Requirements:</i>	3.44	A
Readings (textbook, etc.) that improved my understanding of the subject	3.44	A
Assignments that were well developed and related to course content	3.47	A
Assignments that were creative, hands-on (e.g., case studies, research)	3.45	A
Assignments that were paced and timed appropriately for the semester	3.40	A
<i>Evaluation of Learning:</i>	3.45	A
Provided meaningful, constructive feedback on tests and other work	3.47	A
Graded tests/projects according to criteria published in the syllabus	3.49	A
Prepared me for tests (e.g., gave overviews of test content/format)	3.43	A
Assessed knowledge and conceptual understanding on tests/projects	3.45	A
Returned graded tests and projects on, or by, the promised date	3.40	A
<i>Course Syllabus:</i>	3.50	A
Stated goals/objectives and included a schedule of course content	3.45	A
Gave instructions for successful completion of course assignments	3.40	A
Provided clear criteria for grading projects and assignments	3.53	SA
<i>Overall Mean:</i>	3.45	A

Data reflect 136 course evaluations submitted voluntarily out of 279 course scholarships awarded. Mean ratings are based on a 4-point Likert rating. SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree.

Table 9. *Course Scholarships Awarded per CREATE Center, Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

CREATE Center	Scholarships Available		Scholarships Awarded	
	Type	Number	Number	Percent
Clemson University	O,R	52	21	40.4%
College of Charleston	R	25	8	32.0%
Francis Marion University	O,R	87	75	86.2%
Lander University	O,R	69	66	95.6%
SC State University	D,R	135	35	25.9%
USC Columbia	D,O,R	118	30	25.4%
USC Upstate	O,R	57	43	75.4%
Winthrop University	R	43	1	2.3%
Total		586	279	47.6%

D=distance/ETV course; O=online course; R=regular campus course.

Figure 7. *Course Scholarships Awarded per Semester, Project CREATE, 2006-2007*

non-certified in special education. We were able to verify that all 152 participants enrolled in the project for Year 4 were non-certified in the area of special education indicated on their application. Therefore, we evaluated the effectiveness of our selection process as highly successful.

Advising. Advising teacher applicants was the responsibility of the project director and the center directors. Advising was accomplished through email and phone, and focused mainly on recommending appropriate course work to applicants as stipulated on their respective certification program checksheets. A perfect concordance between courses that participants eventually enrolled in and successfully completed, and needed course work identified on their program checksheets, allowed us to judge our advising process as highly effective.

Table 10. *Course Scholarships Awarded per School District, Project CREATE, 2006-2007*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60	7	Horry 01	14
Aiken 01	8	Jasper 01	
Allendale 01		Kershaw 01	4
Anderson 01	1	Lancaster 01	1
Anderson 02		Laurens 55	12
Anderson 03		Laurens 56	1
Anderson 04		Lee 01	
Anderson 05	1	Lexington 01	3
Bamberg 01		Lexington 02	5
Bamberg 02		Lexington 03	2
Barnwell 19		Lexington 04	
Barnwell 29		Lexington 05	4
Barnwell 45	1	Marion 01	4
Beaufort 01	4	Marion 02	
Berkeley 01	9	Marion 07	
Calhoun 01	1	Marlboro 01	
Charleston 01	20	McCormick 01	
Cherokee 01	2	Newberry 01	7
Chester 01	3	Oconee 01	6
Chesterfield 01	2	Orangeburg 01	
Clarendon 01	3	Orangeburg 02	
Clarendon 02		Orangeburg 03	
Clarendon 03		Orangeburg 04	1
Colleton 01	2	Orangeburg 05	2
Darlington 01	11	Orangeburg 06	
Dillon 01		Orangeburg 07	
Dillon 02	1	Pickens 01	2
Dillon 03		Richland 01	11
Dorchester 02		Richland 02	4
Dorchester 03		Saluda 01	11
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 01	4
Edgefield 01		Spartanburg 02	
Fairfield 01	2	Spartanburg 03	
Florence 01	14	Spartanburg 04	4
Florence 02	1	Spartanburg 05	2
Florence 03		Spartanburg 07	6
Florence 04		Sumter 02	1
Florence 05		Sumter 17	1
Georgetown 01	3	Union 01	7
Greenville 01	24	Williamsburg 01	3
Greenwood 50	20	York 01	2
Greenwood 51	3	York 02	1
Greenwood 52		York 03	2
Hampton 01		York 04	
Hampton 02	4	SCSDB	5
		TOTAL	279

Table 11. *School District Affiliation of Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006-2007*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60	2	Horry 01	3
Aiken 01		Jasper 01	
Allendale 01		Kershaw 01	
Anderson 01	1	Lancaster 01	1
Anderson 02		Laurens 55	
Anderson 03		Laurens 56	
Anderson 04		Lee 01	
Anderson 05	1	Lexington 01	1
Bamberg 01		Lexington 02	2
Bamberg 02		Lexington 03	2
Barnwell 19		Lexington 04	
Barnwell 29		Lexington 05	1
Barnwell 45		Marion 01	
Beaufort 01	1	Marion 02	1
Berkeley 01	3	Marion 07	
Calhoun 01		Marlboro 01	
Charleston 01	5	McCormick 01	
Cherokee 01		Newberry 01	
Chester 01	1	Oconee 01	2
Chesterfield 01		Orangeburg 01	
Clarendon 01		Orangeburg 02	
Clarendon 02		Orangeburg 03	
Clarendon 03		Orangeburg 04	1
Colleton 01		Orangeburg 05	
Darlington 01	3	Orangeburg 06	
Dillon 01		Orangeburg 07	
Dillon 02		Pickens 01	
Dillon 03		Richland 01	3
Dorchester 02		Richland 02	
Dorchester 03		Saluda 01	
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 01	
Edgefield 01		Spartanburg 02	
Fairfield 01		Spartanburg 03	
Florence 01	3	Spartanburg 04	
Florence 02	1	Spartanburg 05	
Florence 03		Spartanburg 07	
Florence 04		Sumter 02	
Florence 05		Sumter 17	2
Georgetown 01		Union 01	
Greenville 01	5	Williamsburg 01	1
Greenwood 50	1	York 01	2
Greenwood 51		York 02	
Greenwood 52		York 03	
Hampton 01		York 04	
Hampton 02	3	SCSDB	
		TOTAL	52

Figure 8. Gender of Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007

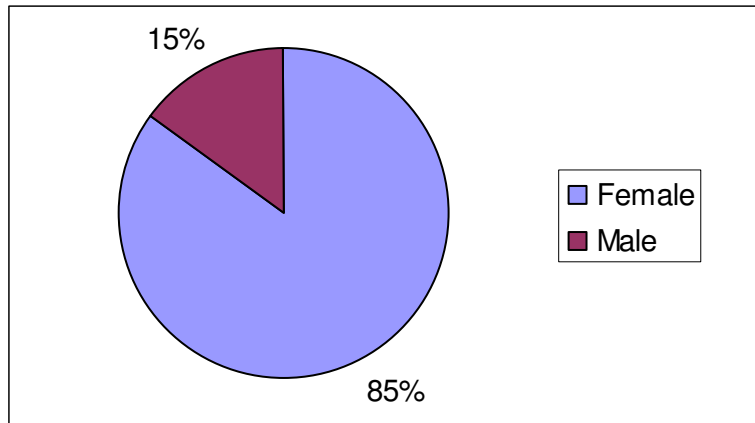


Figure 9. Race of Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007

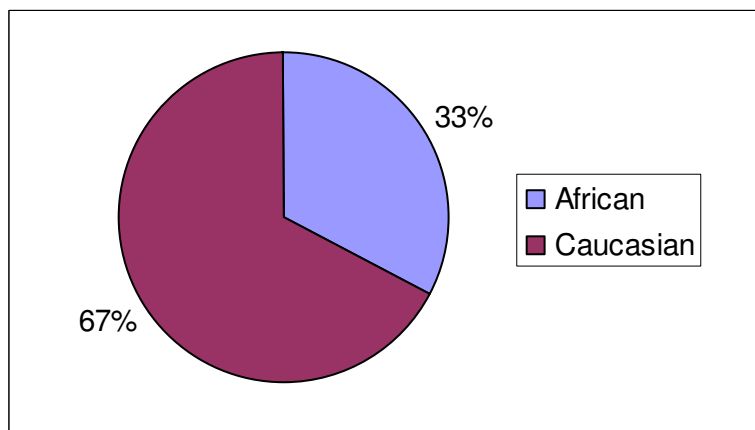
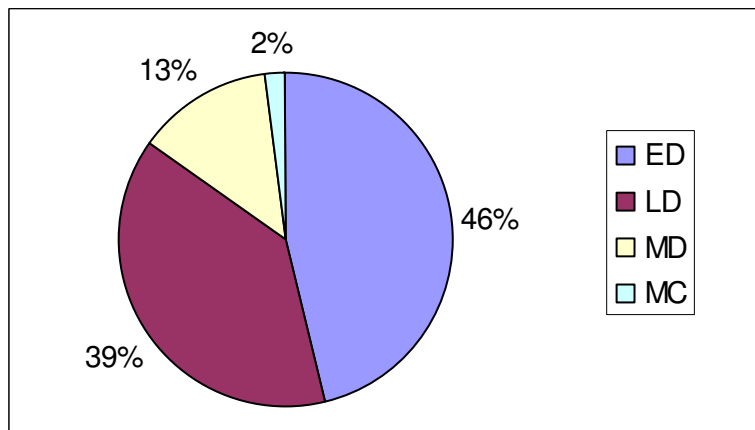
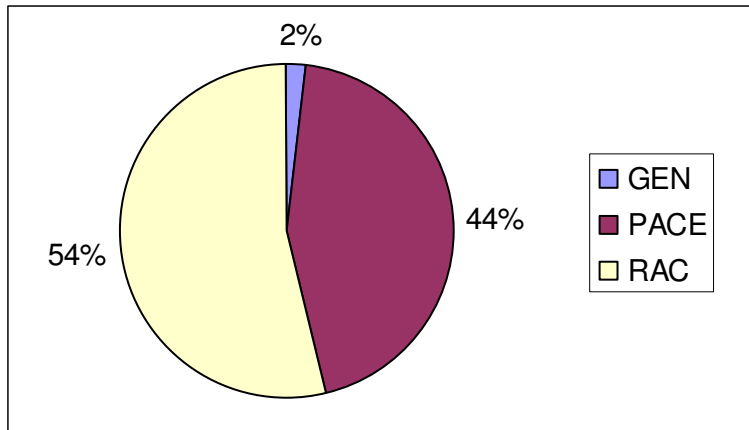


Figure 10. Certification Area of Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007



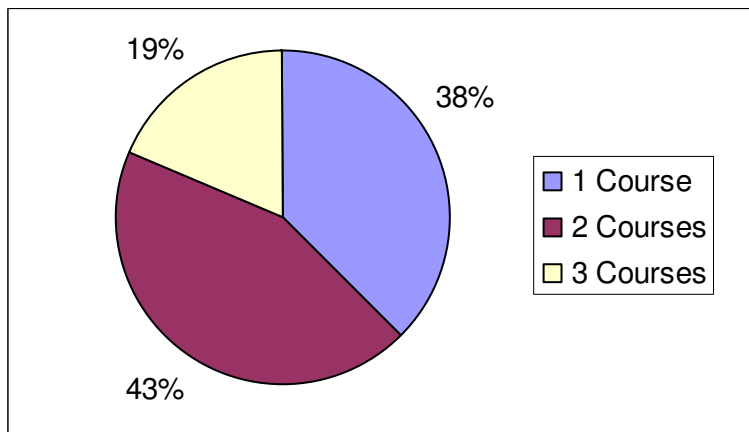
ED=Emotional Disabilities; LD=Learning Disabilities; MC=Multi-categorical; MD=Mental Disabilities; SEV=Severe.

Figure 11. *Employment Status of Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007*



PACE=Program of Alternative Certification for Educators–Emotional Disabilities (Special Education); RAC=Restricted Alternative Certificate (Special Education); GEN=General Education teacher.

Figure 12. *CREATE-sponsored Courses Taken by Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007*

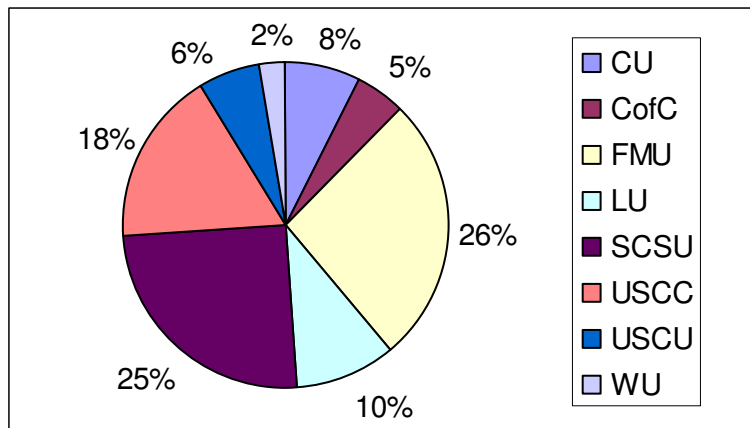


Note: Two of the 52 completers are not reflected in this data, since they completed all program coursework in the interim between Year 3 (2005–2006) and Year 4 (2006–2007), and did not complete any course work during Fall, Spring, or Summer sessions of Year 4.

EMPLOYMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

The mission of CREATE to grow a highly qualified special education teacher force in South Carolina presumes that, once the project has financially assisted participants in obtaining their special education teaching credential, they will remain employed in the State’s public schools for a minimum of three years. In early Fall 2007, we verified the 2007–2008 employment of each of the 52 program completers who

Figure 13. *Contribution of CREATE Centers toward Courses Taken by Program Completers (n=52), Project CREATE, 2006–2007*



CU=Clemson University; CofC=College of Charleston; FMU=Francis Marion University; LU=Lander University; SCSU=South Carolina State University; USCC=University of South Carolina Columbia; USCU=University of South Carolina Upstate; WU=Winthrop University; Data represent a total of 80 certification courses contributed by the eight CREATE centers.

finished course work in 2006–2007 through use of SCDE’s Certification Portal. We determined that 100% of the completers were still employed in the State’s public school system. Only four (7.7%) of the 52 completers had relocated to a different school district than the one in which they were employed when they were initially enrolled in CREATE. That 92.3% of the completers have remained employed in their respective sending districts is a positive sign that districts may be adopting the concept of “growing their own” special educators.

SUMMARY

Project personnel have evaluated the success of Year 4 of CREATE as satisfactory. Data collected and discussed in this report that support this conclusion follow:

- ▶ Available course scholarships: 586
- ▶ Awarded course scholarships: 279
- ▶ Participants enrolled: 158
- ▶ School districts represented: 53
- ▶ Participants completing course work: 52

The four-year total of 277 program completers is compelling, empirical evidence that CREATE is accomplishing its mission of reducing the number of non-certified special education teachers in South Carolina, while simultaneously growing a highly qualified special education teacher force.

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Submitted to SCDE: December 1, 2007

COURSE EVALUATION

Project CREATE

► Circle your Project CREATE Center and the semester/year of your course:

University Center: CU CofC FMU LU SCSU USCC USCU WU

Semester: Fall Spring Summer **Year:** 2006 2007

► Write the number and title of your course in the blank below:

► Use the following scale and circle your rating to the following items:

4 = Strongly Agree 3 = Agree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree

In presenting and teaching material, this professor:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Communicated subject matter clearly. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Caused me to think critically. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Showed enthusiasm and made classes interesting and engaging. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Used examples, illustrations, and/or demonstrations to explain ideas. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Embellished/expanded on textbook material, rather than just repeated it. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Used allocated class time for critical, more important material. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Presented information in an organized, logical, and sequential manner. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Integrated media, guest speakers, and/or other resources with lecture. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Inspired, motivated, and stimulated a desire to want to learn more. |

When interacting with students, this professor:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Showed genuine interest in students' success. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Was available during office hours (or by phone/e-mail) for consultation. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Showed respect towards the opinions of students. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Encouraged student participation in class. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Responded to student questions in a clear, supportive manner. |

Requirements for this course included:

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Readings (textbook, etc.) that improved my understanding of the subject. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Assignments that were well developed and related to course content. |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Assignments that were creative, hands-on (e.g., case studies, research). |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Assignments that were paced and timed appropriately for the semester. |

*Project personnel certify that a total of 29 pages
comprise the final report for Year 4.*