

**CENTERS FOR THE RE-EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF  
TEACHERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA, 2009–2010  
YEAR 7**

*Growing a Highly Qualified and Effective  
Special Education Teacher Force in South Carolina*

Personnel Preparation Project  
Funded by the  
South Carolina Department of Education  
Office of Exceptional Children and the  
Division of Educator Quality and Leadership

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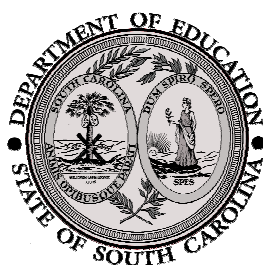
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*Report available at:*

<http://www.sccreate.org/reports.htm>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### PROJECT CREATE—YEAR 7

The twofold mission of CREATE for Year 7 has been consistent with the previous six years of the project, which was to reduce the number of non-certified special education teachers, while simultaneously growing a highly qualified and effective special education teacher force in the State's public schools. With joint funding from the South Carolina Department of Education's Office of Exceptional Children and Division of Educator Quality and Leadership, the project awarded course scholarships to qualified participants for tuition and textbook costs to pursue add-on, alternative, or initial certification in special education. For 2009–2010, the project operated centers at 11 South Carolina colleges and universities including Clemson University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Charleston, Columbia College, Converse College, 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 7 final report. Specific topics discussed include (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 161 participants employed at 53 of the State's 85 (65%) school districts, two state operated programs, and one charter school. The cohort was overwhelmingly female (85%) and just about as many participants were new (48%) as were returning (52%) to the project. Almost one-third (30%) were African-American, American Indian, and Asian-American. Of the declared areas of special education certification that participants were pursuing, the majority reflected Learning Disabilities (33%) or Emotional Disabilities (35%).

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 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 11 CREATE centers collectively offered 22 certification courses 107 times, 36 (34%) of which were online.

Adequacy of Course Content. An overall mean rating of 3.39 (1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree) on course evaluations indicated 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. Item cluster means for Behavior Management, Characteristics, and MAT courses fell in the Strongly Agree range.

Progress of Participants. Programmatic progress was calculated by dividing the number of courses that the participants completed through CREATE by the number of courses prescribed in their respective certification programs. The average progress of participants seeking alternative certification in the PACE program (n=44) was 77% (range of one to three courses). The average progress of participants pursuing add-on certification (n=74) was 60% (range of one to nine courses). The average progress of participants enrolled in initial certification programs at the bachelor's or MAT level (n=43) was considerably less at 31%; however, the range of needed course work was 1 to 23 courses. The weighted aggregated progress of the 161 participants was 56%. Academic progress was superb. Enrolled participants in all programs earned A or B grades in 92% of their completed course work.

Perceptions of Participants. Mean item ratings on the 30-item online course evaluation ranged from 3.40 to 3.67 (1=Strongly Disagree to 4=Strongly Agree). Three of the item cluster means fell in the Average range, with the remaining two item cluster means falling in the Strongly Agree range. The overall mean rating of 3.51 reflected a Strongly Agree opinion from participants. With no individual item or item cluster mean ratings falling below the Agree rating, we judged the teacher perceptions of courses as exceedingly positive.

Enrollment in Courses. Participants enrolled in 304 courses, which represented 86% of the 355 available course scholarships for the year. The number of course scholarships awarded per participant ranged from one to five. Across the CREATE centers, the number of course scholarships awarded per semester was 75.33 (Fall 2009), 71.67 (Spring 2010), and 157 (Summer 2010).

Program Completers. A total of 61 participants completed all course work for their respective certification programs for Year 7. The completers were predominantly female (90%), and 32% were African-American, American Indian, and Asian-American. Forty-one percent finished course work in Emotional Disabilities certification, followed by Learning Disabilities (34%), Multi-categorical Special Education (8%), Mental Disabilities (7%), Visual Impairment (7%), and Hearing Impairments (3%). The majority (66%) were currently employed as special education teachers in emotional disabilities classrooms (PACE-ED program) or other special education settings.

Recruitment, Selection, and Advising. Recruitment and selection of participants for the project was accomplished by a (a) well-designed and informative Web site; (b) statewide mailing at the beginning of the grant year from the SC Office of Exceptional Children to district special education directors, directors of personnel, and school principals and (c) phone and email campaigns orchestrated by the project directors and center directors. Advising qualified participants on which certification courses would meet their needs was accomplished via phone and email. All 161 qualified participants for Year 7 were verified to be non-certified in their area of special education certification need and employed full-time in a SC public school district, charter school, or state operated program.

Employment of Participants. We verified the 2010–2011 employment of a subgroup of 50 (out of 61) program completers whose SC teaching certificate numbers were available, and determined that 100% of these completers remained employed in one of the State’s public schools, charter schools, or a State operated program. Only 10% had relocated to a different school/district other than the one in which they were employed when they were initially qualified for CREATE. That 90% of the completers have remained employed in their respective school districts is a positive indicator that districts are “growing their own” special educators.

In sum, project personnel have evaluated the success of Year 7 of CREATE as excellent. Noteworthy data collected and discussed in this report that support this conclusion include the following:

- ▶ Available course scholarships: 355
- ▶ Awarded course scholarships: 304
- ▶ Participants enrolled: 161
- ▶ School districts/other represented: 56
- ▶ Certification program completers: 61

The seven-year, cumulative total of 562 program completers is strong, empirical evidence that CREATE continues to advance its mission of reducing the number of non-certified special education teachers while simultaneously growing a highly qualified and effective special education teacher force in South Carolina.

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## FINAL REPORT

### PROJECT CREATE–YEAR 7

#### HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

South Carolina public schools have struggled over the last decade in adequately and consistently employing highly qualified and effective special education teachers for its more than 100,000 students with disabilities. By 2002–2003, the number of special educators who were not appropriately certified to teach special education exceeded 400. Looming at the time 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 (SCDE) Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) adopted a ‘Grow our own’ objective, and subsequently, funded Year 1 of Project CREATE in 2003–2004. Continuation funds from both OEC and the SCDE Division of Educator Quality and Leadership were provided in 2004–2005 (Year 2), and again in 2005–2006 (Year 3), 2006–2007 (Year 4), 2007–2008 (Year 5), and 2008–2009 (Year 6). 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 and effective special education teacher force in the State’s public and charter schools.

By underwriting both tuition and textbook costs, qualified participants have been able to complete needed course work in order to obtain add-on, alternative, or initial certification in special education, thereby better preparing them to teach students with disabilities more effectively. In an article published in the 2010 annual issue of *Teacher Education Journal of South Carolina*, authors summarized CREATE’s key statistics reflecting success for Years 1 through 6 (2003–2009):

*Key Statistics for Project CREATE, 2003–2009.*

Project Year ► ▼ Project Descriptor	Year 1 2003-04	Year 2 2004-05	Year 3 2005-06	Year 4 2006-07	Year 5 2007-08	Year 6 2008-09
Colleges in CREATE Consortium	3	4	6	11	11	11
Qualified Participants	100	246	197	152	198	187
School Districts Represented	33	59	63	53	65	55
Courses Completed by Participants	121	411	288	279	484	367
Certification Progress	37%	63%	79%	57%	59%	60%
Certification Program Completers	4	74	147	52	145	79

Source: Sutton, J. P., Pae, H. A., Bausmith, S. C., O’Connor, D. M., & DuRant, S. D. (2010). Project CREATE: State-wide partnership for producing highly qualified special education teachers. *Teacher Education Journal of South Carolina*, 122-129.

#### YEAR 7 OPERATION

With the goal of preserving and advancing CREATE’s mission of growing a highly qualified and effective special education teacher force in the State, the SCDE OEC and DEQL continued joint funding of the project for 2009–2010 (Year 7). Participant eligibility included all full-time SC public and charter school employees in both instructional and non-instructional positions, whose desire was to become highly qualified special education teachers. Primary targeted groups included currently employed special education teachers who did not hold full certification in special education, specifically, [a] those holding a restricted alternative certificate (RAC) in various disability teaching specialties, and [b] those enrolled in the State’s *Program of Alternative Certification for Educators* (PACE) program in Emotional Disabilities. For purposes of growing the State’s potential pool of highly qualified and effective special educators, the project targeted a number of other groups, including general education (GEN) teachers who expressed interest in making a career change into special education; teacher assistants (TA) wanting to upgrade to full certification, long-term

substitute (SUB) teachers, and various other (OTH) public and charter school staff in non-instructional work capacities (e.g., administrative assistants). All qualified participants pursued special education certification through one of two approaches: (a) add-on/alternative certification; or (b) initial certification via a bachelor's (BACH) or master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree program in special education. Colleges in the CREATE consortium offered course work leading to certification of special educators as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA), as well as certification course work for the following traditional special education teaching areas: Emotional Disabilities (ED); Hearing Impairments (HI); Learning Disabilities (LD); Multi-categorical Special Education (MC); Mental Disabilities (MD); Severe Disabilities (SEV); and Visual Impairments (VI).

As in previous years of the project, qualified participants were awarded course scholarships on a first-come basis, which provided financial assistance to pay for tuition and textbook costs. Courses were delivered in various formats (regular/on-campus; online) and reflected add-on/alternative and initial certification needs of participants. Courses were scheduled and delivered during the Fall 2009, Spring 2010, and Summer 2010 semesters at CREATE centers established at the following 11 colleges/universities in the South Carolina, all with NCATE/State-approved programs in special education teacher preparation (Note: Center directors' names are provided in parenthesis): Clemson University (Dr. Janie Hodge); Coastal Carolina University (Dr. Dodi Hodges), College of Charleston (Dr. Michael Skinner); Columbia College (Dr. Tracy West); Converse College (Dr. Ansley Boggs); Francis Marion University (Dr. Shirley Bausmith), Lander University (Dr. Dava O'Connor); SC State University (Dr. Evelyn Fields); USC Columbia (Dr. Kathleen Marshall); USC Upstate (Dr. Holly Pae); and Winthrop University (Dr. Deborah Leach). Dr. Joe Sutton, independent special education consultant, continued his post as project director and principal investigator for Year 7.

## **ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS**

The CREATE office processed 386 viable applications for Year 7, from which 193 (50%) applicants were qualified for scholarship funds. Of the qualified participants, 161 (83%) enrolled in one or more courses during the project year. Representing 53 of 85 (62%) school districts, one charter school, and two state operated programs (see Table 1, p. 15), enrollees were predominantly female (85%; see Figure 1, p. 16) and were as likely to be first-year participants or new to the project (48%) as returning participants (52%; see Figure 2, p. 16). The majority of participants were seeking either Emotional Disabilities (35%) or Learning Disabilities (33%) certification (see Figure 3, p. 16), followed by Multi-categorical (14%), and Mental Disabilities (10%). Considerably fewer participants were pursuing Board Certified Behavior Analyst (1%), Hearing Impairments (1%), Severe Disabilities (2%), and Visual Impairments (4%). Representation by race/ethnicity included Caucasians (70%), African-Americans (28%), American Indian (1%), and Asian American (1%; see Figure 4, p. 17). Participants represented a variety of full-time positions including general education classroom teachers (18%) seeking a career change into special education, special education teachers of emotional disabilities enrolled in the State's *Program of Alternative Certification for Educators* (PACE) program (27%), special education teachers holding the restricted alternative certificate or RAC (1%), special education teachers holding neither the RAC nor PACE-ED (23%), teacher assistants (23%), and other non-instructional staff (8%; see Figure 5, p. 17). Most of the participants were enrolled in add-on/alternative certification programs in special education (73%), with a smaller percentage enrolled in initial certification programs in special education, including bachelor of arts/science (BA/BS) degree programs (7%) or master of arts in teaching (MAT) degree programs (20%; see Figure 6, p. 17).

## **EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

The evaluation design described in the initial 2003–2004 proposal required preparation of a final report after each year of operation. Like previous years, the final report for Year 7 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. Was the content of the coursework adequate in providing instruction for needed skills and competencies of participants?
3. Did participants progress at an appropriate rate toward completion of certification?
4. What are the participants' perceptions of the project?
5. Was anticipated enrollment maintained throughout the project period?
6. What percentage of the qualifying participants completed their respective certification programs?
7. How effective was the recruitment, selection, and advising process? and
8. Have the participants been employed in positions appropriate to their new certification areas?

## APPROPRIATENESS OF COURSES

Access to Courses. With participants residing in virtually all geographic regions of the State, appropriateness of courses from one perspective 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 college center or whether they lived in rural, more remote areas of the State. We believe the project maximized the opportunity for basically all participants to avail themselves of needed course work by offering two course formats, including (a) regular campus courses and (b) 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 or extension campuses by enrolling 18 or more participants. *Online courses* enrolled a State-wide audience of 18 or more participants which would allow participants to learn at-home or other site 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 or PACE-ED certification courses to participants, who represented 73% of the participant group. Course contributions for each CREATE center and corresponding formats for each of the three semesters for Year 7 are provided in Tables 2, 3, and 4 (see pp. 18-19). For Year 7, the 11 CREATE centers offered 22 different certification courses a total of 107 times, 36 (34%) of which were online.

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 espoused by 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 satisfactorily appropriate. Overall, the project director and the 11 CREATE center directors 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, which required issuing online course evaluations at the end of each of the three semesters. When prompted with the statement, "In comparison with other special education courses I have taken, this course..." participants used a four-point Likert-type 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 learners with disabilities.
- ▶ Significantly contributed to my overall preparation in special education.

Table 5 (see p. 19) provides the mean ratings of these four items on course evaluations gathered from 156 of 367 (43%). Results were collapsed into five special education preparation content areas (the various special education certification courses were subsumed in one of the following 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. Cluster means for Assessment, Exceptional Learners, Methods, and Bachelor’s courses fell in the Agree range. For Behavior Management, Characteristics, and MAT courses, the item cluster means fell in the Strongly Agree range. The overall total mean of 3.39 for all courses suggests that participants viewed course content as generally sufficient in meeting their professional preparation needs.

### PROGRESS OF PARTICIPANTS

The project awarded 304 course scholarships to 161 participants in Year 7. 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 6, p. 20); this data represents academic progress of participants.
- ▶ Percentage of courses that participants completed out of courses prescribed in their respective certification programs (See Table 7, p. 20); this data describes program progress of participants.

Table 6 (see p. 20) shows that 71% of participants seeking add-on/alternative certification earned A grades, and about one-fourth (23%) earned B grades, indicating a very high level of skill mastery. Minimally acceptable competency was demonstrated by 6% of participants with C grades. Three percent (3%) of participants earned D/F or I/W (i.e., incomplete or withdraw) grades. These data suggest very high academic progress of participants, as measured by final grades. Grades were virtually identical for participants seeking initial certification in bachelor’s and MAT programs (see Table 7, p. 20). Collectively, they earned 71% A grades, followed by 22% with B grades, 3% with C grades, and 3% with D/F or I/W grades.

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

We divided the 161 participants into three groups (PACE-ED, add-on certification, and bachelor’s/ MAT), and computed progress measures on each group. The average progress of participants seeking alternative certification in the PACE program (n=44) was 77% (see Table 8, p. 21). PACE participants are required to take three graduate courses for their certification requirement. The average progress of participants pursuing add-on certification (n=74) was 60% (see Table 9, p. 21). The number of courses required for add-on certification range from one to nine. The average progress of participants enrolled in initial certification programs (n=43) was 31% (see Tables 10, p. 22). The range of required courses for those enrolled in initial certification programs ranged from one to 23 courses; therefore, it was expected that the progress would be considerably less. The weighted aggregated progress of the 161 participants was 56%. Overall, these data suggest that the participants are demonstrating satisfactory progress toward completing certification.

## **PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS**

We assessed the perceptions of participants by gathering their views and opinions through an online course evaluation survey that was designed in Year 1 of the project. 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.).

A summary of mean item ratings on course evaluations gathered from 91 of the 161 participants (30% response rate) is provided in Table 11 (see p. 23). 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. Individual item mean item ratings ranged from 3.40 to 3.67. The item cluster means ranged from 3.47 (Evaluation of Learning) to 3.60 (Interaction Skills of Instructor). Three of the item cluster means fell in the Average range, with the remaining two item cluster means falling in the Strongly Agree range. The overall mean rating of 3.51 reflected a Strongly Agree opinion from participants. With no individual item or item cluster mean ratings falling below the Agree rating, we judged the teacher perceptions of courses sponsored by CREATE in Year 7 as overwhelmingly positive.

## **ENROLLMENT IN COURSES**

Of the 355 course scholarships available through the 11 CREATE college centers for Year 7, the project awarded 304 (86%) to qualified participants. Table 12 (see p. 24) displays the number of course scholarships awarded out of available course scholarships for each of the CREATE centers. Percentage of courses awarded out of courses available for individual centers ranged from 72% (USC Upstate) to 100% (Columbia College, SC State University, and Winthrop University). Figure 7 (see p. 24) shows the number of course scholarships awarded for each of the three semesters across all CREATE centers, as follows: Fall 2009 (n=75.33); Spring 2010 (n=71.67); and Summer 2010 (n=157). Table 13 (see p. 25) provides a distribution of course scholarships awarded per school district. The three school districts that received the greatest number of course scholarships were Greenville 01 (n=29), Spartanburg 07 (n=28), and Richland 01 (n=17). Explanations for why these districts received more course awards varied. One reason was that these districts had greater numbers of enrolled participants who qualified for the project. Another reason was that participants from these districts simply expressed greater interest. Nonetheless, the project consistently operated under a first-come policy for awarding course scholarships. Additionally, given that all of the available course scholarships were not depleted for the year, the project had the ability to award more course scholarships to participants in other school districts, had interest been expressed by them.

## **PROGRAM COMPLETERS**

The project identified 61 participants who completed all course work for their respective certification programs. Representing 32 of 85 districts (38%) and two State-operated programs (Palmetto USD and SC School for the Deaf and Blind), Greenville 01 District produced the greatest number of completers with 6, followed by Charleston 01 District and SCSDB, each with 5, and Florence 01 District with 4. The remaining districts had a range of 1 to 3 completers (see Table 14, p. 26). The completers were overwhelmingly female (90%; see Figure 8, p. 27), and fully two-thirds (68%) were Caucasian, with African-American completers representing 28% (see Figure 9, p. 27). Figure 10 (see p. 27) shows that 41% of the completers finished course work in Emotional Disabilities (ED) certification, followed by

Learning Disabilities (LD) with 34%, and Multi-categorical Special Education (8%), Mental Disabilities and Visual Impairments, each with 7%, and Hearing Impairments with 3%.

The greater proportion (38%) of completers was employed as special education teachers in Emotional Disabilities (i.e., PACE-ED) classrooms, followed by other special education teachers (28%; see Figure 11, p. 28). Completers finishing alternative programs (82%) outnumbered those finishing initial certification via bachelor's or MAT programs (7% and 11%, respectively) by an 8:2 ratio (see Figure 12, p. 28). Most completers received scholarships for three courses (26%) or two courses (15%) to complete their respective certification program requirements (see Figure 13, p. 28).

## **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. A well-designed and continuously updated Web site provided a highly effective forum for year-round recruitment efforts. Officially, SCDE initiated recruitment at the beginning of the grant year by mailing a letter of information about the project 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 to qualified individuals who either had (a) enrolled in the project the previous year or (b) submitted a new application to CREATE. Having expended 86% of the project's available course scholarships for the year, we evaluated the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts as highly successful.

Selection. Appropriate selection of teacher participants hinged on both fairness and viability factors. With regard to *fairness*, we continued Year 7 operation of the project on a first-come 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 85 (62%) school districts and three State operated programs. More importantly, we rejected no qualifying participants from any district who requested scholarship assistance. As for *viability* of participants, the project selected and enrolled only participants who were employed in SC public schools, charter schools, or State-operated programs who were non-certified in the special education area of need. We were able to verify that all 161 participants enrolled in the project for Year 7 were, in fact, employed full-time in their respective schools and 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, phone, and face-to-face meetings, and focused mainly on recommending appropriate course work to applicants as prescribed on their respective certification programs. With the exception of a couple of course awards, a virtually perfect concordance between courses that participants enrolled in and successfully completed, and needed course work identified on their program check sheets, allowed us to judge our advising process as highly successful.

## **EMPLOYMENT OF COMPLETERS**

Upon completion of special education certification programs, completers are expected to remain employed in the State's public schools and to teach in their newly-acquired teaching specialty for at least three years. At the preparation of this annual report in March, 2011, and using SCDE's Certification Portal, we verified the 2010–2011 employment of 51 of the 61 program completers from Year 7 (2009–2010) who completed add-on or PACE-ED certification and whose six-digit SDE certification number were on-file. Because SDE certification numbers of completers in the bachelor's and MAT groups were

unavailable to the project director, determining their school district employment status was not possible through the Portal. Although the Portal does not specify whether the completer is teaching special education, it does provide proof of continued employment in a SC public school district.

Of this majority subgroup of 50 completers, 100% remain employed in a State public school district. Forty-six (90%) remained employed in the same district in which they were affiliated when they were participating in CREATE and pursuing special education certification. Of the remaining five (10%), four had transferred employment to a different school district; one had secured employment with a charter school. Given that the project's Employment Agreement, signed by the participant and his/her sending school district, requires the completer to secure a teaching assignment in special education the subsequent school year after completion of certification, the 10% relocation rate is not unexpected nor does it seem unreasonable (Note: The Employment Agreement also stipulates that the sending district has the first option to employ the completer as a special education teacher). That 90% of these completers have remained employed in their respective sending districts is a positive sign that districts are "growing their own" special educators. We were unable to ascertain the employment of the remaining 11 of 61 completers who finished initial certification in special education through a bachelor's or MAT degree program through use of the Certification Portal, because their SC teaching certificate numbers were unavailable at the writing of this report.

## SUMMARY

Project personnel have evaluated the success of Year 7 of CREATE as excellent. Noteworthy data collected and discussed in this report that support this conclusion include the following:

- ▶ Available course scholarships: 355
- ▶ Awarded course scholarships: 304
- ▶ Participants enrolled: 161
- ▶ School districts/other represented: 56
- ▶ Certification program completers: 61

The seven-year, cumulative total of 562 program completers is strong, empirical evidence that CREATE continues to advance its mission of reducing the number of non-certified special education teachers while simultaneously growing a highly qualified and effective special education teacher force in South Carolina.

Report prepared by: Joe Sutton, PhD  
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Center Director  
*Winthrop University*

Submitted to SCDE: March 28, 2011

**TABLES AND FIGURES**
**PROJECT CREATE–YEAR 7**

 Table 1. *School District Affiliation of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60	1	Jasper 01	1
Aiken 01	2	Kershaw 01	5
Allendale 01	1	Lancaster 01	3
Anderson 01	1	Laurens 55	2
Anderson 02		Laurens 56	1
Anderson 03		Lee 01	
Anderson 04	1	Lexington 01	3
Anderson 05	3	Lexington 02	1
Bamberg 01		Lexington 03	
Bamberg 02		Lexington 04	2
Barnwell 19		Lexington 05	2
Barnwell 29		Marion 01	
Barnwell 45	1	Marion 02	1
Beaufort 01	2	Marion 07	
Berkeley 01	2	Marlboro 01	
Calhoun 01		McCormick 01	2
Charleston 01	9	Newberry 01	4
Cherokee 01	1	Oconee 01	6
Chester 01		Orangeburg 03	
Chesterfield 01		Orangeburg 04	
Clarendon 01	3	Orangeburg 05	2
Clarendon 02	1	Pickens 01	
Clarendon 03		Richland 01	12
Colleton 01	2	Richland 02	6
Darlington 01	3	Saluda 01	1
Dillon 01	1	Spartanburg 01	
Dillon 02	1	Spartanburg 02	
Dillon 03	1	Spartanburg 03	
Dorchester 02	3	Spartanburg 04	
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 05	1
Edgefield 01	2	Spartanburg 06	2
Fairfield 01		Spartanburg 07	8
Florence 01	7	Sumter 02	3
Florence 02	1	Sumter 17	2
Florence 03	1	Union 01	1
Florence 04		Williamsburg 01	1
Florence 05		York 01	1
Georgetown 01		York 02	1
Greenville 01	15	York 03	
Greenwood 50	4	York 04	
Greenwood 51		Charter	1
Greenwood 52	1	Palmetto USD	2
Hampton 01		SCSDB	7
Hampton 02		TOTAL	161
Horry 01	7		

Figure 1. Gender of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010

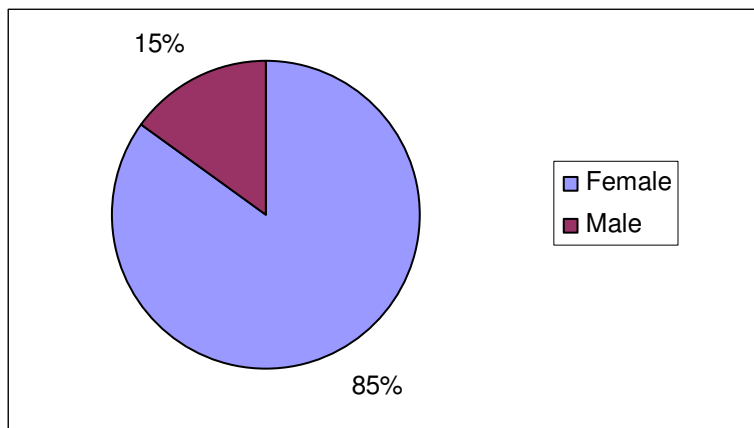


Figure 2. New or Returning Status of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010

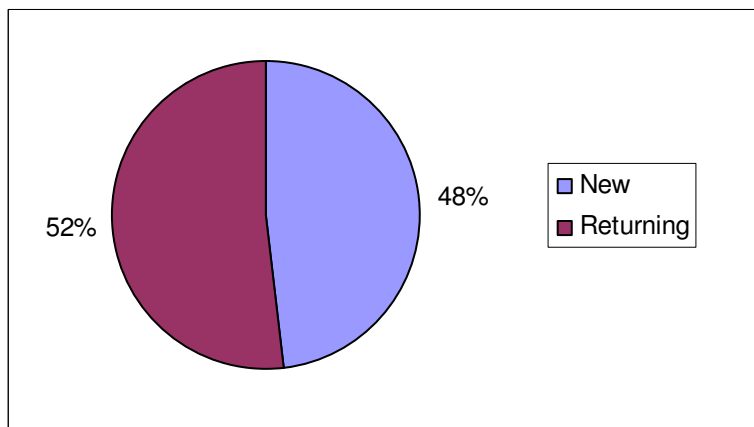
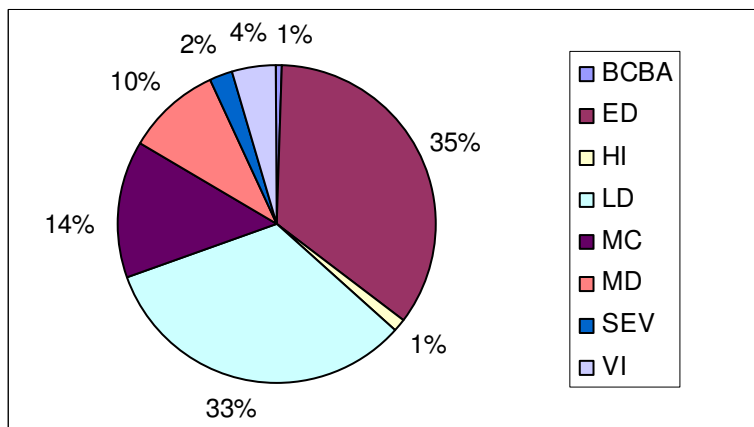


Figure 3. Certification Area Pursued by Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010



BCBA=Board Certified Behavior Analyst; ED=Emotional Disabilities; HI=Hearing Impairments; LD=Learning Disabilities; MC=Multi-categorical; MD=Mental Disabilities; SEV=Severe Disabilities; VI=Visual Impairments.



Figure 4. *Race of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

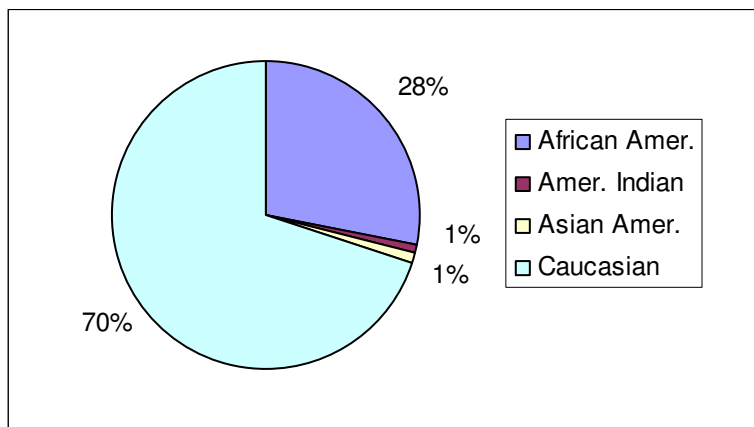
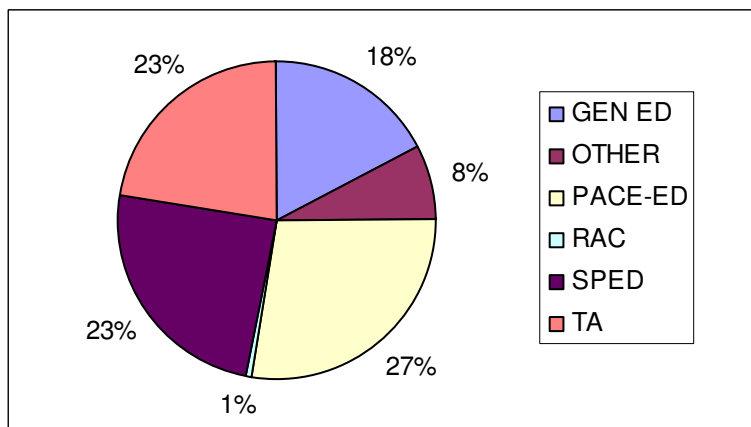


Figure 5. *Employment Status of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*



GEN ED=General education teachers; OTHER=Other non-instructional staff; PACE-ED=Program of Alternative Certification for Educators–Emotional Disabilities; RAC=Restricted Alternative Certificate in special education; SPED=Special education teachers who are not RAC or PACE-ED status; TA=Teacher assistants.

Figure 6. *Certification Program of Enrolled Participants (n=161), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

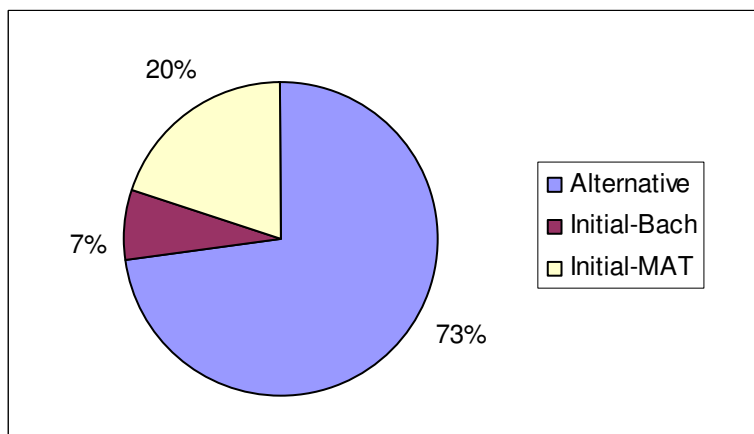


Table 2. *Certification Courses and Formats, Fall 2009 Semester, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

COLLEGE ►	CU	CCU	CofC	ColaC	CnVC	FMU	LU	SCSU	USCC	USCU	WU
▼ COURSE	CU	CCU	CofC	ColaC	CnVC	FMU	LU	SCSU	USCC	USCU	WU
Introduction to Exceptional Learners		C	O		C			C	O	C	
Characteristics: Emotional Disabilities			O		C				O		C
Characteristics: Learning Disabilities			C		C	C			O		C
Characteristics: Mental Disabilities			O		C						C
Characteristics: Hearing Impairment					C						
Methods/Procedures: Emotional Disabilities									C		
Methods/Procedures: Learning Disabilities						C					
Methods/Procedures: Mental Disabilities			C								C
Methods/Procedures: Severe Disabilities									C		
Behavior Management					C	O	C		O		C
Teaching Reading in General/Special Education						C			C		C
Lang./Communication for Exceptional Learners			C						C		
Assessment for Exceptional Learners					C				C		
Braille–Reading & Writing										O	
Teaching Reading for Visual Impairment										O	

CU=Clemson University; CCU=Coastal Carolina University; CofC=College of Charleston; ColaC=Columbia College; FMU=Francis Marion University; LU=Lander University; SCSU=South Carolina State University; USCC=USC Columbia; USCU=USC Upstate; WU=Winthrop University; O=Online course; C=regular on-campus course.

Table 3. *Certification Courses and Formats, Spring 2010 Semester, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

COLLEGE ►	CU	CCU	CofC	ColaC	CnVC	FMU	LU	SCSU	USCC	USCU	WU
▼ COURSE	CU	CCU	CofC	ColaC	CnVC	FMU	LU	SCSU	USCC	USCU	WU
Introduction to Exceptional Learners				O	C	C	O	C	O	C	
Characteristics: Learning Disabilities				C							
Characteristics: Mental Disabilities				C							
Methods/Procedures: Emotional Disabilities			O		C						C
Methods/Procedures: Learning Disabilities			C		C	C			C		C
Methods/Procedures: Mental Disabilities			C		C						
Methods/Procedures: Visual Impairment										O	
Behavior Management		C				O	O				
Teaching Reading in General/Special Education			C		C						C
Assessment for Exceptional Learners		C	C		C	C					

Table 4. *Certification Courses and Formats, Summer 2010 Semester, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

COLLEGE ►	CU	CCU	CofC	ColaC	CnVC	FMU	LU	SCSU	USCC	USCU	WU
▼ COURSE											
Introduction to Exceptional Learners		C			C		O		O	O	
Characteristics: Emotional Disabilities		C			C		O				
Characteristics: Learning Disabilities	O	O			C	C	O				
Characteristics: Mental Disabilities							O				
Methods/Procedures: Emotional Disabilities							O				
Methods/Procedures: Learning Disabilities					C	C	O			O	
Methods/Procedures: Mental Disabilities						O					
Behavior Management		O	C	O		O	O		O		C
Teaching Reading in General/Special Education					C	C					C
Assessment for Exceptional Learners		C				C	O				
Nature & Needs: Visual Impairment										C	
Orientation & Mobility: Visual Impairment										C	
Anatomy & Physiology of the Eye										O	
Speech Reading/Audition					C						
Teaching Language: Deaf/Hard of Hearing					C						
Educational Perspectives: Deaf/Hard of Hearing					C						

Table 5. *Mean Ratings\* of Participants (n=91) for Course Evaluation Items Reflecting Adequacy of Course Content, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

Certification Program ►		Alternative/Add-on					Initial		All
Evaluation Item ▼	Course ►	As n=6	BM n=21	Char n=21	EL n=4	Meth n=28	Bach n=3	MAT n=8	Total n=91
Provided more knowledge/skills about instruction in special education		3.17	3.52	3.62	2.25	3.29	3.33	3.63	3.40
Made more relevant applications to the real world of the classroom		3.17	3.48	3.71	2.50	3.25	3.33	3.50	3.40
Broadened my perspective more in how to teach learners with disabilities		3.17	3.57	3.57	2.25	3.25	3.67	3.50	3.38
Significantly contributed to my overall preparation in special education		3.17	3.62	3.48	2.25	3.25	3.33	3.75	3.38
Item Cluster Mean:		3.17	3.55	3.60	2.31	3.26	3.42	3.60	3.39

\* All data calculated using a 4-point Likert scale and reflect 91 course evaluations submitted voluntarily out of 304 course scholarships awarded (30% response rate); Total means are weighted per type of course; As=Assessment for Exceptional Learners; BM=Behavior Management; Char=Characteristics of Emotional/Hearing/Learning/Mental/Visual Disabilities; EL=Introduction to Exceptional Learners; Meth=Methods for Emotional/Learning/Mental/Severe Disabilities, and Teaching Reading; Bach=Bachelor's program; MAT=Master of Arts in Teaching program.

Table 6. *Final Grades for Participants Enrolled in Courses (n=197) Leading to Add-on/Alternative Certification, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

Certification Courses	Final Grades*					
	A	B	C	D/F	I/W	Total
Introduction to Exceptional Learners	10	1	2			13
Characteristics: Emotional Disabilities	16	7				23
Characteristics: Hearing Impairments	1	1				2
Characteristics: Learning Disabilities	9	3			1	13
Characteristics: Mental Disabilities	10	1				11
Characteristics: Visual Impairments	1					1
Methods: Emotional Disabilities	18	7	3	3		31
Methods: Learning Disabilities	14	4				18
Methods: Mental Disabilities	4	2				6
Methods: Severe Disabilities	2					2
Methods: Visual Impairment	6	1				7
Teaching Reading	1	2				3
Behavior Management	31	12	1		1	45
Assessment for Exceptional Learners	9	2		2		13
Anatomy of the Eye	5	1				6
Braille	1					1
Orientation & Mobility	1					1
Language for Exceptional Learners		1				1
All Courses	139	45	6	5	2	197
Percent	71	23	3	2	1	100

\* I/W=Incomplete or withdrawn.

Table 7. *Final Grades for Participants Enrolled in Degree Program Courses (n=107) Leading to Initial Certification, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

Program Courses	Final Grades*					
	A	B	C	D/F	I/W	Total
Bachelor's Degree Program–BA/BS	12	4	1		1	18
Master's Degree Program–MAT	60.67	20	2.33	2		85
All Courses	72.67	24	3.33	2	1	103
Percent	71	22	3	2	1	100

\* Data unavailable for 4 participant courses from one of the 11 CREATE centers; I/W=Incomplete or withdrawn.

Table 8. *Progress of Participants (n=44) Enrolled in PACE Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

No. Courses in Program ▼	No. Courses Completed*					
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
1 Course	100%	11				
2 Courses	50%	4	100%	10		
3 Courses	33%	7	67%	9	100%	1
Total		22		19		1

\* Includes 3 participants who enrolled in and completed one/more certification courses, but earned a C or F grade, which means the course must be repeated for credit. As a result, 2 of the 3 participants netted 0% progress, and the progress of one was reduced to 33%. Thus, Table 8 reports positive progress for 42 of the 44 participants.

Table 9. *Progress of Participants (n=74) Enrolled in Add-on Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

No. Courses in Program ▼	No. Courses Completed							
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses		4 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
1 Course	100%	8						
2 Courses	50%	10	100%	12				
3 Courses	33%	2	67%	5	100%	2		
4 Courses	25%	5	50%	6	75%	2	100%	1
5 Courses	20%	2	40%	5	60%	3		
6 Courses	17%	1	33%	2	50%	1	67%	1
7 Courses					43%	1		
8 Courses			25%	2				
9 Courses	11%	2						
Total		30		32		9		2

\* Includes 1 participant who enrolled in and completed one certification course, but earned an F grade, which means the course must be repeated for credit. As a result, the participant netted 0% progress. Thus, Table 9 reports positive progress for 73 of the 74 participants.

Table 10. *Progress of Participants (n=43) Enrolled in BA/BS or MAT Degree Initial Certification Programs, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

No Courses in Program ▼	No. Courses Completed									
	1 Course		2 Courses		3 Courses		4 Courses		5 Courses	
	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.	Progress	No.
1 Course	100%	5								
2 Courses			100%	4						
8 Courses	13%	1								
9 Courses			22%	1						
10 Courses			20%	1	30%	2				
13 Courses			15%	1						
14 Courses			14%	2					36%	1
15 Courses	7%	2			20%	1	27%	4		
16 Courses									31%	1
17 Courses	6%	2			18%	2	24%	4	29%	2
18 Courses			11%	2	17%	1				
19 Courses			10%	1						
20 Courses			10%	1						
22 Courses					14%	1				
23 Courses	4%	1								
Total		11		13		7		8		4

Table 11. Mean Item and Cluster Ratings from Course Evaluations (n=91), Project CREATE, 2009–2010

Course Evaluation Items	Mean*	Rating
<i>Teaching Skills of Instructor</i>	3.48	A
Communicated subject matter clearly	3.44	A
Caused me to think critically	3.52	SA
Showed enthusiasm and made classes interesting and engaging	3.46	A
Used examples, illustrations, and/or demonstrations to explain ideas	3.56	SA
Embellished/expanded on textbook material, rather than just repeated it	3.54	SA
Used allocated class time for critical, more important material	3.43	A
Presented information in an organized, logical, and sequential manner	3.49	SA
Integrated media, guest speakers, and/or other resources with lecture	3.40	SA
Inspired, motivated, and stimulated a desire to want to learn more	3.44	A
<i>Interaction Skills of Instructor</i>	3.60	SA
Showed genuine interest in students' success	3.63	SA
Was available during office hours (or by phone/e-mail) for consultation	3.55	SA
Showed respect towards the opinions of students	3.58	SA
Encouraged student participation in class	3.67	SA
Responded to student questions in a clear, supportive manner	3.56	SA
<i>Course Requirements</i>	3.49	A
Readings (textbook, etc.) that improved my understanding of the subject	3.46	A
Assignments that were well developed and related to course content	3.52	SA
Assignments that were creative, hands-on (e.g., case studies, research)	3.55	SA
Assignments that were paced and timed appropriately for the semester	3.41	A
<i>Evaluation of Learning</i>	3.47	A
Provided meaningful, constructive feedback on tests and other work	3.47	A
Graded tests/projects according to criteria published in the syllabus	3.52	SA
Prepared me for tests (e.g., gave overviews of test content/format)	3.44	A
Assessed knowledge and conceptual understanding on tests/projects	3.45	A
Returned graded tests and projects on, or by, the promised date	3.45	A
<i>Course Syllabus</i>	3.54	SA
Stated goals/objectives and included a schedule of course content	3.60	SA
Gave instructions for successful completion of course assignments	3.54	SA
Provided clear criteria for grading projects and assignments	3.48	SA
<i>Overall Mean</i>	3.51	SA

\* Data reflect 91 course evaluations submitted voluntarily out of 304 course scholarships awarded (30%). Mean ratings are based on a 4-point Likert rating. SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree.

Table 12. *Course Scholarships Available (n=355) and Awarded (n=304) per CREATE Center, Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

CREATE Center	Type	Available	Awarded	Percent
Clemson University	O	18	10	55.6%
Coastal Carolina University	C,O	10	8	80%
College of Charleston	C,O	33	31	93.9%
Columbia College	C,O	5	5	100%
Converse College	C	46	42	91.3%
Francis Marion University	C,O	78	71	91.0%
Lander University	C,O	85	72	84.7%
SC State University	C	5	5	100%
USC Columbia	C,O	33	29	87.9%
USC Upstate	C,O	39	28	71.8%
Winthrop University	C	3	3	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>355</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>85.6%</b>

O=online course; C=campus course.

Figure 7. *Course Scholarships (n=304) Awarded per Semester, Project CREATE, 2009-2010*

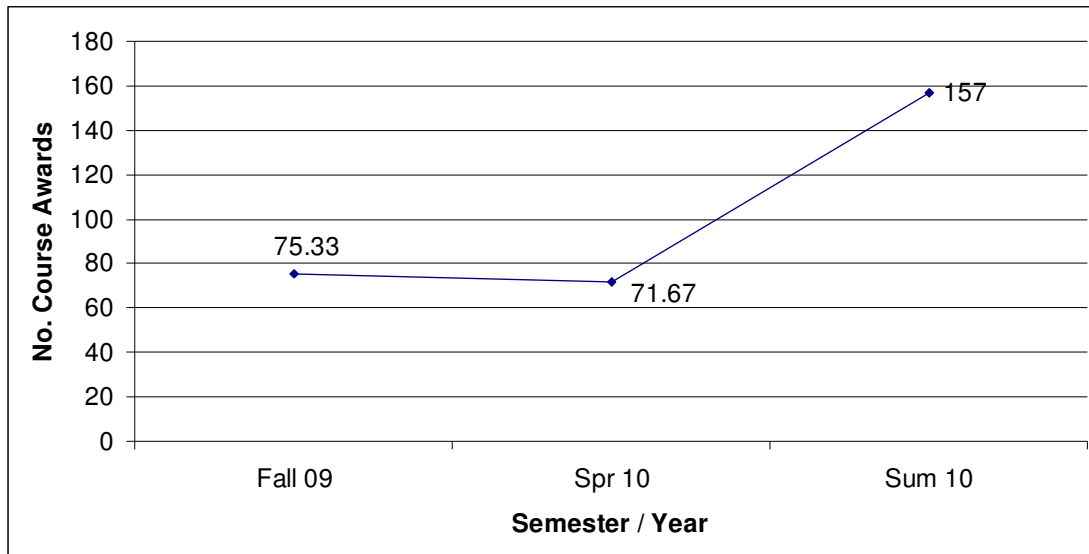




Table 13. *Course Scholarships Awarded per School District (n=304), Project CREATE, 2009-2010*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60	1	Jasper 01	1
Aiken 01	3	Kershaw 01	12
Allendale 01	2	Lancaster 01	7
Anderson 01	2	Laurens 55	3
Anderson 02		Laurens 56	2
Anderson 03		Lee 01	
Anderson 04	2	Lexington 01	4
Anderson 05	6	Lexington 02	1
Bamberg 01		Lexington 03	
Bamberg 02		Lexington 04	3
Barnwell 19		Lexington 05	4
Barnwell 29		Marion 01	
Barnwell 45	2	Marion 02	1
Beaufort 01	6	Marion 07	
Berkeley 01	3	Marlboro 01	
Calhoun 01		McCormick 01	3
Charleston 01	15	Newberry 01	5
Cherokee 01	2	Oconee 01	10
Chester 01		Orangeburg 03	
Chesterfield 01		Orangeburg 04	
Clarendon 01	6	Orangeburg 05	3
Clarendon 02	1	Pickens 01	
Clarendon 03		Richland 01	17
Colleton 01	3	Richland 02	10
Darlington 01	9.33	Saluda 01	3
Dillon 01	2	Spartanburg 01	
Dillon 02	2	Spartanburg 02	
Dillon 03	1.33	Spartanburg 03	
Dorchester 02	3	Spartanburg 04	
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 05	2
Edgefield 01	3	Spartanburg 06	4
Fairfield 01		Spartanburg 07	28
Florence 01	10	Sumter 02	4
Florence 02	1	Sumter 17	5
Florence 03	5	Union 01	1
Florence 04		Williamsburg 01	3
Florence 05		York 01	2
Georgetown 01		York 02	1
Greenville 01	29	York 03	
Greenwood 50	8	York 04	
Greenwood 51		Charter	3
Greenwood 52	1	Palmetto USD	3
Hampton 01		SCSDB	15
Hampton 02		TOTAL	304
Horry 01	15.34		

Table 14. *School District Affiliation of Program Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009-2010*

District	No.	District	No.
Abbeville 60		Jasper 01	1
Aiken 01		Kershaw 01	1
Allendale 01		Lancaster 01	2
Anderson 01	1	Laurens 55	
Anderson 02		Laurens 56	1
Anderson 03		Lee 01	
Anderson 04		Lexington 01	1
Anderson 05	2	Lexington 02	1
Bamberg 01		Lexington 03	
Bamberg 02		Lexington 04	
Barnwell 19		Lexington 05	
Barnwell 29		Marion 01	
Barnwell 45		Marion 02	1
Beaufort 01		Marion 07	
Berkeley 01		Marlboro 01	
Calhoun 01		McCormick 01	1
Charleston 01	5	Newberry 01	1
Cherokee 01		Oconee 01	3
Chester 01		Orangeburg 03	
Chesterfield 01		Orangeburg 04	
Clarendon 01		Orangeburg 05	
Clarendon 02	1	Pickens 01	
Clarendon 03		Richland 01	2
Colleton 01		Richland 02	1
Darlington 01	2	Saluda 01	
Dillon 01		Spartanburg 01	
Dillon 02	1	Spartanburg 02	
Dillon 03		Spartanburg 03	
Dorchester 02	2	Spartanburg 04	
Dorchester 04		Spartanburg 05	1
Edgefield 01	1	Spartanburg 06	1
Fairfield 01		Spartanburg 07	1
Florence 01	4	Sumter 02	2
Florence 02	1	Sumter 17	2
Florence 03		Union 01	1
Florence 04		Williamsburg 01	
Florence 05		York 01	
Georgetown 01		York 02	1
Greenville 01	6	York 03	
Greenwood 50	2	York 04	
Greenwood 51		Charter	
Greenwood 52		Palmetto USD	1
Hampton 01		SCSDB	5
Hampton 02		TOTAL	61
Horry 01	2		

Figure 8. *Gender of Program Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

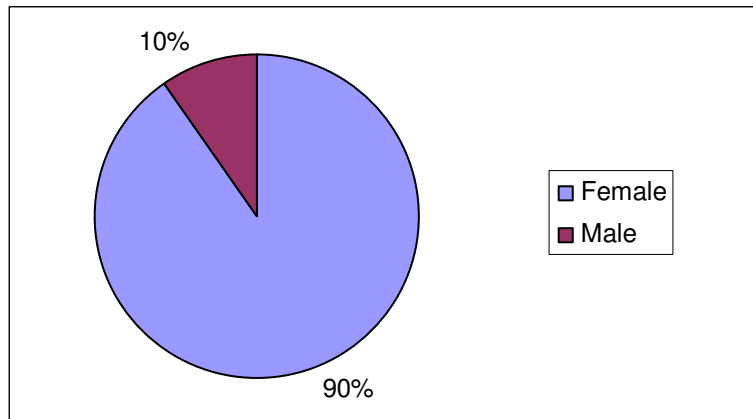


Figure 9. *Race of Program Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*

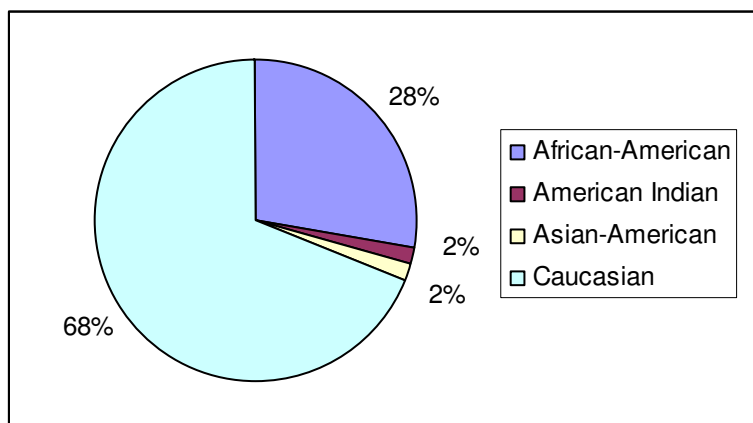
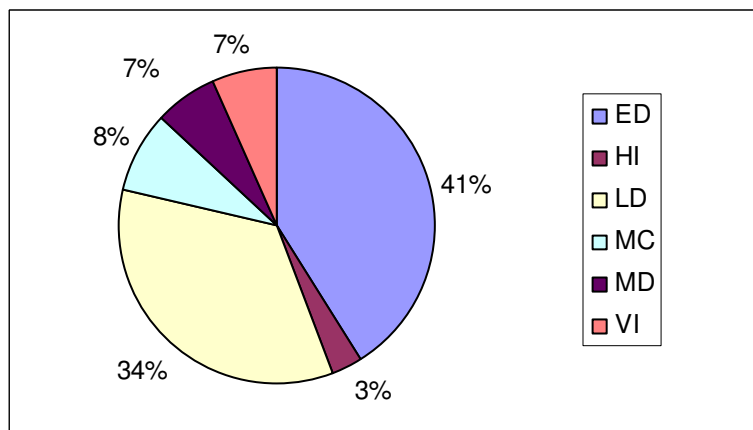
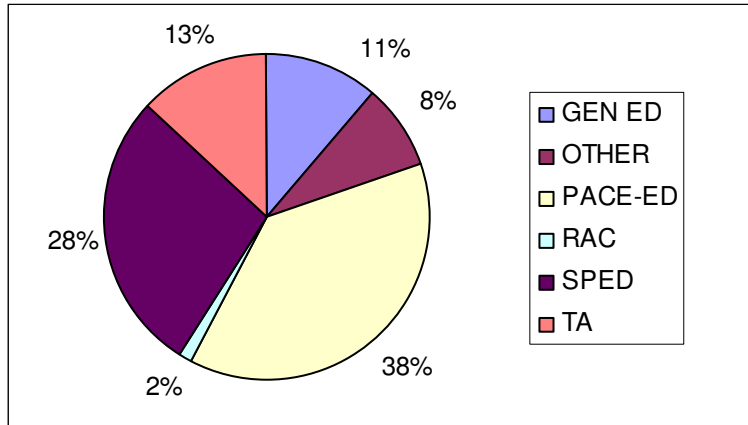


Figure 10. *Certification Area of Program Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*



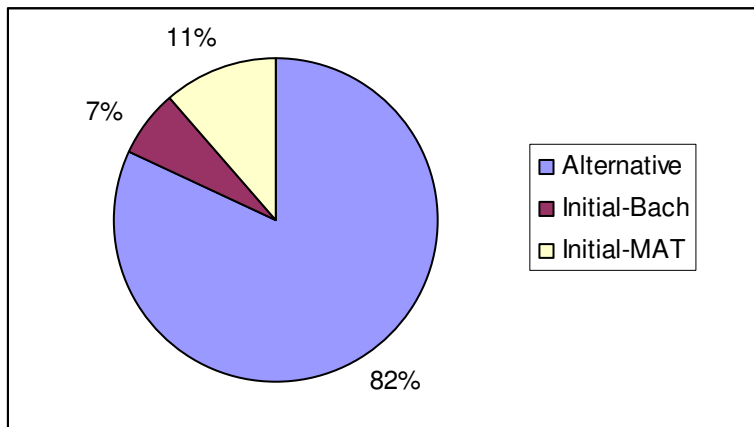
ED=Emotional Disabilities; HI=Hearing Impairments; LD=Learning Disabilities; MC=Multi-categorical Special Education; MD=Mental Disabilities; VI=Visual Impairments.

Figure 11. *Employment Status of Program Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*



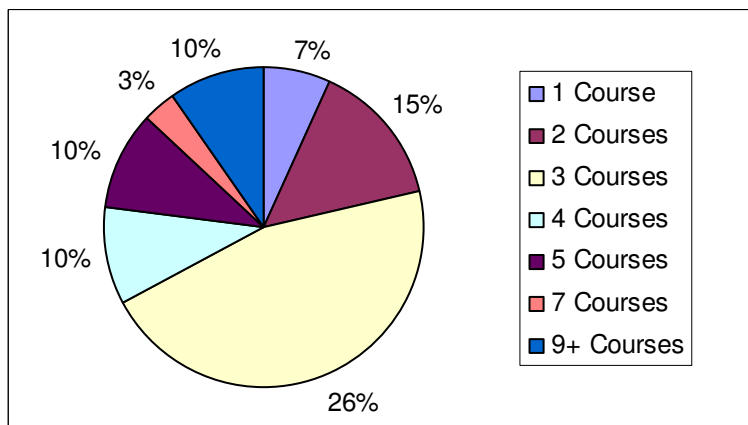
GEN ED=General education teachers; OTHER=Other non-instructional staff; PACE-ED=Program of Alternative Certification for Educators–Emotional Disabilities; RAC=Restricted Alternative Certificate in special education; SPED=Special education teachers who are not RAC or PACE-ED status; TA=Teacher assistants.

Figure 12. *Certification Program of Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*



Alternative includes add-on certification and PACE-ED completers.

Figure 13. *CREATE-sponsored Courses Earned by Completers (n=61), Project CREATE, 2009–2010*



*The Project Director certifies that a total of 29 pages  
comprises the CREATE final report for Year 7.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe P. Sutton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "S".