

Project CREATE: Collaborative Redesign for Effectiveness Across Teacher Education

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Purpose and Objectives:

The purpose of Project CREATE is to redesign teacher preparation programs for special education teachers serving K-12 students to assure that graduates meet the highly qualified requirements of the NCLB/ESEA (2001) and the IDEA (2004), and gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to improve outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities. The specific objectives of Project CREATE are to: (1) develop increased faculty collaboration; (2) modify curriculum to enhance coherence and depth of knowledge (to include Evidenced Based Practices [EBP] such as RTI, mentoring/induction, skills essential for addressing the specialized needs of students with high incidence disabilities from CLD backgrounds such as CRP); (3) modify and enhance performance assessments of students and of the program (to include support systems to enhance retention and success in the program); (4) develop and maintain an effective mentoring and induction program to build stronger school, home, and community partnerships; (5) evaluate and research program, graduate, and K-12 student-related outcomes and sustainability; and (6) disseminate effective EBP resulting from CREATE.

Selected Accomplishments to Date:

Program Revision – All courses in the special education initial teacher preparation programs were reviewed to assure alignment with state and professional standards. Overlap was identified and courses were targeted for elimination and/or consolidation. Program faculty have recommended that all field experiences take place in inclusive settings, have added reading and content (i.e., science and social studies) courses to the curriculum, and have recommended that graduates take the FL FTCE for certification in Elementary K-6 in addition to the exam for certification in K-12 Special Education with ESOL. In addition, a cross-walk of all courses was completed to assure coherence and depth of knowledge in, for example, evidence-based practices (EBP), and to examine assessments across the program.

Partner Schools – Co-PIs worked with personnel in the Miami-Dade Schools (MDCPS) to identify schools that are exemplars of inclusive education. Co-PIs visited schools throughout the district to identify 2 elementary, 2 middle, and 2 high schools that would serve as CREATE partner schools. Plans are to work with general education faculty and students in these schools to develop stronger partnerships.

Collaboration with General Education Faculty – Co-PIs have continued to work with faculty in Elementary and Secondary Education to consider new *integrated* teacher education programs in special education and elementary education and in special education and secondary education.

Evaluation Plan – Data are being gathered across seven stakeholder groups in the project's five-level model of evaluation: current students, recent graduates, principals/employers, parents, interdisciplinary faculty, advisory board, and partnerships. Data are available from all groups except parents.

Additional Focus Areas in 2009-2010:

Induction and Mentoring – Co-PIs have begun working with MDCPS teachers to implement an induction and mentoring program for graduates of the undergraduate program. The pilot group for this project will graduate in Spring 2010. We will be using our own graduates (carefully selected) to serve as mentors.

RTI Initiative – Co-PIs are working with MDCPS to support greater understanding among all teacher education faculty in the College about the state's and district's RTI initiatives. Dr. Janette Klingner will be speaking with faculty in the College on February 24 about national RTI initiatives. The MDCPS Assistant Superintendent of Professional Development will arrange visits for faculty to district schools where she believes RTI is implemented most effectively.