

# **First Time User's Faculty Training Course Evaluation Report**

South Carolina Advanced Technological Education  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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The 1999 South Carolina Advanced Technological Education First Time User's Faculty Training Course Survey provides information regarding participants' perceptions of training quality, applicability and convenience. The survey requested respondents to indicate their agreement with a series of statements about the training program. Additionally, respondents were asked to allocate the amount of time they suggest spending on each topic area and to respond to four open-ended questions. Demographic information was also collected.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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The 1999 South Carolina Advanced Technological Education (SC ATE) First Time User's Faculty Training Course Survey provides information regarding participants' perceptions of training quality, applicability and convenience. The survey was developed collaboratively by SC ATE Center of Excellence staff members and the Western Michigan University (WMU) evaluation intern.

## **METHODOLOGY**

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SC ATE Center of Excellence staff members and the WMU evaluation intern collaboratively developed a 21 item survey. The survey consisted of 16 Likert items, one time-allocation item and four open-ended items. A survey cover page collected information about the participants' involvement in the ATE project, their involvement in the training program, their college affiliation, and their primary teaching discipline. A copy of the survey and cover page was distributed to all participants in the First Time User's Faculty Training Course with a letter explaining the purpose of the survey. A follow-up e-mail requesting participation was sent to all participants who had not returned a completed survey by the survey due date. Subsequently, non-participants were contact via phone and encouraged to complete a survey. Of the 31 participants, 25 responded and two indicated lack of participation in the training as their reason for not participating in the study. The resulting response rate is 86%.

## **FINDINGS**

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### ***Respondent Demographics***

The majority of the respondents (20 or 80%) fully participated in the faculty training as opposed to those who indicated they audited the training program (5 or 20%). The average number of years involved with the ATE project was 3.04 (standard deviation 1.76). As expected, the majority of participants primarily teach Communications, Engineering

Technology or Mathematics with a fairly even distribution across disciplines. The following table presents the primary teaching disciplines for the 25 respondents:

Table 1. Frequencies for Primary Teaching Discipline of Respondents

<b>Teaching Discipline</b>	<b>Number of Respondents (percent of respondents)</b>
Communications (English/Speech)	7 (28%)
Engineering Technology	6 (24%)
Mathematics	5 (20%)
Physics	3 (12%)
Other	4 (16%)

The majority of respondents (21 or 88%) were not previously involved with teaching a pilot class of the SC ATE PreET or core curriculum. The mean number of training sessions attended was 4.20 (standard deviation 1.26), indicating that most respondents attended most of the training sessions. The typical team had approximately 4 members (mean 3.68 standard deviation 1.25).

Overall, respondents perceive the sessions as being appropriately paced. Twenty-two respondents (92%) indicate that overall the pace of the training was just right. One respondent (4.2%) considered the training pace too fast, while one respondent (4.2%) considered the pace too slow.

### ***Likert Item Results***

This section highlights survey findings that are exceptional; frequencies and percentages for every survey item are available as Appendix A.

Nineteen (84%) respondents indicated they would recommend this course to other faculty members who anticipate teaching ATE courses. This finding suggests that the majority of respondents were generally satisfied with the course. The vast majority of respondents (24 or 96%) liked having the training sessions in a series rather than at once. However, 15 (63%) respondents were unsure of or did not think remote delivery of the course was more effective than a traditional workshop would have been. Given the geographic dispersion of training course participants and the desire to have a series of training sessions, a traditional workshop may not be feasible.

Overall the teaming aspects of the training were rated highly, with no one strongly disagreeing with any of the team-related items. The majority of respondents (17 or 71%) indicated their team could adapt the remainder of the curriculum materials for delivery at their school. Most respondents (19 or 79%) perceived working in teams as reinforcing interdisciplinary teaching methods.

While no area stood out as a problem area, a potential area for improvement is providing information and reducing anxiety about the new curriculum. This concern is made evident by responses to survey items related to the new curriculum and in the large percentage of time allotted to the new curriculum (see items 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix A and Table 2 below). Additionally, program leaders may want to consider devoting more time to assessment strategies (see item 8 in Appendix A and Table 2 below).

### ***Percent Time Allotment Item Results***

Assessment and the new course curriculum had the highest average percent of time allotted by respondents (23.41%); followed closely by problem-based learning theory (19.55%) and communication and teaming skills (19.52%) (see Table 2). The amount of time allocated by respondents does not necessarily indicate the importance of or benefit associated with the topic. For instance, although faculty lessons learned was allocated the least amount of time (14.77%), it was frequently mentioned as the most beneficial aspect of the program in open-ended questions. It is possible that assessment and the new curriculum were areas where faculty perceived a need for more instruction or assistance.

Table 2. Percent of Time Recommended for each Session

<b>Session</b>	<b>Mean % of Time Recommended</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Assessment	23.41	9.81
Communication/Teaming	19.52	10.11
Faculty Lessons Learned	14.77	6.07
New Course Curriculum	23.41	11.59
Problem Based Learning	19.55	8.85

### ***Open-ended Item Results***

Open-ended questions were organized by theme and the frequency of similar responses was calculated to indicate the pervasiveness of themes across the respondents. A full list of responses is provided as Appendix B.

Seven respondents (29%) reported that the most beneficial aspect of the program was sharing of ideas with faculty members who have previously taught the ATE curriculum. No single element of the program was repeatedly mentioned in the responses to an open-ended question regarding aspects of the program, which were the least beneficial. Twelve respondents (50%) mentioned a formal means of sharing ideas as an ongoing activity that that would help them become better instructors. The sharing of ideas was suggested as one of the following three initiatives: (1) networking across campuses with other faculty members (no formal grouping); (2) teaming across campuses with other faculty members (teams grouped by discipline or experience); and/or (3) mentoring with faculty members who have already taught the new curriculum. Teleconferencing was suggested as a possible means for communicating across campuses. Additionally, respondents mentioned the need for more help with assessment; perhaps in the form of a workshop.

### ***Respondent Suggestions for Improvement***

Respondent suggestions for improvement are provided below and grouped by theme when possible. The number of respondents mentioning this or a similar idea is in parenthesis. The

most frequently mentioned area for improvement was in sending course materials well before class time. Suggestions mentioned by more than one respondent include: spend less time reporting back to the group; offering specific strategies; and scheduling meeting times at least a week apart. All respondents' comments regarding program improvement are included below.

- Send materials well before class time (3)
- Less time reporting back to the group (2)
- Offer specific strategies (2)
- Meeting times should be a week apart (2)
- Classes should be no longer than one hour (1)
- Set up a help-line for participants (1)
- Course summary/Event Timeline from previous ATE instructors (1)
- Include the perspective of students (1)

## **CONCLUSION**

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Overall, respondents were satisfied with the course and would recommend the course to fellow faculty members. Teaming aspects of the course and hearing from faculty who pilot tested the curriculum were particularly agreeable. In terms of logistics, the participants liked having the sessions in a series rather than as one session and the sessions were paced appropriately.

Assessment and the new curriculum stood out as problem areas for the respondents. Program staff may want to consider providing additional instruction and/or reference materials for these topics. Respondents suggested providing course materials further in advance of classes and allowing more time between classes for teamwork. If course materials are provided well in advance, it may be a good idea to have a plan in place for accommodating participants who have misplaced their course materials.

In response to an item requesting suggestions for follow-up activities respondents mentioned needing time to try out the new curriculum before making suggestions. It may be beneficial to contact participants after their first semester teaching the new curriculum to determine what areas they require further assistance in and topics or situations for which they were not adequately prepared.

## **APPENDICES**

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*Appendix A: Survey Questions, Frequencies and Percentages*

*Appendix B: Responses to Open-ended Questions*

## **Appendix A: Survey Questions, Frequencies and Percentages**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1) Remote delivery of this course was more effective than a "traditional" workshop would have been.	3 (12.5%)	6 (25.0%)	7 (29.2%)	8 (33.3%)	0
2) Adequate resources were provided to support my learning needs.	4 (16.0%)	18 (72.0%)	0	3 (12.0%)	0
3) I liked having the training in a series of sessions rather than all at once.	8 (32.0%)	16 (64.0%)	0	1 (4.0%)	0
4) I understand the components of the SC ATE curriculum better as a result of this course.	2 (8.0%)	13 (52.0%)	8 (32.0%)	2 (8.0%)	0
5) As a result of SC ATE First Time User's Training Course, I am less anxious about teaching the new curriculum.	2 (8.0%)	8 (32.0%)	8 (32.0%)	5 (20.0%)	2 (8.0%)
6) I know enough about the new ATE ET curriculum to begin implementation.	4 (16.0%)	9 (36.0%)	8 (32.0%)	4 (16.0%)	0
7) As a result of SC ATE First Time User's Training Course, I am better prepared to use problem-based learning (PBL) as an instructional strategy.	3 (12.0%)	13 (52.0%)	5 (20.0%)	4 (16.0%)	0
8) I am better prepared to assess student learning in a PBL environment.	2 (8.0%)	11 (44.0%)	9 (36.0%)	3 (12.0%)	0
9) This course helped me develop my teaming skills.	3 (12.5%)	10 (41.7%)	8 (33.3%)	3 (12.5%)	0
10) My team is now better able to create a learning environment that supports and addresses the diverse learning styles of technology students.	0	16 (66.7%)	8 (33.3%)	0	0
11) My team will be able to adapt the remainder of the curriculum materials for delivery at my school.	3 (12.5%)	14 (58.3%)	7 (29.2%)	0	0
12) My team can now produce a realistic action plan to recruit and advise students for ATE courses.	2 (8.7%)	15 (65.2%)	4 (17.4%)	2 (8.7%)	0
13) Working in teams reinforced interdisciplinary teaching methods.	3 (12.5%)	16 (66.7%)	4 (16.7%)	1 (4.2%)	0
14) My team has new ideas of how to use technology in teaching the curriculum.	1 (4.2%)	15 (62.5%)	7 (29.2%)	1 (4.2%)	0
15) Team communication skills and other strategies were utilized in my team during the course.	3 (12.5%)	19 (79.2%)	1 (4.2%)	1 (4.2%)	0
16) I would recommend this course to other faculty members who anticipate teaching ATE courses.	10 (40.0%)	11 (44.0%)	2 (8.0%)	2 (8.0%)	0

## **Appendix B: Open-Ended Responses**

### ***Responses to the question 'What aspect of the program was the most beneficial to you and why?'***

Handouts, course competencies.

Getting ideas on PBL assessment. To me this is the most critical area of PBL. How do we assess a team? How do you assess an individual on a team? How do you prevent a free-loader on a team? These were questions in my mind and to some degree they were answered.

The sharing of ideas was perhaps the most beneficial part for me. I enjoyed hearing what the other colleges were doing as they piloted the new curriculum.

The part where I got to see what faculty before me had done for their courses and what things they would do again or different.

Hearing from faculty who had already pilot-tested; working with my new team members.

Teaming & assessment - shed some light on how to assess myself.

Listen to faculty previously involved in teaching pilot class.

Faculty Lessons Learned - this session allowed us to hear from the people who experienced some of the things we had questions about. Their answers and solutions were realistic, not what somebody thinks will happen.

The various activities were most helpful. They gave us a realistic look at what would be expected in teaching the program.

It was all beneficial without having a team to interface with I can not evaluate benefits.

Seeing curriculum & getting ideas for implementing & having to design [sic] lesson plan with my team.

Seeing that I was not the only one "in the dark" about ATE. I will be honest I did not get as much out of the course as I was told I would.

I liked the 5th session when faculty at various cites shared active learning strategies.

The problem-based learning theory was part in which I felt weakest - so I benefited most from anything to do with that aspect.

Assessment for individual and group projects.

The teaming information was helpful. Especially the materials that can be taken into the classroom. Reference materials in the handouts are also valuable.

Communicating with other technical colleges that had piloted the Pre-ET.

Examples and uses of rubrics/evaluation documents to assess teaming skills to group projects.

### ***Responses to the question 'What aspect of the program was the least beneficial to you and why?'***

Hearing from other teams.

New course curriculum: may be because I had an idea what it all involved.

The last session was informative but a repeat of other workshops we had attended.

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I'm sure all the information I gathered has or will benefit me (I'm just not sure if I can tell just yet).

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Timing, Timing, Timing! The end of the semester is the worst time to schedule a time-consuming activity. Also, more time between each class meeting is needed.

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Format for reporting back could be improved on. Sometimes we had problems hearing what other groups were report[ing]. The video showing ATE faculty actually teaching was too fast to be of any relevance.

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Some experiences at other technical college might be true for others.

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Assessment. This continues to be difficult to devise assessment strategies. I never feel that we complete or settle on efficient assessment techniques.

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Theory aspects. For those of us that have been in the ATE for several years we need more application information.

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Faculty lessons learned.

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That's hard to say. I found all sessions beneficial.

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Communications & teaming - we've done this for years now.

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The game we played with the little board - I felt I didn't have time to prepare a response that was worth sharing with everyone else.

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Not sure.

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Assessment and other activities related to actual implementation would have been more useful if we had the curriculum materials developed by others to work with.

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Overall, the course was great.

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***Responses to the question 'What ongoing activities would help you develop the skills needed to be a better instructor of the SC ATE curriculum?'***

Direct one-on-one communication with instructor who has piloted part of the program I will be teaching. Workshops in Columbia.

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An exchange of ideas & experiences among faculty of different technical colleges during and after a semester of PBL utilizing e-mail and/or face-to-face contact. Panel discussions would be beneficial also.

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The opportunity for the exchange of instructional techniques.

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I'm not sure until I teach it one time to assess myself.

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A video conference with other pilot testers during the pilot semester.

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Teaming will really be helpful.

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Visit and attend a class in session.

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We need to continue to have workshops on assessment and it would be helpful to get together after more schools have done the PreET and ET and see what did & did not work for them.

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Occasional teleconference with similar format.

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Sharing sessions with those teaching the CORE and PreET curriculum - best practices & lessons learned.

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I need to try it before I can tell.

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I need more information on assessment techniques/forms that other faculty are using in the new curriculum

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Activities in which approaches to delivery material are shared.

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Feedback from the colleges implementing ATE courses.

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At this point, more time with my team would be best. We could be teaching each other technology & other skills from our respective disciplines. e.g., Math could help English with the graphic calculation & CBL. Engineering could teach Math/Communications about CAD. This would lead to more effective interaction across the curriculum.

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More communication between colleges providing Pre-ET.

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Close communications with teams on other campuses who have taught or are teaching the new curricula.

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### ***Responses to the question 'What suggestions for improvement would you propose?'***

Less time reporting back to group because it is not productive. PowerPoint presentations were very boring and not helpful.

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(1) set up a help-line for this course and also for PBL courses being taught at different colleges. (2) If at all possible, contract satellite communications for the delivery of the course. (3) If this course is to be taught during the semester, then the meeting times should be at least a week apart not back to back. Too many conflicts come up with other faculty obligations at a college.

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None.

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Classes only last one hour max. and maybe a few more of them. Send all information for class before it actually starts.

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See 19 (*Timing, Timing, Timing! The end of the semester is the worst time to schedule a time-consuming activity. Also, more time between each class meeting is needed.*)

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Send materials way in advance of the course. Sometimes the materials did not arrive in time.

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Like to know the student's feedback about the course.

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Materials need to be supplied more in advance and classes should be spread out more to give teams time to do homework, review materials, etc.

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Don't need responses to individual teams that was pretty weak.

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Get into more preparation of classroom, students (placement), instructor planning.

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I thought it was helpful as is.

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Would it be possible to have those who have pilot taught "summarize" their semester by narrating the sequence of events for the class. I think a summary like that would have been beneficial to me.

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I would like to have a text book just for PreET

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Curriculum materials developed by others could have been made available much earlier. We would have then had a better idea of what was already completed and what we needed to do.

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Course was great! Try to get materials to participants earlier, in the future.

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Tie in specific activities to specific learning styles - teaching strategies for immediate use in the classroom.

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