



# Essay Contest Spring 2018

## Purpose

This contest is sponsored by the Francis Marion University Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty. The topic, **Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty**, is intended to encourage participants to develop their own views about a central idea while concurrently substantiating those views with references to current research. In addition to the opportunity for written expression, participants have the opportunity to win **cash awards**.

## Awards

Cash prizes will be awarded to the authors of the four best essays **that meet all contest criteria** and receive the **highest scores** on the scoring rubric.

### **Teacher Cadets**

First Place - \$200  
Second Place - \$150

### **P-12 Teachers and/or Graduate Students**

First Place - \$200  
Second Place - \$150

### **Undergraduate Students**

First Place - \$200  
Second Place - \$150

## Announcement

FMU students, FMU faculty and Center Partner Districts will receive the announcement via email. It will also be posted under the "*News and Announcements*" section on the FMU School of Education Webpage.

## Official Topic:

### **IMPORTANT WORK: TEACHING CHILDREN OF POVERTY**

This topic has been selected to afford opportunities for P-12 teachers, graduate students, undergraduate students, and teacher cadets to think about both the challenges and opportunities that come with service as instructional leaders in high poverty settings. Special consideration should be given to concepts relating to the unique abilities and needs of under-resourced learners. Writers are encouraged to articulate views on poverty and education, and to specifically address personal insights related to this important work. A minimum of two current research articles must be cited in support of the views expressed within the essay.

## Section I – General Rules

- A contestant must compose an original essay. Webster's dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretive literary composition. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
- Essays must be written by one author. Essays with **co-authors** will **not** be considered.
- A contestant may not confer or collaborate with others regarding the content of their essay.
- A contestant may use the FMU Writing Center for grammar, punctuation, and other writing style assistance.
- The FMU Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty has the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment or notification to the author.

## Section II – Qualifications for Contestants

- The Francis Marion University Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty Essay Contest is open to all undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled at Francis Marion. P-12 teachers from Center Partner Districts are also invited to compete, as are high school students enrolled in FM Teacher Cadet courses.
- Contestants are eligible to compete in the essay contest every year.
- Previous winners are eligible to participate.

### **Section III – Title Page**

Essays must have a complete title page, including all the following information:

- Title
- Author's full name (*The author's identifying information must not appear on any other page of the essay.*)
- Status (P-12 Teacher, Graduate or Undergraduate Student, Teacher Cadet)
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- E-mail address
- Word count
- Name of school (*If employed as a P-12 teacher or a Teacher Cadet*)
- Note: The essay title must also appear on the top of the first page of the essay text.

### **Section IV – Contest Rules**

- The essay must be written in English.
- Only one (1) essay may be submitted by each contestant.
- Participants are responsible for complying with all contest rules.
- Participants must write on the official topic.
- No literary form other than an essay will be accepted.
- Each essay must be based on personal ideas and/or experiences, and supported by current research. Essays must contain a minimum of two current research references. All references and any quotations or copyrighted material used in the essay must be identified properly using either MLA or APA format. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
- Each essay must reflect the contestant's own writing and original thinking.
- Essays must be typed and double-spaced, using 12 point Arial font, and one inch margins.
- Essays must contain at least 800 words but no more than 1600 words. The Microsoft "word count" tool should be used for calculating number of words. **Word count should not include the title or reference pages.**
- Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with the first page of the essay (not the title page). The numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
- **The Center of Excellence Essay Checklist must be submitted electronically with the essay.**
- **The essay must be submitted by email to [COE@fmarion.edu](mailto:COE@fmarion.edu)** as a Microsoft WORD attachment with the subject line including Center of Excellence Essay Contest and author name.  
(*Example: Center of Excellence Essay Contest – S. Jones*)
- **The electronic essay must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 16, 2018.**
- The decision of contest judges is final, and no higher appeals will be recognized.

### **Section V – Judging**

- Essays that fail to meet ALL stated criteria will be disqualified. No exceptions will be made.
- Judging will be completed by a panel of qualified judges to include FMU Faculty, Center of Excellence staff and/or professional educators from the Pee Dee region.
- In an effort to conceal the identity of every writer, each entry will be assigned an identifying number that will be placed on the title page and first page of the essay. The title page will then be detached and retained by a Center essay contest staff person. The judges will be given the essay bearing only the assigned number.
- Judges will not discuss or compare submitted essays.

### **Essay Contest Contact:**

Dr. Cindi Nixon  
**Email:** [cnixon@fmarion.edu](mailto:cnixon@fmarion.edu)  
**Phone:** 843.661.1551

**Address:**  
Francis Marion University  
PO Box 100547  
Florence, SC 29501

## Section VI – Scoring of Essays

Essays will be scored in six areas: **Comprehension**      **Connection to Research**      **Organization**  
**Development**      **Creativity**      **Writing**

- **Comprehension**
  - *The essay reflects a thorough understanding of the essay topic.*
- **Connection to Research**
  - *References to current research are woven within the essay to align author's thoughts with findings from literature.*
- **Organization**
  - *The argument presented in the essay follows a logical and easily-understood progression.*
  - *Corroborating evidence supports each of the essay's main points.*
- **Development**
  - *The overarching theme of the essay is clearly developed through critical analysis.*
- **Creativity**
  - *Diverse resources (e.g., interviews) and/or innovative angles on the issue are employed.*
- **Writing**
  - *Standard grammar, spelling, punctuation, and concise language skills are practiced throughout the essay.*

# Essay Contest Rubric

Contestant Essay Number \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>Excellent 5</b>	<b>Accomplished 4</b>	<b>Developing 3</b>	<b>Marginal 2</b>	<b>Not Yet 1 - 0</b>
<b>Comprehension</b>					
<b>Connection to Research</b>					
<b>Organization</b>					
<b>Development</b>					
<b>Creativity</b>					
<b>Writing</b>					

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 30

### Note:

*To be considered for a first or second place award, a contestant's essay must score a minimum of 24 points.*

**Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty**  
(Please check ✓ all items as they are completed)

<b>Center of Excellence - TCOP Essay Contest Checklist</b>	
	Essay has a proper title page which includes the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title: <b><i>Important Work: Teaching Children of Poverty</i></b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author's Full Name (<i>appears only on the title page</i>)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status (P-12 Teacher, Graduate or Undergraduate Student, Teacher Cadet)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailing Address</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone number</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-mail address</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word count</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of school</li> </ul>
	The title of the essay also appears on the top of the first page of the essay text.
	Essay contains a minimum of two current research references.
	All references, quotations, and copyrighted material used in the essay are identified properly, using either MLA or APA format.
	Essay is double-spaced, using 12 point Arial font, and one inch margins.
	Essay contains at least 800 words but no more than 1600 words.
	The Microsoft "word count" tool is used for calculating number of words.
	Word count does not include the title or reference pages.
	Each page of the essay is numbered starting with the first page of the essay (not the title page). The numbers are centered at the bottom of each page.
	The essay is submitted by email to <a href="mailto:COE@fmarion.edu">COE@fmarion.edu</a> as a Microsoft WORD attachment.
	COE Essay Contest and author name appear in the subject line of the email.
	The Essay Contest Checklist is attached with Essay prior to submission.
	The electronic essay is submitted by <b>5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 16, 2018.</b>

***Contest Rule:***  
*The Center of Excellence – TCOP Essay Contest Checklist must be submitted electronically with the essay.*