

SUMMER INSTITUTE 2009

FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FLORENCE, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Francis Marion University Center of Excellence (COE) to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty held its second annual Summer Institute in June 2009. Hosted on the Francis Marion campus, the COE Summer Institute is a day-long event designed to provide all participants with practical, research-based information about the needs and abilities of low-income children. The agenda for this year's program included an opening welcome address and panel discussion, talks from two other keynote speakers, and over 25 workshop sessions.

Workshop sessions—all dubbed with a “How 2” theme in honor of the program's second year—focused on six major areas of interest that were identified by the Center of be critical to the achievement of children of poverty. These were:

- » *Culture of Poverty*
- » *Language and Literacy*
- » *School, Family, and Community Partnerships*
- » *The Classroom Community*
- » *Curriculum Design, Instructional Strategies, and Assessment*
- » *Teachers as Learners, Leaders, and Advocates*

The Summer Institute 2009 attendees included undergraduate and graduate students in education, as well as area teachers and school administrators. A primary goal of the COE's organizers was to equip these college students and educators with professional development training and skills that they require to work not only with children, but also with families and community resource providers.

Attendance at the Summer Institute provided the opportunity to attend a local training event that exposed participants to expert speakers they might not be otherwise able to hear at no cost to themselves or their sending schools. Furthermore, teachers received professional develop-

ment recertification and/or early childhood SC Department of Social Services credits for attending the event.

Planning for the second COE Summer Institute began after the organization's Spring Workshop ended in January. Organizers of the event chose a date and secured the necessary FMU facilities at that time. Shortly thereafter, the COE acquired its keynote speakers and published a Call for Proposals for workshop presentations, targeting faculty at FMU and other SC colleges, public school educators, and past presenters. Proposals were accepted based on their relevance to the COE's work and the six Teaching Standards listed above.

A number of the sessions offered at the Summer Institute were focused on building school, family, and community partnerships, including workshops about implementing activities featured in previous editions of *Promising Partnership Practices*.

Funded by SC Commission on Higher Education, SC School Improvement, and SC Department of Education grants, this year's Summer Institute cost approximately \$6,500 to implement. Based on this year's success—with well over 250 participants attending—COE organizers are considering expanding Summer Institute 2010 to a two-day schedule, in order to give more local teachers and Action Teams the chance to share their best practices.

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