



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 22, 2021

Dumb-down: University's BLM Essay Contest Won't Require Proper English

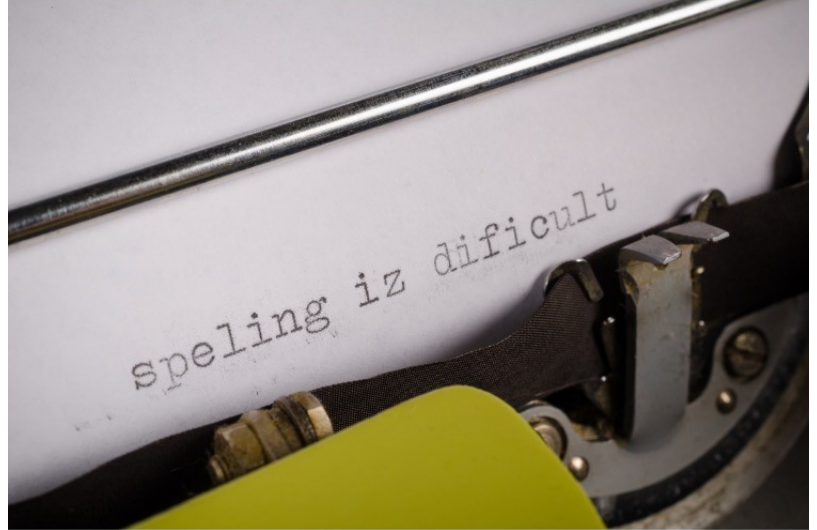
If yous guys don'a rite to good, don'a wurry:

You can still win cash in a Black Lives Matter essay contest, total prize money \$15,000, being run by an institution of "higher learning."

That's the story with the "Reflect & Empower: What Black Lives Matter Means to Me" writing and multimedia event being held by the Central Connecticut State University Center for Public Policy and Social Research.

(What BLM means to many is communism, but I suspect this sentiment won't capture the cash even if written kahmyoonizm.)

As the College Fix [reports](#):



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On the [contest] [website](#) soliciting entries, the school notes the essays must be original, but also that "submissions will not be judged on traditional literary or grammatical standards."

Interim Associate Vice President of Communications and Logistics Janice Palmer in an email to *The College Fix* that the "priority of this project is the stories conveyed."

"The planning committee is hopeful that students from a wide range of academic majors will be inspired to take part," Palmer said.

On the website, the school urges students to submit essays, personal stories, and poems that "express their personal connection to the Black Lives Matter Movement and the issues it has brought to the forefront."

Students are also invited to submit videos, photos, drawings, and musical works that deal with the student's "depth of thought," "personal reflections," "the sensitivities involved," "personal experiences," and their "views of the movement's broad social impact and your expectations for the future of the movement."

...For [contest] winners, the school will give out 20 awards of \$250, 12 scholarships of \$500, and four top prizes of \$1,000 each.

While this story can make eyes roll, it may be tame compared to the "[ethnomathematics](#)" we just heard about ($2+2=5?$). Also, it somewhat reflects the "inventive spelling" pedagogy — originated years ago — under which educators would tolerate misspellings by children. (That's the ticket: When you can't teach effectively, just label it a new learning paradigm!)

The university website [tells us](#) that panels "of judges composed of faculty, administrators, alumni and



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community representatives will review submissions and select winners,” though a participation trophy for everyone might be fairer.

Much can be said here. First, any which way you spell it, Black Lives Matter spells trouble. And it’s troubling that American institutions are promoting this neo-Marxist, racist, anti-American organization.

It also speaks volumes that basic grammar, punctuation, and spelling are even an issue for *college students*. It’s an indictment of our whole educational system and its social promotion, the phenomenon whereby students are moved to the next grade level even without having mastered the necessary coursework. In addition, since these lax standards are being applied especially to black students, some people would say we’re witnessing the “soft bigotry of low expectations.”

For sure, we’re seeing why a study approximately a quarter century ago found that a college degree, even back then, was just the equivalent of a 1947 high-school diploma. Then there’s the 1895 Salina, Kansas, [eighth-grade graduation exam](#) that has been widely circulated on the Internet — and which puts 21st-century education to shame.

Of course, some will say that language norms are invented by man. True, but this doesn’t mean it’s all relative. For example, a paragraph written without periods and capital letters to begin new sentences would be confusing to everyone.

Moreover, just as having a common language binds people together, having it spoken and written in a common way perhaps binds them even more tightly.

More significantly, however, the essay contest standards reflect that slacker mentality epitomizing our time. It’s not just that people aren’t taught to write well; it’s that the virtue of *diligence* is lacking today, which, of course, is a major reason why dutiful, conscientiousness employees are harder to find.

We also should ask: Does sloppiness in writing, and in general, perhaps relate to sloppiness in thinking? Will people instilled with the notion that they can do things in whatever way “works” for them, and who weren’t forced to develop discipline in the “little things,” be any more disciplined between the ears?

For certain, the slacker mentality reigns. In 2019, a leftist reader wrote to me in response to my emphasis on English standards, “I am under 40. Your vs you’re is interchangeable.” Then there was the young woman who [became unhinged](#) at her boss’s correction of her spelling of “hamster.” She insisted that her version, “hampster,” was okay because she’d always used it.

Anyway, for those interested in the BLM essay contest, the submissions deadline is March 1. If you’re late, though, just tell them that tardiness is accepted in your culture and remind them that the anti-virtue educrats have also deemphasized punctuality. They say it’s a “white” norm.



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