Teaching Afrocentricity Through E-Clustering

by

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About the Author

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Introduction

As I demonstrate in my book titled *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, any understanding of an African-centered thinker or idea today is incomplete without talking about how the thinker or the idea has been represented in Internet facilities, their various forms, and the creative uses to which they have been put to share knowledge, empower a new generation of Africans, and create complex intellectual and political networks.[1] Thus, in this paper, I explore how E-clustering can be employed to harness the Internet in order to successfully teach about the Afrocentricity. E-clustering, which is an innovative approach for teaching, learning and research based on the concept known as "cluster-building," can help. I must immediately state here that the theoretical notions on E-clustering that underscore the discourse in this paper appear in my book mentioned above and two of my articles.[2] The discussion is replicated here for those readers who may not know about them or may not have access to my writings on them.

Scientific clustering, I point out, emerged as an important statistical application in the early 1980s as researchers studying similarly situated entities employed cluster analysis methodology, or a number of techniques utilized to create a classification. A clustering method is a multivariate statistical procedure that empirically forms "clusters" or groups of highly similar entities. It starts with a data set containing information about a sample of entities and attempts to reorganize these entities into relatively homogenous "clusters" or groups.[3] According to Ute Hansen, however, E-clustering is an approach based on the concept of "cluster building." In this case, a cluster initiates the networking of all participants in a value-added chain. The objective is to bundle the potentials and competences for increasing the innovation power of the individuals in a cluster. Given Internet technology, even individuals outside the United States can obtain a lot of educational information. Infrastructure, applications, platforms, and broadband enable networking among academic institutions, research institutes, and governments.[4]

Before delving into the technical details of this paper, however, it behooves me to iterate a very important point about the idea of *Afrocentricity* that has been made by Itibari M. Zulu in his book titled *Exploring the African Centered Paradigm: Discourse and Innovation in African World Community Studies*. As he edifyingly tells us, the term "Afrocentrism" was coined by *The New York Times* in 1991 championed by those opposed to the concept of "Afrocentricity." Hence, the term "Afrocentrism" is not a synonym for "Afrocentricity," a mistake many writers have made.[5]

The Internet as a Learning and Teaching Tool

In my *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies,* I point out that the Internet's contribution to the spread of knowledge, whether positive or negative, is hardly a matter of dispute. Millions of people around the world turn to the Internet for answers and inspiration. What they find is a diverse world. The Internet yields links to thousands of World Wide Web sites featuring everything from shopping to sermons to Web-muftis—people who provide answers to theological and legal questions. The web allows almost anyone to offer a plethora of perspectives, and much of the resulting discussion and debate can be found in online fora and chat rooms.

Some observers point out that the Internet has also altered the practice of consensus-building. For example, while it used to take decades, even centuries, to reach consensus, on interpretations in holy books, this process has been accelerated by the Internet's ability to give instant access to the teachings and thoughts of distant religious scholars and original texts. Practices, laws, and beliefs that were once bound by geography are evolving into a mainstream identity on Internet time.

Ninety percent of all users go to the Internet for news or information; of that 90 percent, 80 percent use the Internet for research.[6] One in four of these users surfs the Internet for religious and spiritual material (about 28 million people in the United States), with 23 percent specifically searching for information about Islam.[7] Increasingly, students of all levels and disciplines are using the Internet as a primary source of information; 29 percent accept the information they find as a "good source of information," and only 34 percent consider additional verification of the information important.[8]

As Joyce Fitzgerald and her colleagues demonstrate, educators, clinicians, and scientists are rapidly adapting practice, research, and teaching to the many resources available on the Internet. For a number of years, the Internet has linked researchers and educators, and now the medium provides limitless possibilities for research. Researchers connect to electronic libraries on university campuses, and they also use the Internet for methodological purposes, such as sample selection, data collection, and analyses. Electronically published media challenge traditional print publications, as many and very important works are now made available online. The Internet holds several advantages for researchers that were not available in the past, such as E-mail, chat rooms, listservs, and discussion groups. All of these resources provide learners and teachers opportunities to gain information efficiently and to use new technologies to learn, teach, and explore research methods of the future.[9]

Referring to the information age, John Naisbitt writes: "We are drowning in information but starved for knowledge."[10] Indeed, information is abundant. In his book, *Digital Mythologies*, Thomas Valovic addresses the issue of information overload and raises the following three vital questions:

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(1) Is too much information possible? (2) Is there an inverse relationship between quantity and quality? (3) Is there a difference between information and knowledge?[11] In contemplating these queries, one is also led to reflect upon the utility of the available information, both good and bad, accessible to all on the Internet. Thus, even the seasoned researcher is bound to stumble upon the double-edged sword.

The Internet has been largely marketed and promoted as a fast and easy way to find any information one desires. The emphasis on speed and ease has led Internet users to turn to the most readily available sources for answers to their questions, sites that do not require logins or passwords. As a result, users may overlook buried information that is not included in the higher-numbered results but is found in members-only journals and archives. In such a case, one is left with excessive information but little knowledge because of the multitude of outdated, inaccurate and unprofessional sites that complicate the access to useful information.

Sifting and sorting through this surplus to find useful information takes a lot of time and energy. Unfortunately, as more and more information is made available, the more time an individual has to expend to vet its thoroughness, a process that involves checking the sources for reliability, quality, and validation. Raw data are useless in themselves without rational thought and analysis, which is how they become useful information, which in turns needs application to become knowledge.

The unwillingness or sheer inability to process the vast quantity of information the Internet provides often leads to incorrect or incomplete ideas about the topic in question. However, the successful employment of new search tools made available by the Internet may lead to greater understanding and constructive application of the knowledge gained from researching a specific issue. Virtual investigation of a topic may lead to practically any point on the spectrum, spanning destructive or fraudulent information to enlightenment, depending on the individual and the information s/he comes across.

Optimists see the utility of Internet-based research within networks created by bringing together people who would otherwise never have been able to meet and share their perspectives. Healthy exchange of different beliefs can lead to self-exploration and understanding of others. Since the Internet is anonymous, it can provide a friendly and face-saving way to discuss difficult topics. The Internet can provide access to and a platform from which to post a plethora of opinions. Nevertheless, abuse is not difficult to find. The dissemination of misinformation may lead to confusion, apathy, or aversion. Individuals are allowed to post hate-promoting messages freely, which breeds more hate. The overload or poor quality of information may lead to discouragement and abandonment of research. Persuasive information could potentially distract uncritical users.

To highlight how the Internet can be used for research that is quick, readily available, and user-friendly, I used the following 14 search engines to research available information on Afrocentricism: Avant, DeepNet Explorer, Google, HotBot, Internet Explorer/Edge, Lycos, Maxthon, Microsoft MSN, Mozilla Firefox, Opera, PhaseOut, Safari, SeaMonkey, and Yahoo. It behooves me to mention here, however, that Google was found to be the most extensive search engine in the coverage of Afrocentricity.

The E-clustering Approach

As I recount in my book and papers mentioned earlier, in a series of six papers, Ute Hansen of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Employment, and Transport of the state of Schleswig-Holstein in the Federal Republic of Germany developed E-clustering as an innovative approach for economic policy.[12] Hansen discusses three interrelated attributes of E-clustering: (1) the importance of times-technologies—that is, telecommunication, information technology, multimedia, entertainment, and security; (2) the concept of cluster building; and (3) the cluster strategy. These attributes are explained in the following subsections.

The Importance of Times-Technologies for an Innovative Economic Policy

According to Hansen, times-markets (a wide range of instruments that cluster the volatility of markets and time periods) comprise a major mechanism for the transformation from industrial to information society. Developing rapidly and causing innovations in all industries, times-technologies (telecommunication, information technology, multimedia, entertainment, security technologies that support networking) can be an accelerator for the economic and technological development of a region. The digitization and networking precipitated by the development of broadband infrastructure and applications can push the convergence of different media, particularly information technology and telecommunications industries. Changing business processes, new integrated value-added chains, different organizational structures, and innovative products spur increased employment and economic growth.

   The strategy of an economic and technology policy that focuses on clusters ensures innovation, growth, and employment in a region. Times-cluster (reports of field clustering that occurs during the same time) performs two important functions for the processes of innovation. The first function results from the cross-function of technologies: times-cluster accelerates innovation and, thus, the technological and economic development of the application-clusters like life sciences and tourism. The second function is that time-cluster itself is an application-cluster. This function of times-cluster provides a great potential for innovation and growth for a region to become economically competitive and dynamic. The realization of the strategic E-clustering strategy can lead to an interlocking of the regional times-cluster policy and user-cluster policy.

The Cluster-Building Concept

Hansen points out that the goal of a policy geared towards cluster-building is to support regional networks of competitive and cooperative actors in a cluster. An economic cluster initiates and pushes the networking of all participants in a value-added chain, which include companies, institutions such as universities and research institutes, customers, suppliers, employees, representatives of interest groups, and the public sector. A cluster consists of independent organizations that strive for economic growth and efficiency. In accordance with the concept of cluster building, it is the intensity of the interaction of the actors, not the individual actors, that has a positive effect on the competitiveness of a regional cluster.

The focus of cluster analysis then is the regional or geographic agglomeration of networked organizations and individuals. The geographic concentration of firms in internationally successful industries often occurs as the influence of the individual determinants in the "diamond" and their mutual reinforcement are heightened by the close geographic proximity, resulting in efficiency and specialization. "Diamond" here refers to factor conditions such as cost and quality of inputs, demand conditions such as the experience of local customers, the context for firm master plan and maneuvering such as the nature and strength of local competition, and related and supporting industries such as the local expanse and experience of suppliers and related industries. Thus, Diamond Theory deals with how these elements are combined to produce a dynamic, stimulating, and intensely competitive business environment. A concentration of rivals, customers, and suppliers therefore promotes efficiencies and specialization. Geographic concentration on improvement and innovation are an even more important influence.

The cluster-building concept inherits a new dimension because the innovative time-technologies provide new technological possibilities to support the process of cluster building. Independent of time and location, the actors of a cluster are able to take part in information, communication, and transaction processes with internal and external partners of a cluster. The cluster's competiveness hinges on its capacity to digitize the internal cluster processes and the processes among different clusters. Thus, the digitization of the cluster processes re-enforces the competitive advantages of a regional and local cluster building. The concept of local and geographic clustering has to be extended by the E-clustering concept.

A paradox concerning regional clustering and the process of globalization implicitly undergird the E-clustering approach. Since the classical factors of production are now more accessible because of globalization, competitive advantage in advanced industries is increasingly determined by differential knowledge, skills, and rates of innovation, all of which are embodied in skilled people and organizational routines. The development of skills and the important influences on the rate of improvement and innovation have become local. The paradox is that as global competition becomes more open, the home base becomes more, not less, significant.

Processes of knowledge management and learning are increasingly being supported by information and communication technology. As a result, the competitiveness of a regional cluster in the global market will depend on the extent to which the cluster-specific process of knowledge management and learning are standardized and digitized. Employing E-knowledge management and E-learning applications will allow the cluster to concentrate on the cluster-specific and regional competitive factors described in the paradox of regional clustering and the process of globalization.

E-clustering in a regional economic and technological policy means, on the one hand, a digitized network of the actors in a process-oriented cluster organization and, on the other hand, a digitized network of different clusters. Consequently, a distinction should be made between internal and external processes. A cluster is characterized by a critical mass of actors in a value-added chain that can be focused on technology, processes, or industries. Thus, E-clusters will yield the following positive effects: (a) accelerate the distribution of knowledge, (b) reduce transaction costs, (c) provide for an infrastructure, (d) produce economies of scale, (e) cause external economies, (f) produce economies of specialization, (g) stimulate competition and cooperation, and (h) enforce the internationalization of the economic and cluster-specific relations.

The focus of a cluster policy then is the potential growth of a regional cluster. The acceleration of the innovation processes fostered by cooperation and competition leads to increased employment and growth in the region. An all-embracing cluster has to take into account and to balance out business, economic, technological, employment, and educational objectives in order for a management instrument to be applied that meets these requirements. Robert Kaplan and David Norton's "balanced scorecard" is a management instrument that can be applied to delineate a concept for a comprehensive cluster strategy. The outcome will be a strategic frame for E-clustering that is transferable to all regional cluster initiatives or strategies.[13]

The E-clustering Strategy

Hansen identifies four major characteristics of E-clustering strategy. The first characteristic is the use of a balanced scorecard as a strategic instrument: that is, a strategic management system that, on the one hand, is appropriate to evaluate a strategy and, on the other hand, has its main function during the realization of the strategy. The balanced scorecard depends strictly on times-supported processes. A cluster organized by these particular processes is imperative for the application of the balanced scorecard to develop a cluster strategy. The balanced scorecard concept is based, therefore, on the assumption that managers of the public and private sectors have visions and have also developed a mission and a cluster strategy. The process of developing a scorecard proceeds in the following seven stages:

Stage 1: Evaluation of the strategy by taking the vision and mission into account
Stage 2: Deduction of the strategic objectives
Stage 3: Connection of the strategic objectives
Stage 4: Determination of the measured values
Stage 5: Determination of the assigned values
Stage 6: Determination of the strategic activities
Stage 7: Interconnection with the operational planning[14]

The strategic objectives are linked to measured values with a long-term focus. To realize the objectives and measured values, strategic activities must be planned. In addition, milestones that have to ensure the connection between strategy and the operational plan must be specified. Thus, the balanced scorecard must entail a vision, a mission, a strategy, perspectives, objectives, activities, measured values, and a cause-effect chain.

The second characteristic entails the vision, mission, and strategy, all of which must be integrated in the objectives of the regional economic policy. The goal is to maximize the welfare objectives concerning stability, growth, structure, and distribution. The economic policy should always be geared toward innovation, growth, and employment. A vision, mission, and strategy are needed to develop the model of a cluster policy. The model serves as the starting point for the dynamic strategic process of the E-clustering balanced scorecard. Cluster actors must therefore participate in the scorecard process because all results, like the model, have to be accepted by the whole cluster.

The third characteristic is that an E-cluster establishes a balanced system of objectives and measured values that are necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy. In its formative phase, an E-cluster should develop five interrelated perspectives. The first is the economic perspective of an E-cluster, which represents the final output produced by all economic cluster activities. The decisive goal is to improve the economic output and, thus, the gross value-added goods and services. The second is the partner and cooperation perspective, which is essential for the cluster strategy. The cluster actors, particularly the companies, the universities, the research institutes, and the public institutions, should organize themselves in a network and in cooperation to bundle and, therefore, increase their potentials and competences. The third is the cluster perspective, which entails the internal and cluster overlapping processes that are critical for the successful market position of the cluster. The collaborative processes are part of the main E-cluster processes. Innovation, knowledge management, learning, and government or public processes are used to illustrate the perspective processes of the cluster strategy.

The fourth perspective is the improvement and development perspective, which focuses on activities and measured values that represent, on the one hand, the improvement and development of competencies of the cluster actors and, on the other hand, the optimal application of times-technologies in the cluster processes.

This strategic perspective is oriented toward the growth of the cluster because the human capital and the times-technologies are vital motors for innovation. The main processes of the cluster are collaborative processes that can be supported by times-technologies that will generate a benefit for the cluster actors and for the cluster as a whole. These processes include (a) E-innovation, in which companies, research institutes, universities, and government participate; (b) E-knowledge management and learning, through which the processes and contents of knowledge management and learning are digitized so that the cluster actors could use them on demand at any time and from anywhere; and (c) E-government, through which strategies are realized to organize public services as processes and to support them with times-technologies. The fifth perspective is the organization and policy perspective which is concerned with the objectives and activities of the cluster management and the cluster policy. During the formative stage of the development of a cluster, it is imperative to integrate the organization and policy perspective in the balanced scorecard.

Hansen's final characteristic of E-clustering strategy is the cause-effect chain, which must be developed because its assumptions concern the perspectives' overlapping effects that must be controlled and evaluated. The objective is to determine whether the assumptions about the effects are valid. The following questions must be raised and probed: How is cooperation influenced by the funding activities of the public sector? Is the influence of the cooperation within the cluster on the innovation processes of a cluster significant? Which effects on the gross value-added goods or services and employment are to be expected? Cause-effect chains of the balanced scorecard are all based on assumptions concerning the dependencies of objectives and measured values. A controlling and, if necessary, an adaptation of the balanced scorecard are needed to empirically test the assumptions. To produce reliable assertions with the instrument of the cause-effect chain, statistical methods must be applied.

An Afrocentricity E-clustering Strategy

Similar to what I did in my works mentioned earlier, what I suggest here is a prototype E-cluster that would enable an individual or group to learn or teach about Afrocentricity from a single interface. The Afrocentricity E-cluster aims to identify some valuable resources to learn or teach about the idea. Thus, the E-cluster entails tools designed to pull down geographical distances and facilitate information and knowledge sharing. The general key elements are (a) geographical inclusion, (b) specialization, (c) multiple sources, and (d) critical mass. The main challenges for the Afrocentricity E-cluster are globalization and dematerialization, both of which call for radical redefinitions of physical proximity (local or global) and cultural identity (new or old). These developments have created the need for social or indigenous knowledge preservation while at the same being open to internationalization.

I recommend three steps in the project. The first step is to set up a model of the E-cluster and test it. The second step is to implement the model, and I suggest the use of action research methodology: that is, research that involves the active participation or inclusion of groups under study.[15] The final step is to evaluate the outcomes of the model to be able to replicate it in similar circumstances.

As represented in Figure 1, I identify four potential clusters that can be digitized into a network for an Afrocentricity E-clustering strategy: (1) Google, (2) Wikipedia, (3) YouTube, and (4) Flickr. These clusters are discussed separately in the following subsections for the sake of lucidity.

Google Cluster

Founded and incorporated as a private company in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were PhD students at Stanford University in California, Google Inc. is an American technology company that provides Internet-related services and products and operates in many countries. The company's services and products include online advertising services, search and security tools, cloud computing, hardware, and software. On August 19, 2004, an initial public offering of Google Inc. was made and the company was moved to its new complex referred to as Googleplex in Mountain View, California.[16]
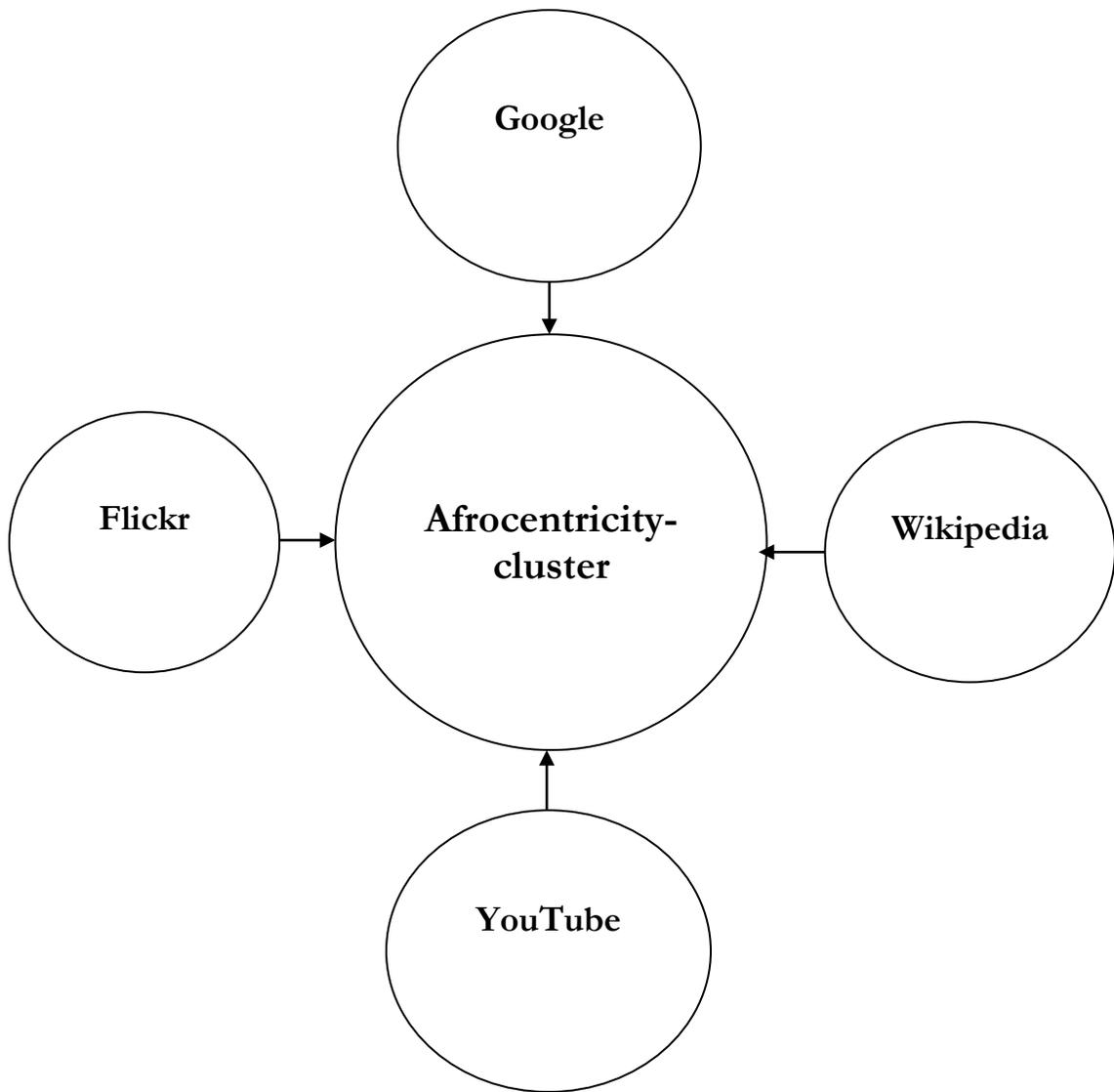
Figure 1: Afrocentricity E-cluster
Source: Self-generated by author

As shown in Table 1, a Google search of Afrocentricity on September 26, 2017 yielded six major categories under which results are subsumed. The general results reveal that the Afrocentricity Definition category has the largest number, followed by Define Afrocentricity, Afrocentricity International, Kemet Afrocentricity and Knowledge, Afrocentricity Theory of Social Change, and Molefi Kete Asante Afrocentricity, respectively. In terms of the concentrated results (i.e. results generated by using quotation marks around the concept Afrocentricity to tell Google to match it precisely), the largest category is Afrocentricity International. This is followed by Afrocentricity Theory of Social Change, Kemet Afrocentricity and Knowledge, Molefi Kete Asante and Afrocentricity, Define Afrocentricity, and Afrocentricity Definition, respectively.

Table 1 also reveals that Afrocentricity has spread internationally and has given rise to a number of country and continental movements. The three most prominent of these movements appear to be in France, Zimbabwe, and Europe, respectively.

Table 1: Results of Afrocentricity Categories in Google

Category	General Results	Concentrated Results
Afrocentricity Definition	347,000 in 0.30 seconds	143 in 0.73 seconds
Molefi Kete Asante Afrocentricity	47,000 in 0.84 seconds	1,980 in 0.57 seconds
Define Afrocentricity	276,000 in 0.73 seconds	153 in 0.89 seconds
Kemet Afrocentricity and Knowledge	111,000 in 0.84 seconds	14,900 in 0.84 seconds
Afrocentricity Theory of Social Change	102,000 in 0.75 seconds	26,100 in 0.95 seconds
Afrocentricity International	148,000 in 0.63 seconds	39,900 in 0.78 seconds
France	4,910 in 0.72 seconds	
Zimbabwe	10 in 0.57 seconds	
Europe	2 in 0.52 seconds	

Source: Self-generated by author

Wikipedia Cluster

As I note in *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, Wikipedia, to which I have contributed many entries and edited numerous others, is a multilingual, Web-based, free-content encyclopedia based on the principle of open editing. The name "Wikipedia" is a combination of the words *wiki*, the Hawaiian word meaning "quick" and *encyclopedia*. Wiki is also a technology for creating collaborative Web sites. Articles in Wikipedia provide links to related pages with additional information. Largely anonymous Internet volunteers write Wikipedia articles collaboratively for no pay. Anyone who has access to the Internet can write and make changes to Wikipedia articles. In limited cases, however, editing is restricted to prevent disruption or vandalism. A contributor can submit articles anonymously, under a pseudonym, or with his or her real name.[17]

Wikipedia has been quite vigilant in making sure that racist and other malicious edits to articles dealing with Afrocentricity appearing on its encyclopedia be removed immediately. It instead urges individuals who want to engage in such discourse to take their discussions to the "Talk:Afrocentrism" page.[18]

A concentrated Google search of Afrocentricity in Wikipedia articles on September 26, 2017 yielded 336,000 results in 0.50 seconds. Nonetheless, there are seven articles in the encyclopedia classified under the Afrocentricity rubric. The following are the titles of these articles with their brief descriptions:

(1) "Afrocentrism (also Afrocentricity)" is about the "cultural ideology or worldview that focuses on the history of Black Africans" as "a response to global (Eurocentric/Orientalist) attitudes about African people and their historical contributions; it revisits their history with an African cultural and ideological focus," and how "Afrocentricity deals primarily with self-determination and African agency and is a Pan-African ideology in culture, philosophy, and history."[19]

(2) "Afrocentric education" deals with how the discipline is "designed to empower peoples of the African Diaspora" and how "A central premise behind it is that many Africans have been subjugated by limiting their awareness of themselves and indoctrinating them with ideas that work against them." The article also makes the point that "proponents assert that what educates one group of people does not necessarily educate and empower another group, so they assert educational priorities distinctly for the *Africans* in a given context."[20]

(3) "Molefi Kete Asante" is an article that entails his birth name, "Arthur Lee Smith, Jr."; his date of birth, "August 14, 1942"; his profession as "an African American professor"; and being "a leading figure in the fields of African American studies, African Studies, and Communication Studies." The article also discusses how Asante "is currently professor in the Department of Africology [and African American Studies] at Temple University, where he founded the PhD program in African American Studies" and is "president of the Molefi Kete Asante Institute for Afrocentric Studies"; how he is "known for his writings on Afrocentricity, a school of thought that has influenced the fields of sociology, intercultural communication, critical theory, political science, the history of Africa, and social work"; and is "the author of more than 66 books and the founding editor of the *Journal of Black Studies*…(and) the father of author and filmmaker M. K. Asante."[21]

(4) *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* is about Martin Bernals's three-volume book "first published in 1987, 1991, and 2006, respectively" in which "He discusses ancient Greece in a new light." The article shows how "Bernal's thesis discusses the perception of ancient Greece in relation to Greece's African and Asiatic neighbors, especially the ancient Egyptians and Phoenicians who, he believes, colonized ancient Greece" and that "a change in the Western perception of Greece took place from the 18th Century onward and that this change fostered a subsequent denial by Western academia of any significant African and Phoenician influence on ancient Greek civilization."[22]

(5) Cheikh Anta Diop is an article that provides the dates of birth and death of Diop, "December 29, 1923—February 07, 1986" and evidence that he was a "historian, anthropologist, physicist, and politician who studied the human race's origins and pre-colonial African culture." The article also discusses the fact that although "Diop is sometimes referred to as an Afrocentrist, he predates the concept and thus was not himself an Afrocentric scholar. However, Diopian thought, as it is called, is paradigmatic to Afrocentricity." The article further talks about how "Diop argued that there was a shared cultural continuity across African peoples that was more important than the varied development of different ethnic groups shown by differences among languages and cultures over time" and "posed important questions about the cultural bias inherent in scientific research," and that Cheikh Anta Diop University (formerly known as the University of Dakar), in Dakar, Senegal, is named after him."[23]

(6) "Golden age hip hop" deals with "a name given to mainstream hip hop music created in the late 1980s and early 1990s, typically by artists and musicians originating from the New York metropolitan area" and how "It is characterized by its diversity, quality, innovation and influence on hip hop after the genre's emergence and establishment in the previous decade." The article also shows that "There were various types of subject matter, while the music was experimental and the sampling from old records was eclectic."[24]

(7) "Black psychology (also called African psychology)" is an article that discusses "an African cosmological lens applied to social or psychological phenomenon…approached from two perspectives: The first perspective considers these concepts and theories as universal…and the second perspective, the Afrocentric scholar approach, considers the lens as only appropriate when applied to people of African descent." The article also shows that "Both perspectives agree that African American psychology is a science and that it is structured and organized" and "Both African and African American psychologies study the thoughts, behaviors, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, interactions, and well-being of African Americans." It further reveals how Black psychology has critiqued or rejected white psychology, developed Afrocentric models of study and therapy, and intervened in the social struggle for more black and human environments."[25]

YouTube Cluster

As I mention in *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, YouTube was founded in February of 2005 to enable people to discover, watch, and share videos. By acting as a distribution platform for original content of creators and advertisers, large and small, YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe.[26]

A search on the YouTube Web site on September 26, 2017 yielded 3,860 results for videos dealing with Afrocentricity. The videos include lectures, international conventions, fashion shows, musical tracks, musical concerts, plays, poetry, African artefacts around the globe, clothing, jewelry, book descriptions, and pronunciation of the word Afrocentricity, and racist and other malevolent diatribes against Afrocentricity.

It behooves me to add here that there are many video lectures on Afrocentricity. While the majority of them are by Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, many other major Black thinkers have done videos on Afrocentricity that are in the YouTube collection. These thinkers include Adelaide L. Stanford, Barbara Sizemore, Charshee McIntyre, Clyde Winters, Paul Gibson, Kmt Shockley, and Ron Daniels.

Flickr Cluster

As I point out in *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application. The site describes its two main goals as follows:

1. We want to help people make their photos available to the people who matter to them. Maybe they want to keep a blog of moments captured on their cameraphone, or maybe they want to show off their best pictures or video to the whole world in a bid for web celebrity. Or maybe they want to securely and privately share photos of their kids with their family across the country. Flickr makes all these things possible and more!

To do this, we want to get photos and video into and out of the system in as many ways as we can: from the web, from mobile devices, from the users' home computers and from whatever software they are using to manage their content. And we want to be able to push them out in as many ways as possible: on the Flickr website, in RSS feeds, by email, by posting to outside blogs or ways we haven't thought of yet. What else are we going to use those smart refrigerators for?

2. We want to enable new ways of organizing photos and video. Once you make the switch to digital, it is all too easy to get overwhelmed with the sheer number of photos you take or videos you shoot with that itchy trigger finger. Albums, the principal way people go about organizing things today, are great—until you get to 20 or 30 or 50 of them. They worked in the days of getting rolls of film developed, but the "album" metaphor is in desperate need of a Florida condo and full retirement.

Part of the solution is to make the process of organizing photos or videos collaborative. In Flickr, you can give your friends, family, and other contacts permission to organize your stuff—not just to add comments, but also notes and tags. People like to ooh and ahh, laugh and cry, make wisecracks when sharing photos and videos. Why not give them the ability to do this when they look at them over the internet? And as all this info accretes as metadata, you can find things so much easier later on, since all this info is also searchable.[27]

A search on the Flickr Web site on September 26, 2017 yielded 57 and 3,358 photographs categorized under the Afrocentricity and Afrocentric labels, respectively. The Afrocentricity collection includes historical, covers of old magazines that are no longer being published, African-centered costumes, and major Black thinkers of the past photos. The Afrocentric collection entails photos of arts, "shepard fairey print collection," Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood, divination, tattoos, and fashion.

Learning and Teaching with the Clusters

Similar to what I discovered in *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, from the preceding clusters, it is evident that four major learning and teaching tools are present. The first tool is biographical information.

As teachers, we use anecdotes from our own and other people's experiences to illuminate and bring to life our lectures, for both our students and our professional development activities. In his article entitled "Explorations in Teaching and Learning: A Biographical Narrative and Some Enduring Issues," Andrew Pollard uses his academic biography, particularly his association with primary education, to illustrate some of the dilemmas posed by academic agency. He finds that teaching and learning are always in "changing times," although many of the underlying issues are more enduring. He also shows that history and biography shape the development of ideas and that they pose questions and challenges with which researchers in any historical period must grapple.[28]

Since a biography is about a person's life, teachers can ask students about the factual information they find in the biography, and they can discuss whether the person in the biography is a "hero" and the differences between a "hero" and a "celebrity." In small groups, students can talk about the person and whether they would like to know about him or her.

The second tool is online encyclopedic information. A collection of articles from a specialist conference held on October 6–7, 2006 at Flensburg University in Germany were published in a volume entitled *Learning and Teaching from Biography* edited by Steffen Kirchhof and Wolfgang Schulz. The authors subscribe to the general notion that "biographisation" (i.e., writing biographies) is a key competence for learning processes in the modern era. They point out that in some ways all aspects of learning are "biographical learning." They note that developing biographical skills and experiencing one's strengths in new situations can aid in professional development. They add that "change management skills" can be supported and promoted by biographical learning and work.[29]

Also, according to Alan Josten, research being done by students, teachers, and researchers has taken a giant leap because of the increase in the use of online encyclopedia and reference resources. He points out that online reference materials are often as factually correct as printed ones. He notes three benefits for students using an online rather than a printed encyclopedia. The first benefit is that it is much faster to use online encyclopedias compared to the many hours that must be spent in the library searching for the information. The second benefit is that online reference materials reflect changes in and updates to facts. The third benefit is that, since online encyclopedias are constantly being updated, they often have more depth and breadth than their traditional counterparts. Josten also notes two benefits for teachers and researchers who use online encyclopedias. The first benefit is that the online encyclopedias create a connection between teachers or researchers and students, as students are using the Internet and all it has to offer at a continually growing rate. The second benefit is that online encyclopedias help teachers and researchers in image building, as they must gain the approval of their audiences as they become more accepting of these tools.[30]

On the question of whether online encyclopedias should be trusted, Josten states that many printed encyclopedias and reference materials have been replicated online and are considered legitimate, while popular online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia are often criticized. He observes that since anyone can contribute to Wikipedia, many scholars argue that it is full of mistakes and inaccurate information, but that in total Wikipedia has been found to be "shockingly factual."[31] This is because entries in Wikipedia must provide citations that are unbiased and proven to be factual, and they are also reviewed by editors. Wikipedia is found to be as nearly as factually accurate as *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encarta*. Josten ends with the following poignant observation: "If you are still wondering if Wikipedia can be trusted, keep in mind that it took over 70 years and thousands of contributors, including an inmate in an asylum for the criminally insane, to create the original *Oxford English Dictionary*. Just because thousands of people have made a contribution, that doesn't inherently make the information incorrect."[32]

The third tool is video. This resource can be used by busy teachers to educate, engage, and inspire students by putting together playlists of partner videos that align with common core standards. This strategy will allow them to spend more time teaching and less time searching.

The fourth tool is digital images. As David Green points out, digital images are now a major element in the rapidly evolving educational digital landscape. However, as he discovers, there are five major challenges to the use of digital images in learning and teaching. The first challenge is that many systems prevent the use of digital images from multiple sources. The second challenge is that Google Images is a very popular tool for finding digital images because of its ease of use, but its images are variable and often of poor quality. The paucity of metadata attending the images is another challenge. The third challenge is that PowerPoint is the fairly universal choice as a presentation tool, but it cannot zoom or easily project dual screens and prevents lively in-class interchange of views. The fourth challenge is that there is a connection between inadequate technical support and underuse of digital resources by faculty. Therefore, as to be expected, teachers with high technology comfort levels use more digital images more often. The fifth challenge is that copyright issues remain problematic. Users of digital images would prefer a system that assures them of the copyright status of works and the way they are allowed to reuse them.[33]

Conclusion

On the whole, as I state in *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies*, common sense, critical thinking and analysis are essential to research any topic on the Internet. However, this is particularly important in regard to Afrocentricity, since it is an often misperceived and complex subject. Since the Internet is here to stay, and many people do use it to find information on a plethora of issues, it behooves scholars in the field to use the medium to learn and teach the truth about a chosen topic.

Furthermore, a comprehensive and balanced cluster is required to expand the potentials of harnessing the Internet to learn and teach about Afrocentricity. Thus, the process orientation and the application of times-technologies are the key factors for the development of an Afrocentricity E-cluster and for the realization of the innovation and growth objectives of the cluster.

To optimize the strategic process in an Afrocentricity E-cluster, the participation of all members in a course is imperative. The determination of the vision, mission, and strategy in particular requires the process of participation. From the cluster strategy, one can deduce individual strategies and balanced scorecards of the various clusters. The strategic network of all actors will decisively improve the comprehensiveness of an Afrocentricity E-cluster.

Indeed, an important issue in the implementation process is the existence of innovation management of tools necessary to support the innovation process from the generation of ideas to launching successful ventures throughout the innovation life cycle. The availability of innovation infrastructure and support tools becomes a crucial factor for the deployment of innovative actions in harnessing the Internet to learn and teach about Afrocentricity. This action line will provide the necessary tools and methods to enhance innovation capacity and networking interoperability. These goals and tools should be widely and freely available to all actors using Internet technologies. The collective effort will take the form of a portal for innovation management, concentrated in supporting innovation actions.

Endnotes

[1]Abdul Karim Bangura, *Toyin Falola and African Epistemologies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 217.

[2]Abdul Karim Bangura, "Using E-clustering to Reinvigorate the Mano River Union," in *Journal of International Studies and Development*, vol. 2, (Spring 2012), 1-40; Abdul Karim Bangura, "Federalism, Economic Development, Science and Technology for a United States of Africa: An Ubuntu-clustering Approach," in *Journal of Pan-African Studies* vol. 3, no. 2 (2009), 33-70.

[3]Mark S. Aldenderfer and Roger K. Blashfield, *Cluster Analysis* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 7.

[4]Ute Hansen, "E-clustering: An Innovative Approach for Economic Policy," Refereed Paper no. 650, ERSA-Congress, Porto, 2004.

[5] Itibari M. Zulu, *Exploring the African Centered paradigm: Discourse and Innovation in African World Community Studies* (Los Angeles, CA: Amen-Ra Theological Seminary Press, 1999), 151-153.

[6] James W. Cortada, *Making the Information Society: Experience, Consequences, and Possibilities* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2002), 174.

[7] Gill Donovan, "A Quarter of Web Surfers Are Looking for Religion," *National Catholic Reporter* 38, no. 6 (January 2002): 6.

[8] Leah Graham and Panagiotis Takis Metaxas, "Of Course It's True: I Saw It on the Internet!" *Communications of the ACM* 46, no. 72 (May 2003): 72.

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[10] Quoted in Thomas S. Valovic, *Digital Mythologies: The Hidden Complexities of the Internet* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 54.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ute Hansen, "Cybernetics of a Regional E-cluster System," in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Enterprise Odyssey: Integration or Disintegration, June 15–17, 2006*, ed. L. Galetić (Zagreb: Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, 2006); Hansen, "How to Manage and Control E-government," in *Proceedings of the Sixth European Conference on E-Government, April 27-28, 2006*, ed. D. Remeneyi and Trinity College Dublin (Marburg, Germany: Academic Conferences, 2006); Hansen, "Innovation through Process Oriented Knowledge Management in a Regional E-cluster System," Refereed paper no. 757, ERSA-Congress, Amsterdam, 2005; Hansen, "E-government and E-clustering: The Public Sector as a Key Player in a Regional E-cluster System," in *Proceedings of the Fifth European Conference on E-Government, June 16–17, 2005*, ed. D. Remeneyi and Trinity College Dublin (University of Antwerp, Belgium: Academic Conferences, 2005); Hansen, "E-clustering"; and Hansen, "Innovation durch prozessorientertes Wissensmanagement in einem E-cluster," *Research Publications* 2 (2004).

[13] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy into Action* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996).

[14] Hansen, "Cybernetics of a Regional E-cluster System."

[15]For more on this technique, see, for example, Bangura and McCandless, *Peace Research for Africa*.

[16]https://www.google.com/intl/en/about/

[17]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About

[18]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3AAfrocentrism

[19]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrocentrism

[20]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrocentric_education

[21]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molefi_Kete_Asante

[22]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Athena

[23]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheikh_Anta_Diop

[24]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_age_hip_hop

[25]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_psychology

[26]https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/

[27]For this and more details, see https://www.flickr.com/about/

[28]Andrew Pollard, "Explorations in Teaching and Learning: A Biographical Narrative and Some Enduring Issues," *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 15, no. 1 (March 2005): 87–106.

[29]Steffen Kirchhof and Wolfgang Schulz, eds., *Learning and Teaching from Biography* (Flensburg, Germany: Flensburg University Press, 2008).

[30]Alan Josten, "Using Online Encyclopedia and Reference Resources—How They Help Students, Teachers and Researchers," *Ezine Articles*, retrieved on July 22, 2012, from http://EzineArticles.com/?expert-Alan_Josten.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]David Green, *Using Digital Images in Teaching and Learning: Perspectives from Liberal Arts Institutions* (Middleton, CT: National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education, Wesleyan University, 2006), retrieved in July 22, 2012, from http://www.academiccommons.org/imagereport

The word 'clustering' means grouping similar things together. The most commonly used clustering method is K-Means (because of it's simplicity). This post explains how K-Means Clustering work (in depth), how to measure the quality of clusters, choose the optimal number of K, and mentions other clustering algorithms. The Concept. Imagine you're opening a small book store. View Afrocentricity Research Papers on Academia.edu for free. The papers and presentations should engage the various aspects of Pan-Africanism and Afrocentricity and the ways in which they expedite or delay the advent of an authentic African Renaissance. We also invite papers and presentations that spell out the aspects of an authentic African Renaissance and. Save to Library.