

Summary of Application for Consultants and Presenters:

Virtual Institute in Afrocentric Teaching

(submitted for Ohio Humanities Educators Grant; notification of award in April 2021)

Lynne Hamer, Ph.D., Shingi Mavima, Ph.D., Michael Toland, Ph.D.

The University of Toledo

With Consultants:

Hope Bland, Ph.D.; Jeremy Holloway, Ph.D.; Treva Jeffries, Ph.D.; Ruth Leonard; Nicole Percival, M.A.; Celeste Taylor; and Fletcher Word

Summary

The University of Toledo History Department and Educational Studies Department (UToledo), with The Herb Innovation Center (THInC) of the Judith Herb College of Education and in collaboration with *The Sojourner's Truth* community newspaper (ST) and Toledo Public Schools (TPS), will host a ***Virtual Institute in Afrocentric Teaching*** for 80 Ohio P-16 educators during August 2021 and monthly through the 2021-2022 academic year. The institute will bring together the study of rich humanities texts as well as accomplished regional and international humanities scholars and practitioners working in a variety of media and applied settings.

1. What do you plan to do?

The University of Toledo History Department and Educational Studies Department (UToledo), with The Herb Innovation Center (THInC) of the Judith Herb College of Education and in collaboration with *The Sojourner's Truth* community newspaper (ST) and Toledo Public Schools (TPS), will host a ***Virtual Institute in Afrocentric Teaching*** for 80 Ohio P-16 educators during August 2021 and through the 2021-2022 academic year.

The goal of the institute is for teachers and administrators throughout Ohio to develop skills, knowledge, and a sense of efficacy to understand and incorporate an Afrocentric worldview as a framework for schooling, and to recognize and respond to Afrocentric expression of humanities, and to master basic knowledge of African philosophy, history, language, and oral literature to use in their teaching pedagogy and school administration. The goal is not to replace the curriculum currently in place but rather to embed it in a classroom pedagogy rich in humanistic content that is Afrocentric and *pluriversal*, rather than *universal*, which in practice is Eurocentric. Specific **outcomes**, as developed by institute organizers working with consultant master teachers-administrators, are that institute participant teachers & administrators will

1. become aware of the nine dimensions, the Afrocentric frameworks and humanities resources and able to begin to recognize how they exist in the daily lives of their students and communities and how they might be in conflict with current knowledge they hold;
2. begin to critique and revise standard curriculum and existing school structures to make them pluriversal;
3. begin to align Afrocentric curricular materials and pedagogical methods with the state standards that guide their practices.

The institute will bring together the study of humanities texts as well as accomplished regional and international humanities scholars and practitioners working in a variety of media and applied settings. The majority of funding from OH will go toward bringing in humanities scholars, as well as providing honoraria for a team of consultants (master teachers, master administrators, and community education specialists) who already serve as advisory committee in planning the institute, publicizing the institute throughout the state of Ohio, leading break-out room discussions during the institute, and providing formative feedback assessment after each session.

For Whom

Virtual participation in the entire institute is free to eighty (80) teacher and administrator participants from throughout Ohio and acceptance is based upon an application, which will provide baseline data for evaluation of the institute. Selection of participants will:

1. Maximize regional representation from throughout the State of Ohio;
2. Maximize selection for diversity of type of school (private, public, charter, home), municipality (urban, suburban, rural), level taught (early childhood, middle grades, high school, post secondary), subject matter taught, and life experience; and
3. Consider potential participants' plans for using humanities experience and sharing it with colleagues.

Participants will qualify for 30 contact hours (3 continuing education units). Participants will be guided to work with their Local Professional Development Committees (LPDCs) to have the institute approved for professional development; documentation will be provided for participants to submit to their school districts. Participants who complete 9 of 10 sessions will receive a certificate of completion, and the first 30 to register and to complete 9 of 10 sessions will receive a \$75 honorarium both as an incentive to complete the 9-month commitment and as a token acknowledgement of the investment of time and expertise participants make.

Virtual attendance of humanities experts' presentations is free and open to the public throughout Ohio, the nation, and the world. Presentations will be publicized and will be available in real-time in a webinar format via Microsoft Teams as well as in archived form as a sustainable resource, on The Herb Innovation Center (THInC) website and available to all via THInC on the Judith Herb College of Education YouTube channel.

What, Where, When and How

Due to the uncertainty of face-to-face interactions with the COVID-19 pandemic and in order to make the institute accessible to all educators across the state, all sessions will be held on the secure virtual platform, Microsoft Teams, with preregistration required and password protection.

Activities to be supported by the OH Grant

The virtual institute will include a 3-evening, 3-hour/evening intensive session to establish foundational humanities content and methods, to be held in summer 2021 (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, August 10-12), with continuing once-monthly, 3-hour evening sessions through the 2021-2022 academic year (Tuesdays, Sept 14, 2021; Oct 12, 2021; Nov 9, 2021; Jan 11, 2022; Feb 8, 2022;

March 8, 2022; April 12, 2022). All sessions will be held 5 pm to 8 pm EST. The virtual platform of Microsoft Teams will facilitate statewide participation.

In each of the sessions, participants will take part in the following basic agenda:

1. **Reports on Outcomes:** In small groups (intentionally configured based on subject matter and grade level specialization), participants share observations of applications of material from previous session (with first session, participants sharing what prompted them to join).
2. **Presentations of Humanities:** Humanities expert presenters, combining scholarly and practical applications, demonstrate and interpret humanities works within frameworks of *pluriversalism*, the 9 dimensions of African-American culture, and/or the *Nguzo Sabe* principles of Kwanzaa.
3. **Discussion of Ideas:** Small groups (based on variety of shared interests) discuss the presentation and readings, led by institute consultants (master teachers/administrators).
4. **Practicing Applications:** Humanities expert presenters and institute facilitators presenting key humanities and pedagogical concepts and practices with suggestions for further study and practice.
5. **Anticipating Outcomes:** Participants receive general prompts, and generate specific prompts, for their field and practice observations to be noted by participants preparatory to next session.

Humanities-Based Framework and Agenda

The Virtual Institute on Afrocentric Teaching will immerse participants in the core concept to Afrocentrism, *pluriversality*--an orientation that allows different experiences and voices to be understood and valued through their specific lens and not as inferior to the predetermined standard situated in another's experience--while also deepening their understanding of the philosophy of Kawaiida and the *Nguzo Sabe*, the seven principles undergirding the now-familiar Kwanzaa Celebration. To do this, the sessions are organized for teaching and learning humanities concepts, materials, and processes through what scholars Allen and Boykin (2000) have identified as the *nine interrelated dimensions of African American culture*:

- ***Spirituality***: a vitalistic rather than a mechanistic approach to life.
- ***Harmony***: the belief that humans and nature are harmoniously conjoined
- ***Movement Expressiveness***: an emphasis on the interweaving of movement, rhythm, percussiveness, music, and dance
- ***Verve***: the special receptiveness to relatively high levels of sensate stimulation
- ***Affect***: emphasis on emotions and feelings
- ***Communalism***: commitment to connectedness where social bonds transcend individual privileges
- ***Expressive individualism***: the cultivation of a distinct personality or proclivity toward spontaneity of behavior
- ***Orality***: a preference for oral/aural modalities of communication
- ***Social Time Perspective***: an orientation in which time is treated as passing through a social space rather than a material one

The sessions are envisioned as follows, with themes based on the nine interrelated dimensions of the Afro-cultural experience (Allen & Boykin 2000). Note: See Appendix for schedule with readings:

- August 10: Introduction to Afrocentricity (Shingi Mavima)
- August 11: Communalism (Dana Hudson)
- August 12: Orality (Boitshoko Molefhi)
- September 14: Verve and Affect (Michael Wilson)
- October 9: Harmony and Time (Colins Imoh)
- November 12: Kwanzaa Principles and Kwanzaa Celebration (Diane Gordan, Donald Lynn)
- January 11: Harmony and Spirituality (Clarence George III)
- February 8: Movement Expressionism (Shingi Mavima and Lynne Hamer)
- March 8: Expressive Individuality (Jodie Summers)
- April 12: Conclusion - Pluriversality in Practice (Shingi Mavima and Lynne Hamer)

2. **How do the humanities inform this project? 3000 characters**

Relevant Humanities Disciplines

The Afrocentric idea grows out of the Africana (or Black) Studies discipline, itself characterized as “interdisciplinary approaches combining **humanities** and social science literatures and methods.” The essence of our speakers, materials, and topics center around the various disciplines of the humanities. The framework of the nine interrelated dimensions of African American culture (Allen & Boykin, 2000) calls upon humanities fields.

Driving Questions

- What African and African American humanities texts and processes have been traditionally excluded from dominant culture, Eurocentric teaching and learning at P-12 and higher education levels in Ohio, the nation and world?
- How does learning about the production and use of African and African American humanities help us as educators develop an understanding of the underlying structures governing knowledge and relationships in African-derived cultures?
- How can this humanities knowledge be integrated across the curriculum and aligned with existing state standards for grade levels and subject areas?
- How can understanding and practicing an African-centered worldview and pedagogy improve the performance of all students, both in the classroom and as citizens of the multicultural, pluriversal world in which they will work?

Significance at the Moment

Teachers and students are highly motivated at this point in history to learn about African and African American history, literature, and philosophy, and the modes by which they are produced. Citizens across the world responded to the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, with citizens in general and teachers in particular looking with new urgency at how our curricula, in P-12 and higher education, teach and support Eurocentrism at best and white supremacy at worst. Among others, Pillay & Swanepoel (2018) call this “decolonizing the curriculum,” and emphasize “collaboration and self-empowerment” are essential. In all this, the critical humanities pivot of our institute is the aforementioned idea of pluriversalism, an orientation that allows different experiences and voices to be understood and valued through their specific lens and not as inferior to the predetermined standard.

Results

The institute will provide space and resources for Ohio educators to collaborate toward deconstructing the Eurocentric humanistic narratives in which we have learned and curricula are grounded, and to become self-empowered to reconstruct pluriversal narratives, created through Afrocentric process and including but not limited to African and African American texts. Specific outcomes are for participants to:

- become aware of the nine dimensions, the Afrocentric frameworks and humanities resources and able to begin to recognize how they exist in the daily lives of their students and communities and how they might be in conflict with current knowledge they hold;
- begin to critique and revise standard curriculum and existing school structures to make them pluriversal;
- begin to align Afrocentric curricular materials and pedagogical methods with the state standards that guide their practices.

The goal is for educators to develop skills, knowledge, and a sense of efficacy to understand and incorporate an Afrocentric worldview as a framework for schooling. The goal is not to replace the curriculum currently in place but rather to embed it in a classroom pedagogy that is Afrocentric and pluriversal.

Timeline and Roles

Project Stage	Time Period	Project Activity	Event Location	Project Participants
Planning	May 2021 (three meetings between May 1-15)	Mtg#1 Finalize publicity and application materials; Mtg#2 Finalize agenda for sessions & consultants’ roles, practice technology; Mtg #3 Finalize evaluation plans	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Toland, consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Wor), and B. Jeffries

Publicity	May-June 2021	Send press release; post announcement & application; publish article; set up website	Email and other social media platforms	Hamer, Mavima, Toland, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ July 15, 2021	Meet with initial presenters to finalize agenda for 3-session intensive	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Mavima, Hamer, Hudson, & Molefhi; consultants invited but not required
Events	Aug 10, 11, & 12, 2021	1 st session: Administration of Pre-questionnaires & pre-survey. All 3 sessions: Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities experts; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Hudson, Molefhi, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ August 25, 2021	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Meet with next presenter to finalize agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, & Wilson; consultants invited but not required
Event	Sept 14, 2021	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities expert; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Wilson, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ Sept. 25, 2021	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Meet with next presenter to finalize agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, & Imoh; consultants invited but not required
Event	Oct. 12, 2021	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities expert; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Imoh, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)

Planning	Two meetings @ Oct. 25, 2021	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Meet with next presenter to finalize agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Gordon, & Lynn; consultants invited but not required
Event	Nov. 9, 2021	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities expert; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Gordon, Lynn, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ Dec. 5, 2021	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Meet with next presenter to finalize agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, & George; consultants invited but not required
Event	Jan. 11, 2022	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities expert; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, George, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ Jan. 25, 2022	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Meet with next presenter to finalize agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Mavima & Hamer; consultants invited but not required
Event	Feb. 8, 2022	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities experts; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Mavima, Hamer, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ Feb. 25, 2022	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Finalize next session agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, & Summers; consultants invited but not required

Event	March 8, 2022	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities expert; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment.	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Hamer, Mavima, Summers, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	Two meetings @ March 25, 2022	Mtg#1:Facilitators email follow up to participants; review formative assessments from consultants (master teacher/administrators) and journal entries from participants; adjust plans based on assessment and summarize for external evaluator; archive materials on website; Mtg#2 Finalize next session agenda	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Mavima & Hamer; consultants invited but not required
Event	April 12, 2022	Background/outcomes discussion; presentation by humanities experts; small group discussions; application & pedagogy discussion; outcomes assignment. Administration of post-questionnaire & post-survey	Microsoft Teams online institute meeting	Mavima, Hamer, and consultants (master teacher/administrators Bland, Holloway, T. Jeffries, Leonard, Percival, Taylor, Word)
Planning	@ April 25, 2022	Review evaluation materials collected with external evaluator	Microsoft Teams online meeting	Hamer, Mavima, B. Jeffries
Reporting	May, 2022	Receive final evaluation; submit final evaluation to OH	Email	Hamer, Mavima, B. Jeffries