

## Filling the Gap

by Wendie Wilson, Executive Staff Officer, BIPOC Advocacy and Engagement

Disparity is a revolving theme in the world of racial equity. Distance and difference are measured by the gap that lies between groups or communities. Recently someone asked if the road to equity ever ends. I've pondered this question many times and have come to the conclusion that equity is a journey that is dynamic in nature, and I cannot say with confidence that it ends. The course changes, the language changes and most importantly our perspectives change. To reference the famous quote by Maya Angelou: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better". The emphasis for me is on "do" the verb. How can we (you and I) do better to reduce or bridge the equity gap, especially as it pertains to education?

There are many ways to implement authentic and sustainable change if we are invested in taking on the challenge. As we know with challenge comes risk, but risk is also coupled with reward. One way to foster change is to create systems, products and resources that lend new perspectives that can help narrow inequitable gaps in education. Seeing through a different lens builds perspective and creates awareness. My advice is to start small. Creating small changes can have a domino effect and also offer expertise and knowledge that others can access and potentially benefit from.

Where, when, and how we create this change depends on our individual and collective needs and the lens we use to view the world. A resource that I created out of need was the *Cultural Wisdom Card Deck*. The *Cultural Wisdom Card Deck* is a culturally inspired resource that is based on the Adinkra symbols conceived in West Africa. The Adinkra symbols teach valuable concepts, philosophies, and positive attributes. These cards can be used across subject areas and are meant to engage all learners aged three to 103. My goal was to fill an existing gap and produce

something that I had difficulty locating. After exhausting my search I started my research and created this product that I hope others will find just as useful as I have.

We know there are gaps in the availability of culturally specific educational resources. As an educator of African descent, I have a good idea of what learners who share a similar culture are

looking for and can use. I want learners who look like me to have access to resources that represent them and for learners who don't look like me I want the *Cultural Wisdom Card Deck* to be an opportunity to learn about and respectfully appreciate another culture.

My perspective is limited, and I am always interested in the perspectives of others to broaden my scope. Learning to see, think and do things differently has been elevating and beneficial. Wisdom runs deep and learning from others only stands to make us more knowledgeable and capable. "Affluence and prosperity can really follow when people of diverse backgrounds interact with each other" (Josh Clarke). I believe we all have something valuable to share. We can all contribute to filling the gap.

As educators we have it within our means to either locate culturally specific resources, create these resources ourselves or at the very least provide opportunities, avenues and the supports for others to create them. If we are waiting for others to fill the gap it may never get filled. If we don't implement the changes needed who will? We need to consider that it just might be us that others are waiting for. "What we do is more important than what we say or what we believe" (Bell Hooks).

For more information or to order the *Cultural Wisdom Card Deck* by Cultural Wisdom Educational Products® message on Instagram @culturalwisdomeducation or email [culturalwisdomeducation@gmail.com](mailto:culturalwisdomeducation@gmail.com).

