Conclusion

The book is full of stories that may inspire many others who are on similar career pathways and in the decision making process for success. Hopefully, the lived experiences shared in the chapters will lead to further mentoring, modeling, and empowerment for more equality, equity, and the advancement of diversity, multiculturalism, and humanity.

In chapter 1, you will find predecessors like Dr. Dove have laid down much firm ground work for others to follow to advance humanity and education for inclusion and humanity. According to the chapter, Dr. Dove was first and foremost an acclaimed scholar. Her life and work could be characterized as “Now, Then, and Forever.” Her impact on others is beyond words and the chapter. At the peak of her academic and professional work, she earned the honor of distinguished educator from the Association of Teacher Education. A legend in her own right, Dr. Dove has been a crusader for teacher education. Her contribution and work in teacher education has been characterized by the authors as faith, commitment to teacher education, commitment to community or civic engagement, commitment to sisterhood, method of mentoring men and women, principles over expediency, and her sense of class and integrity. These are the qualities that inspire teacher education in the 21st century. As indicated in the chapter, Dr. Pearlie C. Dove over a span of 92 years (as of this manuscript 2014), allows a student of history, a researcher of a discipline, and a contributor to the body of evidence that prompted a movement for human dignity. To the understanding and meaning of character with conviction and conscience, Dr. Dove showed commitment to culture service. Dr. Dove’s sense of class and scholarship has modeled the ideal that can become a transformational leadership framework for higher education faculty and administrators of the 21st century.

Chapter 2 is titled “Full Circle Moments: The Navigation of an Education Journey.” This chapter reflects an educational journey that has shaped the author’s particular cultural ideologies in relation to education and teaching. Her reflection on being accused of “acting white” within a predominantly white educational setting as a smart black girl from an African family was thought-provoking. The chapter emphasized how her parents’ model of education had impact on socially constructed thoughts and achievements. The chapter went even further to question how these socially constructed thoughts and achievements may be perpetuated through school
systems, school buildings, and individual classrooms. An astounding fact from the chapter was the lesson learned through the author’s own experience that the school was where one learned things that would potentially take someone to the next stage of life and that home was where one learned things that one sometimes never really talked about in school. The finding highlighted between the lines was the segmentation between home and school. The conclusion finding added more strength on the author determined to make a change to the segmentation by going to the field of education and to bridge school and home. Her inspiration for that comes from own learning experience in higher education and those professors of color who were motivating, brilliant, and nurturing.

Her remark on the social issues in the school setting was unforgettable. She commented that it was in school that she saw firsthand that societal structural inequality, poverty, and other limiting realities, as well as the unjust policies and practices in schools. That experience impacted her classroom and the school. As the opportunity presented itself for the author to go to graduate school and pursue her own Doctorate full time, she made the difficult decision to leave her school family in pursuit of furthering her education and making still a meaningful yet different impact in the field of education.

It was the intent of the author to highlight identities or ideologies transform our thinking and provide us with a rationale for the decisions that we make. As educators, what teachers do is a significant part of a student’s life in addition to the role of the parents (and eventually peers). The lesson offered in the chapter is that teaching is not just about the mechanics of teaching the content, but it is also about one’s willingness to be an advocate for students in a way that will provide them with meaningful experiences in education, that will accommodate and also challenge the perspectives they bring to the classroom. While it is important to teach students the skills and competencies they need to negotiate the world successfully, teachers also need to teach students to be critical. It is necessary, in other words, to teach them to not only acknowledge the information, but also acknowledge where the information is coming from. To conclude, the chapter emphasized that similar to the journey the author had, others may have “full-circle” moments in their lives whether it be based on physical location or based on thought processes. However, during these “full circle” moments it is imperative to recognize ourselves as the learner and strive to grow professionally from wherever these moments may lead.

In Chapter 3, the author focused her discussion on her eight year journey to obtaining a Ph.D. at a large Predominately White University (PWU) in the south of the US. Her eight year journey was definitely filled with personal and professional trials throughout the journey, with complications as a result of courses, race, committee, expertise, family, marriage, and health. The voice coming from the lived experience reflected academic advising insufficiency, cultural ignorance, and much
needed mentoring. In the author’s words, if educators are taught by faculty members who have not experienced diversity first hand in elementary through high school classrooms, it may be easier for them to teach theory opposed to sound pedagogy and relevant classroom strategies. However, as a teacher educator, faculty members like those described above became a significant roadblock toward the completion of her doctoral program, according to the chapter. The insight offered at the end of the chapter is through compromise and at one point, giving in, the delicate balance between speaking up and using quiet strength could be helpful toward greater success for women of color.

As voiced in the chapter, as a fulltime faculty member who works with undergraduate students on a regular basis, the author learned to practice meaningful and engaging mentorship to enhance the growth, development and success of students based upon the experiences in the academic journey. The lived experience has transformed the author’s thinking and practices with students. The discoveries of the learning include: 1) the art of effective listening is a lost skill and that many students just need a sounding board to sort out their personal and academic trials; 2) through the storytelling lens of Critical Race Theory, interactions with students who are Black females, are strengthened by the instructor’s personal and academic experiences as a same race and same gendered professor; 3) through listening and mentorship, professors can build on, rather than tear down what female students of color bring to their academic coursework; 4) by keeping the eye on the prize, the prize is attainable. In other words, don’t let your dream become deferred because of someone else’s confusion, ignorance or inability to understand your culture, skin color, gender, life story, and personal circumstance.

Chapter 4 featured the discussion of gender and education in Post Mao Era in the Chinese Education System, one of the largest educational systems in the world. As history turns to a new page in China’s development, China of the Post Mao Era shifted to an emphasis on education and respect for intellectuals and knowledge. Factors that impact gender and schooling and college entrance assessments are explored and analyzed after the Mao era in the chapter. Gender equity and equality in Chinese educational system since the 80s through the perspective of the author’s schooling experience in China were discussed with a focus on the efficacy of Gaokao, the high stake assessment system for high learning access.

The historical review of the chapter revealed that Chinese history made a huge turn after the ending of Cultural Revolution to focus more on reconstruction of the country’s infrastructure, such as education, health, and economy. The new higher learning selection system GaoKao was reinstated in 1979. Access to college was encouraged but how was gender equality and equity addressed through the high stake testing system? The author’s story shared the educational experiences with focus on gender in education in relation to Gaokao assessment.
Conclusion

Educationally, the author was the product of the Golden Era in terms of schooling experiences. When the worldly known social movement Cultural Revolution in the country ended in 1977, Deng’s national policy on education encouraged individuals to go to college through the selective assessment system of Gaokao. The author’s elementary education experience was wonderful in that it was carefree and the leisure and recess were abundant for students back then but is greatly reduced for today’s elementary children during their school days. While at school, classrooms were all co-ed. Boys and girls were mixed together. Some of the boys and girls were older than the same grade level students but they all played and learned together well. Literature revealed that there seemed to be more representation of equality and equity in education over time. However, the dynamic of the professional discourse needs to continue to include discussion of gender equity and equality at all levels, K-12 and college, and beyond in college and the workforce.

As Chinese education is going through continued reform, the dynamic of the discussion could also include new reform ideologies, education globalizations, social and international exchange and world economic development. All those factors need to be taken into the consideration in the further discussion of diversity in higher learning settings. In the meanwhile, the micro levels of changes such as local changes and reforms need to be brought to the table for continued examination as well. At the turn of the century, facing the new challenges from international market and education globalization, Chinese education saw a shift in merging into the world educational market searching for new strategies and models to build world class higher education in China. Reforms have been on-going since the 80s and challenges remain. New directions are worth exploring further.

Chapter 5 delineated the multiple disadvantages faced by women of color, especially the ones coming from the Caribbean. Being Black, foreign, and female means that woman of color from the Caribbean face many challenges and successes along a spectrum of known issues that are often encountered by women of color in the academy. This chapter calls for necessary research in the area. In addition it is necessary to tease out the differences between Afro-Caribbean and African-Americans because of the tendency in the United States to view the Black population as a homogeneous group. As a matter of fact, society as a group has failed to acknowledge the intra-group differences, thus disregarding the ethnic distinctiveness, cultural practices and norms of the Afro-Caribbean emigrant. The chapter highlighted the significance on the inclusion of Caribbean women in the academy in higher education in that higher education in the United States remains majorly ‘white’, exclusive of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The world of academe inhabited by Afro-Caribbean women is a white world to a large extent. After years of multicultural efforts, reports from US agencies responsible for tracking the progress of higher
education and students, faculty and administrators neglect to report the number of African and Afro-Caribbean females in the academy. Such patterns of invisibility marginalize these groups according to mainstream racial or gender based issues.

It is pointed out that although scholars are beginning to articulate Third World, Afro-centric and Chicano Frameworks, the literature and field still lacks a comprehensive understanding of how Afro-Caribbean women, as a distinct group, interpret their triple identities and experiences in America. Diversity is a widely accepted strategic goal concerning higher education. These goals are meant to diversify faculties, administrations and student bodies, which makes them a large part of any college or university’s strategic plans. The fact that Afro-Caribbean emigrants mostly come to the United States from English-speaking countries and that the Afro-Caribbean woman is one of the largest subsets of international teachers that are recruited validates their significance to the inclusion of discussion and framework in the broader society. Finally the chapter emphasized that the reality calls for the need of higher education institutions to implement models of change to strengthen the role of the women of color and the Black foreign women in academic institutions.

Chapter 6 featured the cognitive and emotional understanding and development and conceptual transformation of the understanding on race as a learned identity through lived experiences. The finding revealed the question of what race is: it is not the knowledge that matters the most but the process of finding one’s self in diversity that speaks louder on one’s growth and development professionally and personally. It is the process of discovery of one’s race that matters. The author’s discovery process entails doubt, disillusion, and self-discovery, and then back to a new self. The discussion of the chapter reiterates the framework based on literature findings on Asians in the US. Specifically the chapter discussed the challenges that Asian Americans encounter based on the literature framework: (a) race is not a tangible, objective phenomenon, but rather a learned social construct open to varying attributions and interpretations; (b) the Asian American racial identity challenges the Black-White binary by adding a third racial category; and (c) religion may be treated as an attribute of race. As an Asian American, the author’s lived experiences attest to those areas of findings.

The chapter has a focus on race in higher learning institutions. To an individual coming from a highly collective society, such as China, the idea of race was new at the very beginning. The lived experiences of understanding race revealed eye-opening and sometimes overwhelming dilemma and transformation. Lived experiences provide insight for our understanding of the past and direction for the future. Lived experiences speak powerfully for a society and a culture. In a racially diverse society, racial relationships could be dynamic to build a strong culture towards increased creativity and productivity; or it could also mean the backdrops for delayed problem solving and un-concerted decision making for action. The lived experiences
were interwoven between personal and professional in the chapter, both academic and political. During this process, the concept of who I am makes more sense to say race is a social construct in addition to a legal construct.

In that sense, in the long run, the power and the beauty of diversity lies in the establishment of newly constructed racial identities for individuals in a diverse society. The dynamics of that could promote an even more diverse populations and a more specific identity of being an American. Specifically, this aspect of understanding is revealing in regarding race as a legal and social construct. To advance further towards equality and equity in a racially diverse society, more efforts could be made available to encourage a social and legal identity. In addition, to promote and embrace diversity and reduce second generation discrimination in higher learning institutions, change agents are needed to educate others on equity and equality. Other services such as counseling services and support network could be built to facilitate students’ identity construction and reflective learning and growth. The self-discovery process means also a reflective process on the side of the instructor, the counselor, and other professionals in order to promote a culturally and racially diverse and inclusive campus climate and increased academic learning, retention, and graduation rates for all students in higher learning settings.

Chapter 7 continued the discussion of building a learning climate to be culturally and organizationally sound. The chapter is framed around black feminist pedagogy. Specifically, the chapter explores the challenge of creating a “liberated” classroom, one that digresses from the norm in both content and structure according to feminist principles. The chapter discussed a teaching project designed to create a unique learning environment through the use of black feminist pedagogy. Charged with teaching a cross-listed course (Women’s Studies, Black Studies) entitled “Black Feminist Theory,” the teaching team consisted of a professor, a graduate student, and an undergraduate student. The team came together from a diversity of educational experiences in the U.S. and Africa. The chapter is a reflection of the team’s experiences on co-teaching a “non-traditional” course as well as a collective inquiry about the strategic importance of incorporating oppositional discourse into the college curriculum for nurturing, advising, and mentoring climate for students of color.

As indicated in the chapter, teachers at the all-Black school reinforced the idea that a good education is the key to survival by making sure that all students lived up to their fullest potential. Teaching was not just a job, but a mission to cultivate a new generation of African American youth who would transform the world by becoming educated and productive citizens. The lived experience shared the learning of own as well as other African American students. The revealing of that learning was both a challenge and a threat to the dominant culture. This priceless bit of knowledge made the authors more determined to transgress those sacred boundaries. Not only
did they talk about what strategies worked and those that did not work, but also the authors discussed larger topics relevant to Black feminist pedagogy and the roles of teachers as practitioners.

To conclude the chapter, assuming the roles of both student and teacher has revealed how much students and teachers impact the way a class may transform, depending on its dynamics and its needs. The syllabus, expectations, and those of the students who enter a Black Feminist Theory class, are more like guidelines than maps, as the destination is splendidly and Formidably uncertain. As students and instructors are equally challenged to contribute to knowledge and a new way of “doing school.”

In reflection, the voices of lived experiences call for a direct link between theory and practice. What is ahead is an uncharted territory where connections between ideas and implementation, goals, and expectations, need to be continuous and with complexity. Listening for the silence of students in the classroom is necessary as that indicates their need to feel anchored in a process of knowledge production that is unfamiliar and sometimes challenging.

Chapter 8 revealed an important aspect of diversity and multiculturalism in southern Africa, a different perspective. The author pinpoints the challenge in gender research, saying that “whether eastern, north or western [one] should really think outside the box to bring change. My thinking out of the box is the psychological and multi-discipline approach could be tried in Gender research.”

The chapter studies the organizational culture and structure with a focus on gender and power in Botswana in Southern Africa. The author stated that an organization such as higher learning institution like University of Botswana should enable a gender equality system that works and a gender-diversity friendly atmosphere. Specifically, the chapter pointed out that more literature needs to be availed to deal with gender diversity in institutions. Organizational culture that encourages new mindsets of gender equality for inequality perpetuators needs to be more available. The concept of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is a contested concept and practice. It is fought in various ways by governments, institutions, and departments.

The chapter presents a theoretical discussion of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) as a process that encapsulates many of the tensions and dilemmas in feminist theory and practice. Three areas of issues were framed in the chapter. The first issue that resulted from self-reports at the University of Botswana was access to power or a not so easy way of accessing the reins of power for women. The second issue was inclusion. One recommendation was that the UB content of teaching, learning materials, and language used to be gender sensitive. The university can also assist academic staff on methods of inclusion. It can incorporate gender issues into various disciplines and expand research on gender issues.
The third issue was climate or work environment. The setting is restricted to historical and cultural Botswana of today during the days of the author’s lived experiences.

According to the author, researchers want to define feminism. It remains a useful tool for analyzing the different paths and contexts that discriminations are situated in institutions and in the society. Organizational culture needs to break away from the societal culture in which institutions and departments are located. People in power should accept change and move away from old ways of doing things and thinking. There has to be a campaign and training more than proliferation of policies that aims at the transformation of the cultural self to the digital age self. Management needs to move from policy rhetoric but actively commit to the practice of mainstreaming gender. In short the University of Botswana needs to quicken its steps in correcting gender inequality by implementing policies and legislation particularly in the following areas: UB can develop new regulations or initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in position of full professorship and decision making. Gender mainstreaming in institutions like the University of Botswana needs new trends of research. The need for dedicated research and teaching that makes gender a central focus across the curriculum is indisputable.

Chapter 9 is titled “Building Bridges: Using Life Lessons to Inform Our Work with Students.” Within the pages of this chapter, the authors shared portions of their personal journeys as women of color matriculating Predominantly White Institution (PWI) campuses as students, and now navigating these same spaces as employees. The authors tie the research on belonging to that on cultural nourishment and mentoring relationships. Collectively, their experiences breathe life into the research findings that provide examples of how institutions can incorporate the ideas of cultural nourishment and mentoring to better serve students. The main ideas used to guide the development of the chapter include: (a) the research on belonging through cultural nourishment and mentoring relationships; (b) as campus employees the authors see the task of contributing to students’ sense of cultural nourishment and engaging in mentoring relationships as part of their responsibility to the students with whom they work.

Cultural starvation has been featured as cultural experiences in PWI for minority students in the chapter. Belonging and space were called for in higher learning institutions throughout the chapter. Firstly, within different campus environments, the purpose of communication should be to enhance one’s own sense of belonging at various institutions. Secondly, it may be beneficial for students of color to have spaces on campus where they feel safe and supported. However, it would be better if students’ sense of belonging was fluid across the entire campus. Thirdly, there are two overarching lessons as models of mentoring work as a practitioner. Finally, within the epistemological world, sources of cultural nourishment include
role models, literature, faculty, and courses. For students of color, this may come
in the form of courses in an ethnic studies program or with faculty teaching from
a cultural perspective, cultural mentors or role models who share or can share ex-
periential knowledge, or books and articles written by authors who write from a
cultural perspective. Needless to say, future examination on the topic needs to focus
on cultural nourishment specifically on capturing activities of students or campus
employees who take on the role of cultural workers and who intentionally engage
in acts that are believed to increase cultural nourishment.

Chapter 10 is titled “Through the Eyes of the Beholder: Experiences of a Woman
Living in a Patriarchal Society.” The chapter addressed the hegemonic reality created
by those in power, in the part of the world where the author’s home is. This reality is
in equality is passed down and imposed on the powerless by those in power. Although
the feminist theory is chosen, it is not at the exclusion of the acknowledgement that
life is a multifaceted process with intertwined impact on lived experiences.

According to the chapter, challenges and constraints are posed on women by a
patriarchal value system in southern Africa, as it relates to the right to reproduction,
child rearing practices and legal connotation, and opportunities in socio-cultural,
educational, economic and political participation. Although the narrative is limited
to how the author experienced these issues, the real issue is that one’s culture de-
determines who he or she is in the social arena and the work world.

Passionately, the author pointed out as multicultural systems and multinational
centers are built, practicing tolerance for other cultures should not be difficult. This
tolerance should be extended to gender differences. The story shared in the chapter
displayed the truth that the author personally chose actions carefully around different
cultures and male dominations, and slowly worked her way up. She concentrated on
the product to be achieved and rose above the attitudes and actions of domination.
The African culture by nature is collective with regard to actions. It is important
to understand patriarchy in its fullness. Gender issues affect men, women and
children mostly in negative ways, which can make or break the world. In Botswana
there is a rise in divorce cases, passion killing cases and lives and opportunities are
sometimes lost.

Clearly, the chapter points out future directions on the further research. To strike
the needed balance on gender issues, the organizational culture or system would
need more than a collective complex strategy. Further research should focus on
community participatory research also. It will seek feminist problem solutions that
are situated in the culture of the people. Researchers need to think long and hard
about child rearing practices and men’s domination as vulnerability toward a more
just and equal society. A twist in theoretical framework for research is needed that
will include new perspectives of equality. Societal culture is dynamic, research

Conclusion
Conclusion

has to harvest the new perspectives and integrate them into gender education and multicultural tolerance.

The ten chapters all together composed of the main body of the work beautifully and collectively. Each chapter offered a specific perspective and analysis of a unique story that speaks for diversity and multiculturalism in a diverse world we live. The voices embedded in the chapters lend themselves to the strength and beauty of the true meaning of diversity and multiculturalism and the implications to change agents. Hope you have enjoyed each chapter and each individual story in its beauty and uniqueness. When you have a story yourself, please do not hesitate to share that with others as the process to diversity and beauty in humanity means sharing, inspiring and empowering.