

OPENED DOORS



Opened Doors

Doctoral Learners often struggle with the volumes of edits and rewrites and view them as a mere hazing event. The fact is – a dissertation **has to be perfect**. It is the highest form scholarship and production of a document that is significant and contributes to a better workplace, society, or new knowledge. The dissertation is only the beginning – the opening of new doors. Each month, we will share stories of individuals who have experienced new doors that opened after they finished their dissertation. Doors they did not expect to be there. We invite all Mentors to submit their story to ljohnson@ncu.edu and fturner@ncu.edu for inclusion in the newsletter. This section is devoted to all learners in the doctoral journey – you too can have new doors open for you.

“To learn is to change. Education is a process that changes the learner.”

- Unknown

Dr. Linda J. Burrs: Consulting Opportunities

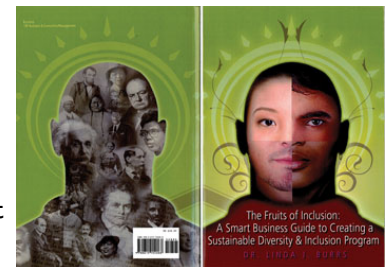


My name is Linda. My journey did not end with the conferring of my doctoral degree. I consider it the beginning of a multi-stage passage into the community I choose to serve. A doctoral degree is a gift that may profoundly change one's life at an extraordinary level. Only 1% of the population earns the doctoral degree.

My advanced education has not only impacted how I see myself, I believe it influences how others in my community see me. I have been asked to serve my community in a number of ways. I was selected to be a Catalyst for my regions' Creative Initiative based on the work of Richard Florida to stem the flow of the brain drain from our region. As part of that extended initiative, I was invited to serve on the Young Creatives Summit team and am a co-chair on the communication team to serve as a link between the

task force and the media. I have agreed to serve on the Diversity Steering Committee for my region's law enforcement diversity strategy initiative. Currently, I am the Director of Diversity Programs for the Dunbar Institute, a non-profit committed to teaching diversity through the arts.

One of my most significant accomplishments has been the completion and publication of my book: *The Fruits of Inclusion™: A Smart Business Guide to Creating a Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion Program* – March 2008 (to purchase the book, please click here). This book was written as a result of my participation on a diversity panel where the question was asked how to start a diversity program that was practical and meaningful. It made me think. My education not only provided me the research and writing skills needed to fill this gap in the market, but also the confidence needed to take on this type



of project. The title of my doctoral dissertation was, [The Relationship Between the Mid-level Leader's Emotional Competence and Follower Commitment](#). I was able to re-craft ideas from my dissertation into an article that was published in the *Journal of Business and Economic Research* (April 2006). This publication provided additional credibility to my skills.



I have developed a series of programs branded around Second Generation Diversity Training™ that takes participants in the programs beyond the beginning levels of first generation diversity training awareness into the higher level of skill-building that is needed to build inclusive work environments. Second Generation Diversity Training™ (SGDT) is a blame-free, shame-free, guilt-free approach to diversity training that brings real diversity solutions into focus. Change the lens and you change what you see.

There is a saying, to learn is to change. No one goes through the challenges of a terminal degree untransformed. Not only does making it through the curriculum phrase, the comprehensive exams, the dissertation research process, defending the dissertation to a committee of scholars make one deserving of the title, Dr., It also makes one humble and grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow and evolve into a new thinking individual. All those edits in my dissertation at the time frustrated me but today I see insights from those wiser transformed me into a higher level thinking person. My journey is far from over. My education has contributed significantly to helping me “open doors: Yours will too.