

Training Partner's Bio: Dr. Sonia Heywood

Dr. Heywood spent several years working in Corporate America at various levels of management prior to entering the environment of academia. As a non-traditional academician she found a home with proprietary institutions of higher learning. As an educator she believes she has the power to impact the thoughts/ideas of others to some degree. She does not take this responsibility lightly. She attempts to share research-based knowledge with her students while encouraging them to explore course concepts with an open-mind. She reminds them that while she is honored to share her knowledge with them, it is important for them to form their own perspectives on course objectives through the educational process.

In fact, she considers it a privilege to participate in the knowledge enhancement of others. Her focus is personal empowerment. She believes that education/knowledge is the single most significant means to personal empowerment. As such she encourages life-long learning. Positive outcomes of life-long learning include enhanced critical thinking skills, improved decision-making/problem-solving skills, and increasing levels of personal accountability for creating one's own reality.

A natural flow as a result of her corporate background led to Dr. Heywood developing a strong professional and educational background. Over the years she has served as Department Chair of the FlexNet program for the Fort Lauderdale campus of the University of Phoenix; Dean of Business and Legal Studies for the Buckhead Campus of American InterContinental University (AIU), University Dean of Graduate Studies and Innovative Learning for AIU and most recently as Provost and Chief Academic Officer for Briarcliffe College. As such she has extensive experience in accreditation, curriculum and instruction, evaluation, program development and distance learning.

Dr. Heywood also has a strong interest in leadership development. In 2008, she graduated from Leadership Forsyth, a regional community leadership development program in Cumming, Georgia. This program: "encourages and fosters the development of emerging community leaders by integrating leadership development theory and experiential learning through interactions with community-based organizations, its leaders, and their events and initiatives".

Dr. Heywood graduated with a B.S. in Marketing from Fairleigh Dickinson University and an M.B.A. and D.B.A. in Business Administration from Nova Southeastern University.