Inclusive Leadership: An Alternative to Traditional DEI

Traditional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts have stalled. People are burned out, demotivated, divided, and frustrated. Inclusive Leadership lets you pause, assess what’s not working, reset, and empower your organization to move the needle.

Dr. Elizabeth Dickinson
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Former Associate Dean of DEI, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School
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First, About me

I have two roles: 1) An independent consultant and educator, specializing in Inclusive Leadership and DEI. 2) An adjunct professor at UNC Chapel Hill’s Executive Development.

With an academic background and applied experience, I focus on the emerging concept of “Inclusive Leadership” – a personal and organization strategy to empower individuals, organizations, and communities to “reset” their DEI efforts by doing DEI differently. I have a BA, MA, and PhD in Intercultural Communication and experience working in and consulting in corporate, nonprofit, government, and academic settings. I also served as the former Associate Dean for DEI at the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School.

I help people and organizations:

1 | ADVISE: Leaders, managers, boards, employees on Inclusive Leadership
2 | CONSULT & COACH: Strategy; Equity and DEI audits; Value mapping; Revamping org habits; Decision making; Handling situations and conflict
3 | EDUCATE: Inclusive leadership; Decision making and bias; Cultural intelligence and competencies (identities); Communicating across differences; Leading & managing inclusive meetings; Equitable performance evaluations; Inclusive teaching and classrooms; Difficult conversations and conflict
4 | TAILORED WORK: To meet organizational needs.

Contact me to talk: eadickins@gmail.com, 805-506-0090
“Despite my best efforts, I bet you’ll find something wrong . . .

When (and not if) this happens, I invite you to be critical *and* extend grace and understanding that this work is messy, every-changing, and imperfect.

Proceed thoughtfully with that in mind—and when you can, use my mistakes to expand and build upon your nuanced understanding of this work. That’s how we grow.”

Citation: *DEI Deconstructed*, Lily Zheng (2022)

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**Today, We’ll cover**

1. **Traditional DEI**
   - What it is
   - What doesn’t work
   - Effects

2. **Inclusive Leadership**
   - Fundamentals
   - Why it works
   - A new approach

3. **Inclusive Leadership Education**
   - Goals
   - Topics
   - Delivery

4. **Applying Inclusive Leadership**
   - In your role & organization
   - Create change
First, **What exactly is “traditional DEI/DEIB”?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Inclusion, Belonging</th>
<th>Equity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Representation of difference in a group</td>
<td>• Physiological, emotional <em>feeling</em> that we have a place and are respected</td>
<td><strong>Equality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, perspective, etc.</td>
<td>• <strong>Inclusion</strong>: action</td>
<td>• People/groups get same resources/ opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Groups are diverse, people aren’t</td>
<td>• <strong>Belonging</strong>: result</td>
<td>• Goal: equal distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defined by context</td>
<td>• Leaders and organizations should intentionally build it</td>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Current terms:</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Begins by admitting different starting places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Represented/ Underrepresented</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Goal: allocate resources/ opportunities to reach equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Historically Included/Excluded</td>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Equity</strong> – process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual terms defined**

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Scholars and Thought Leaders

Think traditional DEIB has stalled

Lily Zheng
DEI Deconstructed

Irshad Manji
Diversity without Division

Dobbin & Kalev
Getting to Diversity

Chloé Valdary
Theory of Enchantment


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Why? 5 Limitations of Traditional DEI

1. DEI Strategy & Tactics (missing, unclear, inappropriate, debated, unimplemented)
2. Sole focus on: Increasing representation (diversity) & superficial contact
3. Lack of personal accountability: “It’s not my job:” Waiting for senior leaders, HR, Diversity Officers, task forces, ERGs, etc.
4. Not embedded within roles, teams, and groups within organization
5. Stalled Education: Ineffective trainings that are mostly (but not always):
   • Mandatory and compliance/legal-focused
   • One-off, simplistic, repetitive
   • Taught by unqualified educators
   • Lack clear, achievable outcomes; “one-size-fits-all”
   • “At least it’s something:” the belief that something is better than nothing

→ Effects: Burnout, disempowerment, resistance . . .

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I’m afraid what I say might be judged. I’ll be called out, or worse, canceled. It’s better not to speak at all.

I want to participate. But there isn’t an open playing field to feel comfortable to ask questions (which may seem dumb) about topics we don’t know. People are quick to judge and that makes it hard to learn.

Lacking sense of voice, agency, and control

As a marginalized person, people expect me to teach them things. It’s frustrating and emotionally exhausting. People need to want to learn on their own. And I’m getting tired of waiting.

As a white man, I feel like I’m seen as a demon when I walk in the room. I care a lot. But when I’m judged, intentionally or not, I check out and disengage.

Race, gender, etc., are overwhelming topics. I don’t know how to start or what to do. And I’m not an expert and didn’t sign up for this as a job.

[Fill in your own:]

Lacking sense of voice, agency, and control

Race, gender, etc., are overwhelming topics. I don’t know how to start or what to do. And I’m not an expert and didn’t sign up for this as a job.

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Inclusive Leadership: Lead with it to practice DEI differently

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<th>Equity</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
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</table>
| Interpersonal and org strategy | Physiological, emotional feeling that we have a place and are respected | Equality
- People/groups get same resources/ opportunities
- Goal: equal distribution | Representation of difference in a group |
| 1st: Connect with, learn about myself | Inclusion: action | Equity
- Begins by admitting different starting places
- Goal: allocate resources/ opportunities to reach equality | Race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, perspective, etc. |
| 2nd: Connect with, learn about others: backgrounds, thoughts, structures | Belonging: result | Equity – process | Defined by context |
| ➔ Connect and engage perspectives and contributions | Leaders and organizations should intentionally build it | Equality – outcome | Current terms: |
| ➔ Give back voice, agency, and control | | | • Represented/ Underrepresented |

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Inclusive Leadership: What is it, exactly?

**Context:** Society, Industry, Organization, Unit, Role, Etc.

**Self**

**Connection Tool:** Introspection

1. IQ, EQ, and CQ
2. Critical thinking
3. Learning mindset
4. Vulnerable
5. Handle ambiguity
6. Humble

**Other**

**Connection Tool:** Engagement

1. Relationally orientated
2. Open
3. Communicative
4. Foster all opinions
5. Collaborate
6. Inspiring

Skills and Traits to Learn and Use

**Self**

- IQ, EQ, and CQ
- Critical thinking
- Learning mindset
- Vulnerable
- Handle ambiguity
- Humble

**Other**

- Relationally orientated
- Open
- Communicative
- Foster all opinions
- Collaborate
- Inspiring

Impact Areas Within and outside of organizations

- Recruiting
- Interviewing
- Onboarding
- Communication
  - Verbal, nonverbal, written, transparency
  - Internal comms, External comms
  - Listening
- Decision-making
- Small groups, meetings (formal, informal), gatherings
- Feedback
- Promotions, recognitions, awards
- Performance appraisals
- Innovation
- Problem defining & solving
- Client/public interactions & engagement
- Data (collect, process, analyze, interpret)
- Marketing & external comms
- Finance, accounting
- Boards
- Markets, politics, current events

Discuss in Chat: In your role/org, which area most needs an Inclusive Leadership approach?
Inclusive Leadership Education

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Objectives

• Hit the pause button to connect, discuss, inspire
• Return a sense of voice, agency, control
• Learn differences between traditional DEI and the innovative Inclusive Leadership approach
• Transition away from single, simple trainings to a systemic, strategic foundational programs
• “Anchor” and reframe with a memorable relaunch
• Deepen understanding of fundamentals and inclusion’s role in organizational growth and innovation
• Identify strategies to help people feel inclusion and attachment to their work
• Strengthening engagement, retention, and organizational success
• Apply techniques that strengthen inclusion and equity in day-to-day leadership practices

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Educate Holistically Overview and goals

1. UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE

Current complex state of DEI within your org. Use peer-to-peer learning to discuss and understand what’s not working. Use "Inclusive Leadership" as an alternative interpersonal strategy to reset organization’s DEI efforts and empower people.

2. CONNECT & ENGAGE WITH THE SELF & OTHERS

Learn and practice Inclusive Leadership skills (EQ, CQ, vulnerability, humility, collaboration, relational orientation). Practice psychological safety to create trust, engagement, and innovation. How to navigate conflict and difficult conversations.

3. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

1. “Inclusive Thinking:" how the mind works and how to make better decisions
2. Designing and Leading inclusive meetings
3. Inclusive recruiting and hiring practices
4. Inclusive performance appraisals
5. Analyzing data

4. APPLY INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TO YOU

Best practices are only meaningful if you can apply them to your role, teams, and organization. Customize and commit to an area of change. Peer-to-peer and experiential learning help challenge and aid in applying what you learn.

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How much have meetings increased during the pandemic?

250% more meetings

Source: “This Is What Happens When There Are Too Many Meetings,” The Atlantic, 2022

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Effects of Changes

Back-to-back virtual meetings w/out breaks . . .

. . . affect our brains and decrease focus and performance.

→Breaks between meetings allow the brain to “reset.”

Source: “Research Proves Your Brain Needs Breaks,” Work Trend Index Special Report, Microsoft Worklab, Illustration by Ben Wiseman,

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How I advise, design, and teach Inclusive Leadership

Modes of Delivery
- In-person
- Virtual
- Hybrid
- Synchronous & asynchronous

Lengths of Delivery
- Keynote and invited speeches
- ½ day educational sessions (4 hours)
- Full-day sessions (8 hours)
- Multiple day sessions
- Lengthy courses (15-20+ hours)
- Customized

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Thanks, and let’s connect

I can offer:
- More info
- Resources
- Readings
- Articles
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Information
- Community
- Connection

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