

DEI 100 CASE STUDY

1 In an engineering design course taught by Dr. Smith, Ty, a trans-
2 African American man, is assigned to a team with four of his peers.
3 The rest of the team consists of one Black cisgender man, Jerry,
4 and three White cisgender men, John, Austin, and Tim.

5 Dr. Smith suggests that each team do an icebreaker activity, plan a group bonding
6 activity, and meet weekly to build trust and effectively complete the project.

7 During the icebreaker activity, Ty says, "Call me 'Ty.' My pronouns are he/him/
8 his." As the group begins brainstorming activities, the three White teammates
9 strongly advocate for a weekend camping trip. They describe the "super cool"
10 trip as only requiring a 3-mile hike to the site and the rental fees are "not very
11 much money." They take a vote and choose the camping trip in a 3:2 count, with
12 Ty and the other Black student, Jerry, being opposed. Ty tells them he cannot go
13 due to a prior work commitment but does not disclose that it is due to financial
14 limitations and physical hygiene needs. Jerry says that he does not go camping.

15 The team also decides by majority rule to schedule team meetings on Thursdays at
16 6 pm via Zoom. Ty is often unable to meet the meetings due to working two jobs
17 to help his parents with the household, both of whom lost their jobs shortly after
18 the pandemic. On days when Ty can make the meetings, there is poor Internet
19 connectivity, and he does not turn on his video due to his four siblings running
20 around in the background. Ty realizes that he is being sent separate emails by the
21 self-appointed team leader, Tim, telling him what the team has decided and how
22 he can support those decisions. They also consistently call him by his dead name
23 and refer to him using she/her pronouns. Ty reaches out to Jerry and discovers
24 that Jerry feels that the three others are basically controlling the project, and
25 despite his best efforts, he is always out-voted. Mid-semester, Dr. Smith takes a
26 confidential poll about the team dynamics and participation. When Ty discloses
27 his experience, Dr. Smith points out to Ty that he intentionally put two African-
28 American students on the team after reading about best practices for teaming.
29 "Could you be taking things too personally?" Dr. Smith writes to Ty in an email.

30 Ty disengages with hopes of just making it to the end of the class. Before the
31 project's final presentation, Tim sends out assignments. He assigned Ty to the
32 background section, Jerry to the motivation section, and John, Austin, and
33 himself to the design, results, and interpretation sections. In the title slide for
34 the presentation and report, Ty noticed his and Jerry's names were listed last.

KEY TERMS

DIVERSITY: Diversity is variety of race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, neurodiversity, personality, intersecting identities, different ways of knowing, doing, being, and cultural norms and values.

EQUITY: Equity is the dismantling of systemic and institutional barriers, and giving people what they need to succeed.

INCLUSION: Inclusion is the ongoing act of welcoming and valuing people's differences in terms of their identities, experiences, and ways of thinking and being.

TRANSGENDER: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation.

CISGENDER: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.



For a more comprehensive glossary of terms related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, save this link.

7EV.CO/GLOSSARY

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. What is happening to Ty in this case?
2. From Ty's perspective, how is diversity celebrated and honored (or not) in the class? Do you think Ty is experiencing an equitable learning experience? Do you think Ty feels included?
3. What might Ty be feeling about his teammates? How may Ty's feelings affect his identity, sense of belonging, and persistence to a degree?
4. Based on Ty's experience, how could he respond? What impact does Ty's response have on his inclusion?
5. What might Ty's teammates be feeling? How could their feelings affect their perception of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the course?
6. Team bonding activity: Did the trip accomplish its intended purpose? What could they have done differently to improve diversity, inclusion, and equity in the course?
7. How did Dr. Smith's response to Ty's concern impact diversity, equity, and inclusion in the course? What might Ty be feeling? What could be a more appropriate response from the teacher to Ty?
8. Awareness >> Action. What do you need to learn more about? How will you improve DEI within your sphere of influence?