

## Addressing Common Obstructions to Inclusive Teaching

<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>This resource guide, adapted from <a href="#">Harvard’s Christensen Center for Teaching &amp; Learning</a>, reviews potential “obstructions” instructors may have when it comes to creating an inclusive environment and suggestions on how to address them. As instructors, we must constantly examine our pedagogical practices and self-reflect on practices that hinder inclusivity in the classroom. While we may make mistakes, and that is expected, we can still make proactive efforts to limit them. As instructors looking to build an inclusive classroom, it is vital to ensure that all students are recognized in the classroom but that we do not single any one student or group out for instructional purposes.</p> <p>Inclusive teaching is not just adhering to certain guidelines or principles, but it is an active mindset and approach to instruction. It requires that instructors take on the mindset of accessibility, inclusivity, and equity. This resource guide offers practical steps one can take immediately to foster a more inclusive environment.</p>
<p><b>Goals</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To provide instructors with potential obstructions to inclusive teaching that may come up while instructing.</li> <li>2) To encourage instructors to constantly consider how they can improve inclusivity in their classroom.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p>This resource focuses on ways to improve accessibility and inclusivity in your classroom. This list is not exhaustive, and it is always a good practice to consult with the <a href="#">Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)</a> office for support with accommodations.</p> <p>In any discipline, instructors can take deliberate steps to ensure that all students feel welcomed and valued as part of the learning community. The following practices can help to create an intentionally inclusive environment in any class.</p>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>As mentioned in the overview, we are bound to make mistakes in our teaching. While going through this list, we may come across examples that we can relate to. It is important that we recognize where we have made mistakes in the past in order to learn from them. If inclusive teaching is a new concept, building up your pedagogical practices to be more inclusive will take time and effort. While you continue to build a more inclusive classroom, this list will be a helpful reference point.</p>
<p><b>Citation</b></p>	<p>Adapted from ‘Teaching by the Case Method: Diversity and Inclusion,’ Christensen Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard Business School, Copyright President and Fellows of Harvard College. Adapted with permission. 2021.</p>

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<p><b>Generalizing About Students Based on their Group Membership</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Using differential call patterns or making comments that suggest that students with military experience are tough or that engineering students like to do numbers.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Drawing on student experiences can greatly enrich the class discussion, as long as instructors avoid making generalizations about students based on those experiences.</p>
<p><b>Asking a Student to Speak for an Entire Demographic Group</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Calling on a French student for the French or European perspective on an issue.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Include in the conversation students from both within and outside of the demographic group under discussion, with an explicit understanding that none of these students' perspectives are necessarily representative of their entire demographic group. If faced with multiple instances in which specific demographic groups are being discussed, use varied approaches to calling patterns (e.g., do not always begin by calling on a member of the demographic group in question).</p>
<p><b>Unintentionally Marginalizing Students with Invisible Social Identities</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Using language that implicitly holds as a norm (e.g., heterosexuality, Democratic Party affiliation, high socioeconomic status, or heavy drinking during social events).</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Use neutral references (e.g., "partner," "spouse"), avoid in-group/out-group comments (e.g., "those people" or "people like us"). Avoid partisan political comments.</p>
<p><b>Challenging Students Differentially Based on their Demographic Group</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Disproportionately calling on male students to perform quantitative analyses or female students to discuss shopping or work-life balance.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Probe student comments, engage students in tough role plays, pose difficult questions to all students, irrespective of gender, race, ESL status, or other group membership, to provide them with equal opportunity for development.</p>
<p><b>Using U.S.-centric (or Sports) References</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Referencing baseball to illustrate a point.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Use analogies that are broadly accessible to make all students feel included in the discussion. Include references to non-U.S. contexts.</p>

<p><b>Assuming that Students are Comfortable Revealing their Invisible Identities in the Classroom</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Students may reveal their sexual orientation, a history of physical illness, veteran status, political or religious affiliation to an instructor, or a few section mates but not to the entire class.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Be mindful of unintentionally disclosing private information about students. If a student raises their hand during a class discussion relevant to such private information – and you call on that student – do not specify the reason for doing so.</p>
<p><b>Assuming that a Student Belongs to a Particular Demographic Group Based on the Student's Appearance</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Inferring that a student grew up in Asia because the student looks Asian or assuming that an Asian student is from China.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Ask whether anyone with experience in a particular area would like to share it with the class. Use the information on class cards to learn about student backgrounds.</p>
<p><b>Mispronouncing Student Names</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Mispronouncing or avoiding the use of students' names when calling on them to participate or when referring to their comments.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Carefully review pronunciations provided on student class cards. Announce on the first day of class that you want to make sure to pronounce everyone's name correctly and encourage students to let you know if you are mispronouncing their name. Reach out directly to students whose names you find difficult to pronounce and ask for guidance.</p>
<p><b>Reserving Discussions of Issues Related to Diversity Primarily to Gender and/or Racial Minority Protagonists</b></p>	<p><b>Obstruction example:</b> Only using a case with a woman protagonist to discuss gender discrimination at work or work/life challenges, which may signal that these issues are relevant only to women or minorities and/or reduce the protagonist to a single social identity.</p> <p><b>Suggestion:</b> Discuss issues related to social identities across cases, regardless of the protagonist's demographic group (e.g., "Would the protagonist's actions be perceived differently if he were a woman or a racial or sexual-orientation minority?")</p>