

Welcome. My name is Kristen Hardy. I use she, her pronouns. I'm a university instructor, and I've taught and researched in the social sciences and the humanities, as well as in science and healthcare contexts. My scholarly interests encompass a range of material that relates to equity diversity and inclusion, particularly in the areas of disability, gender, and body weight and size. My own identities and experiences as a fat and disabled woman have definitely influenced my academic interests. For many of your students, their identities will also impact the subjects they're interested in studying, whether directly or indirectly. And quite likely, your own identities impact your teaching or research areas too. It's worth reflecting on how who we are has shaped the choices we've made about what we study and do. In the first module of this course, we were introduced by Laura Forsythe to the first people's principles of learning, which act as a touchstone for these modules. Several of these principles speak to the ways in which our sense of self and of our place in the world, our relationships with others, both human and other than human, and our experiences are key parts of an indigenous model of learning. While these principles seek to capture some common elements within indigenous pedagogies, all of us, including those of us who are settlers on these lands, like myself, can learn from the values and priorities to which they point.

For those of us who work with students, we hope to see them flourish, professionally and personally, during and after their studies. Our primary interests are to foster and facilitate student learning and growth.

Depending on our field, this may include the acquisition and production of knowledge, development of practical skills, and positive change in values, perspectives, and ways of living and acting in the world. But when students don't perceive themselves and the communities to which they belong, as acknowledged, accepted, and reflected in positive ways in course materials, teaching practices, activities and assignments, and classroom environments. They're less likely to be engaged, committed, excited about learning, and willing to bring the insights of their own lived experience to their studies and classroom interactions. Likewise, when the sort of inclusive environment is present, learners from diverse backgrounds are more likely to excel and to find their educational experiences meaningful. Inclusive pedagogical practices help all students to achieve both a fuller understanding of the world and a sense of themselves as valued and empowered learners and changemakers. I hope you enjoy the material that follows.