

Getting to know your learners and developing relationships is a pillar in best practices within education. Never mind EDI. There are multiple ways in which you can do this in your classrooms. And we've provided a few strategies. But I wanted to speak specifically about one of the ways in which I get to know my learners, whether I have 27 learners in my classroom or over 220. Using the online platform offered by my institution, I invite my learners to share who they are. I model in a post, who I am, where I am from and of, what brings me to the Faculty of Education, and what I hope we're going to do together. I then invite all of the learners to do the same. In this activity, I get a sense of who is in the classrooms that time, beyond the numbers in which we have assigned them or their university emails, I get a sense that who has just joined us, who are newcomers, who are Indigenous, who are single mothers, who are struggling with their education and have come numerous times to complete their degrees. All of this they share willingly because I have shared of myself. And then I have a sense of who is in that space when I'm lecturing or when I'm speaking to various things that we're learning, I can lead into their real-world experience. I can ensure that I am providing links or comments or photographs or all of these things that will include them in that space. I have genuinely either heard them if we get a chance to do a circle and share or that I have read each of their responses. It takes time, of course, respond to every single student, especially if there's 220. But I assure you that it is time well spent. I have, in my own experience a richer connection with those learners. I've had repeat students come back and take classes multiple times with me because we have a relationship and a bond, in which I acknowledge them as a person and an individual in a very large institution. I invite all of you to do the same.