

## STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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I treasure my role as a post-secondary educator it has offered me a unique opportunity to positively impact others in ways that are meaningful and that bring me a profound sense of purpose and joy. Central to my professional role is supporting my students in meeting their educational goals. To better frame my 'teaching philosophy' as related to supporting Aboriginal learners I will lean upon the language used by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) in identifying the central tenets of respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility and of Goulet and Goulet (2014) in their identification that 'effective teaching for Indigenous students is about connections to the content and process of learning' and relationships among and with students (p. 78).

While I approach all facilitated learning experiences with purpose and desire to support student growth and affect positive change, this seems to take on an even greater focus for me within the context of Aboriginal education. As a non-indigenous person I recognize that I cannot fully and completely understand or appreciate the experience of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, yet I do feel a responsibility by nature of my upbringing, my education and my professional role to work within my sphere of influence towards a reconciled and brighter future for all. This responsibility moves me to first listen with the intent of broadening my own appreciation of what other 'ways of knowing' may exist, that may have import and that must be included in the academic discourse. I'm grateful to have had friends, students, colleagues, mentors, elders, aunts, uncles and countless others who have been generous and patient with me in sharing different ways of thinking and understanding the world. In turn I look to reciprocate this generosity by integrating, adapting, bending, and yes at times subverting the established curricula in an aim to advance the collective understanding among my students and to raise the horizon of ambition of what the future may look like should we collectively choose a path towards reconciliation.

I strive to craft relevant learning opportunities that stimulate, inspire and challenge. When my students are engaged with key concepts, speaking with one another, questioning the status quo and offering insights that are intended to create positive change, there are few other places I would prefer to be. I am convinced that the 'classroom' must be a safe place for understanding knowledge that has come from before, imagining future ways of thinking and exploring different approaches to practice with a sense of urgency in order to improve the human condition and the environments that we thrive in.

My goal is to design and implement transformative learning experiences that have the potential to shift student's perspectives on themselves and the world around them, while equipping them with the requisite skills, knowledge and understanding that will afford them the ability to thrive and make positive impacts on the constituents and communities they will serve. I am convinced that the most effective way to facilitate this type of learning, particularly for Aboriginal learners, is to give proper respect and recognition to the relationships between process, place and people. When learning is applied, place based, experiential and respects traditional knowledge the experience for all is profound. I am extremely grateful to have had an opportunity to contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of a series of successful educational programs focused on supporting Aboriginal learners.