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Diversity Statement

When it comes to people, I have always been taught to treat someone as how you would like to be treated, a stranger is just a friend I have yet met. I have always carried this with me. I love meeting new people and learning about them. Growing up in Wyoming we are blessed to get to learn about different cultures from across the world. The Jamaican bobsled team practices in Evanston, WY which was 35 miles from my hometown. They would come to the schools and allow us students to meet the team and we would ask them all sorts of questions. In Pinedale where I live now, the town employs many folks from Jamaica and Mexico. I get to know both cultures because I have become friends with many of these folks.

When it comes to teaching there are so many different diversity students. Whether it is gender, race, culture, or a disability. I have taught autism students and down syndrome students to show market lambs for their fair project. At the schools I have substituted numerous times for the special education teachers because they request me. They know how well I get along with students who have a disability and have a way of getting them to work.

At Western Wyoming Community College in my photography course, I have had students from Africa, Europe, and other countries. I have had a student who went by they/them pronouns and a student with a learning disability. As a college professor I think it is exciting to get to have students of all diversity in the class.

For my student with they/them pronouns I would approach them by their name. Anytime I needed to tell the class about the student's work I used their name instead to avoid the conflict of pronouns. This seems to help all students be more comfortable in the learning environment.

I had a student with a learning disability, and I took it upon myself to ask him what he needed from me to succeed. I could tell from the first assignment that something was not clicking, so after class I asked if I could talk to him. I asked him, what help does he need from me. Do you need examples of what the assignment is about, or do I need to print you a copy of it for you to read and keep with you. He asked if he could bring in his recorder so he could listen to the lectures over again, that was totally fine with me. After doing that and having the printed lectures and seeing more examples of what would work for the assignment, he started succeeding on his assignments. He grew so much as a photographer that he blew me away with his final project.

I have learned as a professor if you take time to get to know your students then diversity is no longer an issue. They feel comfortable to be in class because they feel welcomed.