Welcome. My name is Kristin Hardy. I use she-her pronouns. As an image description for accessibility, I'm a white, fat, disabled, middle-aged, cisgender woman with dark blonde hair and black-rimmed glasses, wearing a blue blazer, seated in an office with shelves of books behind me. I live and work on Treaty 1 territory in Winnipeg, Manitoba, or Winnipeg, Manitoba, which is on the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg, Anishinaabeg. This territory is also a place of significance for the Dinasuline and the Inuit, some of whom have been living here for generations. As a settler-Canadian, I'm profoundly grateful to these nations and their people for caring for the land on which I live and work, and for shaping my own ways of seeing and understanding the world, including how I approach my teaching work. I'm a university instructor and an interdisciplinary researcher, and I've taught in a wide variety of fields in the social sciences and humanities. My own experiences, both good and bad, as a disabled student and educator, have helped to shape my awareness of the importance of accessibility in teaching and learning contexts. In this module, we'll be exploring the ways that the Universal Design for Learning framework can help us in making our courses and other teaching-related work more accessible. In working with students, we want to see all of them succeed. Successful learning can look many different ways, depending on what we're teaching and what students want or need to take away from our courses.

It may be practical skills, a general understanding of a broad field or discipline, in-depth knowledge of a niche area, or an appreciation for a form of creative expression. Teaching online introduces some new challenges, but also a range of possibilities, including many that have the potential to reduce barriers and increase accessibility. Incorporating approaches drawn from Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, is a way to minimize the need for special accommodations and proactively address access holistically, making the learning experience better and more accessible to both disabled and non-disabled students.

It can also make teaching more effective and facilitate greater enjoyment of learning. Most instructors can probably relate to how rewarding it feels to have a student tell them that they genuinely loved a course, that they've come to feel more confident in particular skills, or that they learned to see something in a new way.

Helping as many students as possible to achieve this kind of transformative learning experience is our shared goal, and UDL is a set of lenses and tools to help us achieve this. I hope you enjoy going through this module and that you come away inspired to continue to enhance the accessibility of your own courses.