

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Hello and welcome to You Got This!, a podcast about teaching and learning and sustaining community for everyone at Thompson Rivers University. I'm your host, Brenna Clarke Gray, coordinator of educational technologies. And this podcast is a project of your friends over at Learning Technology & Innovation. We're housed within Open Learning, but we support the whole campus community. I record this podcast in Tk'emlups te Secwepemc within the unceded traditional lands of Secwepemcú'ecw, where I hope to learn and grow in community with all of you. My friends, I am recording this on March 21st. Spring has sprung, the grass is riz, where's your head at? Because I am recognizing that I am basically a sentient house plant. And now that there's sunshine, I'm doing a lot better. Let's get into it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Things feel a lot more hopeful when it's sunny. This is why my nine years in the lower mainland did not do me any good, mental health wise. I love the sun. I don't mind if it's cold, it can stay as cold as it likes. When it's sunny, ugh, it makes all the difference. But now of course it is warming up. I don't know. Things seem so much more possible. Now that the vernal equinox has passed and we've sprung forward, which I hate doing but don't at all mind the aftermath of, it's amazing how much more seems possible. This is all things that I know, but have to be reminded of over and over and over again.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

At the beginning of the pandemic and the work from home period, I was so good about getting out for a walk every single day. But of course at that point, things were starting to open up weather wise. And I was working like a bazillion hours a week. So getting away from my desk at lunchtime didn't seem like a big deal to find the time to do because I knew that I would spend the time, probably that night, doing more stuff, answering more tickets, helping more folks. I'm trying to guard my evenings and weekends a little more so I feel less flexible, like getting up and going for a walk during the day. And also just my days are so full. It's like the video calls all day. When am I going to go for a walk? So this weekend, it really just kind of struck me how much less time I've been spending outside and how much better I feel when I do. I'm reflecting on this because it's just such a good reminder that there's a lot of things that impact mood, right?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Situation on campus these days is rough for a lot of us. Budgets have just come down. There's cuts. We're dealing with an austerity framework for yet another year. People are struggling mental health wise for all kinds of reasons. The anxiety about returning to campus has maybe dissipated. And then all of a sudden the mask question comes into effect, which changes the game for lots of people. We're back to normal mostly, but many of us are still not socializing in the ways we did before the pandemic. And for some people, that's good. For some people, it's not. There's just a lot of things that go into the way we are feeling about work and about how work fits in with our lives. And I'm just really struck this week that there are so many things pushing against our ability to feel positive.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

But you know, the term is slowly coming to an end. Sometimes it seems like it's really slowly coming to an end. And it's hopefully a moment that we can try to find some time to regroup. Many of us teaching and working through the summer, that regrouping is going to not take the form of a long time of rest or break. But I do think that the change of season, the reminder of spring, the hopefulness of the sun, maybe it can help us figure out what it is we need to feel good.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm recording this early in the week because I have two days off this week, which I'm very excited about. And I have actually booked off one entire one to spend outside. I'm just going to sit in and read, because again, I am a sentient house plant. It's a good reminder for me and maybe for you that there are actually little things that we can do to really feel more imbalance and more hopeful, particularly if the context of your own role, the institutional politics and the struggles that we're all having to get through the day are really weighing on you. I'm trying to choose hopefulness this week. It's not always possible, but I'm going to try and I'm going to invite you to try too.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Speaking of hope, I have the most delightful interview to share with you. I know I've said that the last few weeks, but been interviewing really delightful people. Kayla Sanford is someone who makes it her mission to help students feel like they belong here at TRU. And gosh, there's nothing more hopeful than that. I'm going to let Kayla take it from here.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay. Today I am here with Kayla Sanford. Kayla, I'm really excited today to talk about your relationship to the university because you've worn a lot of hats and you've been both a student and a member of staff here. But I think maybe I'll ask you to introduce your current role and where people might find you on campus and then we'll do some backtracking from there.

Kayla Sanford:

Sounds good. So hello everyone. My name is Kayla Sanford. Currently, I'm a learning strategist in Orientation and Transitions. What that means is that I help to develop and deliver programming for new students to welcome them to TRU and support them throughout their first year.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Kayla, you are also maybe currently or just recently finished as an MEd student, is that correct?

Kayla Sanford:

No. So I did a dual degree program. I've finished all of my coursework for a bachelor of arts, majoring in psychology. And then I have two more courses left for my bachelor of science, majoring in biology. So, busy.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, fantastic. I am all over the place. I think because I know you through Stephanie Tate and I knew that was what she was doing so I kind of just transposed. Okay. So this is fascinating to me because you're working as a learning strategist. I'm really going to want to dig into that role, because gosh, is there a moment where transitions are more apparent than right now? So I want to talk about that for sure. But I'm also really interested because as a student, you've taken courses across multiple faculties. And prior to your role as a learning strategist, you were, I believe a student ambassador/mentor, right? Is that what you were doing in the last position?

Kayla Sanford:

Yes. I'm still finishing up being an orientation and transitions mentor on campus. I've done that role for four years now and it's been so enriching during my time here. And then I also, for two semesters, was a career ambassador because I've also done the co-op program.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. That's what I mean. You wore every hat on campus. It's awesome. It's great because I can't think of anybody to invite on the show who has a better sense of this moment for students, right? Because not only are you a student, but you're working every day with students, whether it's going through transitions or managing co-op, that kind of thing. To me, you're a person who has a real sense of what our students are experiencing right now. Do you feel that way? Do you feel like you kind of could maybe speak to how our students are handling this particular moment?

Kayla Sanford:

Absolutely. It's been so interesting having kind of been a student and a mentor before the pandemic and then as we transitioned to online learning throughout that year, and then now obviously transitioning back to in-person learning. It's been so interesting getting to see how during the different time periods, different sort of struggles or hardships have expressed themselves. So for example, with online learning, a huge thing was accessibility for some student or things such as feeling really lonely, which that's true any year, but it was especially salient with online learning. Whereas now a lot of it has been sort of readjusting to in-person exams and experiencing anxiety about being on campus with COVID and what that looks like. So it's been really interesting seeing the different things that have been stressors for students now versus before.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I feel so much for students because I have felt at sea for the last two years and I've been doing the same job the whole time. The day to day objectives of what I have to accomplish and the context in which I am accomplishing them, like I work a little bit from home, I work a little bit from my office but I have an office where I close the door and I'm totally in control of my space, that's a very different and very privileged position to be in this moment where there is just so much flux.

Kayla Sanford:

Yeah.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I don't want to steer the conversation towards the negative necessarily. I really want to talk about a range of your experiences at TRU, but I do want to pick up on that note you mentioned about anxiety because it's something that we're seeing in the student support research, right? Like increased reporting, self-report, increased use of counseling services around this issue of anxiety. And I'm wondering if you could say a little bit more about how you're seeing that in the students you support or even in the students like you're in classes with and how we are managing it as an institution. Would you mind talking a little bit about that?

Kayla Sanford:

Yeah. Mental health's actually something I'm really passionate about, so that's very exciting for me. I think to some extent, I think the amount of stressors that we have right now, because we're all obviously being in a pandemic, there's so much going on and so many more stressors than usual that it

makes sense for anxiety to be really peak right now. I know even for myself at the start of the pandemic, I was having panic attacks for the first time since I was a teenager to see how the sort of intensity of everything that's going on can accumulate to make things really difficult for students, which is already a very stressful experience being in post-secondary. Much less without all of the unknowns that came with being very adaptive as a learner, if I can put it that way.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's a nice, positive spin. Being very adaptive as a learner. I like it. I like it a lot.

Kayla Sanford:

I think there are some ways that we can improve and some ways that we're doing really well. I really appreciate how open TRU is about talking about mental health and trying to provide those resources. I think that the stigma here can be a little bit less than some at some other institutions, from what I've talked to with other friends and other people that I know who are post-secondary students. I mean, it's kind of prevalent everywhere where there's just not enough mental health care because there's not enough people, there's not enough funding. There's not enough of any of it for the amount we're seeing. And again, at the same time, part of the good thing about having reduced stigma and increased sort of awareness of these services is that students are better able to access them. But the, not downside, but with that means that there's more students who potentially feel more comfortable reaching out and making that disclosure and trying to seek help. So I think it's a little bit of both.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Obviously, anxiety can be a problem in our lives for sure. Generalized anxiety disorder is a thing. I'm not taking anything away from that. But I also think that anxiety is like a natural adaptive response to not having enough information to feel like you can make a good decision, right? Right now, I'm going through this. I just booked a trip home for the first time since last summer. My dad's immunocompromised. And so we were really threading this needle of like, "Okay, once my son has had his second shot, we're going to go and get everything booked." And then all of a sudden the mask mandates disappear everywhere and it's like, "Okay, can I keep us safe until we arrive there so I can keep my dad safe?" You know? And it's like everything is always changing. The information we have access to is, as we all know, really imperfect. And I'm not surprised that we're all really experiencing anxiety around that.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I think about that with students who are also going through, say your first year was in-person, your second year was fully online, and your third year you're back in in-person but in-person doesn't feel anything like in-person felt in your first year. Gosh, it's almost like you're a first year three times over, right?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about supporting students through transition and if you're seeing maybe an increased need or maybe an increased experience of transition? It just feels to me like, if that was your student experience, in a traditional four-year program, by third year you're really kind of hitting your stride socially and contextually and you know where everything is and you've got everything figured out. And it seems like I feel for our third year students right now, because that is probably not the experience that they're having.

Kayla Sanford:

Yeah. So in our department, with Orientation and Transitions, traditionally we focused for the most part on first year students. And that kind of had to change this year. What was really interesting is for orientation this year, one, we had to be very adaptive and creative for what we could offer safely to keep students safe but still try and give those opportunities for social connections and to get to know campus and all of those things that you traditionally get during an orientation. But we also had a second catchment of second year students who potentially have the academic stuff down path. They've had their exam seasons. They've written their papers. They've experienced the classes to some extent, obviously in a different way, but fully new to campus. And so one of our challenges was figuring out what we could do to offer relevant supports for both orientation and transitions for the different populations, which again, falls on a lot of being adaptive and trying to really listen to students and reach out to them with what they're wanting and with what they need.

Kayla Sanford:

What we've kind of seen a lot in our department, what's nice is we have our group of peer mentors and ambassadors. Some of them are second year students who have gone through that experience, and others are third year students who have gone through kind of what you're describing too. And so we get to really interact with first year students from that lens of having these diverse educational experiences, but also hear from them too in our role with what they're struggling with. And a lot of it really is just kind of getting back into the groove and trying to figure out what your educational journey looks like, which, I mean, mine has been with a lot of toss and turns anyways. So I think that there's something to be said for the fact that your traditional four years isn't necessarily what most students go through anyways. Yeah, definitely a really unique experience for students.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, it's interesting too, because we've known that especially in the province of B.C. for some time, right? We have a really mobile student population even compared to other provinces in Canada, just in terms of students try out different institutions. Particularly for students who are geographically located in the lower mainland. I used to teach at Douglas College, I'd have students in my classes who were like technically SFU students or KPU students or Capilano students and they'd be in my class because it was offered at the time that was appealing to them, right? We've set up a structure that is designed for students to be able to be mobile like that. And obviously here, we've got students who move between Open Learning and Campus courses. They might have courses from other institutions that they're bringing in. But it's weird because we have that structure, and yet I think in many ways it took a pandemic for us recognize that like, well actually, yeah, that first year, second year, third year, fourth year progression, the way we think about it is a pretty outdated way. Most students don't make a movement through university that really looks like that.

Kayla Sanford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. And so for us, like speaking specifically for transitions from first year, one of the things we're starting to kind of be more interested in is connecting with the students who haven't had your traditional out of high school moving away from home and learning how to do all of the adult things like cleaning and doing your laundry and cooking your food and budgeting and all of those things. So trying to obviously still support those students through that in terms of developing not just the academic success but also the personal and social, but also trying to get a better understanding of how we can support learners and newcomers to TRU who have different experiences, whether that's, like

you said, transferring from other institutions or if they're a mature learner who's been away for a while and coming back, and how we can offer targeted programming to really support that transition no matter what it looks like.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I had on some of the supplemental instruction leaders last semester. One of the things that they said was one of them... Well, they were both mature students, but one of them really said that like when they arrived at TRU and they found out there was an orientation for mature students, they were blown away because none of their other sort of experience of university had felt welcoming to them and what they had heard from peers didn't feel or sound welcoming. But they got here and there was this sense of like, "Actually, you do belong. Here's a set of resources that are tailored specifically to your experience."

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It was a real resonant moment for me just to remember that belongingness is a really important piece, right? And it's transient. We feel more or less belonging in different courses, in experiences on campus. And that's true for faculty and staff as well. Belongingness is not static or fixed, but belongingness does really require an invitation in, right? It's not something that happens just because we're all learning on the same campus together. So it was interesting for me to hear from her perspective about those efforts. It's really nice to hear that your office has such a clear sense of the diversity of experiences that our students are arriving with.

Kayla Sanford:

I love that you bring up belongingness because that's something that I would argue from what I've seen from working with so many new students over the years, including master's students and undergraduate students ones from high school, mature students from all sorts of different backgrounds is. I would argue belongingness, if you don't have that, then the other pieces don't fall into places easily. Obviously in a post-secondary institution, the reason you're here is to learn so the academic supports. Bolstering that is obviously important, but I think if you don't have that social peace and that belongingness, I don't think you can really move forward to the academic part. Because what motivation are you going to have as a student if you don't feel like you belong there? Like maybe in your classes, that if you don't have belonging there, then you're not going to necessarily feel motivated or feel as capable of succeeding as if you know what supports you have and you know that you have people around you.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, I love that. I think it's so important. I guess this is a moment where I want to invite you to be a little reflective. You have had this broad range of experiences on our campus. There's an argument that you have a uniquely comprehensive view of the institution. I'm wondering if you could share a little bit how you think your particular journey has sort of brought you to the work you're doing right now and helps you do that work effectively.

Kayla Sanford:

When I got here, I was just out of high school, 17 years old. I had a full 10 year plan. I was like, "I came in to do my bachelor of arts in psychology and then I'm going to go on and do a master's and then a PhD in clinical psychology." And then I finished my first year and I was like, "Wait, I don't want to do that." So then it was kind of like-

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It sounds familiar.

Kayla Sanford:

Yeah, an 18 year old identity crisis. The jobs that I'm in now and the positions that I'm interested in, in terms of going forward in my career, are jobs that I didn't even know existed. And so by actually by meeting Stephanie Tate-

Brenna Clarke Gray:

We're a big fan of Stephanie Tate, like big Stephanie fans in this office.

Kayla Sanford:

She's amazing. I adore her. I was living off campus alone. I didn't really have any friends. Again, coming back to that sense of belonging, I felt it a little bit on campus, but I didn't feel it overall in my life. Not in Kamloops. I didn't really have anybody. And so by branching out and applying to be an orientation and transitions mentor, it opened up so many doors for me, just kind of making that singular choice of talking to Stephanie because I recognized her and asking her, "So you're really involved in TRU. What's that like?" And it's opened up just so many opportunities for me. So I think getting involved is really what made my experience here. Because I didn't plan on doing co-op. I didn't plan on doing any of these things. Just that one choice of putting myself out there really just completely changed the game for me.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Your reflection is so interesting because it's not dissimilar to mine. When I started University at Carleton, I was absolutely certain that I was going to study political science. I don't know. Step B and C were a little bit murky, but then I was going to be prime minister. That was the trajectory. And then I got to the end of my first year. I had started at Carleton as a special student so I was only taking like two classes. They have this really wonderful program at Carleton where you can enroll in any two classes. And if you get a B as an average across them in the first year, then you're admitted to the Bachelor of Arts Program. So it's like very sort of straightforward way of accessing postsecondary. But it meant that I wasn't really very connected to campus because I was part-time. I was taking one of the courses. This was old school when you could take courses on cable TV in Ottawa. So I was-

Kayla Sanford:

Beautiful.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yep. Channel 65, baby. Taking my courses. And I was having this moment of like, "Okay, I don't really..." I like political science but I found out there was a second year stats course, so I was like, "Well, I'm not majoring in this anymore. That's obviously over forever for me." And I didn't love what I was studying, but I also didn't have much connection to campus. I ended up... I was invited to apply for something very similar to this supplemental leaders program that we have here. I applied and got that job. And it was through that job that I found... First of all, I figured out I like teaching, like a lot. But also I found community, right? And I found a group of people who were going through very similar struggles to me, but who were succeeding at it. I had all these models of success all of a sudden.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And so, yeah, it's really interesting. When we talk about the programs that we fund on campus, I think sometimes we overlook the importance of opportunities for students to be leaders and mentors. And the kinds of jobs on campus that give you a community sort of ready made, that can be really valuable. Like I'm an introvert man. If I have to find connection to people outside of like a structured setting, it is not going to happen. The structured setting is really valuable to me in terms of figuring out like, find who your people are. It's really, really important.

Kayla Sanford:

Mm-mm (negative). I think that's something that over my "too long" at TRU as a student... That's the running joke in my office, is they'll ask me, "What year do you want us to put on the postcard? What year are you?" And I'm like, "Just pick one. Any of them. It's been so long. Just make something up." But it's been so encouraging seeing... I don't remember there being any peer mentor programs during my first year. I was on residents council and there were residents advisors, but I don't remember the same types of peer mentor groups being available. So it's been very exciting seeing... Even my first year in orientation and transitions, that was the first year that we offered the New to TRU Peer Mentor Program.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah.

Kayla Sanford:

And so seeing that kind of start from us each having four mentees and trying to figure out what we're doing, what that looks like, to having during the winter of 2021 semester, I think I had like 15 or 16 master's students.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh wow.

Kayla Sanford:

And in fall semester this year we all had 19 or 20 new students. So it's been so exciting to see this specific program grow, but also see other peer mentor programs on campus startups, so things such as like the Arts Ambassadors or Career Ambassadors. And just seeing that there are so many more opportunities for students to get involved and also seeing it become something that I think students can maybe be a little bit more aware of with things like last week we did a Peer Mentor Extravaganza where we had to tables with a whole bunch of different peer mentor groups set up and students who could come and see what opportunities were available and hear from students who were in those roles on what it's like to do that and what it's like to be involved.

Kayla Sanford:

So I think having those opportunities to see what's out there, and like you said, to take those opportunities when they're right in front of you, I think it makes it a lot more accessible for students, versus, like most students aren't going to go and look on the website and see if there's something available. First off, websites can be nightmarish to navigate. Yeah, nightmarish. But also that's just an extra step. And then you're cold reaching out to somebody which is terrifying already, especially if

you're feeling disconnected and you're not feeling any sense of connection. So having those opportunities where we can get out and interact with students, whether that's in-person or on Instagram lives, I think that that makes a huge difference.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. Sorry. I'm reflecting on my own experience as I think about how important it was for someone to reach out and say... I mean, in retrospect, the email that I got inviting me... Actually I think it was a paper letter. Oh my God. I'm so old. In retrospect, the letter that I got inviting me to apply for the Supplemental Instruction Program was a form letter. It went to everybody who had achieved a certain grade above whatever in the course. But what was important about it was that it was the first time anyone from the university had reached out in any capacity, right?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And so it was like, it didn't matter that it was a form letter because I didn't, A, know that it was at the time, and B, what it represented was like, "Oh, somebody has noticed that I exist." And that's really shockingly powerful. I mean, especially a traditional age student is at this time in their life when they feel very invisible often and they're still trying to figure out like what their place is going to be in the world. So, I mean, just the act of someone seeing you, that's extremely powerful in that moment for sure.

Kayla Sanford:

Absolutely. Like I said, I mean my first time meeting Stephanie, I was volunteering for something for the City of Kamloops because I was, again, sitting at home. I lived in Bachelor Heights. So I was way off campus living alone, calling my mom way too often. I think the hours she spent on the phone with me, that poor woman.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yes.

Kayla Sanford:

But I remember her just sending me volunteer opportunities. And she's like, "In high school you were literally never home because you were always out doing things and extracurriculars. So maybe try doing that." And so I committed to the one volunteer opportunity. It was in a training group with Stephanie Tate. I heard her say she's involved at TRU. I proceeded to say not a single word to her. Nothing. Left. Did my thing. But I ran into her at Long Night Against Procrastination, which I went to alone, because again, I still had no friends. She was the one who she remembered my face and was like, "Hey, weren't you..." And so having her... She acted as that person for me of being like, "Hey, you did this. You made the effort to go out and try something. You'd be perfect for this position. You can put my name down as somebody who recommended you." And I was like, "You've known me for 10 minutes." I don't know what exactly did she saw, but I'm so eternally grateful that I got to meet her.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Everything is relational, right? Student success is relational, and belonging is relational. When we don't make the effort to make those connections, once you're sort of established in a space or a role or a position, taking the time to do exactly what Stephanie does very well, which is connect people.

Kayla Sanford:

She's amazing.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

She is, right? It's so important. And when I hear about someone like you, Kayla, in the role you're in now, I have the same thought, which is, that's the perfect person to be mentoring and guiding and supporting students through transition because you've experienced it, right? And you aren't... I don't know. When I talked to Jenna Goddard from the learning centre, we had this conversation about the importance of giving students models of success that feel real, right? It's one thing for the professor of a class to say, "Well, this is how you write an essay." And it's another thing for a second year student who nailed the course to say, "Well, this is how you write an essay." And likewise, I think it's really important that students see, in someone like you, a range of possible ways to engage with the institution and to move through a degree program, right? That there isn't one cookie cutter that works for everybody. I think it's just so important that someone like you is in a role that's visible where you're talking about that and you're explaining sort of how you come to the position you're in now. It's really valuable for students to have those kinds of models.

Kayla Sanford:

It's very kind for you to say. Thank you. And I think too, I think there's so much value in sharing the perceived failures are the things that maybe didn't go so well. Like I said, it was not my plan to be a student for seven years and do multiple programs. Even the doing the dual degree thing, that was kind of a last minute, "Oh, we're in COVID and I don't want to do these hard science courses online. How many courses would it take for me to do my arts degree?" So also a very last minute unplanned decision.

Kayla Sanford:

I think by sharing that you can kind of start with this goal and have everything completely crumble and everything in your life feel like it's burnt to the ground and feel like you're truly at rock bottom, whatever that looks like for you, sharing that you can come back from that, and not just come back from that but come back from that and thrive and figure out the person that you are in this environment and how that's going to serve you in your future, I think that seeing and seeing people who have had different successes and different failures is so... I'd argue that's maybe even more valuable than the success part is the failure part.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I agree with you so much. I think we work in a sector that has traditionally really focused on narratives of success, right? The academic models are typically something that goes all the way through to the PhD level and beyond, into faculty communities. So often, we only ever hear the sort of like "failure story" once somebody is in a position of success, right?

Kayla Sanford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Because it's really vulnerable to talk about failure before you're finished, right? That's seems-

Kayla Sanford:

Oh, it feels terrible.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. But it's so important, right? Because if the only time you ever hear about failure is when it's already been kind of woven into a tale of success, it's really easy to say like, "Okay, well, yeah, but that person's a rock star. Okay. Yeah, but that person is this or that person is that, and that's not me" whereas actually having someone with you in the trenches to navigate through that experience I think is huge. I'm so glad to see our student resources being kind of invested there. Because I think just exactly what you said, I think that's what really will make the difference for students who are looking for that connection.

Kayla Sanford:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And we see that all the time, especially with the Peer Mentor Program and with all of the student, where in our communications we very much encourage them to share, like, "This is the thing that I did wrong in my first year, or not wrong per se, but something I wish I would've done differently." And so taking those experiences and sharing them with students to make the waters a little bit less rocky and confusing for them. Or even we did a workshop on procrastination last semester.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, I should have come.

Kayla Sanford:

Oh, two days before that I had pulled an all-nighter because I just started an assignment that was the next day.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, that's amazing.

Kayla Sanford:

And so it was something where I was like, "Hey, I'm this student who's doing these cool things and is successful in senses of academics, whatever," and yet there I was at the start saying "All of these things are true and these are tools that you can use in identifying why you're procrastinating and all of those things, but also give yourself some compassion." Don't be like me if you can avoid it. But even if you are, you can still get through it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah.

Kayla Sanford:

It won't feel as nice, but you can get through it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

You know what? That's hugely important though. It's so important. I think you're right when you said that makes more of a difference than just the pure models of success. I think you're right, because it's more human, right? And it's more relatable. I don't love the word relatable, but it is. It is more relatable. And yeah, I just think that's so important. These are my favourite conversations to have on the show because I love feeling like we're in good hands. And Kayla, I think that our students are in really good hands with you. It's just lovely to have this opportunity to talk.

Kayla Sanford:

Thank you so much. I was very excited for this opportunity, especially having listened to your podcast, I'm a very quiet Twitter following fan of yours. So I was very excited about the opportunity.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well thank you so much. And I hope we can chat again sometimes soon.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So that is it for Season 2, Episode 23 of You Got This! As always, if you want to write to us, you can email me, I'm bgray@tru.ca. I'm also on Twitter @brennacgray. In both cases, that's gray with an A. All of our show notes and transcripts are posted at yougotthis.trubox.ca. And of course you can always comment on individual episodes there.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip, and it's a real, real practical one. If you've looked at the turnaround time between the end of winter semester and the start of summer semester, these are the kinds of things that I obsess over. It's very short this year. Grades go in right at the end of April and then classes start again right at the beginning of May. So can I recommend that if you are teaching in the summer or if you are a department chair, can you take a minute to make sure Moodle classes are in order? That people have been assigned to the right courses and banner that's what creates the course shells. They should all be there. Jamie created the categories last week and populated them so you should be able to see your classes.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

If you're teaching in the summer and you can't find your classes, or if you're a department chair and you know that there have been changes to who is the instructor of record that maybe haven't gotten updated yet, taking care of those things now is going to be really, really helpful, because the turnaround is super tight. And if we wait until we've put winter term in our rear view mirror, then summer term is going to hit us with a ton of bricks. So yeah, it's a very operational Tiny Teaching Tip this week, but can you make sure you have classes? Can you make sure people know what they're teaching? And then can you let us know if there's any problems? See, sometimes I'm just all about practical.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I hope you're well. I hope you can get some time out in the glorious sunshine and warm weather. And I hope that you can figure out what it is that will help you find moments of recharge and rest. If you need me, I'm going to be in the hanging chair on my back balcony in Upper Sahali, looking out over our glorious town. And if you don't need me, even better. Until next time, take care of yourselves and each other, and we will talk soon. Bye-bye.

