

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Hello, and welcome to You Got This!, a podcast about teaching, learning, community, conversation and your digital life, made 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 and 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. And I'm still thinking about AI. Sorry, I know we did this two weeks ago, but the robots, still coming. Let's get into it.

So I have to confess that part of the reason why AI is absorbing all of my thinking energy right now is because, looking ahead to the digital detox this January, the team is going to be tackling artificial intelligence in education. What should we be watching for? Where's it going? I want to think about things like how AI impacts our equity practice. I've been reading some really distressing things about AI models and the ways in which institutions might choose to present themselves as having a strong EDI framework in place when actually, there's very little true engagement with minoritized communities. I'm really concerned by some of the ethics around where the body of work is taken from. AI is on my mind, and so it's on your mind too. Sorry. For fun though, I thought it might be good to talk this stuff out with someone who is as equally trepidatious and paranoid as myself.

So obviously, I've invited the boss on. Brian Lamb's joining me today to play a little bit with AI and to have some, hopefully, enlightening conversations. I have to confess, it goes pretty dark today, and part of that is because coming out of the pandemic and hoping for massive structural change within our sector and not seeing it makes me anxious about our capacity to face down the robots. The reality is that the changes that AI might require of us, they may actually be really good. We talked about some of the pedagogical implications around writing last time we talked about this two weeks ago. I don't hate that. I think a lot of that is really necessary work. And at the same time, I wonder about our institutional capacity for change, and I don't mean that about our institution. I mean institutional sector-wide capacity for change. Brian and I are going to talk about all of that, so maybe I'll let him take it from here.

Hello, and welcome to our podcast where today we have the pleasure of speaking with Brian Lamb, the Director of Learning technology at Thompson Rivers University. Brian has been with the university for over 10 years leading the implementation and integration of new technologies in the classroom to enhance student learning and engagement. With a passion for innovation and a commitment to accessibility, Brian has been instrumental in the success of Thompson Rivers University's online learning initiatives. We're excited to hear from Brian today about his work and the future of technology in education. Brian, in what ways does Thompson Rivers University prioritize the ethical use of technology in the classroom and in student learning?

Brian Lamb:

Thompson Rivers University prioritizes the ethical use of technology in the classroom and in student learning in a number of ways. First, the university has developed a comprehensive set of guidelines and policies that outline the ethical use of technology in teaching and learning, including principles such as fairness, respect, responsibility, and transparency. These guidelines provide a clear framework for educators and students to follow when using technology in the classroom and help to ensure that technology is used in an ethical and responsible manner. Additionally, the university offers a range of training and support for educators and students on the ethical use of technology in teaching and learning. This could include workshops and seminars and topics such as digital citizenship, online safety, and responsible use of technology, as well as ongoing support and guidance from technology experts and educators.

This helps to ensure that all members of the university community are aware of the ethical considerations related to technology use, and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to use technology in an ethical and responsible manner. Furthermore, the university actively encourages dialogue and discussion around the ethical use of technology in teaching and learning. This could involve hosting events and forums where students, educators, and other stakeholders can share their perspectives and experiences, as well as engaging in ongoing research and evaluation to better understand the ethical implications of technology use in the classroom. By fostering an open and inclusive culture of ethical reflection and dialogue, the university can ensure that the ethical use of technology remains a top priority in its teaching and learning practices.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay, I cannot maintain this bit any longer.

Brian Lamb:

No, I don't want to do it anymore either.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So both the introduction for Brian and the questions and that answer were all written by ChatGPT today.

Brian Lamb:

That's right. We are already obsolete.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So there's a few things I note about... We've been back and forth this morning with questions and responses the AI has written, and I'm fascinated with it in a bunch of ways. One is just the high level baffle gab that AI produces. Lots of the right words, very little actual content. Of course, the AI can't speak to specific things we do around the ethical use of technology, so it just speaks in vague generalities. But I've got to tell you, Brian, and no shade to administrators, but there's something very administrative about the way ChatGPT speaks.

Brian Lamb:

Yeah. I think I've said this before. I know I have to use in casual conversation. People talk about the impacts on student grading and essays and stuff, and I'd love to talk to you a bit about how you're thinking about that, but I really think the first wave that's really going to, and I hate to use this word but I think in this case it's worth using, disrupt organizations, it's going to be in administration. It's going to be, because one of the hardest things actually I find about my job is writing official documents because it's so important to follow forms and to use certain words and phrases in certain ways, and to be divergent from that is a big no-no.

If you're doing an assessment or you're writing a policy or you're putting a submission forward to a committee that's official, form is everything. And I actually find that kind of writing really hard to do because I'm trying to put some sort of meaningful content into these forms and these rituals in the text. So AI does that really well and it doesn't spend time kind of agonizing about how to make this stuff meaningful. People like me, honestly, I think will be in the cross hairs for what we supposedly provide as value to the institution.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, one of the things I find sort of fascinating is the way it tries to sound human, the way it tries to evoke tone. Something we were playing with this morning is when I asked it to give me the question prompts, I specifically said that I wanted the questions to demonstrate ethic of care thinking, and I don't think it knows what that is. It just tries to make the questions sound nicer. So I got a lot of words like inclusive and accessible both in your introduction and in the questions that it generated for me to use today. But the content of the questions doesn't really shift. So it wants to ask you a question about how you implement technologies, and if I push it on the ethic of care thing, then it adds the word inclusive to that question. But the question itself doesn't actually really change from ask to ask, if that makes sense?

Brian Lamb:

Yeah, no, and it did the same thing in the answers too. Another thing I just wanted to note. I said this to you a little bit offline. I was playing on the weekend myself, because we talked about maybe doing this as an intro joke. I asked it to generate a dialogue on a podcast about artificial intelligence in the university, and at first, I said, "Host Brenna and guest Brian," and the questions coming from host Brenna were very deferential and very basic. And then for the expert, Brian, and I thought, "Oh, everyone will know that that's not what's happening." So I started to play with it a little bit and I just put the names in and it kept going back to that format, and I don't know if it was gendered. I didn't actually try reversing. I didn't make myself the host. I found it fascinating that even when I stripped out host and guest from the prompt, that it kept pushing that paradigm where Brian is the expert and Brenna is the person asking these very open-ended questions.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It definitely has a sense of what kinds of questions would be acceptable. It's almost circumscribed by its own notion of what the audience is. So when you tell it's a podcast, it generates the questions. But they're very broad. They're pretty vague. At one point I asked it to demonstrate critical pedagogy in the questions and it was just like, "I don't know what you're talking about. Here's the same questions again."

Brian Lamb:

But you know what it's been doing really well? Again, not to circle back to my point. We have a colleague who's been firing policy prompts into it and it's generating stuff that's pretty close, and at the very least, a human being can just go through it and pull out some of the obvious clunky phrases and put in some local context that may not be in the output. It works well and again, because it does understand the format of a policy really well.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, this is my general worry with AI generated text is that, so often, we're just invited to scan a document. We're not invited to engage deeply with it, and a lot of the kind of documentation we see around EdTech ethics, around EDI, around inclusive practice, around accessibility, they're either content neutral or they're content absent. The goal is to tick a box and to achieve a document that looks like it is meaningful without actually having to commit to anything that might later on be a liability. AI is great at making texts that won't make you liable to actually do anything.

Brian Lamb:

It really is like a skilled BS-er. It really is. One of the fun things we did on our team was we fed some Moodle support questions into it and the answers were really authoritative and I realized how rusty I am

with Moodle support. The team's been great to me this year. I have not done nearly as much hands on support the last number of months than I had in the last couple of years. When I read it, I was like, "Wow, that's pretty good," and then people piped in. "Answer two is complete disaster." "Answer four would delete the course." But it was so confident.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, yeah.

Brian Lamb:

And it had the tone of a... Actually, I'm glad we don't talk quite like that because it's a little arrogant. It's really sure of itself when it gives the answer. It inspires confidence.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It didn't make sense, but the response sounds like it made sense. I could see someone very diligently trying to follow the steps that it had laid out and getting into some trouble. But you're right. There's this sort of bravado or confidence. This voice that it writes in, unless you specify the parameters, you ask it to try to use ethic of care as the example for today, but if you don't include that, it talks like a tech bro. Everything it spits out is extremely confident and simultaneously often quite vapid, and I'm fascinated by that because it gives you a sense of who is training the tool that it speaks with such a sense of confidence in itself.

Brian Lamb:

There's that piece. John Warner has had a lot to say on this lately, and I know you've boosted some of his comments into timelines. He was highlighting the fact that so many of the assignments that are being handed out can be crushed by this AI. Says a lot about the questions and quite a few people made that observation, but then he followed up to say, "It really just highlights how much we're trying to make people act like machines," and not just in the classroom. Administration, to bang that drum yet again, classic example of that.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

John Warner's been talking for a long time about the problem with writing instruction in universities is that we are constantly trying to create a simulation of a research paper, and he's been arguing that since he wrote *Why They Can't Write*, which was, I don't know, 2018 maybe. I think he's finding quite a moment at the moment because the strategies that he suggests for getting students out of this mold of trying to create a facsimile of a research paper in a context neutral space, those are also strategies for overcoming the way AI answers questions. I think it's really telling that there was such a panic immediately about, "Oh, well, the essay is dead as a form," because the essay has never scaled particularly well when it's written well. A five paragraph essay scales well because it's really easy to go tick, tick, tick.

That's why standardized tests ask for it. But a thoughtfully composed essay doesn't scale well because it needs to be read carefully, and that's not what ChatGPT is disrupting. ChatGPT is disrupting poor essay writing, but unfortunately, that is the majority of what we call on students to do a lot of the time. So I find this whole discourse really interesting because much like previous quote, unquote disruptions that we've had ethical qualms with before, like video proctoring or whatever, it's really pointing to problems in the way we imagine learning and the box we've got ourselves trapped in by trying to operate universities at these massive scales that makes it really hard to change course.

Brian Lamb:

So you taught writing for a long time, and even here, you've made writing one of your areas of specialization. You did a lot of H5P activities about composition and the more open-ended way of using H5P and you revised a composition textbook last year with a lot of H5P objects and stuff like that. So if you were teaching full-time again, would you have been okay with the way you were teaching already? And if so, what were the things that made you okay? And if not, what would you be rethinking right now? What would you be trying to do differently, do you think?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I think I would be rethinking the kinds of one paragraph responses that I used to use as a way of checking in on students keeping up with the readings. I think those prompts were often very general and open-ended with the intention of giving students lots of space to play. But I think those same kinds of open-ended questions, I don't know that the AI answers would get good marks from me, but I think it's a situation where you're giving students enough rope to hang themselves. You're asking a question that is inviting them to go and test and see what the GPT does. I think my composition instruction would've been okay because I was already following a model very much like the one Warner outlines. But I think what would change in my practice is I would be putting my prompts into ChatGPT in class and we'd be taking them apart together.

I think that's actually a pretty exciting part of what you can use this tool for, which is a teaching tool in the classroom to try to break students of those habits of writing just super empty prose, which a lot of students come to university already in that habit because they've just been filling space. Getting them to write concretely is the hardest part, but the great thing about ChatGPT is you can see what writing that lacks concrete examples looks like and how vapid it is, how boring it is, and how it doesn't answer the question. And so I think that aspect of it could be a lot of fun. One of the hardest things when you're doing composition instruction is writing essays that are convincing enough that you can take them apart in class, but bad enough that there are things to take apart, if that makes sense. Writing the sample essays, I think this is a huge labor saver from the perspective of writing those sample essays. It's great, and when you ask it to put in citations, it does just the most fantastically lazy job of it. It's great.

Brian Lamb:

Can I ask a followup question? I think it's going to enrage you, but I've been wondering how you would respond to it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay.

Brian Lamb:

So this is a question I saw posed and I was like, "I wonder what Brenna would do if she saw it?" It was kind of in response to the discourse that was emerging out of a lot from people like Warner and you and a number of other people that teach rhetoric. It seems like the rhetoric people are way ahead on the thinking here. It was like, "Okay, that's all great." Say, "Create more dynamic thought embedded into writing," I think is one of the ways that Warner puts it and really emphasize that. Someone put forward point is, "Some students are at such a troubled space in their ability to write that they almost need the ritual of writing through very simple, almost thoughtless statements just to get the mechanics of writing in place and that forcing them to cognate when they do it, it almost pulls them away from what they

need to do, which is just literally learn the mechanics of writing." So when I saw that, I had my own response, but I was curious what you thought.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Students write better when they care. It's always been true, and the hardest thing about so many academic writing courses, the way they're structured, is that students are asked to write an essay about some topic they've literally never thought about before, and then we dump them into the research, the peer reviewed research, on whatever the topic is that they've never thought about before, and then we're surprised when the outcome is empty and they have difficulty wrestling with the concepts. There's always been this idea that students should just be able to produce writing on anything when we would never expect that of ourselves.

If you actually try to produce a publishable piece of writing on a topic that you have no investment in or buy-in for, it's extremely difficult. But we expect students to do it all the time. My big issue with composition, the way we teach it, is that we don't invest in what individual students already care about. I think there's ways to do that that are less and more labor intensive for instructors, but in general, I don't buy it that there's some empty prompt that will unlock students' capacity for writing. I've just never seen it happen.

Brian Lamb:

If I can now take that and then maybe pull back a little bit, and maybe ask you to put on your thought leader hat.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, no. It's my worst hat.

Brian Lamb:

It's not a nice hat. It's not a nice hat.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No.

Brian Lamb:

It's not a good hat. But I've seen some of this stuff floating around. There are people that are trying to position themselves as the visionaries here. Actually, and I fed some of these questions into Chat API and it says pretty much what these thought leaders are saying, which again, not unlike my initial answer, says pretty much nothing. "Well, of course there are going to be concerns about this, this and this." My favorite comment though, which was just hilarious, was it said, "It will decrease people's workloads and free them up to do more real teaching and research." I love the idea that anything would ever reduce a workload-

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yes.

Brian Lamb:

... in contemporary society anywhere. How long have we been hearing about automation giving us more leisure time and look at us now. I just can't believe that even a bot would say that. But again, the thought leader thing, I asked the chat bot, I was like, "What's going to be the future of universities in the wake of artificial intelligence?" How is it going to affect all this? Do you have a sense, the big picture, where it's going?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

What I hope it does or what it's going to do?

Brian Lamb:

I was asking about what you actually think will happen, but you can be more hopeful if you wish.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, no. I'll tell you what I think is going to happen. We're just entering another arms race. So the academic integrity arms race was first, Turnitin comes in, and then students who want to cheat discover that if you just pay some impoverished writer living in a Third World country, they will produce a new essay for you that isn't going to trip Turnitin. And so then we get, "Well, stop having students write and have them do high stakes exams and have them video proctored." That's the escalation that we see, and students are all ultimately harmed by that. We see the way those kinds of contract cheating companies use blackmail. We know that some of them are connected to organized crime. We know the harms that eProctoring does to racialized students, to gender diverse students, to neuroatypical students. Ultimately, the harm always lands on the students, but we end up in an arms race.

I think we'll see the same thing here. You can't convince me that ChatGPT isn't free right now mostly to just collect data. The kinds of questions that we're likely to ask, the things that are causing us anxiety about AI, are exactly the things that we're feeding into ChatGPT right now. So it's a matter of time before we have, not an originality detector we have with Turnitin, quote, unquote, but an AI detector will come and it'll be embedded in a learning management system and it'll have all our students' data. It's just going keep happening, and then someone else is going to develop some AI tool that somehow gets around that and then we're just off to the races again, and the great part is that we get to pay for all of it. Public institutions shell out huge sums of money to private EdTech companies to solve these problems that we've created ourselves. It's going to be great.

Brian Lamb:

There already is a ChatGPT-2 Output Detector demo out from Hugging Face, which I believe also comes from OpenAI. So they're having an arms series with themselves from what I can tell.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I did see someone put their own book through that tool and it said that their book was generated by AI. The person was like, "I was very surprised."

Brian Lamb:

Can you imagine a more insulting phrase at this point? So how about bigger, though? So how long, if not already, until this stuff is being used to generate multiple choice questions for an exam or learning content itself? Again, talk about content where following formal rules of structure and being predictable

and winnowing out... Not all content is like this, but I've seen learning content certainly that clearly went through a process to take any trace of uniqueness or idiosyncrasy or voice out of it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I don't want to guess on a whim, but it worries me in the same kind of way that we've had these very difficult... I'm going to rewind. We are often in a very difficult place, morally and ethically, within the university because we see a lot of stuff and a lot of it is wonderful practice. We have a lot of people at this institution who care a great deal, but we also unfortunately are the first line of seeing poor practice. And so I'm thinking about the number of times we've had to have discussions because someone is using a textbook generated question bank and the questions are wrong. The answers are incorrect. And term after term after term, we have students coming to us and saying, "Hey, these questions in Moodle are wrong," and we go to the instructor and maybe the instructor corrects it for the individual students who complain, but clearly, the question bank itself is never being corrected or updated because the problems come term after term.

That kind of stuff has always upset me because, oftentimes, students are paying for the pleasure. That's a proprietary textbook, at least, that they've bought, even if they're not being required to use the homework system. That stuff upsets me, and so to think that there's going to be a further potential step removed where, I don't know, you feed the chapter into ChatGPT and it generates 100 multiple choice questions. I don't know. My worry is there's always a subset of faculty who aren't going back to check that. I don't know if I care that someone is going to use it to generate the first pass of their multiple choice questions. Multiple choice questions suck to write. It's one of the worst things why I hate them and I don't use them because they're really awful to write. It's very awful. It's hard to write a persuasive multiple choice question.

So maybe that's the first pass. It comes through AI because they get the form and the structure right. I don't know that I hate that. What worries me is that anytime something is pitched as a labor saving option for faculty, if it's really treated that way and nobody ever goes back to reread and nobody ever double checks that work, then the person who is harmed by that is ultimately, again, always the student. It's like Cory Doctorow's shitty tech adoption curve. The only person who ultimately gets harmed is the person who is most marginalized in the context, and in our case, that's students.

Brian Lamb:

To step back a further level of abstraction, how much of this stuff is going to end up driving, whether we acknowledge it or not, admissions, awards, financial assistance, counseling?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I worry about things like AI driven mental health counseling as a cheaper alternative that universities can buy into, or even just as a first step triaging of students. I worry about where that data would be held. You're identifying a problem that is real and also that already exists. So admissions are already heavily skewed towards students who know how to take tests well, who are able to maximize their use of existing resources, whether that's test prep or tutoring or whatever. There's always going to be students who game ChatGPT better. There's no way this is going to be free forever. There's going to be a paid version of this that some students will access and others won't.

So I think equity issues are really very real. Again, as long as the entry essay prompt is being marked by... I think about things like ACCUPLACER. So ACCUPLACER determines your English language competency. Can you put your ACCUPLACER question... It's marked by AI. Can you also write it with AI and it's just, "Whose robot is better?" There's an absurdity to all of this that really, if you drill down, it comes to the

fact that we've been measuring compliance instead of learning for a long, long time, and these tools are really, really good at performing compliance.

Brian Lamb:

Some of what you were talking about, the quality of the AI and then who gets what, I heard a discussion last week where someone made the point that there's a place where ChatGPT, it builds on a body of text that exists and it reads that, but how much of that text is itself now being generated by AI? So it is feeding on itself and becoming more and more locked inside its own group, much like my Spotify algorithms, because I listen to Spotify a lot, for reasons I won't get into. The algorithm, whenever I ask it to generate playlists, keeps narrowing over time, and if I listen to the playlists that it generates for me, then it even further narrows down what it'll give me when I ask it for recommendations. It's making me a more conservative music listener if I don't make an active effort to disrupt its recommenders.

And the thing is, I listen to Spotify, it's kind of my lazy comfort listening. If I want to listen to adventurous music, I go somewhere else. I can feel it making me less and oh my gosh, when it gives me the year end review stuff, it's just humiliating. The point though, the idea that we may have already passed a point where the source that the AI will be feeding on is already going to be so clotted up with crud, but maybe there'll be free ones that are clotted up with it and then you'll be paying for the ones that maybe have a curated data set or something. I don't know.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Mm-hmm. Any number of services offer free captioning or free transcription. So YouTube, Office 365, the paid version of Zencast, which we're using here, they'll all spit out a transcript for you. They don't touch the quality if you pay for machine transcription, even if you pay for machine transcription elsewhere. So Rev offers a machine transcription function that is so vastly superior at identifying individual speakers and picking up slang or slurred speech or anything like that. I think that that's exactly it. There's always going to be a free tool that you can access that's maybe good enough.

But if there's one thing tech will never actually do, no matter how much it claims it's democratized, there's always going to be a paid version, a better version, that only some people will have access to. And I think too, one thing I find really interesting about the ChatGPT is that if you ask it questions that are too specific, it's very quick to tell you that it doesn't have access to an internet search. But once those two things get coupled together, the AI composition and the Google search to see what other people are actually saying about the topic, that's going to be wild. That's going to be the next level, particularly when it comes to vapid research papers because-

Brian Lamb:

Isn't one of the reasons they're cutting that off because it just opens up too many unknown variables, and that's when you start getting Nazi propaganda in your answers and stuff?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, this is exactly it, but one of the things that people have noticed is ChatGPT is claiming to be a fairly safe platform at the moment, which, yeah, no internet search capability. Because we've learned that every time you train chatbots on the open web, you make Nazis 10 times out of 10. So they're trying to circumvent that, but you can say to it, "Answer this question in the style of a right-wing shock radio DJ," and it'll do it and it'll spit out some pretty horrific stuff.

Brian Lamb:

So I got one more question for you, and I don't know if this takes us into too dark territory. You may want to cut it later. I can't help but whether it's hyped the way that that Atlantic Monthly article about the essay being dead, whatever vision is coming, there is going to be some changes here. We have to rethink something, but will we?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No.

Brian Lamb:

I guess I can't help but, and this is not me, I swear, making a comment about our specific university because everything I'm about to describe as far as I can tell, is pretty much universal, at least in North American higher education, just having gone through the latest big disruption, the pandemic, and seeing how we process that and responded to that, and I don't know. I feel like there's been almost a conscious unwillingness not to reflect and learn from whatever we've gone through together.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, yeah. It's called trauma.

Brian Lamb:

Fair. But that would be okay too. If somebody would get up and say, "Hey, wow, we're all in collective trauma right now," I would really welcome that. That to me would be the mark of a real leader, but it's quite the opposite. They're trying to pretend that it never happened, and again, I'm not singling anyone out because it's extremely almost universal among leadership. And I don't know if that's because they don't feel they can open up that conversation. I get that it's difficult and fraught, so I don't know. You already answered when I said it. I have grave concerns that our culture is just not resilient and curious enough to deal with this.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, higher ed is rigid and not resilient. I think that's the lesson of the pandemic. I look at the lecture form and the high stakes exam and the fact that even through the pandemic, those two forms did not reduce their stranglehold on the institution, and we're still told, "Well, this is the only way to deliver a massive amount of content to a massive number of students is to lecture at them." "Okay. Anybody have any follow-up questions to this structure that we've worked ourselves into?" And likewise, the high stakes exam. "Well, this is what the regulator requires. This is what the accreditation board requires, so we're stuck." I think that, as a system, we lack curiosity and imagination. We lack the ability to wonder if what we're doing is right, which is amazing when you consider the fact that we are research institutions and we have all kinds of data that show the problems with both lectures and high stakes exams. And yet...

Brian Lamb:

Yes. No, I agree. And I've seen comments that probably the most likely immediate response from higher ed to some of this stuff is going to be doubling down on in-person invigilated exams.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. And I think that that's the first thing everybody says is, "Well, students need to do more in-class writing." Well, I actually do think that students do need to do more in class writing. They need to have more learning time, more classroom time dedicated to process. Ultimately, if we want to get at what the core problem here is, it's that we care about product and we don't care about process, and instructors are in a situation where they feel like they have too much content to cover. Coverage is king. We have to get through all this material. I can't possibly spend the time on also teaching them to write. I can't possibly spend the time on also teaching them how to be assessed, and as long as that's the case, as long as the final product is the only thing the teacher sees, we're never going to get out of this.

They do need to do in-class writing, but they don't need to do in-class high stakes exams. They need to get messy with writing together in a classroom with an instructor who's giving them feedback all the time, and we've effectively created a precarious workforce with too many students and not enough time, and we've made that part an impossibility. That's why this works. If we were actually caring about process, if we were reading students' writing all the way along in a term, ChatGPT could be whatever it wanted to be. It wouldn't matter, and I think at the core, that's the problem and it's starting to feel like a problem that is unsolvable. Not to end our chat on a total bummer note, but I don't know how we solve that problem.

Brian Lamb:

I think, on the kind of stuff that you're describing as [inaudible 00:35:05] that I agree that at least in its current form, the chat AIs can't touch is when you get into process and you break it down and you have that really engaged relationship throughout the entire steps of putting a project together. But that's why I referred to the workload thing jumping out at me before, because I think a very plausible medium term scenario is that we get some really good grading tools that come out that can eliminate or really reduce the burden of a certain type of grading.

No one likes doing that kind of grading and it won't be able to pull out every little bit, but it could tell you, "Did it refer to three different sections of the reading? Is it internally consistent? Is the grammar solid?" And it could do that stuff, and then theoretically, it'll be pitched, "The faculty member can then really focus and look for the unique ideas and things like that." That's how they'll pitch it, but I just can't help but think, "Okay, if a tool like that becomes available, how long until people that make the budgets at our institutions go, 'Well, then obviously now we can have bigger classes?'" It's not going to be like you have more time to do process work.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, it never is.

Brian Lamb:

I can't imagine that being the response. I hope I'm wrong. It so flies in the face of what we've seen as a response in our sector to almost every development that we've seen in my time as a learning technologist at a university. And again, it's everywhere. I've seen it in a lot of different contexts. I'm not pointing fingers at anybody. It's how this works.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, as long as the priority from a budgetary perspective is to maximize the number of humans moving through and to maximize what they pay versus what is paid to instructors, which means maximizing the number of bodies in a classroom, if that's the goal, then that's the ultimate goal. I just wish we would be

honest about it because if that's the goal, then learning is not happening. Learning is, at best, secondary, but what you're evaluating for is compliance,. And that's true of many of the articulated tests or regulated exams. All of these things are primarily measures of compliance, and if that's what we're doing, we could be honest about it, but we won't.

We will call it learning, even though we all know that is not a demonstration of learning because that's not how learning works. Learning is a lot messier and it's a lot messier than anything ChatGPT can spit out. And as long as we're prioritizing something that's easy to read and clean looking over the messiness of hands-on teaching and learning, then ChatGPT will have a place. But if we can change what it is we prioritize, we might actually be able to get ahead of this stuff. But I don't think we will. So, no.

Brian Lamb:

We're not good thought leaders.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No. No, I'm a terrible thought leader. A terrible thought leader because thought leaders like really simple answers to really difficult questions and neither one of us have ever been very good at that. I think we'll end it here. I should have done a ChatGPT closing remark, but I didn't.

Brian Lamb:

Are you going to get it to generate your Tiny Teaching Tip?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I should. I should see what it comes up with for a Tiny Teaching Tip. I bet it's going to make me really mad. Thanks for your time today, Brian. I appreciate it.

Brian Lamb:

Oh, thank you, Brenna. It's always so much fun talking to you.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So that is it for season three, episode nine of You Got This! As always, if you want to write to us, you can email me. I'm bgray@tru.ca, and I'm also on Twitter, [@brennacgray](https://twitter.com/brennacgray), and 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.

Brian suggested I ask ChatGPT to leave you with our Teaching Tip this week, so I did. I said to ChatGPT, "Please fill in the following prompt for the end of a podcast called You Got This! about teaching and learning. The prompt is, 'I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip and today's Tiny Teaching Tip is,'" and ChatGPT offers this, "I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip and today's Tiny Teaching Tip is to always believe in yourself and your abilities as a teacher. You got this, so keep pushing forward, keep trying new things, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Your students will benefit from your confidence and enthusiasm, and you'll be a better teacher for it. Thanks for joining us today on You Got This!, and we'll see you next time for more tips and tricks for teachers."

Honestly, promise me, if you ever can't tell the difference between me and ChatGPT, you will just put me out of my misery. Please just promise if I ever come to you with that level of vapidness, I hope that you will stop listening at that point, my friends. My real Tiny Teaching Tip is that you should go and play with ChatGPT. I've included a link in the show notes. I think you should go mess around with it. I think you

should see what it has to say about your discipline. I think you should feed it some of your prompts. I think that's how we learn. I don't think you need to use phrases like, "Keep pushing forward, trying new things, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it." Please promise me you'll always be able to tell the difference between me and ChatGPT, and until next time, take care of yourselves and each other and we'll see you next time for more tips and tricks for teachers.