

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. I record this podcast in Tk'emlups te Secwepemc within the unseated traditional lands of Secwepemcú'ecw, where I hope to learn and grow in community with all of you. And my friends, well, it's the season finale of season 3. Let's get into it.

I can't quite believe it, but we are at the end of another season of the show, a shorter season, I think, by about 10 episodes. We only made it to episode 26 this time around for a whole bunch of reasons. As y'all know, I lost my dad in October, which took me away from work quite a lot for... That's okay. It's okay to be away from work for that. It's been a tumultuous term in lots of ways. Many of you are aware there's some reorganization happening over in Open Learning, so my job has moved around a little bit. It hasn't changed the day to day, but it's sometimes weird to not know quite where you work on a given day. Sometimes a little bit strange.

It's also been a tumultuous semester because there's been so much uncertainty in the air around all things AI, which obviously I've had no shortage of time spent talking about and thinking about this year. And that's also where I'm going to leave you this term with some thoughts about how to prepare for fall. It's minisode, this season finale this year. No guests, just me, fewer of those I think this year than maybe previously, but I've had a lot of people to talk to and about and with. It's been an interesting challenging tumultuous year and I'm grateful to all of you for being along the ride with me.

I want to talk today about some things that I think you should be thinking about as you prepare for the fall semester. And yeah, no better time to start than the present. The first is that I think you need to make some kind of statement about generative AI in your syllabus. I know that for some of us, we're still not really sure how much we want to get involved.

And I think there are all kinds of ethical reasons for taking a big old breath and a big old pause before we jump in to AI. Something I'm going to be thinking about for the rest of this summer is the notion of a framework that we can use, a critical framework that we can use for when we approach thinking about AI. What are the questions we need to ask to decide whether a generative AI tool is the right choice for us in the right context? Allowing us to think a little bit more about maybe some of the ethical ramifications and whether or not a particular tool fits with our values and also what it can offer to students in terms of accessibility and opportunity.

So when I say that I want you to have a statement about AI in your syllabus this year, I'm not saying that that has to mean you go in whole hog, but I think we need to remember that students are going to be coming up against many different kinds of environments for artificial intelligence in their classes, and you need to have a conversation with your students that starts in the syllabus about what your expectations are going to be for the term. So that could look really different for all of us. It's got a lot of different shapes and possibilities, but I think one thing that we can expect is that students will want to know whether a tool like ChatGPT is acceptable in your course. And maybe the answer is an easy yes or an easy no, or maybe the answer is somewhere in between. That's okay. It might be on an assignment by assignment basis. That's okay, but we need to start with the transparency. We need to start with the conversation.

To try to help facilitate this, we've built some sample syllabus language and included it on the AI education website, so I'm linking that in the show notes and I hope you'll take a look at it. And I really hope that if you use some of that language or adapt it, you'll let us know because I'd like to know what's useful and what's not as I continue to develop more resources around these ideas. So that's the first thing I think you need to do with the rest of the summer is think about where you're going to land on allowing for AI in your classroom.

The second thing I think you need to do, and we talked about it a little bit last week, is I think you need to think about your assignment guidelines. If you don't want students using AI or if you have specific responsibilities that you want students to take when they use AI, that's going to need to be spelled out in the assignment guidelines. The assignment guidelines are going to need to be rigorous enough so that if you do mark a ChatGPT-generated assignment against them, that it doesn't hold up, I guess. I mean, what we want is to see that you're requiring things like reflection on the student's own learning or perhaps reflection on the classroom environment in ways that ChatGPT won't be able to respond to.

You also might think about drawing on specific examples from other texts, asking students to make those connections. Those are all the kinds of things that if you lay them out in your assignment guidelines, you have something to go back to in the evaluation process. Whether you use a formal rubric or you just list these guidelines, either way it gives you something to go back to. When you get that generated response that doesn't seem to really do exactly what you were hoping for, it gives you somewhere to go in responding to that with your students.

The third thing I think you need to do, and this is especially for those who would like to not have their students working with AI in their classrooms, I think you need to think about what those conversations are going to look like when you suspect it. So this is the kind of thing that it might help to start to put together a script for. Back before we had really good capacity to Google things or when we thought a student was using a past assignment from another student, but we didn't have the assignment to prove it, we'd sit down and have a one-on-one conversation with a student and get to the root of the fact that they didn't really understand the argument that they had submitted, for example, in the case of an essay. We're going back to that, right? That's going to be how we deal with academic integrity issues when it comes to generative AI.

So it might be a good idea to start to script how you might approach those conversations to even start to draft with the email you'll reach out to those students with will look like. That's going to help you feel like you're ready. On the flip side, for folks who are welcoming generative AI in the classroom, you're going to want to start to think about how you're going to have students show their work.

So are you going to be asking for copies of prompts? Are you going to be asking for the chat string? Are you going to be asking for screenshots? What's that going to look like and what would a satisfactory revising of that work would look like? What kind of thinking labor are you expecting students to put in and how will they demonstrate that to you? You're going to need to be able to articulate that ahead of time so that students know what to expect. And that's the kind of thing that you'll tweak and change over time as you engage with these tools. But as you engage with these tools, you do need to have that kind of plan in place, I think.

So those are the four things that I would be doing right now if I was heading back into a classroom in the fall. And the fifth thing I would be doing right now is resting. I know some of you are deep into summer too, and you've got a few more weeks ahead before rest will take place. Or perhaps you're not in a teaching role and rest looks very different for you. I certainly understand that. But you're going to have to find some space to take some time because I think that fall is going to be difficult. I think we're going to be thrown a lot of curveballs as these technologies adapt and I think we are going to want to feel ready. So I really encourage you to find the space and time to do that resting.

The LT&I team is going to be hitting the ground running with some programming. We haven't really come up with a name for yet. I'm thinking it's like an AI crash course. Those of you who were here for the pandemic closure period will remember that when we came back, we did a crash course of sort of hybrid learning strategies. So this is kind of that, but for the AI moment. So it'll be a week of workshops that start that very last week of August, and we'll be talking about things like AI 101, so doing a deep dive on artificial intelligence, definitions, terms, concepts, all that kind of stuff.

What do my students already know about AI, where we'll talk about some of the tools your students might already be using already be aware of. A little bit of a tool catalog. I'm grateful to the team for working on that. We're also going to talk about how do you talk to your students about AI. So some of that sample syllabus language, but also how do you have those transparent conversations, how do you talk about AI's impacts on assessment. We're going to talk about the critical AI framework we're working on, this idea of thinking through when is AI the right choice. And then of course we'll talk about AI and AI. So artificial intelligence and academic integrity, how do those things interact. That's going to be like a little intensive week of lunch and learns right before we go back. And I think that that'll help us all feel a little bit more...

If nothing else, maybe like we're on the same page and we all have the same vocabulary for talking about these tools. We're going to run those sessions hybrids. So if you're not coming back to Kamloops yet or you've got other things you want to be doing or you're going to enjoy that last week of working from home, whatever it is, we'll try to accommodate that with some hybrid sessions. So I'll link to the registration for that in the show notes. So just something to think about in terms of support that you'll have for starting those conversations with your students when you do get back to the classroom.

I feel like every semester I start by saying that we're about to have a challenging semester, and I guess this is what it means to live in interesting times. But you know what? There are some good things, right? It's June right now, and it's rainy. It's blessedly rainy. Thank you, June. I'm hoping that we can all have something of a less chaotic summer than other summers have been, and maybe we can find some time and space for rest because at the core, that is what we will all need to get in, whether you're getting it in now or squeezing it in at the end of August before we come back refresh and ready to deal with yet more unprecedented times in September.

All right, folks, so for one last time in the 2022-2023 school year, I will say that is it for season 3, episode 26. And indeed that is it for season 3 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. And in both cases, that is gray with an A. I'm also on Bluesky, Mastodon, and Spoutible at the same handle. I'm not really using any of them though, I have to admit. All of our show notes and transcripts are posted at yougotthis.trubox.ca, and of course you can always comment on individual episodes there.

I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip, and it's really the only thing that matters, although I guess this whole episode's been a bunch of Tiny Teaching Tips, but I really hope that you might take some time between now and when we talk again to really think about the things that you value at your core. Any time we're confronted with a new technology, it can often seem like we have to adapt, we have to take it on, we have to pick it up, like we're obligated to enter into this kind of accelerated, breathless moment. And I want us to normalize the practice of thinking through our values first and deciding what tools we adopt based on that. Too often, I think we are forced to adapt our practice to the kinds of tools and technologies that are presented to us instead of adapting the technologies to our practice. Never has that been more apparent to me than with the rush to work generative AI into our teaching somehow.

I want to tell you that if you don't feel like generative AI is right for you, I don't think you should feel pressured to leap in in this moment. I want to give you permission to take some time and think about whether generative AI fits your values as a teacher. And if that means not jumping on the hype train just yet, I'm with you. I still think you've got to make some statements in your syllabus and think about it in your assignment guidelines because it is in the air that our students are breathing, but that doesn't mean that you have to adopt the newest technology. If it doesn't feel right for you, I'm giving you permission to pause in case you needed it. And I hope we all take some time to really think about who we want to be in the classroom and what technologies enable that and what technologies don't. And until next time, which will be sometime in August, take care of yourselves and each other and we'll talk really soon. Bye-bye.