

Hello, and welcome to You Got This! A podcast about teaching and learning and pivoting to digital for the whole TRU community. 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 Secwepencul'ecw where I hope to learn and grow in community with all of you.

And today's episode is about something that I think we're all really familiar with right now. Today's episode is about making do when things aren't going quite your way. Let's get into it.

So today's episode is a little bit different than usual. For a couple of reasons, I think. I was sick all week -- I actually took a day off, which holy godfathers, I'm not good at. I was off on Tuesday because I had this wicked head cold. The whole thing, sinus pain, the whole nine yards and I just couldn't think past it. So Tuesday I was off. My toddler has been sick all week, too, so he's been home and after the gamut of phone calls with public health to confirm that we did not in fact, need Covid testing -- yay, personal victory! It was an exhausting week. It just was. So I'm recording the podcast really late. It is actually Saturday at 5:00 PM, and I'm only finally sitting down to record it for a bunch of reasons. You know, that thing where you take a day off, so everything just has to get crammed into the remaining few days of the week. And it was a short week anyway, so that was difficult. And I've just sounded off. I don't know if you can still hear how gorgeously phlegmy I am at the moment. But a yeah, I just didn't want to record. I sounded awful and I was waiting for a day when I sounded better. And now here we are. It's late on Saturday. I'm feeling a little bit like a student with an exam tomorrow. And it's not the ideal circumstances to record -- my kiddo's home. That's part of why haven't recorded this week. He's just always been around and he's a delightful three-year-old and is super noisy. And so I was just kinda hoping for a quiet moment and there isn't one coming. So if you hear him in the background, that's why.

So I'm thinking about making do because. I feel like today's episode is really one where I'm making do. But also because I know so many of you are not teaching the exact semester that you would hope to. And I know our students are not having the exact semester that they had hoped to have. That's just hard. You know, all of this is really hard. And I think we're eight months into not feeling like our best selves. Right? Like, at a certain point it starts to take a toll. Will we ever be back to normal? Will we ever be back to feeling like our best selves? I don't know. It feels so distant to me right now.

For all my talk about self-care, I am personally terrible at it -- it's one of my areas for growth. So I was really proud of myself that I took Tuesday off and I genuinely rested. My spouse also took the day off so that he could look after our kiddo and I rested. And what I felt when I woke up on Wednesday morning was mostly profound resentment that I wasn't better. Like I did the thing you're supposed to do. I had -- I took the day off. I rested. Why am I not better? I'm not patient. I mean, I'm not patient about anything, but I'm especially not patient with myself. And so all week long I've just been, I don't know, chasing after something I can't quite get to -- like a clear brain to think. I wonder what this essay is going to sound like when it's actually time. Things you could edit out in posy, Brenna, but given that it's five o'clock on Saturday, probably won't.

Making do is difficult. I think that it increases the cognitive load that we're all under to feel like we're not quite achieving what we want to achieve. When you never get to feel that, that sort of sense of satisfaction, I think that's hard. I'm thinking about that in particular today because the format of today's episode is a little bit different. No guest. Thank goodness because I don't know when I would have

recorded it this week. Instead, what I want to do is talk to you about the programming that we're going to be offering for the back half of the semester. It's not that I think our programming is making do, I think is pretty good. But the central focus of what we want to do with the back half of term is give everyone in the community a chance to get together and talk about what we've learned from this strange and in some ways exciting and educational and in many ways terrifying and exhausting semester that we've all been through together. You know, we're not the experts in what's going on inside the classrooms at TRU. In this exact moment, we've got a lot to tell you about good digital pedagogy and how to build community and how to reach students. But you've got the students and you're the ones who are living it right now. So we've tried to build a series of sessions that will give you time to share expertise. Ask questions of us but also of each other. And really build on the body of knowledge that's happening around campus. So instead of an interview today, I'm going to interview myself. Nope, that would be super weird. I'm going to spend today's show talking to you about the programming we have to offer starting this week. So as I always say, let's get into it.

The centerpiece of this semester's programming is something that we're calling our Lessons Learned series. And the Lessons Learned series invites you to share your expertise and draw on the experiences of each other. We reflected on the most frequent needs raised by the community in the last semester. So what we did was we took a look at the tickets that have come in and the kinds of issues that were foregrounded in our inboxes. And we tried to arrange programming around it so that we could offer advice and guidance on those issues. And then also so that you would have space to talk to each other about what worked and what didn't work.

So starting this week, tomorrow, if this episode is something you are listening to on Monday, otherwise, October 20th, we'll have a workshop called What Should Be in Your Moodle Shell. The start of term was really rocky. And I think that in a lot of cases, we didn't have the foundational sort of building blocks in place that students needed, especially when BigBlueButton crashed, right? The students who had the most stressful time when BigBlueButton went down were the students whose entire Moodle course experience consisted of Moodle shell with a BigBlueButton link, right? So how can we contextualize that information a little bit better so that students have access to more contextual information from the course in that space. So that's the primary focus of October 20th workshop. All these workshops are taking place on Tuesdays, kind of over the lunch, 12:30 to 2:00. You might notice that's nestled in between our office hours. Only so many hours in a day.

On the 27th, Jamie's doing a fantastic session on creative quizzing, looking at how to get the most out of the quiz tool in order to meaningfully assess learning. I'm really excited to see what Jamie does with that session. She comes up with ideas for quizzes that consistently blow me away. So I'm really, I'm really looking forward to being an attendee on that one, to be honest.

November 3rd is a session that I will start soliciting feedback for right now. You can tell me what you want to cover in this session today. Send me a quick email to [bgray@tru.ca](mailto:bgray@tru.ca). The session is called If I Knew Then What I Know Now, and I really want to focus on the true lessons learned this semester and pull together a set of advice. How do you reach students in virtual delivery at TRU right now? So that's If I Knew Then What I Know Now, I'm excited for that one. I'm also prepared to be a little bit humbled with it though. If what you learned is that none of my advice from the summer was any good, you can come and talk about that. And I will be okay with that. Will I? Yes, I will, okay.

And then on November 10th, we've got the brilliant Jon Fulton to talk about Effective Video Work in Moodle. Obviously, we're all relying on video a lot more than we used to. Jon will be there to talk about

what worked, what didn't, how to knock your video production out of the park for January, what tweaks you might want to make to existing videos, all that kinda stuff. Jon's going to cover for you in that session.

November 17th is maybe the session I am most excited for. It's our Faculty Showcase and Brian's going to take the lead on this one. He's going to be celebrating the folks who really jumped in with both feet and turned this semester into something special. So it's a chance for us to spotlight some of the colleagues whose work has inspired us all semester long. And one of the great things about the way Brian's thinking this session is these faculty members are not, like, tech wizards. Many of them were quite anxious or nervous about teaching online, but built something pretty remarkable anyway. So I'm excited for you to feel as just grateful to know these folks as I do and for you to get some great ideas from them.

And then the final workshop in the sixth week Lessons Learned series is on November 24th, and I'm cheekily calling it Have the Best Week Ever!... Next Term. So with all we've learned through this experience about building community and about setting tone. I want to help us plan for the best first week for the winter term. The reason I'm doing this kind of as the last workshop is my hope is it'll give you a little bit of, I don't know, make you feel ready for January so you can actually maybe enjoy your time away from campus. Is that possible this Christmas, I don't know – we're having the big negotiation in my family right now about whether traveling is wise or not. And if we don't go home, it'll be our first time not going home for Christmas in a really long time. And yeah, this Christmas is going to be hard enough. So let's feel good about January before it starts, okay? So that's Have the Best First Week Ever.

And so those workshops take place -- they start October 20th and they run every Tuesday at lunch. And of course we will be archiving them in the Support for Virtual Delivery shell. We do need you to register for workshops, but you'll find all the links to that information in the show notes. And I also sent out a little note via faculty-L last Friday. So you can check there for the links as well.

And then we do have some additional programming on top of the Lessons Learned series. So something that people have asked for and Jamie is delivering because she's amazing: we've got a Gradebook Studio Setup. So it's going to be, I think Wednesdays from one to two starting towards the end of October. And if you go to the Support for Virtual Delivery shell and you click into the fall 20-0 workshop section, you'll see a Scheduler there where you can book a time for you to just sit down and go over Gradebook with Jamie. And this can be like you just want to understand gradebooks, you really want to have like a focus session with Jamie where you can ask questions, or maybe it's just like, I don't care, I just need someone to fix this before finals. Jamie, do your magic. It's for that too. So it's an opportunity to really get to know the finer points of gradebook or to get your gradebook fix just in the nick of time for finals.

Matthew Stranach is going to give a tour of his Learning Without Walls site that he built with the expertise of our learning designers, Marie Bartlett and Melissa Jakubec, and also with input from the student union and from the folks at faculty of student development. So it's a fantastic resource for helping students to learn online. And what you might not know is that you can take and adapt pieces of it or use it to develop resources for your own teaching. So October 29th from 12:30 to 2:00, Matthew's going to go over that -- Matthew and Marie actually are going to go over that and do that tour.

And also from Matthew on November 9th, from 12:30 to 2:00, he's going to have a guest, Leanne from the ESTR program, who's going to show how she's using Teams and Office 365 in her teaching. So we don't offer a lot of Teams support out of our office because IT Services has the expertise and the

permissions there. But Matthew works with Office 365 quite frequently. And so he's going to talk about how to use Teams as part of your workflow and consider it as an alternative or a compliment to what you're doing already.

And then I'm always excited to get to partner with the good folks over in CELT. So Carolyn Ives and I will be doing a workshop on alternative assessments that's going to be on November the 6th from 10:00 until 11:30. And this is a chance for us to really go into some depth about what your options are. You know, we've been talking a lot about how a timed invigilated final exam is just not a thing right now and how obviously, and even a timed final exam conducted synchronously through the learning management system, it's not ideal for a lot of learners. And having a lot of people do that is not ideal for the health of the server. And unfortunately, that is a consideration that we have to make. So Carolyn and I have some ideas to talk about how to close the feedback loop for students and give them some different kinds of assessment options that might make a bit more sense than what you're doing right now. Some of them are very sort of gentle, practical tweaks to what you're doing right now. And some of them are more, like, a redesign, kind of aspirationally. Let's put it that way. Ideas for what you might want to think about into the future. So I'm excited for that, and it's always fun when Carolyn and I get to co-present. And we always have fun. So. Yeah.

The only other programming and I'm speaking directly to department chairs, if you're listening, is we're going to offer Moodle 911 again. That's our very popular one-week Moodle bootcamp. So it's an hour a day with lots of time to build and work in-between the sessions and that's going to be the very last week of term. So the intention of that is for any new faculty who are hired for the winter term, they can come and get brought up to speed with enough time afterwards that they can do their course development and shall development. But it'll give them a sense of the fundamental basics of Moodle if they've never worked in the environment before or if it's been awhile. So yeah, that's a really good option for brand new folks, but everyone is welcome. If you feel like a refresher on any sort of individual component of Moodle would be helpful for you. You're more than welcome at Moodle, 911. We never turn anybody away.

So yeah, that's our programming and I'm feeling really energized about it. It's been nice. You know, at the beginning of term, we were adamant that we wouldn't be offering any programming this term. We were all really, really tired. I don't think we're any less tired. You're tired, it's midterm season after all. But sometimes it's nice to feel like you're building something instead of just reacting. For me, that's a really important part of my workflows to feel like I'm creating. So it's been nice to sit down and really think through programming that I hold this filling a need for faculty. And I get how busy you are – I really genuinely do. And so if you don't feel going to a session as possible right now, I get it. We will archive everything and it'll be archived in the Support for Virtual Delivery shell. You're more than welcome to come back and check it out. You know, if reviewing those sessions over Christmas is a reasonable expectation for you, for yourself, like that's totally fine. We just wanted to make sure we were offering something for those who are really feeling like they want to talk through what's happened so far, this term and make a plan for the winter. We like to be where you need us. So I hope that's the case right now.

So that's it for episode eight of You Got This. As always, if you want to write to us, you can email me [bgray@tru.ca](mailto:bgray@tru.ca). And I'm also on Twitter [@brennacgray](https://twitter.com/brennacgray). In both cases, that's gray with an A. All of our show notes and transcripts are posted at [yougotthis.trubox.ca](http://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 one that I learned this week. Are you making do? Does everything feel completely out of control? Are you exhausted? I want you to take a nap. I know it doesn't sound like a teaching tip. It's like, yeah, okay Brenna, everybody's exhausted and we should take a nap, we get it. No, but seriously. Seriously. If there's a chunk of your day when there's no responsibilities on your time. Like you don't have a meeting imminently and your kids are with a caregiver or at school, I want you to sneak away and have a nap even if it's just for an hour. That's all I managed on Tuesday, I managed a one-hour nap in the midst of all that rest. And it helped. It helped so much. It was not a panacea. I was not suddenly cured of my head cold, but it helped. It helped to gain perspective. It helped to gain space. And it helped to remember that my health actually matters. I'm not just a brain in a jar. My health matters. And yours does too. If you've just been making do, if you've been running from one thing to another, if your calendar looks a lot like mine, which is somehow blocked just full of video conferencing from nine in the morning till five at night, my tiny teaching tip for you this week is to find one hour somewhere this week and take a nap. I'm rooting for you, you can do it. If I can do it, you can do it. I know it. Till next time. Thanks for enjoying this slightly different "making do" episode of You Got This! with me. I love chatting with you, even if it's a little different. Take care. Look after yourself. And I hope we see you out at the programming. Buh-bye.

[Difficult to discern toddler noises.]

So professional. [Laughing.] Bye!