Brenna Clarke Gray:

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 Secwepemcú'ecw, where I hope to learn and grow in community with all of you.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And today, tonight, I'm recording this one late at night. I have a sick kiddo at home and quiet time is going to be at a premium for the next little while. I'm thinking about the home stretch. I'm thinking about the home stretch of a lot of things. It's the end of term, and I hope you're hanging in there. And it's also, well, we keep being told, it's the home stretch of this whole pandemic thing, but it's not feeling like it right now, especially if you're here in BC where we're seeing numbers go up and restrictions emerging again. And the whole thing is feeling very Groundhog Day to last March and April. And I want to think about how we get through the home stretch together and how we make it through the home stretch to see the other side. So let's get into it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I feel like the adjustment back to campus has been slow going since returning from my unexpected hiatus, it's been difficult to get back into a rhythm of working. And some of that I think is just due to how much anxiety is in the air now. I don't think anybody feels very good right now. We're in the middle -- as I said off the top -- of this, well, I'm going to call it a surprise surge. I didn't see it coming. And it's also end of term, it's a difficult, stressful time for everyone. Nothing can happen quite fast enough for what people need at the moment. And we're looking towards more uncertainty in the fall. So it's the home stretch because we know that vaccination is coming -- for some of us and some of our loved ones it will have already happened by the time you hear this and yay! This is definitely one of those things where every individual success is everyone's success.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

But it also, I don't know, it doesn't feel very home stretchy. It feels kind of more of the same as usual. I'm thinking about care and how we enact it for each other. How we demonstrate that we understand the stress and pressures that everyone is under and how we take care of ourselves through all of this. I'm not sure I have great answers. I think that this is a moment when lots of us are struggling and maybe the compassionate, the caring thing to do is to just acknowledge that. Maybe that's something that you could do for your colleagues and your students this week is just acknowledge that things are hard. You're going to be listening to this just after Easter break. I'm really hoping to take a very genuine break over Easter. It's also my birthday, my second pandemic birthday. What a thing, what a thing to be planning to celebrate in a moment like -- this after I already did it in a moment like this last year, Groundhog Day, very, very Groundhog Day.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

There's something about the cyclical nature of what we've been through over the last year that actually reminds me quite a lot of the teaching year. September is always, September, November always feels like November. March is always March and yet we want things to be different. We want to improve on our best practice. We want to reflect, we want to learn. We want to grow. And then some days we just

find ourselves in these moments where we are repeating the exact same patterns that got us nowhere last time around. I'm procrastinating again, there was a stretch in there I was doing really well. I was actually on top of deadlines and feeling pretty good. And I'm back to procrastinating again, I'm back to some old patterns that are rooted in anxiety, rooted in not feeling like I have the bandwidth for feedback right now, rooted in not wanting to disappoint people, but ultimately you'd think I'd learn, by not accomplishing what I set out to accomplish also has the effect of disappointing people.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

We're just back in this same place. And I'm struck by how, if you strip away the panic and the anxiety and the maybe not fear, but trepidation of the early days of the pandemic. And you drill down to that just sense of unease. I'm really noticing the sameness. And I wonder if maybe it's the sameness that's getting to so many of us. We're ready to do something different. I don't know if I have a hopeful end for this surprise. I have vaccinations for everyone. Nope. Sorry I don't. I guess the hopeful nature is that just like a school year where September is always September and November is always November and March is always March. We do find moments of joy. Don't we? We do find moments of excitement. We do find moments where things connect in a new and different way. We do find moments of learning.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm searching for mine right now. I hope you're doing okay. As I look towards end of term and finals, I'm sort of struck that we've, we've made it a year. And there were weeks when it didn't seem like that was going to be the case. So if nothing else, even if my second pandemic birthday is just me eating a box of creme eggs -- that's not a metaphor for anything. I bought a box of cream eggs. I'm looking at them right now. Even if that's all my birthday is even if that's all your Easter weekend is, even if that's the moment of rest, you find this week, we're here, we're doing it. And that's the first step to finding some kind of success in all of this, some kind of joy.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's a gearshift to my interview with Carolyn Hoessler today. Although what a source of joy it was to chat with her about something I care really deeply about. Today's interview is about data privacy and stewardship and how that works at TRU. Carolyn co-chairs with Brian Lamb a committee called DSALT. I'm going to let her tell you all about it because I can't even remember what the acronym stands for, but suffice it to say, I care about it a lot. I promise.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So I am here today with Carolyn. Carolyn, would you introduce yourself? So generally I ask people to say who you are and what your big fancy title is, what you do day to day. And I have been asking people to introduce where they might have been most likely to be found pre pandemic, but of course you arrived to us during the pandemic. So if you want to talk about where you came from, you're more than welcome to

Carolyn Hoessler:

Thank you very much, Brenna, wonderful to be here. I am one of the wonderful coordinators that we have in learning and faculty development at CELT, which is the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching on campus. And I've had the wonderful opportunity of getting to know people during the pandemic. So I joined TRU August 13th in the middle of pandemic, middle of being remote and online. And I got to come here from doing work at other institutions. So I've been doing work in curriculum and

accreditation and assurance of learning and all the kind of fun stuff around teaching and learning through a couple of institutions, but most recently at Ryerson and then OCAD, which are two institutions out in Ontario. So I get to join Thompson Rivers University. And one of the things I get to do around campus is get to meet faculty when they're discussing things like program learning outcomes. So some people will know me from that work as well, or from some of the workshops I get to do with the other Carolyn, Carolyn Ives at CELT. So there's two of us.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

There's so many Carolyn's. You are in fact the third Carolyn to come on the podcast. So I specifically invited you on the show today to talk about a new or maybe revived initiative committee at TRU called DSALT. I shamefully am a member of the committee and I'm not entirely sure what DSALT stands for. So could you start by telling us that?

Carolyn Hoessler:

So the fun joy about coming up with an acronym is trying to figure out how to put all the words you want into it and still make it sound like something. So DSALT stands for Data Stewardship and Analytics for Learning and Teaching. So essentially we are focused on things like learning analytics, data stewardship, but particularly around the data connected to learning and teaching. So this is all the data that's collected in any time instructors are teaching online. This is all the data that's collected through all the systems on campus and how we interact with those, whether as instructors or as students. So DSALT: data stewardship and analytics for learning and teaching. We played around with it, but that was kind of the best option we got. So that's the one we went with.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's nice that it kind of makes a word. That's always helpful. Very much so. Yeah. I chair ACTAC, which is a terrible committee acronym and I'm envious of DSALT. Okay. So this one, I think is really important, particularly given the mode of teaching and learning that we are using at the moment, primarily virtual, what kinds of data and privacy issues do you think sort of led to the resurgence of the DSALT committee, because we've attempted to do this before and it sort of petered out. So why do you think there's a new interest in it now?

Carolyn Hoessler:

Well, I think there is a new interest, but there's also an ongoing kind of challenge around data. So the moment I sit down and I, I teach as well. And when I think about that, the moment I sit down and I log into all the systems, we log into a system that records any lectures that I'm recording. We log into a system that tracks my movement and students use and grades and everything. You know, we have all the times we type our password in all the systems we access. Every time I send a file through email or my student replies to me on email. So there's so many systems I use as an, as an instructor. And if we think about the instructors on campus and they, one instructors probably navigating 10 or 12 systems without even attempting to use an additional system.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And then on top of that they, there's all the types of systems that each department uses and everything. So there's so much data on campus. And part of it is I think it's always been important, but it comes back to the, how are we going to have the conversation and what the focus is going to be. So when we strike a committee, we all want the committee work to go smoothly and be done quickly. And so one of the

hard things for the committee is that is scope is how big or how small is our scope. And it's kind of like saying, if you want to go big in one dimension, you have to go smaller and another dimension. So knowing that there were probably close to five or six dozen possible systems out there connected to teaching and learning and student and student instructor data recognizing that there's dozens and dozens of them. We had to go small on, on what we were going to look at for them. And so part of it is, is that we're really focused on thinking about like governance and policy we're thinking about which systems have been approved, which systems have been reviewed for privacy. All those kinds of questions to help people be a bit more informed about what systems do exist that have been reviewed and, and also thinking about what policies do exist. So that's kind of, we decided, okay, we'll do, we'll do a first initial scope on looking at what exists, how are people using it? What's been approved what still needs to be reviewed, all of that kind of looking at it from that perspective, and then working towards guidelines on kind of decision-making and how this process connects, or coming up with a hub for people to go and check and go, I wanna use Slido, is Slido available on campus, or I want to use Zoom, is Zoom available on campus and being able to actually have an answer to that. And so knowing there's a lot of systems we had to get clear on our focus. When you do, if you do work in one system, it's easier to kind of branch out into a bunch of different directions, but we have a lot of systems to think about.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's interesting because I think sometimes, well, for a lot of us, I think our understanding of privacy and data sort of begins and ends like maybe at our understanding of FIPPA. So we know that some tools are FIPPA compliant or are not, we kind of have a general idea of what that means kind of general idea of like, you know, the process of asking students for a waiver, if not, but the work you're doing goes far beyond the idea of like something being allowed or not allowed and, and looks more at, okay, what is happening with that data? Right. Like who's caring for it. What are we collecting? Do we need to be collecting it? Like those kinds of questions? Am I right? Yeah.

Carolyn Hoessler:

So it is like, part of it is, is if we're thinking about systems on campus, who is the individuals who have access to that data. So I can think of something like student grades. So as instructors, we handle on student grades a lot, but those things are very, you know, could be very embarrassing. They are very much student private data. They pretty much fall under FIPPA. So one of the questions I think about is like, let's say, invite somebody to come into my course, whether it's to help something out or be a guest lecture or something like that, how do I give them access in ways that don't have them accessing student grades, for example, so something that's pragmatic like that, or something big, which is who on campus actually can see my students' grades and who can't. And so thinking about like, which, which access points they can, like, I know your office can't see a student's grade, unless somebody's, screen-sharing in a way that shows you them. And that's not something they would normally do, but that's something that people wonder like, Oh, this is person have access. And the answer is probably no, but sometimes it's yes. And so it's good to know.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, it is. I think it's really helpful to understand where to go for help too. Once you have a clear understanding of how the processes work. So oftentimes at end of term, people are surprised that, you know, you, you calculate a final grade in Moodle and I can see that because I can help you build that grade book, but you have to transfer that grade into the Banner system. Right. And new instructors, don't always even realize that that's a step they have to complete. And people are always surprised that that's where I, I can't help. I can give you like directions on how to access that service, but I don't have

any kind of access to student records in banner for good reason. Right. I don't need them to do my job. And so keeping clear the lines of who has access to what can also help you when you do need to go and get help because asking the right person often results in a quicker response, right?

Carolyn Hoessler:

One of the advantages I have of being new to campus with that is I can see what's available publicly on who I ask for things. And because I, I don't know that you know, this person is the, always the person I go to. I don't have those go-to people on campus. So I get to use myself a little bit as a pilot test to find out like, okay, I want to use a system that makes word clouds, where do I find that on campus who has access to that? And then being able to leverage existing connections to be like, Oh, this is the office that has that. And I think about just for myself, how much use it would be nice to have a page and say, Oh, this kind of functionality, this kind of system, here's the support person or it's available, but unsupported. And at least then I would save myself some time. So that was kind of part of it too.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

This is information that is kind of living and changing and it will vary based on what service we procure, but also we know how a contract might change year to year, for example, right? All these kinds of things are potentially variable. And so having a committee that's tasked with keeping on top of it is really important. If you want to keep that information accurate over time.

Carolyn Hoessler:

Well and, you know, someone said to me, what's the timeline from a review, like we were talking about privacy -- Brian Lamb, who co-chairs the committee and myself, and some colleagues and just like, thinking about, well, how long did this approval last? And if I think about that, what, is there a best before date? And one things we know is that every time there's an update access could be different or privacy could be different, every time there is a contract change or contract negotiation, it can change. So thinking about, are there things that could trigger a new review and who is doing those reviews and how do we keep that work feasible and transparent and also make and make sure, you know, who's going to be the one updating the website, ultimately. And I think as you said, having a working group or ongoing kind of body that does that, but also just how does that become part of -- when you update this, this, and this, make sure you click one button or send this one email and get this list updated and thinking about doing that in ways that aren't going to be, you know, one more thing on everybody's lists that they have to do, but also recognizing that it's useful for as many people as possible.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah, it's interesting. You know, you've come to campus at a really interesting time to start talking about this stuff because many of us on campus are interested in -- obsessed about, conspiracy theorists on issues of -- privacy and data and student rights. But for me, it was really interesting to experience the discussions that happened around VitalSource in the last couple of months, because suddenly people across campus were really engaged. And one of the questions that emerged and it actually got asked at Senate was okay, well, I want to see the contract, like, can I see what data we're storing and can I see where it's going? And can I see what the limitations are or aren't. And I don't think there's been a huge interest in or desire to engage with that material previously, or at least I haven't seen it in, in all my, my bear poking. So, you know, and, and that's a process that is really interesting, right. Because where does that contract live? Like who, who does get to see it on some level, surely there's an argument that it's a public document, right? Like it's public money at a public institution. And yet of course there are all

kinds of you know, corporate reasons why those documents may not be made completely public. So I'm just really interested in, in that aspect of it as well. So not only what's happening with data on campus, but like, what are we agreeing to and who has access to find that information out?

Carolyn Hoessler:

Yeah. And I think, I think an analogy can be made maybe historically it's almost like thinking about our data as water. And historically our data has been this pitcher of water or jug of water. And we go to our local well, and we get our water out. And we, you know, there's this kind of really contained set of data, right? If you wanted to access grades 20 years ago, you'd have to break into the registrar's office, filing cabinets and pull out someone's folder. And there wasn't a super highway connecting that registrar's office and that file drawer to the rest of the world. It was quite literally one spot with a lock and a key. And I think one of the things that's shifted quite a bit with data is just how interconnected everything is. So when I started having training around privacy, so part of my background comes from being like a research lab manager and and these kinds of training where you're trained, how to keep the pieces of paper locked in separate file drawers in separate rooms. So they do not touch and then possibly can connect people's data to in ways that are identifiable. So I'm thinking about when I think about those days, I'm collecting pieces of paper. Well, the odds of breaking in require somebody to break in past three doors and into our filing cabinet, right.

Carolyn Hoessler:

But we now do a lot of research and this goes outside of the diesel committee cause DSALT's on teaching and learning. But when I think about research and ethics and how it's evolved, and now it's to take into account that my interview might be via zoom, my and -- which has its own recording and cloud and everything else and servers. And my my survey, maybe also on something like survey monkey, which TRU does have a license for, and it exists in servers and that can be accessed. So suddenly that survey that I would have given as a researcher that was on paper and had to just be careful not to like accidentally have it fall out in the hallway, or, you know, I couldn't take it to the cafeteria with me. I had to like go back to the office first and lock it in the cabinet. Like those were the kind of concerns we had then now we have this concern that the data we're collecting is on essentially vast networks and it can go anywhere. So that water we're drawing from is actually part of our aquifers and rivers and oceans. And you, as soon as you drop something in, it can go anywhere. And I think that awareness of interconnection is so important in this work. And so when I think about the DSALT work, part of me is knowing, okay, so a student posts makes a comment in a recording in the class, where is that picked up stored, and it's not stored in one place like that paper copy was, but it's stored in possibly hundreds of places. And then who has access and then from who has access, how does it get shipped around? And when does it get deleted? Like one thing we don't consider is, well, how long will the internet have -- how long will the giant system have the recordings of me doing my lecture or the recordings of my student who asked the comment three classes ago? And the answer is we don't know how long that recording may exist, unless we, you know, less, we're less, we know a lot of the systems we're in.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Well, and it's interesting, right? Because we're recording this over a cloud service. I use Zencastr to record the podcast. And there's lots of good reasons to use a cloud service. For me, this is fantastic because it makes a unique recording on my end and a unique recording on your end. And then it hosts them together so that I can then pull down the audio. It's the best quality audio that I can get for podcasting. There's a reason why I use the space that I do. But yeah, that interconnectedness, I think we lose track of often when we're weighing systems to use for teaching and learning sometimes, you know.

One of the real benefits of a service like Big Blue Button for all its clunkiness and all its fallibility -- and I recognize it has both in spades -- is that that is hosted by us, right? Like we have total control over that data in a way that we will never have with Teams or Zoom or Blue Jeans or any of the other services that we subscribe to connect with. And I was this really fascinating slash horrifying article this weekend, I'll connect it in the show notes, but it was all about we collect so much eye tracking data. Now Teams collects eye-tracking data, Zoom collects eye-tracking data, right. And it's, it's often packaged as a learning analytic. Like you can see if students are quote unquote paying attention or not based on their eye tracking, which, troubling, but okay. But this article is a, it's a literature review of all the other things that I tracking data discloses without recognizing. So it, and it's everything from, you know, researchers have ascertained sexual orientation from eye-track data, so like, they can ascertain various kinds of disabilities through eye-track data.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And so it's like, sometimes I feel like it's like this mushroom cloud, right? Like the thing that we're worried about is like, where is the data? What is it being used for? But that, what is it be used for question is something that is always changing. Right. And that is the part that I often feel a little bit out of control about like when Microsoft comes up with like a quote unquote habit for a user, what will that habit mean into the future? Like we don't always know, the contract language isn't always clear around this stuff.

Carolyn Hoessler:

Well, and the other thing to think about is it's not just what it's know what it's being used for now, but what it could be used for in the future. So one of the things that we are aware of is that any of the data that gets collected on this and this idea of scraping vast amount of data, and then being able to pull profiles from it, or being able to just even just train better machines out of it. And so thinking about not only is it what the data is now, the way I think about it is we think about in policing as an example, they collect to start collecting blood samples and what became more DNA. And they even collect stuff now that they say, well, we can't analyze it today, but we'll keep it because maybe we can analyze in the future.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And when it comes to solving violent crime, I am fully supportive of the idea that that sample gets maintained to the day that they can analyze it appropriately. But I think the question comes back to our data. So not only is it the question of like, how is what I'm saying to you, which I am considering as if everything I say I would post on my door and could pop up 40 years from now because I'm thinking of this as a public space. But a lot of times when we have conversations with a friend we're asking a question, a class we're not considering those as public spaces. We actually intentionally are building them as perhaps brave spaces or spaces where we can have tough conversations. So then what happens in those, the data that gets scraped from those kinds of experiences.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And going back to eye-tracking, one of labs I used to work in as our lab manager did eye tracking, and a couple of things are interesting as eye tracking works differently, depending on the colour of your eyes, but we know, and they're getting better at it. But one of the things we know about eye colour is that it's somewhat associated with other phenotypes, which can lead to things that are related to racism. So we, so we have to be careful that the algorithms and the, and the data just outliers and happenstances don't

lead us to value certain students or judge certain students in certain ways. So what can happen is our algorithms in our computer can manifest our biases. They can manifest which things we don't think count, and they can lead us to the value things because they don't read as well, or they don't appear as well. So we have to be really conscious about what biases we are receiving from and building into these systems.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's one of the things that makes me so nervous about the kinds of learning analytics, that report not pure data, but draw conclusions on our behalf. So, you know, I already gave the example of the Microsoft habit. One of the ones that it will track is when your students submit essays: do they submit their essays first thing in the morning, do they submit them last thing at night? Because Office365 can tell when our students are working on that assignment, it will also track that information as well. And I was reading a blog post about this that was from a Microsoft for education guru. I am not going to link this in the show notes. Where they were talking about how great this is, because now you can stage an intervention. If you think your student is working on papers too late at night. And I just thought there's a heck of a lot of assumption going into the idea that my student needs an intervention, because they write papers late at night. It could be anything from their preferred circadian rhythm to their work schedule, to the fact that they're a caregiver. And like I do most of my work late at night because that's when my kid is asleep, you know, like I was just sort of baffled. And so I think too, when we look at the kinds of tools that are increasingly being offered to us, we need to look at who's making the judgment and what underlies that judgment. And if we can't find the answers to those two questions, then we need to just not look at the judgment at all. And, you know, maybe the data part is useful, but I worry about the judgment a lot.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And we think about this as -- if I think about faculty and instructors. We, we also are weighing that judgment, that leap from pattern or number to meaning. And we do this every time any faculty member does research, right? We do that every time someone looks at a student's assignment, we are looking at our pattern and we're making meaning from it. So and what I think is so true in what you're saying is when that report comes out and an interpretation is added, in some cases, we need to also weigh ask that question of like, what were, what was the original pattern? And do we have access to that? But also what are the options that are explanations that exist? There are tools like thinking about the ladder of inference, which is you state the facts, and then you go up the rung with, well, so that means this. So that means that. So that means this. And you go up this ladder. And so you might have something, as you said, where the fact is, let's say we have the data, it said 30% of my students write their paper with less than six hours of word, document processing time and submit it -- mostly occur on the final day before it's due. And then they submit it. What does that tell me is that only that fact that they use this word processing for six hours, most of it on the day before it's due and they submitted it online, what it doesn't tell me is does that student hand write it beforehand? Do they make notes in a note program? So there's about a dozen free or paid for no based programs. So maybe they don't like word. Maybe they like a different program.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I do so much of my messy note taking for articles or book chapters on my phone. Like when I'm like my kid won't sleep and I'm lying next to his bed, I'm like, Nope. I just had an idea. I might bash out a paragraph that way. Right. That's not going to be captured in any one single like, system. Right.

Carolyn Hoessler:

So I think what I find is, as you said, the messy data won't capture that it won't capture the fact that you punch it off the articles, because you're sitting in the bleachers somewhere, watching your kid in a swim competition and you're out and you're highlighting the sections for your paper. Like none of that is going to be captured. And so I think when we realize how limited the facts are, then we can kind of remind ourself that we actually don't know. Yeah, this is a given what we know. This is a possible answer to this, but we don't know. So one of the things I think about is if you think about a software that marks grammar, one of my favourite things is, is, is it marking behaviour with O U R or behaviour with I O R and I, I sometimes look at these systems and go, so the good news is all this tells me, is that the system doesn't like the Canadian spelling, it doesn't tell me necessarily how accurate everything else is. So that allows me to navigate that and to say there's some fallibility, one, one of my favourite things about something like Teams is it is it's tracking eye contact. Well, I might be taking my notes if you did. We thought about something and I don't know which system, I don't know the details on what exactly teams does track material. So I'll put that caveat in there --

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Me either, I'm still waiting for my freedom of information requests.

Carolyn Hoessler:

I have a system, whatever it is that tracks what I'm looking at, I may be taking, I may be your most attentive student taking notes. And I think if I go back to just even the classroom, and I remember somebody saying, I know what students are listening and which ones are not. And I go, well, how do you know that they're listening? And they said, they're looking at me. And I thought about this. And I went, I can look at somebody and be entirely thinking about my grocery list in the back of my head. Right. I remember a wonderful quote that talked about how one of the authors in the 16th century would sit in the classes and just write, be writing stories, looking. And he would look up at the board every so often just so the person thought he was writing notes.

Carolyn Hoessler:

So this idea of a cat and mouse game of we'll come up with better technology to determine something, requires us to take a moment to recognize that what we really want to know is are students succeeding, are our instructors being able to engage in the way they need to engage in terms of like, are they having access to what they need to access? Is there delays and things that they need not to have delays in? If those are our questions, then it's thinking about, well, what are ways to ask and what data do we have and what are the limitations on that data? So, so it's just a different approach to thinking about it as, as one of many options. And wait to see. Yep.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

The other thing that isn't captured by that kind of thinking is, is the inherent variability in the way we learn, even just moment to moment, I had this very transformative learning experience back in the fall, I was taking the the BCcampus indigenization course for, for certain leadership positions. As I look ahead in my career and thinking about what that might look like. And it was phenomenal course, but one of the things for me, like personally, totally apart and aside from the content we were learning was that we were asked to create these medicine bags and we were given the supplies. And while we were listening to the content, we were working with our hands and I'd never had that experience before. And it was, I had been, I was going through a pretty emotional fall anyway. And I just found like my ability to focus on

what was being said when my hands were occupied in this like very repetitive, simple, but, I don't know, self-contained tasks, I guess -- it was incredible. I'd never had that experience before and through the rest of the fall I would like knit through meetings. When I'm, when I'm not in that same emotional state, I don't have that same need. Right. Like, so I don't do it. I haven't been doing it lately, but like that to me was just such an interesting experience of how being introduced to this new skill or a new practice at a point where emotionally, I sort of needed a different way to approach my work was like, Oh, wow, I'm doing this whole new thing now. And I, I know that if I sat in certain classes I had in undergrad and had been sewing, the instructor would have been like, well, you're not paying attention when really I was paying so much attention to this class. So I think like one of the things that stresses me out about learning analytics is that I don't think they always recognize that like people are human beings, right? And that, like, we have variability of experience and we have, you know, our, our emotions, our contexts, our stress load, these things all play into what choices we're making about our learning day to day, minute to minute. And, and I, any system that doesn't recognize that is going to be missing a huge piece of the picture.

Carolyn Hoessler:

Sure. One of the things that I've really appreciated with coming to tear you and just having the conversations with instructors and faculty at TRU has been that we use thaatt TRU the plural for student. So what comes to me, interestingly enough, this is a small linguistic thing, because it's a difference between saying my student and my students, Oh, it's hugely powerful. Because when I hear a faculty member say my students, they are not seeing one archetype, they're seeing many different students. And I think one of the pieces that I think is so powerful when we think about are our students at TRU is we do see them as everywhere from you, the student who is coming, maybe first-generation you, the student who is having to leave at a time to pick up their kids, a student that is multi-generational in terms of higher education and is planning on a particular career after they finish their degree, all of that exists.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And because we recognize at TRU in many little subtle ways have noticed that there are multiple students with multiple goals and multiple ways of engaging. There's little ways we've built the system to allow for that. And I think of the things with the DSALT's working group is to attend to this is very much, has to be a something that we make at TRU, because every working group is something that is TRU -- fits in within our culture here. And I think with TRU, one of the things is really recognizing that there is going to be a vast array of students. There's going to be a vast array of instructors. There's going to be an array of the needs of instructors and the needs of students. And so it's as much as sometimes our desire is to control the variability and make a much more standard you know, input into the system. When we embrace the diversity of the input, we actually have to consider what it means for the system that we're using. And I think that's a different kind of approach. And that's something I'm excited to see with, with the work here at TRU,

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That is a very hopeful and encouraging place to leave it. Thank you so much for your time today, Carolyn. And I really appreciated this chat. I like talking to anybody who cares about privacy, as much as I do. I'm always excited.

Carolyn Hoessler:

And I wanted to say, if anyone else likes to think about the technology, you think about the good for students, think about what instructors need. We at DSALT would love to have you on board. If you ever want a coffee conversation, happy to have that as well

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Is the best way for folks to reach out to you by your email?

Carolyn Hoessler:

Best way is email. It's a little hard to find anyone's office at this point in time.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

This is very true. Okay. Thanks so much, Carolyn. I really appreciate your time today.

Carolyn Hoessler:

Thank you.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So that is it for 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. And in both cases that's Gray with an A. All of our show notes and transcripts are posted at yougotthis.trubox.ca. 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 comes back to this idea of the academic year and the Groundhog Day-like nature of this moment, we find ourselves in. I'm going to encourage you to go out and really search for those moments of joy. Even in and among the sameness. If you're looking for a place to have a little bit of fun, I promise, this week, Brian Lamb and I are giving a redux of a workshop we did last year called meme media. It's all about how to make memes and why you might want to, what the pedagogical significance of a meme might be. And we'll teach you how to make your own animated gifs too. It's a perfect end of term workshop. And it's even something you might find useful in soliciting course feedback from your students. No, I'm not joking. Yes, I am very serious. So that's on Wednesday at lunchtime, and I do hope you'll come in and join us.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

But even if that's not where you find your joy and your fun this week, I hope you'll find something. And I hope you'll share it with me. I'm really in the market for your joyful stories of teaching and learning right now. So please reach out, you know, where to find me. It's the end of another term, probably one of the hardest in memory for many of us. So I'm going to leave you today by just reminding you, you got this, it's the cheesy name of my podcast. And it's also the thing I believe most deeply about each and every one of us that at our core, we know how to do this. We know how to care for students. And if you're a student listening, you got this too, you know how to move through your course material. And if you're not teaching this term, or you're not in a teaching role, you got this, you know how to support your colleagues. You know how to do the role that you've come to the university to do. We've all got this. Even now, if I say it enough, will I believe it of myself? That is always the question. All right. Too much introspection for the radio. We'll talk soon. Bye-Bye.