

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Hello. And welcome to You Got This, a podcast about teaching and learning and sustaining community for everyone at Thomson 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 today, I am thinking about that lottery slogan, know your limits play, within it. Was that an Ontario thing or a BC thing? Anyway, I'm thinking about limits and how the heck you're supposed to play within them. Well, let's get into it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I am having a week with a capital W and it's only really just begun. I'm recording this much earlier in the week than usual, because I'm sort of looking ahead at the week and thinking, Ooh. It's not really that it's particularly oversubscribed so much as there's a lot of work/life imbalance going on this week. I've got medical appointments, my kiddo is home sick, and finding space to brain... I don't know how to brain this week. If anybody needs me to brain, I'm going to need you to ask someone with a fresher mind than mine, because mine is already tapped out. And as I say, it's embarrassingly early in the week to feel this way.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm reflecting on this right now, because I'm trying to get into a new habit with my to-do lists. I write a to-do list every week, usually on Sunday night, and it's a way of mapping out my week. It's a way of feeling in control of my schedule and making sure that nothing is falling through the cracks. I don't like feeling over scheduled, but I prefer it to feeling like I've missed something really important. And so to-do lists, I live or die by them. Sometimes I die by them. Like I forget to do it. And then I look and see everything that has gotten out of control and out of scope and yeah, you know, it's a lot of stuff all the time. So I'm trying to get into this practice of not just writing my to-do list on Sunday, but trying to take a realistic look at what the week is going to feel like. Obviously sometimes we don't know, there's infinite surprises, right? What will this week have in the store for me? Will Moodle do something ridiculous? Will BigBlueButton do something ridiculous. Will my schedule suddenly fill up in a way I wasn't planning? But you know, sometimes you know, right? You look at your kiddo or someone else you care about and you see that they're looking a little under the weather and you think to yourself, hmm, you're going to take some energy this week. Or you look at your own life stuff and you realize, oh, I am not going to be a hundred percent in my body this week. As I get older, I'm trying to recognize those triggers, I guess, better and plan around them.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So this is a week I've told myself for no new tasks. This is a week for cleaning up things that are already cognitively in process so that I don't have to, I don't know, kickstart my brain because it's not present. And it's a week for cleaning out my inbox. I hope. Gosh. I hope. If you're waiting for an email from me, I'm sorry. Just so sorry. Anyway, what I'm realizing is that this is not a week for brand new tasks as I've said. So I'm trying to triage next week and give myself some gentleness and some space this week. And I guess that's why that slogan, know your limits, play within them. Know your limits, play within it. It rhymed, didn't it? The slogan. Anyway, I guess that's why that's resonating for me right now because I'm trying to get a lot better at knowing my limits. It's never been my strength. My to-do lists are typically like aspirational documents. Here is what you can do if you have infinite time. Life doesn't really work

like that and I'm beginning to realize that creating these to-do lists for myself that are just unattainable is really setting myself up for failure.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So at the ripe old age of 38, I think, let me do the math. Yeah. At the ripe old age of 38, I'm figuring this out. Anyway, I'm bringing it up this week because, well, think of it as an offering. I know I'm not the only person with the infinite scroll to-do list that doesn't really reflect what's actually going to happen that week, but reflects a sort of ideal. Let's put ideal in heavy quotation marks, by the way, because it probably reflects like an 80 hour work week. I know I'm not the only one who does that. So consider this a little bell that I'm ringing for you to try to set yourself a more realistic set of tasks for the week ahead. You deserve not to get to Friday and feel like a failure because you set yourself up with an unattainable set of goals. I'm starting to believe that, right? Oh my friends, I'm a work in progress. And where would I be without this podcast as my weekly therapy session, I ask you?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

If what you tuned in for was to hear someone very delightful talk about learning technology, then you are in luck because our newest member of our team, Amanda Smith, learning technologist, she is joining us to talk about why she likes her job and how she's learning WordPress and why you should feel like you are in extremely good hands when you reach out to our help desk. I'm going to let Amanda take it from here.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay. So I am here today with the relative newest member of our team. You're not really new anymore, Amanda, but you kind are still to me. I'm here with Amanda Smith. Amanda, would you introduce yourself? Let people know what your role is on campus and how they might find you if they were looking for you.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. So my name's Amanda Smith. I'm obsessed with dogs, Harry Potter and desserts. I'm a learning technologist, right? Who doesn't love those things. I'm a learning technologist at TRU. So I'm on Brenna's team with LT&I, and we basically support and develop the deployment of digital learning technologies. So I'll answer questions and support faculty, staff, and students with questions from Kaltura to Moodle to WordPress. And usually you can find me if you're emailing the support desk. So if you get a message back from Amanda, that's me.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That is. And you answer most of the support tickets these days. So people hear from you a lot. Yeah.

Amanda Smith:

I do, and like you said, I mean, I've been here for a couple months now, but every day there's something new. So yeah, it's good being on the help desk because you learn so much. Moodle is an endless vest and big vortex.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I was going to say you learn a lot, but it's also literally like standing at the end of a fire hose.

Amanda Smith:

Oh yeah, for sure. Definitely.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Amanda and I have an ongoing DM thread, which is like, I would say 30% Moodle questions and back and forth problem solving and 70% where to find the best desserts in Kamloops.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. That's my passion. As you can probably tell from my WordPress site, I'm a big foodie. I actually moved to Kamloops from Vancouver, which is where I'm from, in Burnaby actually. I moved here in 2017 and to go from all those different food options to this, I'm always searching, always looking for the next new thing.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I love this. I also moved up here from, I was in New West actually until 2019. Yeah. It's funny. Because I grew up in a small town, and I mean an actual small town, like Kamloops is a big city. I grew up in a town of a thousand people. It's little. And so I don't think of myself as a city person, but I was definitely thinking the other day of foods that I miss. Things that I just haven't found, the perfect specimen of here. Cause oftentimes what you end up with is one of something. And if you don't like the one place you're kind of in trouble.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah, exactly, exactly. But yeah, I mean, besides that, I love Kamloops, it's a small tight-knit community and I always joke, I'm a grandma at heart. So I like to stay in and I don't need the big city, but yeah, I do miss the options. It is nice to have a variety to choose from, Brenna, that's for sure.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

This actually segues nicely into what I was hoping we would get a chance to chat about today. So one of the things that, and I only stumbled upon this like a couple weeks ago, but can you tell listeners a little bit about how you've been teaching yourself more advanced WordPress skills? Cause I think it's cool.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah, for sure. So yeah, I'm pretty new to the team. I had a little bit of experience with Moodle in my past position, but none in WordPress. And I've always wanted to create a website, just been very intimidated. Now being in this role, having to help people with it, I thought the best way to learn myself is a practical use. So I created the website, so it's loopslife.trubox.ca and basically it's just my blog about all our different local vendors and food places in town, different collection of all local things, all foods, home decorations. Yeah. That's what I have been using to teach myself.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's really awesome. First of all, it's fun. I just think it's so neat to create what's basically a sandbox for you where you're learning how to do different things and the site, and I know you've had help with it, but it's really quite sophisticated. The tools that you're using and experimenting with are very cool and ones that, many of them, I've never even played with. But you're doing it to create something that reflects your hobbies and your passions and your interests. I just think it's really neat. It's a good

example of, maybe how much easier it is or just how much more engaging it can be to learn through play than just kind of going through a bunch of rote exercises.

Amanda Smith:

Oh totally. Like I find myself even working on it on the weekends or at night because it's just something I'm passionate about and I've always loved. Like we have people come over to our house and they're just like, where is that painting from? And I'm like, let me tell you. So instead of having to verbally talk about this really cool donut place, it's all in one place. And I feel like I get to showcase the vendors. But again, I get to also learn things that I need to know in my role.

Amanda Smith:

And it was good networking too. I get to meet new people, people in our departments. I talk to Nicole Singular and Stephanie Gountas, she helped me a bit. They did some of the graphic design. I asked them on an advice, for people who are new to creating a website, what are some tips? I talked to them about where to get royalty free images, how to choose your colouring, which funnily enough, I said my inspiration was Tiffany Pratt. I don't know if you've seen her on some of the baking shows on Netflix, but she's a Toronto based designer and it's all just like pastel overload, pinks and blues. So you'll see that on the site. But yeah, I mean it was really cool. You think it's pretty straightforward, but it does have a little bit of a learning curve. So I got to learn how to use the different blocks, how to add a button, how to inset an accordion, an info box, an advanced gallery, all these sorts of fun things you can play with.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's just such a good way to go about learning and to want to dig in more because you've got a goal in mind and you're looking at different tools to implement. And you mentioned Stephanie and Nicole, who folks have heard on the podcast before and they're on the OL media team. It just also helps that they're really accessible and easy to chat with and get help from. And it's just, I don't know, it's a nice kind of community site, but it also reflects the community that are helping to orient you to your new role. I just think it's neat.

Amanda Smith:

Oh, thanks so much. Yeah. Yeah. And they're very knowledgeable. I mean, I think they have years on me, but just as simple things like the tips I would share with like our audiences, like stick with one theme. I kept switching from Ascend to Kadence and it took me a while to realize that not all themes are the same. So you'll be looking for a Kadence block. That's not there or things are different. So just basic stuff, you know?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. Oh, that's such a good tip though, too, because when you're working in WordPress and you change your theme, you are not just changing as you suggest, you're not just changing the visuals, you're changing what tools you have access to. And sometimes you're deleting your own hard work. I've done that on more occasions than I care to think about. So Amanda, as you suggested you joined us from somewhere else on campus, what was your role before you came to learning technology?

Amanda Smith:

I started at TRU in the school of nursing. I was a program assistant there, more specifically with BScN program and I helped with the practice placement. So I did a lot of the electronic side of things. We had

a system called HSP Net and that's where you would electronically send out placement requests, accept them. And I'd also help with a lot of their electronic access, their required documents. So that's kind of the capacity I worked in there.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

We were so glad when you came to join us because we knew you from working in nursing and we knew how like quick you were at picking up things. I remember Jamie saying to me, there's this woman who works over in nursing and I wonder if she would come and work for us. Sorry, nursing. We stole your Amanda. Anybody listening who has dabbled in Moodle knows that it's not the most intuitive system in the world, but one of the things that's been so impressive about you joining our team, Amanda, is that you have gone so quickly from knowing a couple of things in Moodle to knowing enough to operate our help desk almost full time. I think Jamie and I each take an afternoon and basically you're on the desk the rest of the time. So I wonder if you have any thoughts or reflections on the learning process or how you get yourself comfortable with a new technology quickly or maybe what your favourite tips or tricks are. Anything you want to share with us about your little Moodle journey you've been on, which I shouldn't say little, your enormous Moodle you've been on, quite frankly.

Amanda Smith:

You know, it's so funny. I was just thinking about this the other day. First, kind of segueing off, it's so interesting how you might go to school for one thing and you end up doing something completely different.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh yeah.

Amanda Smith:

I went to SFU, Simon Fraser University, and I actually studied criminology.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh cool.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah, and I actually worked for a couple different police detachments before this doing all sorts of things, whether it was records or adding warrants on the system. And then yeah, when we moved, I got the job at TRUU and obviously landed here, but it's just so crazy to think you start one way. I never would've thought I'd be in a role like this, but that's sort of, like how you're saying to learn a technology. They needed someone to help out with Moodle. So I just sort of jumped in and I just loved it. And that's how I figured out what I wanted to do and what I was really interested in. And then what helped with learning it as well is like, it's just, when something you're interested in, like back to the website, if it's something that you're really passionate about or interested in, or even if you're just an instructor who wants to make your page look a certain way or be more functional for students, when it has a practical application and you're working towards a goal, it makes it so much more driven and something you're more passionate about.

Amanda Smith:

And I would just suggest just start small. Start making changes. If you want to learn how to make the colors, try that first or learn how to highlight part of the text. I think a lot of times we just get overwhelmed with how many things Moodle can do. Like I said, it's an endless vortex. And of course you can do things three or four different ways, which doesn't help. I would just say start small with little tweaks and improve from there and feel free to reach out to us. Because like you said, I mean, I just started picking your guys' brain and I bugged you so much. I'm so sorry. I'd always come to your classes and email and yeah. So it's just about networking and having the confidence to start small and build from there, I think.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yeah. And also, nothing to apologize for because you ask thoughtful questions and then you implement what we help you with, which is like, that's the ideal person asking a question. It doesn't actually get better than that in my day to day world. So I appreciate it. But yeah, I'm thinking, you know, it's funny, you were saying you studied criminology. Brian and I both have graduate degrees in English. So it's the only person on our team who's qualified to do this work is Jamie. I remind myself of that all the time.

Amanda Smith:

I know, right?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Speaking of Jamie, basically the first big project you worked on after you arrived on our team was the Moodle orientation site. The Moodle orientation site, I'll link to it in the show notes. If folks haven't checked it out, it is, first of all, it's a thing of beauty. But second of all, it's the first time we've ever had really well organized support materials. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about building that orientation site, especially when you were, yourself, so new to the technology. I mean, I'm guessing that was a really good learning experience if nothing else.

Amanda Smith:

Absolutely. Like you said, that was great learning tool for me. I think what really made it so easy for me, honestly, was just that I'm a huge note taker. So I already had a lot of those instructions and steps in my notes. I mean we sorted through that together in a shorter timeline that we would've liked. So we sort of wanted to focus on the main things or the main issues people encounter or the biggest tips. And we build it out from those main topics. But our hope is that over time we can have really, really big resources with a lot of different sources and instructions and just sort of build on it and have the tiny details too. But that's going to take time.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's interesting. I don't know how to phrase this, it's one of the first resources we've built that I can see the expansive possibilities of because it was so well organized at the start. And I can say all this cause I had literally nothing to do with this project. It just crossed my ask pretty much fully formed one day. Jamie was like, what do you think of this? And I was like, is this what you've been doing? It's amazing. But one of the things that really strikes me is yeah, it's so well organized and so well laid out that we can expand upon it. Oftentimes we've been so pressed for time, particularly since the start of the pandemic around here that we haven't had the ability to build really expansive or expandable resources. And I don't know, there's something about that Moodle orientation site and the Teaching Unbound site that Stephanie and Nicole worked on as well, those two resources that really, there's such a more

professional representation of our work. And I think I don't know, that's why I appreciate them. It's really nice to see the resources that just look so good, you know?

Amanda Smith:

Oh thanks. And I think too, like I said, I think it helped being new because a lot of times you'll see instructions and they'll sort of assume, you know, okay, go to the dashboard and I'd be like, okay, first login, then go to ... Kind of have the smaller pieces. And also I'm very much a visual learner. I need to sort of see this steps or have screenshots. So to whoever I answer tickets on with a flood of screenshots, I apologize. But that's how I learn. Like I need to see where I'm going and have a visual. So I think that really helps having the steps right in front of you to sort of follow along with. Otherwise, if you're met with like a lot of text, it can seem overwhelming at times. So we try to do a lot of that as well as have videos with instructions along with it. So yeah, we tried to make it helpful for a lot of different people, whether you're just starting out or you're building on previous skills. So I hope that comes across to people. I hope it's helpful.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It is so helpful to be new when you're helping people, which, it seems counterintuitive, but you know, it's so easy to start skipping steps. And I can see that in myself. I used to be so much more better about creating detailed screenshots and sending them back and now I'm like, well you just click here and I have to remind myself, no, no, no, no, no, this person just got their Moodle account yesterday and that's not helpful advice for them. But it's also, part of it is just about learning our community and knowing who prefers screenshots and who needs more detail and who just wants you to point them to the online documentation. It's a part of our job that I think a lot of people don't realize is just how tailored the feedback ends up being for different individuals as we get to know people better, you know?

Amanda Smith:

Absolutely. I think that's a big part of our job is sort of meeting people where they're at. Because different people have different levels of comfortability. And like you said, we have some pretty advanced users too that sometimes I think they know more than me. I could be asking them questions, but like you said, there's some people who are brand new, they don't even have their account up yet. So I'm like, okay, first log in, again, they're like, I don't know how to do that. So yeah. It's definitely meeting people at their level and their expertise and helping them or giving them suggestions that they're comfortable with. Yeah. I think that's definitely been a big positive in being new, because I can relate. Or also relate on like just being a student myself. And having the user experience and know what people are going to be met with, what features of Moodle they're going to get frustrated with or not be able to find. I think that's a big thing too.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Oh, it's a huge thing. I've noticed that even just having the empathy to remember, to say to people, oh yeah, I also really find this confusing or actually here's an easier, quicker way to do it for me. Maybe it'll work well for you. I just try to remind myself the last two years have been such a change in practice for so many people. Even though we're back face to face now there's this expectation of having your materials online that never really existed before. It was a nice to have before and now our students have come to really lean on Moodle, especially in this time where we're finally, as a society, acknowledging that, Hey, people get sick sometimes. And we don't want them to come to campus when they're sick, you know? And so to me it's a really good thing that we're starting to provide students with multiple

ways of getting information. But there's no doubt that it's been a huge learning curve for folks. And I think one of the strengths of our team is that I think we're pretty approachable. I think it's not scary to ask anyone on our team for help. And I think that's really important.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah, I hope so. I hope we come across as friendly and fun and I think that's why I always introduce myself, or when I have to write something up, give some of my interests. Cause I'm like, Hey, I'm just like you, I love to eat. I love cute dogs. You can talk to me. But yeah. And cycling back to what you were saying, I think that's a big thing with the pandemic. A lot of people sort of were thrown into having their course virtual or students were using it for the first time. And again, that was kind of a positive of being new to this position is like, everyone's been so great and had so much patience. I think it's given me a greater appreciation for people who are learning this and trying to pick it up and being patient with them.

Amanda Smith:

We have some great students and instructors who are like, I'm so sorry. I just can't find it. And your heart goes out to them. You're like, it's okay. I'm going to walk you through this. And at the same time, people have been so great and patient with me because I feel like I've learned quite a bit, but there's still so many minute things I don't know. So a lot of times I'm like, okay, I'm so sorry. I'm going to look into this and investigate. I will find the answer. I'll get back to you. And people have been really gracious and been like, okay, no problem. And I always add in, you always add in the line, I'm new. Even though like you said, Brennan, it's been a couple months, but you know.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No, but it's true. And you know, we threw you in at the deep end, right? You had support while you were answering tickets for sure. We were around, but you were answering tickets on your own pretty early in the process. And the reality is that our team is too busy to not do that to people. When I started, we were not nearly so busy and I got spent a couple of weeks shadowing Jamie, and then I had a couple of weeks on my own, but the questions were really pretty straightforward and it was like, can you set up my new course? Okay. You know? The kind of questions that we have now are much higher level because our user base is much more comfortable with the technology. So it's a good thing, but it also means that for brand new team members like you it's like, okay, well we're going to drop you off at swimming lessons, pick you up at five. Bye.

Amanda Smith:

I know. Well, like I said, I'd be like, okay, well you're doing this advanced grading feature and Moodle, let's learn this together because I haven't done this either. But no, it's great though. Cause I get really excited when people want to learn different features and make their Moodle courses really interactive and fun for their students. So I'm totally game to learn if they want to. And again, I think at the tip to everyone is if you really want to learn this and you can, find a practical use. Because we've been so busy a lot of times I've had to work on my website at night or on the weekend. But I love it, it's been fun. And it's been a great way to get to know different people in our community. And I don't begrudgingly do it like, oh I got to write up above these donuts I ate last night. Fun memories. Right? So yeah. That's what I totally recommend is try to find something you're into sit in and I know Brenda, you have that podcast class that you're hosting right now and I'm trying to learn how to do that as well. So yeah, that's something maybe I could do in the future.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Sure. Amanda just learn one entire additional technology to everything else you're learning right now.

Amanda Smith:

Notice how I said future. Yeah. Yeah. My first list journal entry. I'm like, yeah. I'd like to be able to support people to do this in our role. And I might create a podcast. Might.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That sounds eminently reasonable. We're getting towards the end of our time. And I want to leave with probably the most important, well I'm going to ask you the two most important questions. So first, most important question is what are your top three desserts in Kamloops if I made you pick right now?

Amanda Smith:

Oh my gosh. I was not expecting that.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

No, I know you weren't.

Amanda Smith:

That I was getting nervous. Oh my gosh. Oh how can you do this to me? I could talk about this for hours. Top three. Okay. I have to number one would be Gold Leaf. It would be they're cookie sandwiches. They're all good. But if you haven't, oh my gosh. The oatmeal raisin with apple cinnamon icing in between. So good.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I haven't tried that one, but I am a raisin skeptic. I have to tell you.

Amanda Smith:

Oh I hate raisins except for in that for some reason. It's that good? It's that good?

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's a good selling pitch.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. Number two. I would have to say it's fairly new, I think in the last year Brandon's Bakery downtown, their cinnamon buns are so good.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I have them in my freezer right now, I haven't made them yet, but I'm really excited.

Amanda Smith:

Oh yeah. Oh, you know, you've done the hit and run. You've been there. Put them in the freezer for later. Good on you. Yeah. Third. Ooh. This is a hard one Log Jam Donuts, which is on my website. They're so good. Especially the glazed donuts because I was very skeptical. I'm like glaze, that's boring. They're

so good. If you read on my website, my friend actually grabbed one. We ate as we walked around the park, went back for a box more. They're that good.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay. See, I haven't tried them yet because well, I just haven't gotten downtown at that time yet. So I'm excited. Okay. I will. I will try those.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. They said they're going to make a storefront on the north shore soon. They're hoping.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That is exciting to me. That is.

Amanda Smith:

You might see me there often.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

That's very exciting to me. Okay. I have to say that if I was going to give you my top number one, it would be Mayann's Macarons, when she's got really good flavours like this week at Friendly Composting. Hi, you can apply for advertising if you send me snacks. Not really.

Amanda Smith:

Me too.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

The box this week at Friendly Composting is like mini egg macaron, Snickers. I don't know. The flavours are just amazing. A chocolate birthday cake, which is my kid's favourite one. So I ordered a box of those I'm very excited for tomorrow.

Amanda Smith:

Oh that sounds so good. I can't wait for her Easter flavours.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Yes. Yes. I'm just, I'm a big fan of her work in general. So yeah, that would be my number one. Although Gold Leaf's macarons are also good. The flavours are just not as fun. Okay. And then here's my number two most important question for you. Best place to buy gifts in Kamloops if you had to pick one place.

Amanda Smith:

I'm a sucker for supporting local. That's something that's really near and dear to my heart. So if it was me, I'd probably get some of our local shops downtown. Probably Crooked Crown.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Nice. Okay.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. Cause that's actually what Emily created the store for is she loves to curate gifts special for that person that you're looking for. So yeah, she's got a lot of different things from like bath bombs, chapstick, hoodies, jewelry. A lot of my gifts from my husbands are from there and I like to subtly hint. He likes it cause it's easy. But yeah, it's great. And I think, if not all, most of the stuff in her store as well are all from Canada. So you're also supporting BC and Canada and local. So I definitely recommend that for sure.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Nice. I was expecting you to say Far and Wide. I don't know why, but I was expecting you were going to say Far and Wide.

Amanda Smith:

You know what, they're great too. And they also support local. They would be probably a close second, but they have such fancy style and I'm such a klutz and a lot of it's kitchen stuff. So it would be broken on my floor. But they do have a lot of cool stuff too and a lot of cool treats and food and stuff like that. But I'm kind of a kind of a sucker for stationary and jewelry.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

It's really interesting, moving to Kamloops sort of in this moment as a lot of really interesting small businesses are starting up, it reminds me a lot of, I moved to New West in 2010, right before New West got super cool and it's really fun to see a community come online and really support small business. So I just thought, I'd give you a chance to tell me your favourites because I always need ideas.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah, no, I mean I think we're definitely growing. I remember I moved here in 2017 and like I was like, yes, we've got a Sephora, we've got a Lululemon and we've got more of the chains coming. But you said, also a lot more local, like Jardine's Domain is having a kitchen and home store open downtown soon. I'm really proud of that. Yeah. Yeah.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Aw. That's cool. Well, Amanda, you've been such a great addition to our team and I'm sorry it took me this long to get you on the podcast to introduce you to everyone else. Folks, if you've been getting tickets responded to by someone named Amanda, this is our Amanda. We're very fond of her. We're really glad she's here.

Amanda Smith:

Aw, thank you so much. Yeah. Yeah. If you get tickets from Amanda that's me. So don't be afraid. I don't bite and we're all here to help for sure. I'm so happy to be a part of the team. Thank you for asking me. Ironically, I hate the sound of my own voice. So I've been dodging because I'm like, oh no, but how can I say no to you? You're such a sweetheart and I'm so honoured. Thank you so much for having me.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Aw, thanks Amanda. Have a great day. We'll talk soon.

Amanda Smith:

Yeah. Thanks Brenna. Bye.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So that is it for season two, episode 22 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's Gray with an A. All of our show notes and transcripts are posted at yougotthis.trubox.ca and of course you can always comment on individual episodes there.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip. And it's sort of in the spirit of know your limits play within it, but maybe a modelling of that, which is to say: we're getting into silly season, right? End of term is coming, lots of major papers, lots of exams, lots of stress on our students. I would love it if you would consider this week, checking in with your students about your expectations and theirs.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

This is a good time to make sure that students have a clear of what's expected of them over the next couple of weeks. And that you have a clear sense of where your students are at in terms of moving through the content effectively. So I think that this is a great time of year for an anonymous survey to be circulated, to just check the temperature of your students. And I always recommend when you do that, to leave a space at the end so that students can volunteer their identity in case they want you to follow up with them. But I think it's also a good time to just start class by saying, hey, just let's go over the deadlines that are coming up in the next little while and what I'm expecting from each of you for those deadlines. I think that taking 10 minutes out of class over the next couple of weeks to do that can really help students to feel like they are on top of the material in your class and clear on your expectations.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

This is such a hard time of year. I think we all really struggle as deadlines pile up and expectations become, maybe the expectations aren't murky. It's just that we haven't checked in on that class or that assignment in a while. Giving your students a free reset can be really powerful. So I encourage you to offer that as a little life preserver for your students. And I hope that you'll join me in my quest for a more attainable to-do list for yourself. I wish you gentleness. I wish you calm and I wish you 10 minutes of quiet because oh my God, what I would give for 10 minutes of quiet. You can send some to me via inter office mail, I would greatly appreciate it. Until next time I am always rooting for you and we'll talk soon. Take care. Bye bye.