

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Hello and welcome to You Got This! A podcast about teaching and learning and sustaining community for everyone at Thompson Rivers University. I'm your host Brenna Clarke Gray, coordinator of educational technologies, and this podcast is a project of your friends over at Learning Technology and Innovation. We're housed within Open Learning, but we support the whole campus community. I record this podcast in Tk'emlups te Secwepemc within the unceded traditional lands of Secwepemcú'ecw, where I hope to learn and grow in community with all of you. And I'm back, I'm back. I'm back after quite a bit of time away and maybe, maybe a little bit of time spent healing from my own burnout. So I wanna tell you about that, but I also wanna tell you about the exciting stuff I have planned for the rest of the summer, so let's get into it.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

Okay. So it turns out yeah, time off is really good. <Laugh> Sounds fake. Huge if true. Yeah. I had a really good time away. I was with my family in Ontario for the whole month. Then I got to really, yeah. Just spend a lot of quality time with my folks and they got to spend a lot of time with their grandson and I got to see all the in-laws and it was good. It was really healing to be away from not just the pressures of work, but I think out of the environment, you know, most of us are working from home either part-time or, you know, at least partially these days. And that can make it hard to escape when you're feeling that sense of burnout. And I think burnout wasn't just work related. It was, you know, health and life and pandemic related too.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So getting outta my environment was really helpful. I hope that you can find some time to do that too over the summer. I think. Well, I just can't imagine there's anybody on campus who doesn't really, really need to get away in some capacity, whatever that looks like for you. So that's my hope for you. I had a busy return in that I got back on a Wednesday and I had booked two keynote for the Thursday. Yeah, I know that does sound like me. That sounds like the kind of things I was doing <laugh> before I took some time away, but I had a really great two talks. It does mean that I don't have an interview for you this week. You've gotta settle for just me. I'm afraid and I'm gonna keep it short. But the real thing I wanna talk to you about is something that I do have brewing for the rest of the summer for June, July, and August.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And I'm really eager to tell you about it, especially because it kind of kicks off this week on Friday. And I, I hope you might consider checking it out. So within the learning technology and innovation team, we're not really offering a lot of programming this summer, we're prioritizing catch up and we're also prioritizing making sure everybody takes some vacation time. You've probably noticed that we aren't gone very often <laugh> and most of us have quite a bit of time racked up from the last two and a bit years. And so we're really trying, given that it's a quieter time that there's less panic. Yeah. We're just trying to use that. So we haven't planned a great deal of programming for the summer, but I know that some of you might still be looking for professional development opportunities that have to do maybe with the digital space.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And so I wanna talk to you about an event I'm putting together with some of my pals from around the world, different folks who work in open education and, and other kinds of virtual communities we've

put together an event called the Mid Year Festival or MYFest for short. And the idea behind MYFest is that it will offer learning experiences related to open education, critical pedagogy, community building, also wellbeing and joy, and sort of centered around this idea of emergence. We wanted to put together a professional development opportunity that would leave you feeling recharged and excited and ready to go back to whatever going back looks like to you in September and not a series of professional development opportunities that make you feel drained and exhausted. We also wanted to make it maybe radically accessible is a word. So if you have some PD funding, you can pay for the programming, it's a hundred dollars for kind of an all you can eat buffet each month or \$250 for the whole shebang.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

If your PD funds are limited, there's like an automatic 50% off coupon available that you can use. And if that is still a barrier for you we will waive costs entirely. We just need to know that that's what you need to do. So I'll link to all the information about registration, but the idea is that it's kind of like a choose your own adventure buffet of offerings. There's a range of offerings every month. You choose what you wanna participate in or what you, don't the themes. As I kind of already alluded, we've got five tracks. So community building and community reflection, critical pedagogy and social justice emergence, open education and digital literacies. You can guess where I'm spending most of my time and also a track related to wellbeing and joy.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

The organizing team is from all over Canada and the US. Yes, for sure. But also organizers in Egypt, in South Africa. And one of the things we really wanna do is maximize the range of time zones that are accessible so that hopefully you'll meet people who you might not have had a chance to interact with in PD sessions, before everything is happening virtually and online connecting people that way. But we are thinking through different ways of having that experience. So I promise you, it's not just gonna be staring at zoom <laugh> for three months. MYFest is a project of equity Unbound, which you may or may not be aware of, but it's rooted in the concept of something called intentionally equitable hospitality. So the goal here is to bring you into community, to engage, to prioritize maybe the, the needs that aren't typically expressed in some of these spaces. And it's designed to be, as we say, intentionally welcoming.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So it's designed to make space for everyone. It's gonna be iterative. It's gonna reflect the moment. It's going to be responsive and spontaneous, but it's also really strong content from experts in these fields. And I'll share the link and you can see all the different people who are contributing. It's quite a fantastic list. The reason I'm talking about it today though, is because we have something coming up this Friday called A Taste of MyFest. So a taste of MYFest is just a chance to check it out, to check out what this intentionally equitable hospitality looks like to check out what the program is going to be to ask questions to discuss the different themes of focus and why they've been selected. So it's a free open event on May 27th, just to check out what we're all about and to decide if this is a good place for you to put your PD energy this summer.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So, so I'm gonna link to that in the show notes as well. And I'm really hoping you might check it out and see if what we're offering lines up with your schedule and looks like something you'd wanna spend your time doing this summer. So yeah, I'm feeling really enthusiastic and excited about MYFest because to

me, this is a really ideal way of structuring PD. You know, I don't know about you guys, but after flying, I'm not super into sitting in a boardroom <laugh> for any length of time. I like the flexibility of being able to grab my laptop and, you know, sit in my backyard and chat to people or pop a call on my phone and go walking while I have these learning experiences. And MYFest is really designed to meet you flexibly in the spaces that you're in. And to give you a chance, to think a little bit differently about your professional development this summer.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So you'll see when you dig into the website that I'm organizing a few sessions, but if you're sick to death of me, that's cool. There's a bunch of other contributors doing really interesting work that maybe you haven't had a chance to interact with yet. So I hope you'll check that out too. Let me know. <Laugh> if MYFest is something that you're into, because if there's a handful of us here at TRU who are participating in the various aspects of MYFest, we might consider having like a community of practice, like a meeting once every couple of weeks, just to check in and see what people are doing and learning and enjoying. I'd really love organizing something like that. If there's interest. So check it out, let me know what you think. And let's be excited and enthusiastic about PD let's feel encouraged.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

So just a quickie this week, but that is in fact it for Season 2, Episode 21 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. I'm going to leave you today with a Tiny Teaching Tip.

Brenna Clarke Gray:

And that is, think about your summer intentionally. Now those of you who are teaching full-time this summer are gonna be like, yeah, Brenna, it's all intentional. Thanks very much. But I guess I'm mostly speaking to folks who maybe have some time expanding out in front of them. Something I'm doing this afternoon is I'm gonna really sit down and try to plan out what I wanna accomplish this summer, but also when I wanna rest. And when I want to play too often, I lose my downtime because by the time I get to it, I'm just so scattered or tired that I, you know, scroll TikTok videos for an hour and fall asleep. I don't wanna do so much of that this summer. <Laugh> I wanna spend more time intentionally engaging in rest and intentionally engaging in rejuvenation. So that's what I'm gonna spend the rest of the afternoon doing. Actually, I'm gonna sit down and plot out the summer and figure out what that's gonna look like for me. If you've got some downtime in the next few months, I encourage you to take some time to do the same. I also think this is a great skill to model for students. Nobody ever really showed me how to plan out like a big chunk of time. When I got to grad school, I realized just exactly how bad at it I was. But I do think this is something our students can really use modeling in. So maybe that's something to think about too. As you plan the kinds of additional skills you wanna engage with students on this year, that's it for me, I've missed talking to you. I'm thrilled to be back and we'll be back in the swing of our usual interviews next week. So until then please take care of yourselves and each other, and we'll talk soon. Okay.