Designed for Learning Ep7 Transcript

AI, Cheating, and Trusting Students to be Human (July 10, 2025)

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Guest: Tricia Bertram Gallant

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[JIM LANG]
(cheerful upbeat music)
Welcome to *Designed for Learning*, a podcast from Notre Dame Learning. I'm your host, Jim Lang.

If you follow conversations about higher education on social media, read stories about it in the news, a primary topic on people's minds has been the impact of artificial intelligence on the purposes and processes of an education. And for better or worse, much of that conversation has been focused on cheating. Are students outsourcing their work and their learning, more importantly, to tools like ChatGPT or Co-Pilot or Gemini? Some high-profile stories have claimed that everyone is cheating in college, right, and the whole system is like basically collapsing all around us.

Today's guest, the co-author of a new book on cheating in college, will give us some essential context for those kinds of claims and give us insights into the deeper questions that we should be asking about academic dishonesty and integrity in a college education. Why do students cheat? Are they cheating now more than they used to? And if so, what should we be doing about it?

Dr. Tricia Bertram Gallant is the director of the Academic Integrity Office and Triton Testing Center at the University of California San Diego. She is president emeritus of the International Center for Academic Integrity and former lecturer for both UCSD and the University of San Diego. She has been an academic integrity practitioner, consultant, keynoter, and scholar for over 20 years. Her fifth book, *The Opposite of Cheating: Teaching for Integrity in the Age of AI*, which is co-authored with David Rettinger, was released in March of 2025.

Tricia, welcome to *Designed for Learning*.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Thank you, Jim. It's always a pleasure to speak with you. We've got a bit of a long history, you and I, in terms of academic integrity.

[JIM LANG]
Absolutely. So we'll get into that. So as we just heard, you have spent a career working in the field of academic integrity. When I first became interested myself in the subject, like more than a decade ago, your books were the ones that really helped me think about the subject in, like, a new and productive way.

So I wanted listeners to have the same experience that I did and learn some basics from you first. So let's start with the most basic question, which you take up in your book and you've written about before in previous works.

Why do students cheat?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
All right. This is the bombshell moment of the podcast, and I'm going to reveal a deep secret that nobody knows:

Students cheat because they're human. (both laugh)

You know, I think we're right to have some moral panic around cheating because the universities, colleges, K through 12, educational institutions are in the business of facilitating and certifying learning, right? And so cheating fundamentally undermines both of those things. If students are cheating, they're not learning. And if they're cheating, we are not validating their learning, and therefore our certifications lose any meaning whatsoever in society.

So I do appreciate the interest, the heightened interest in academic integrity currently. I also think that we need to temper that with some acceptance that students are going to cheat because they're human, and we can leverage those opportunities as a teachable moment.

And if then if the student continues to cheat regardless, then we do something about that to preserve the integrity of our degrees.

And so why do students cheat? They're human. So what does that mean? They're focused on extrinsic motivations, right? They're focused on getting the job done. What's the job? Producing assignments for the faculty member to grade. That's what school feels like. Susan Blum talks about that in her new book, *Schoolishness*, right? Like the social structures of school convince students that the name of the game is producing widgets.

And I had said long before ChatGPT that we were treating students like assignment factories, right? Just here's a prompt, spit it out. Here's a prompt, spit it out. So it's no surprise that they're now offloading that to ChatGPT.

Why else do they cheat? Low self-efficacy: I don't think I can do it or I don't think I can do it to the level that I want to. Those are two of the personal factors.

And then there's a whole set of situational factors. I think everybody else is doing it, right? If we know or we perceive other students are cheating, we're more likely to do it. If I think the core sucks or the assignment's stupid or not meaningful, I'm more likely to cheat, as well. There's a whole host of personal situational factors that create a perfect storm sometimes to entice cheating.

[JIM LANG]
So I actually I want to just ask a little bit more about this issue. I know a few years ago I wrote a book about this also, and I've looked at some of these factors too. But the one that you take up in your book I did not write about, I'm interested in, which is like what they call neutralizing.

Talk a little bit about neutralizing and what that means. Because that seems really important to me, actually.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
It's super important. So we all do this, right? Mary Gentile created this whole Giving Values to Voices curriculum where she says that people actually know what's right from wrong, but they talk themselves out of it.

And so that's how we use neutralization or rationalizations. And so some of the most common ones are, Everybody's doing it, right? It's not that big of a deal. So think about that. We always say, oh, let's make all our assessments low stakes because then students won't cheat on low stakes. Well, we saw in the pandemic that that was not true. "It's not that big of a deal" really fits that scenario. It's not my responsibility. If the professor isn't doing anything about academic integrity, he's letting me take a take-home exam on my computer. It's not my responsibility. That's his problem.

So these are kind of moral justifications that we tell ourselves to maintain our sense of self as a good person, right? We do this all the time. So think about speeding. It's like, Well, I'm just going with the flow of traffic. Well, I'm in a hurry this one time or whatever the case may be, we know we're breaking a law, and yet we tell ourselves lovely stories to make ourselves feel like we're morally justified to do it or that it's not--yeah, like it's not that big of a deal to do it.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, or the fact that maybe it's the case is I believe in the rule, but the rule doesn't apply right here for a particular reason, for me right now. I give the example, like you're driving in the desert, and there's a stop sign you see, you come on, and there's nobody around for, like, miles, right? Okay. Yes, I believe in stop signs, but it doesn't apply here, right?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yeah.

[JIM LANG]
So those are kinds of things--yeah, keep going.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
And so sometimes that's good critical thinking, and you know, maybe it doesn't apply in that circumstance. And so what is the difference between critical thinking and this moral justification? It's a tricky line.

When we're teaching students, when we're leveraging the teachable moment after a cheating moment at UC San Diego, we teach students to train their brain to listen to their gut. And so usually humans are pretty good at knowing like, Oops, I'm about to do something that's wrong, right? Like, we get the butterflies in our stomach or our jaw tenses up or our palms get sweaty and we kind of, kind of know. And then our brain quickly says, it's not that big of a deal. Don't worry about it. Everybody else is doing it. The assignment's stupid. And so we have to train our brain to listen to our gut.

So what we train, we give our students tests. So as soon as you feel that gut instinct, instead of jumping to justifications, jump to values test: Is what I'm about to do honest, respectful, fair, trustworthy, honest? Is what am I about to do in accordance with the rules or the standards of this particular situation?

My students particularly love the professor-standing-behind-me test. And so when we're in class and I'm teaching them this, I'll literally go up behind one student and just kind of, like, hover over them. And I'll say, how does that like, would that stop you from doing what you were going to do? And they're like, yes. (both laugh) And it's a visual, visceral test that can snap you out of that tendency to morally justify what you know is against your own values or just against the person you want to be.

[JIM LANG]
Right. So it may be the case that a student sort of recognizes like in abstract, yes, cheating is bad. But in this particular case, this professor is designing an assignment that is dumb and is not going to help me in any way, and so—

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
It’s not related to my career.

[JIM LANG]
Exactly. Right. And but then you sort of start shading into these other places where yes, but maybe you don't realize why it might be helpful to you in the future. You don't see that. And so yeah, it gets tricky, right, drawing the lines.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yeah, it gets tricky. And that also shows us what when it's the relationship between the instructor and students. So students shouldn't have to intuit why an assignment is worth doing. They shouldn't have to intuit that hidden curriculum that we've been famous for in university education, right, where we say we teach all these human durable skills, but we actually kind of

don't intentionally teach them. We just kind of have them off in the side and we magically think students are going to acquire them.

And so we don't articulate to the student, You know what? I know that writing about *Iliad* is not something you're going to do in your career. But here's the reasons why we're having you do it, and here's the human durable skills we think you're going to develop in doing that.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, I love that phrase of, you know, we sort of put this burden of intuiting the purpose of our work oftentimes on the student, you know, and so that's a great point.

Let me just ask you one little last thing about this kind of deeper question about why students cheat. Has that changed? Like, you know, with artificial intelligence, do you think those reasons have changed a little bit? Have they modified, updated? What do you think?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Absolutely not.

[JIM LANG]
Okay.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Absolutely not. No, humans are still humans. They've been humans for centuries now.

I think that what Gen AI does is it further blurs that line, right? It further makes it easier to morally justify. So before, if I wanted to hand in work that was not created by me, I had to go on the Internet, I had to hire someone of the many contract cheating providers that are out there, which is estimated to be a four-plus-billion-dollar industry. I had to, like, put an order online. I had to get that paper back and submit it as my own.

That's a high bar. Most students are not going to engage in that kind of behavior. But now it feels like I'm just using Microsoft Word to write my essay, I'm pressing some buttons.

So that's the only thing I think is, it doesn't change the underlying why, but it amplifies some of those underlying whys and the ability to neutralize.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, right. So it's much easier to neutralize when the road is much shorter to the place where you can get some benefit from the neutralization, right?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Right, exactly.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah. Okay. I just want to sort of start with that question because oftentimes it helps us put teachers into more like a place of empathy, right? And so maybe not just coming out and sort of judging students because they're bad people or we're trying to help people see, okay, yes, students cheat. Absolutely. And as you said, we have to start, it's important for us to explain why that's not good. And it's important to do your work with integrity, but we should be able to come from a place of understanding why it happens.

Okay. So that's sort of the why question. And then now sort of, what do we do about that is the bigger question. That's what we'll mostly talk about today in this podcast.

I know that your work in general, but also the book you wrote with David, talks about cheating at multiple levels, from the whole institution, the culture, down to the classroom. But I want to focus here on the classroom. And so let's say, let's just sort of give ourselves like a basic starting place.

A teacher is designing a course, and they're concerned about academic integrity, especially right now. Where do they start? Where does their thinking start in terms of creating a course which will have integrity to it?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yeah. Well, I think there's a couple of places to start, linking back to our, just our previous conversation. When I talk about, and David and I in the book talk about, the normal, quote-unquote average student is going to cheat when there's opportunities and temptations that are just too big to avoid, right? For all the reasons we just mentioned. Let's talk about them the rest of the episode.

But before we do, let's just make sure that people understand, and there are what our Australian friends call enrolled persons in our, in our universities, in our colleges, right? And so there are people who are going to cheat no matter what we do. And so it's also important that we create barriers, that we raise the guardrails to—I just heard Joseph Thibault on another podcast say to create some more friction for those folks who would cheat and also to create friction for the students who might be tempted to cheat, right, to reduce those temptations.

So one thing I've been saying lately is if you want to get healthy and you have a sweet tooth, the first thing you're going to do is remove all of the sweet stuff from your kitchen. You're not going to put it on the counter and will yourself not to eat it, right? (laughs) Maybe you'll develop that a little bit later. But most studies have been pretty clear that we don't have a lot of good willpower as humans. We actually need guardrails to help us achieve the goals that we've set up for ourselves.

And so one of the first things that instructors can do is say, OK, where are the guardrails needed both for my honest students, my normally honest students, and for the other folks? And to do

that, you have to figure out where AI is going to undermine learning and your ability to assess learning, and when it could amplify it.

So if you are teaching a foundational course that teaches like, say, math 10 that, you know, all students have to get this in order to take the higher-level math classes, then you're probably going to have to have more secure assessments in math 10 than you will, say, in math 120, right, when you've got upper-division math majors taking these courses.

And so first thing you got to do is figure that out, which means playing with the tools. We can't just figure it out without knowing what the tool, how the tools respond to the work that we're giving students to do. So we have to play with the tools with the current learning activities, formative and summative assessments that we're giving students, see what they can do and then kind of take a breather and say, OK, so what does that mean? What does that mean for my learning outcomes? Do those need to change? What does it mean for the assessments themselves? Or perhaps what does it mean for the way I grade or evaluate student learning?

And so that's where I'd say the very first step is figuring out the impact of these things on your current assessments.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, I just want to pause here and talk about this for a minute. Because I think that you and I have a shared perspective on something we hear about cheating. Like, from some folks in, like, social media, especially, you know, I just want to trust students. I don't want to be the police. And what you're saying is important here because we're putting two things together.
It is important to have integrity, and we know that students are tempted for these various reasons to cheat because they're humans. The neutralization, the extrinsic motivators, all that kind of stuff.

And so we're not trying to, like, catch them or entrap them. We're trying to create a little friction for them, put some guardrails around there because this is an important value, right? And so for sure, we want to have a good relationship with students. We want to sort of show them that we trust them. And at the same time, we're trying to help them be their best selves. That's the phrase I like to use: I'm trying to help you be your best self. You know this is probably an important thing for you to do, and I'm trying to help you get there, right? This idea of putting a little bit of friction or guardrails is a great way to think about that.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yeah, I really think it's all about the way you're—I think it's about your intent, right? And I think it's about the way you communicate that.

So if you communicate to students, I just want to trust you, and here's all your assessments that you can do on your own because I trust you, what the students hear is, You're naive, everybody else is going to be cheating, now I have to cheat, too.

That's what a lot of them hear, especially if we're talking about classes with 100 students, 150, 200, 300, 400 students. I may not be talking about those classes with 30 students, right? Like, Laura Dumin and I have talked about the privilege she has of being able to teach much smaller courses where you can actually get to know your student and develop a real relationship that's based on trust.

When you get to a larger scenario where you actually don't get to know your students, I'm not sure how you can have an actual trusting relationship like people are talking about. As Derek Newton says, I trust my neighbors, but I still lock my doors because I want to just put that extra little barrier to let people know, like, this is not allowed.

And so it's the way I phrase that. So what I say to students is, I trust you. I trust that you're human. I trust that you want to do the right thing most of the time. And I trust that sometimes it'll be really tempting for you not to do the right thing. So here's what I've done to help you.

[JIM LANG]
I love that. The trust is being used a different way there, but still trust, right? I trust you're a human, I trust you're tempted. Because I am, too, right?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
I am, too. And I've done things that have been against the law, like speeding. I have lied to people. I have been disrespectful. I've been irresponsible. I've been untrustworthy. I've been unfair.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, likewise. Likewise. Yeah. Yeah. Likewise.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
And so to expect our students to be more than that, to expect them to be superhuman, I think is actually a dereliction of duty.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, I agree. Okay. So the idea here now, you're talking about the starting point here is like, you know, having that notion of analyzing your own, the places where you can put those guardrails, the friction so that I can look at my course and identify. And it might be the case that, like certain courses, it might change, right? So like my intro course, or a larger course, will have a different set of guardrails versus my senior seminar, right? And so that's an important thing for us to think about, too.

What about like, you know, how do you introduce these guardrails? How do we talk to students about them? In the syllabus, the first week, what do you recommend there?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
This is one of my favorite conversations because I really feel like good communication could solve a lot of the world's problems, including this one.

So we have a tendency to communicate at students. This is the history of, you know, the didactic higher education system that we lived in, right, that's based on lectures. We sage on the stage, we talk at students. So we create a policy we put in our syllabus and then we say, You should now abide by my policy.

But really talking with the students can help to start to create that common culture. And it's not so much about trust as it is about shared expectations and shared understandings, which could lead to people trusting one another.

So something I used to do before AI came along was I take those six values from the International Center for Academic Integrity. I've already said them a few times: courage, honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness. I have them on a sheet of paper down a left column. And then in the next column, it's as students, we can uphold these values by ... And then another column that says as the instructional team, we can uphold these values by ... And we talk about them.

And people would be surprised that students are going to say a lot of the same things that you would put in your policy. Well, you shouldn't have AI write your first draft. Well, you shouldn't have it do your research for you because it makes stuff up. Well, you should come to class prepared to engage in discussion. They'll say all those things. And when they say it, their peers are like, Oh, my peers think I should do this. That's a different situational factor than the prof telling me to, and I'm thinking none of the other students are actually going to follow on that.

So that's one way to communicate with your students. Another way is to survey them either before class starts or maybe the first day. What Gen AI tools are you currently using? How do you use them? How do you find them helpful for your learning? How do you find you're using them that actually interferes with your learning? How do you think you might use them in this class in an ethical, responsible way? And then get their opinions and use those thoughts to either—to hopefully in part create your policy, because maybe you'll say, Oh, my gosh, like that's a great idea, students, I think actually that's OK. Or you'll tell them, Hey, this is why I disagree with you. I know you said this, but in this class, this is a writing class, and so using AI to brainstorm ideas is actually one of our learning outcomes, to learn how to brainstorm yourself. So I don't want you using it for that purpose. So it enables you to be more clear and to either confirm their expectations or dissuade their expectations.

Another alternative, which would take longer is, you know how we faculty always complain, students don't read the syllabus, they don't look ahead to know what assignments are coming up? If they don't know what assessments are coming up, they often procrastinate, leave it to last minute. And guess what they do then? They cheat.

And so taking a look at the syllabus, taking a look at the learning outcomes and all the assessments that are in there, and then saying maybe put them in little groups.

I actually took Perkins and Furze's AI assessment scale and I map it and I say, have the students look at it and say, what level of AI use for each assessment would be ethical or helpful? That would take a little bit longer. But depending on your class, maybe that's a good way.

So I guess those are three methods to communicate with rather than at your students.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, I like to say to people, any problem we have in higher education will always be better off if we ask the students about it and have them help us think through it. And so this is another place where I think that applies, as well.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Trusting their judgment, trusting what they're thinking. If we go back to the trust thing, if we really want to trust them, that means we have to listen to them.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, that's a great point. So you mentioned writing. So I want to talk about writing because I come from a writing background. And so, obviously, when ChatGPT first came out, it was like, oh, its capacity for basically of writing, like, writing essays. And that was the yeah, yeah, essays, right. And so everyone was saying that for a while.

I think people have now had a more complex view and nuanced views about it. But so tell me, from your perspective, like, is there still a value in, you know, assigning a traditional essay of, like, a literary analysis or like a personal essay in a writing class? Like, so where should we be at that point, at this point now, on those kinds of questions?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
I say yes and no. I say that we've overused writing as the only artifact of student learning and student thought for a long time. And I think we've overused it in places where it doesn't need to be used.

So do all students in a lower-division chemistry lab really need to learn how to write a lab research report? I believe they need to know how to critically read research, every citizen should be able to critically read scientific research. But I don't know that they need to write a lit review, methods, results, findings, right? Maybe they could demonstrate their lab skills in some way.

Now we've got scaling issues here, which is why primarily writing became a—writing and multiple-choice questions became a dominant mode, because of scaling issues. And so I think we do need to use this opportunity to rethink, is writing a learning—is communicating this course's content knowledge in writing an important learning outcome?

And if it's not, maybe it could be a video, maybe it could be a podcast, maybe it could be a poster, maybe it could be a presentation, right? So I do like the idea of rethinking the place of writing.

And I think we want to discern—I like John Warner's work and other people as well, where they talk about separating out the process, the processes that writing helps us work through, versus the production of a product, which I think has been our errant focus in higher ed.

No student, again, needs to probably write a five-paragraph essay ever again once they leave university. So what are the processes? What is the thinking? What is happening behind the scenes when we're having them do that? And are those skills still valuable? And is writing the way to do it? And if it is, then how do we evaluate their process of writing rather than just the final product, which can be faked easily?

[JIM LANG]
So I've been thinking myself about a couple of things. And I'm speaking about, you know, when I talk about these issues now, and I'm giving talks to faculty, I'm trying to push people to think about two things, especially when it comes to writing, like maybe we need to bring more into the classroom itself, right? And honestly, we should have been doing that a long time ago.
I mean, writing in class is always a good idea, if you have time for it, because, you know, we oftentimes will assign something and then we expect students to go off and do it in their rooms, and then come back with a finished product. Well, it's much better to confront problems when someone is right there to guide you, right? And so writing in class is one way to think about that. It doesn't have to be by hand, it could be, you know, still can do on a laptop, but still bringing more of the process into class.

And the other one that I was curious about from your book was about pairing oral and written stuff together. And you talked about this in context of maybe like an engineering class. Yeah, so tell me about what happened there. Because that was really interesting, it was pairing, you know, a traditional exam with some oral assessment, too. So tell me about that.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yeah, so this is a good time for me to plug David and I've also been doing a little podcast, informal podcast episodes with faculty and practitioners who are bringing to life the ideas in our book. And so people can find that on our website.

And HuiHui Qi was one of those folks that we've, we've already aired that episode. And she was the lead on this NSF grant in our engineering school looking at oral assessments. A lot of our professors were schooled outside of the United States, and they were very used to oral assessments, they were very used to having to explain their knowledge to the professor orally. And then they came here and they thought, Gosh, nobody—we're graduating engineers who've never had to do that.

And again, that's a dereliction of duty, I would say, you know, if we're graduating people who can't talk to other people about what they know, since that's what they're going to have to do as citizens and professionals.

And so they were trying to figure out, their main goal was, Okay, how do we do that at scale? Because our classes here are not small. And so they scaled this up to as many as—I think their largest class was 250. And what they did was they trained their TAs to help. And so there was the traditional written exam, and then different professors did different oral assessments, depending on what they were aiming for.

So they might be following up on a question that the student got wrong, but maybe they should have got it right because that preceding question was related, and they got it right. And so they want to give them a chance to show they actually know, like, maybe they just had a, you know, a brain moment, you know, that moment in the exam, and they just lost it. So they want to give them a chance to do that.

Or maybe they're seeing they got a whole bunch of questions really wrong that they got perfect in the homework. And so now they're worried about cheating in the homework. And so they want to follow up to see, was it just a testing effect, right? The student got nervous on a test, and that's why they got them wrong, or do they actually not know what they're talking about? And so just 15, 20-minute oral assessments, they might only focus on one question, just to follow up.

And so some were doing it kind of as academic integrity checks, some were doing as almost like a retake, like you can get more points, because you can actually demonstrate your mastery of the material.

And what they found in pre- and post- surveys was students really appreciate it.

[JIM LANG]
I know, that was so surprising to me. That was so surprising.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
I know. And one reason they really appreciate it is they thought that that protected academic integrity, and therefore they were less tempted to cheat. They were less tempted to cheat because they thought every bit—they didn't think anybody else would do it now. And if they knew they cheated on their homework, they were going to bomb the exam, and then they'd have to try and orally explain why they bombed the exam question. So it reduced their own temptation to cheat.

It also gave them, they said they felt more connected to the instructional team. And many did this, like, at around midterm time, as well as around final time. And they also expressed appreciation that they had to talk about their knowledge, because they understand that that's something they're going to have to do.

Now, HuiHui, she and some others have gone on to study metacognition because they also saw some hints that that was also improving metacognition, my thinking about my thinking. So now they're doing a whole other study about that.

So I think that's a great way to do it even to not emphasize the writing portion so much. Now, two concerns people usually bring up. What about students with accommodations that have anxiety? And what about people whose English isn't their most comfortable language?

They found it even effective with the latter group of students whose English isn't their most comfortable language. And again, they didn't feel like it was a high-pressured situation. They felt it was an opportunity to try and express themselves. And of course, students with accommodations can get accommodations just like any other time.

And so I also want to say, like, it's okay to put students under stress.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
I know. That's a horrible thing to say.

[JIM LANG]
No, no, yeah, you're right. Yeah, a little bit. Yeah, not a lot.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
They're gonna be in stress their whole life. (laughs) And so if we're constantly coddling them and saying, Oh, well, we shouldn't stress them out, I think that's, again, a really big disservice to our students.

Now, I think we should allow them opportunities to recover from that stress or to make up from that stress, which is why I love mastery-based testing and chances at retakes. But I think it's okay to put students in a stressful situation.

[JIM LANG]
A stressful, but it's also a safe situation, right?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
It’s so safe in the grand scheme of life.

[JIM LANG]
Right, right.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
The students don't think so at the time.

[JIM LANG]
I know. That's true for many stressful situations that we're in. Yeah.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Exactly.

[JIM LANG]
Okay, so we've talked about three big things. I think they're worth sort of repeating here.

The first is in terms of like, you know, the traditional things we might do in the classroom. First is, like, when we talk about writing, make sure that it's core to the class, the learning objectives of the class. And so thinking about that, maybe there's ways to expand the ways you have students share their knowledge with you.

We talked about a little bit, bringing more of the process into the classroom, as opposed to having students doing it on their own, and then pairing oral stuff with written stuff, or more traditional stuff like exams.

And I actually love that idea, even for like papers, right? Student writes a paper, then comes in, and there's like a 15-minute, you know, oral assessment of the process, talking about it, reflecting upon it, the challenges.

So I think all those three strategies are really good ones to think about if you're concerned about the use of AI, and I guess we should all be aware of it at this point, no question about it.

Just two little final questions here. The first one quickly is, you know, so what's your take on, a student has cheated, and, you know, it's a fraught moment for both student and professor. And there's a lot of emotions in play at that moment. So what should our response be, especially like a teacher, you know, just in the moment, they've just discovered this, how do they respond? And what should we do with that student?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Breathe.

[JIM LANG]
(laughs) Yeah.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
I spend a lot of my time helping faculty reframe their response to cheating. So most people are parents, I am not, but I remember being a kid to a parent. And, you know, when your kid does

something wrong, or something you disagree with, or something against the rules, you might fly off the handle sometimes if you're having a bad day.

But most of the time you try and address it constructively, right? And you don't love the child any less. As we say, I dislike your behavior, but I love you, right? You try and help them learn from it, you try and help them correct their behavior, you try and help them not make that same mistake again.

I'm not saying your students are your children, but they're somebody's children, and they're humans. And we are an educational institution. And so our job is to help people learn and grow, period, whether it's from an honest mistake or a dishonest mistake. I really, really believe that. And it's only when a student has proven themselves either incapable of changing or unwilling to change that I think more punitive measures should be exhibited.

But that does mean that faculty shouldn't be handling these things on their own. Because if you're handling it, Jim, in your class, and Susan's handing it, handling it in her class, and Frank's handling it in his class, and no one centrally knows about it, then someone could still theoretically cheat their way through college, cheat their way through Notre Dame, and nobody would ever know, right?

So we don't want to do it that way. But I do want the faculty member to just breathe and realize this is not the end of the world. This is not a personal attack on me. It might feel like it in the moment, but I'm going to rise above that. And I'm going to keep my educator hat on, and I'm going to try and validate the student's learning, right?

And maybe it's especially in the age of AI, the best evidence you can have is talking with the student. Can they actually explain their process? Can they explain what they wrote? Can they explain their choices? And if they can, maybe either they didn't cheat, or maybe they used AI in an acceptable way. And so I would say that: Keep your educator hat on, follow your institutional policy, which hopefully says report it to a central place so we can keep a record. Hopefully the institution does some leveraging the cheating moment as a teachable moment so all students kind of get that same experience, and it doesn't depend on the individual faculty members' choices.

But let's keep our educator hats on and breathe and just remember, this is an imperfect human that you're working with and that our job is to help them grow and develop.

[JIM LANG]
That's great advice. I really appreciate that.

Okay, so finally here, I know your book is out, you're doing a lot of stuff around the book, giving talks and workshops. And by the way, you should reach out to Tricia and David to give workshops for your faculty, and the book is available for a book club and all kinds of stuff.

So you're doing a lot of that work, and you're talking to faculty in person and online. What's the mood? I know people are, oftentimes from the news, everyone's demoralized and frustrated. Are you seeing that? Are people demoralized? Are they hopeful? And how are you feeling in terms of the future of higher education?

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yes.

[JIM LANG]
(laughs) Okay, right.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Yes. Depending on the day, the minute, what I'm feeling sometimes, I would say on average, I'm a skeptical optimist.

Some days I'm more on the skeptical side, and some days I'm more on the optimist side. I do think that education has a lot to change, and we had a lot to change before Gen AI. I'm optimistic that Gen AI has opened our eyes and that we might change this time.

I'm skeptical because I fear that a lot of institutions aren't doing enough for their faculty. I fear that this is once again asking faculty to rebuild the planes while they're flying them without any time or without any sufficient time, training, and support.

And so—we gotta stop doing that. Especially not only for tenured professors, but for the adjunct professors, for the contingent faculty—enough. They're burnt out, they're tired, they were never taught how to teach, a lot of them. The majority were never taught how to design valid assessments, ever. And so let's fix that. If we're going to ask a faculty member to redesign a course, then perhaps they should get course release from having to teach that course. So they actually have time or maybe they get paid in the summer.

But that's where I want to see institutional leadership is providing time, training, and support. Maybe it's training instructors in different disciplines because I can only help a writing instructor so far, Jim, but I don't teach writing. And so at some point, writing instructors have to help each other. I really believe that, and math and chemistry and everything else.

And so getting people trained up and so they can help their faculty would be great, and giving them the time and training they need to actually do the hard work that needs to be done. And I think the institutions as a whole, we need to look at a lot of things that are from the 20th century that no longer work, like the Carnegie Credit Hour, like that we should be really focused on moving towards competency-based education.

But those are big, big things. In the meantime, we could just help faculty rebuild the plane when it's on the ground.

[JIM LANG]
Yeah, I like it. And your book definitely will help people do that. So thanks very much for writing the book. And thanks for coming on the podcast.

[TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT]
Thanks for having me.

[JIM LANG]
(cheerful upbeat music)
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