WHY STUDENTS CHEAT & WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT:

Encouraging Ethical Learning Practices in the Age of AI

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LEEF

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This workshop will be recorded and the video shared on the LEEF website if you would like to review the content later.

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Agenda

- Explore why students cheat
- Examine how GenAI changes the landscape
- Identify practices that reduce incentives for cheating

For the chat:

Why do **YOU** think students cheat?

What Research Actually Says About Why Students Cheat

- Performance pressure & self-efficacy
- Social norms
- Rationalizations and neutralizing
- Personality factors
- Cultural/societal context
- Teaching & assessment factors
- Technology & GenAI…

(Akkas et al 2024; Baran & Jonason 2020; Bretag et al 2019; Chen et al 2024; Gallant & Rettinger 2025; Leaton Gray et al 2025; Lee et al 2020; Malesky et al 2021; Shaw 2025; Waltzer & Dahl 2022; Waqas et al 2025)

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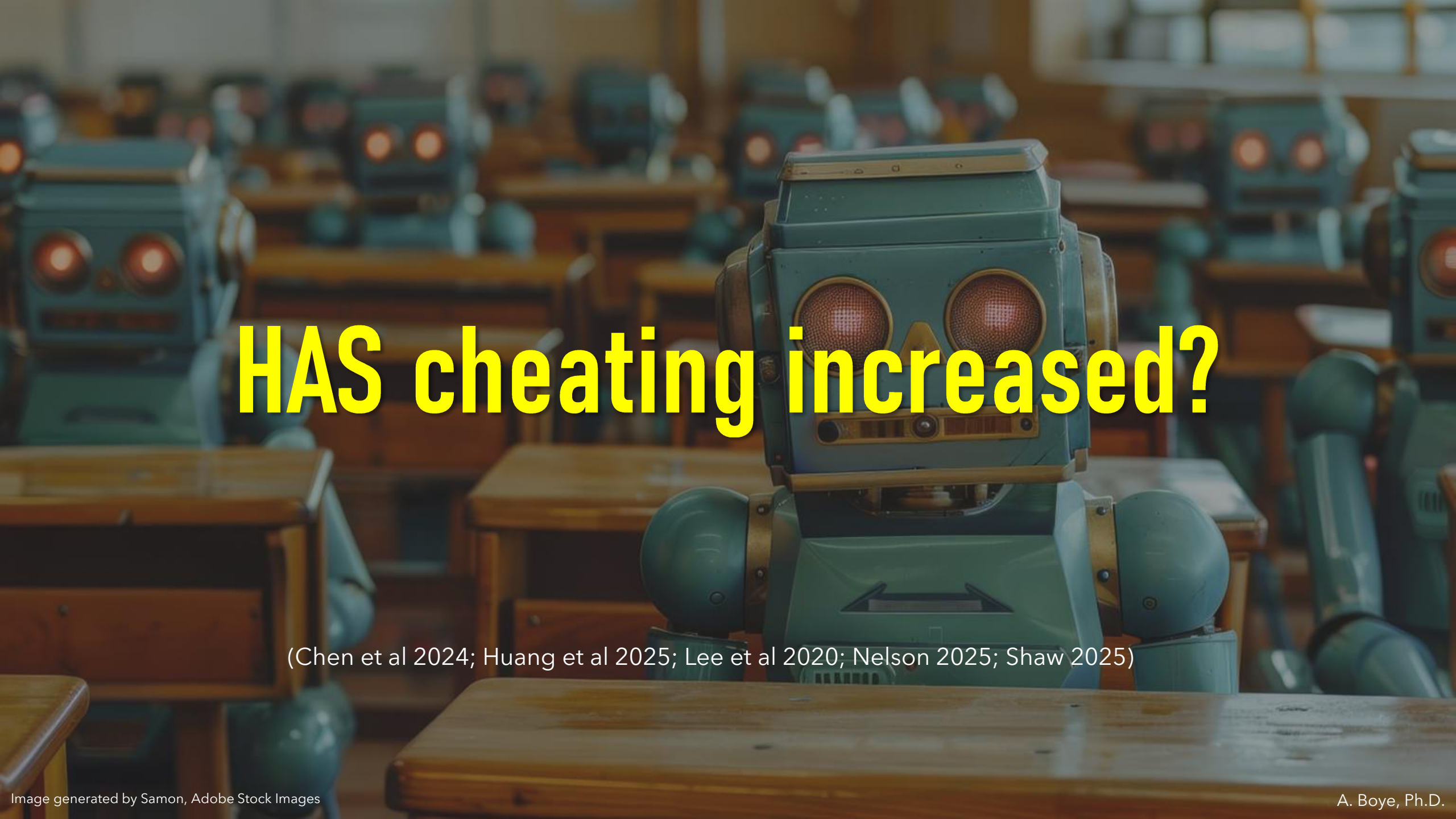
HAS cheating increased?
(Chen et al 2024; Huang et al 2025; Lee et al 2020; Nelson 2025; Shaw 2025)
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The GenAI Factor

- Shifts in methodology
- Problematic AI detection
- “AI-giarism” and ethical ambiguity

(Bretag et al 2019; Chen et al 2024; Gallant & Rettinger 2025; Huang et al 2025; Leaton Gray et al 2025; Shaw 2025; Waltzer & Dahl 2022; Waqas et al 2025)

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Black, white or gray?

How would you characterize each of the following scenarios?

1 *= Ethical (White)*

2*= Needs more context/unsure (Gray)*

3 *= Unethical (Black)*

Using the annotate /stamp tool in Zoom, mark the option listed on each of the following slides that you feel best characterizes the scenario. (You may also just put your option in the chat!)



A student uses Grammarly to edit their writing before submitting an assignment.



A student uses ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for a class assignment but completes the assignment on their own.



A student submits an AI-generated lab report with minor revisions.

Ethical	Not sure/Need more context	Unethical

A student copies their own assignment from last semester and submits it to another instructor without revising.

Ethical	Not sure/Need more context	Unethical

A student uses AI to assist with finding and citing research for a lit review they must submit for a grade.

Ethical	Not sure/Need more context	Unethical

Long-term impact?

- Circumventing the learning process?
- Learning loss?
- Competency risks?

(Chen et al 2024; Huang et al 2025; Kickbush et al 2025; Lancaster et al 2025; Malesky et al 2021; Nelson 2025; Shaw 2025)



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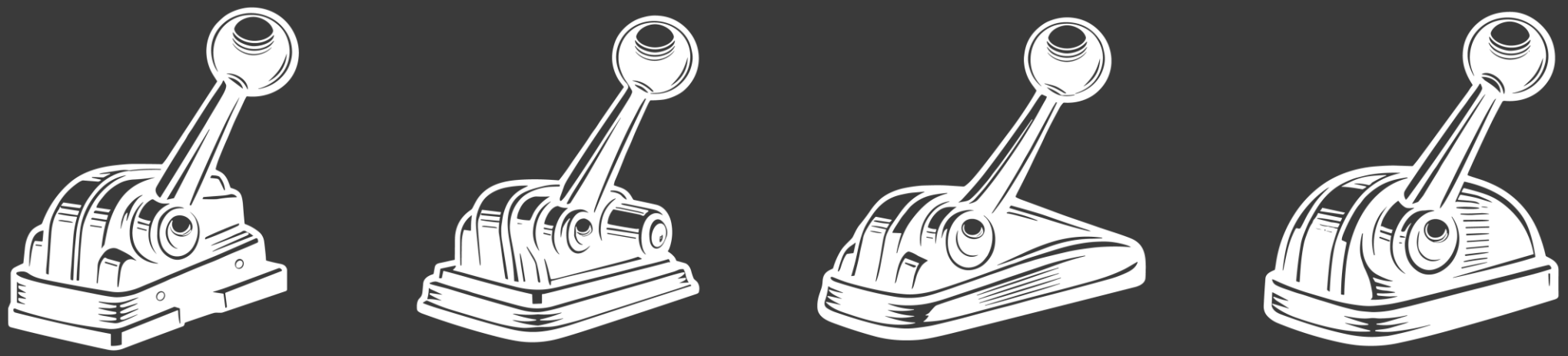
What CAN we change?
Classroom Levers that Can Help Reduce Cheating



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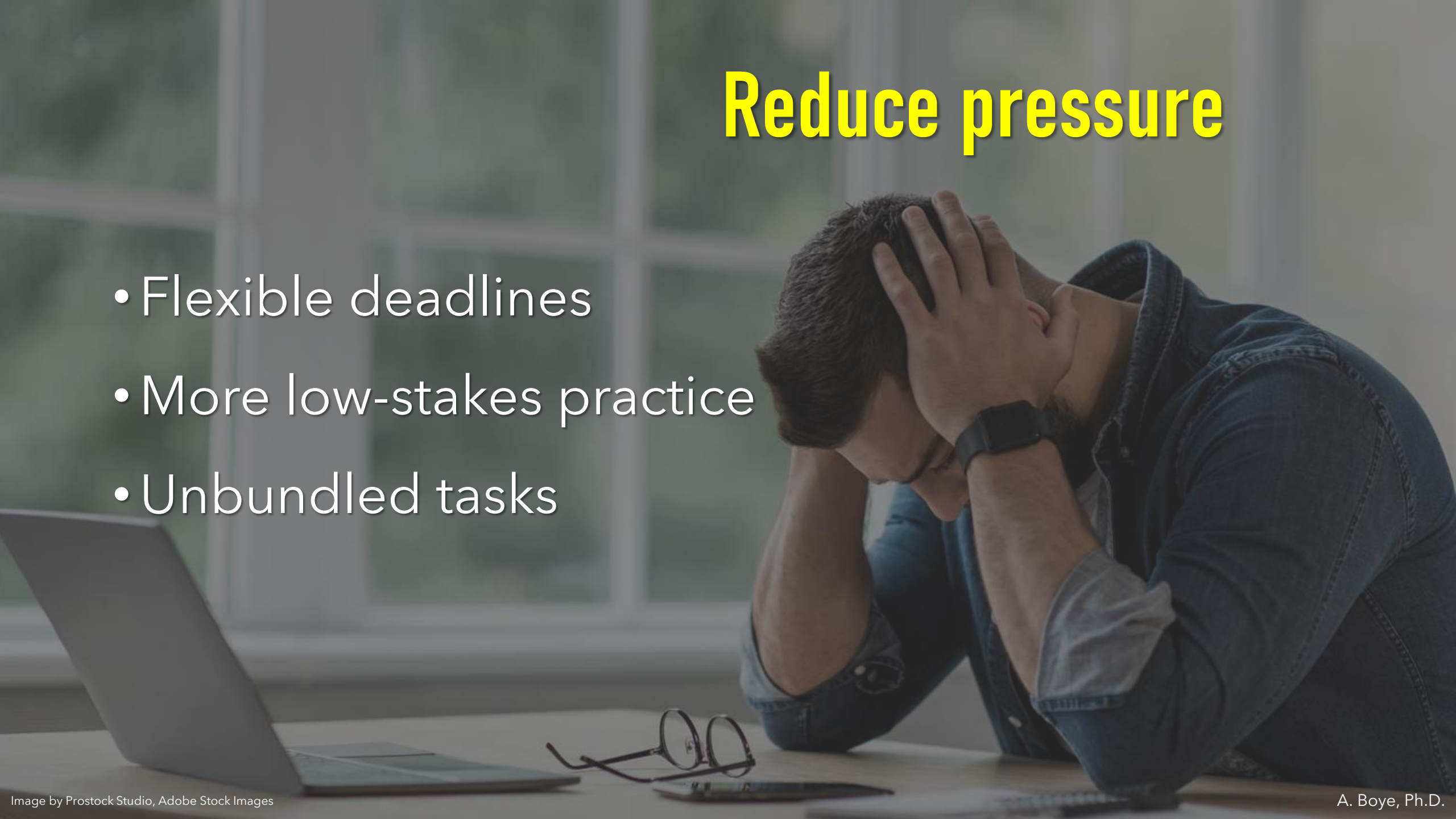
Reduce pressure

- Flexible deadlines
- More low-stakes practice
- Unbundled tasks



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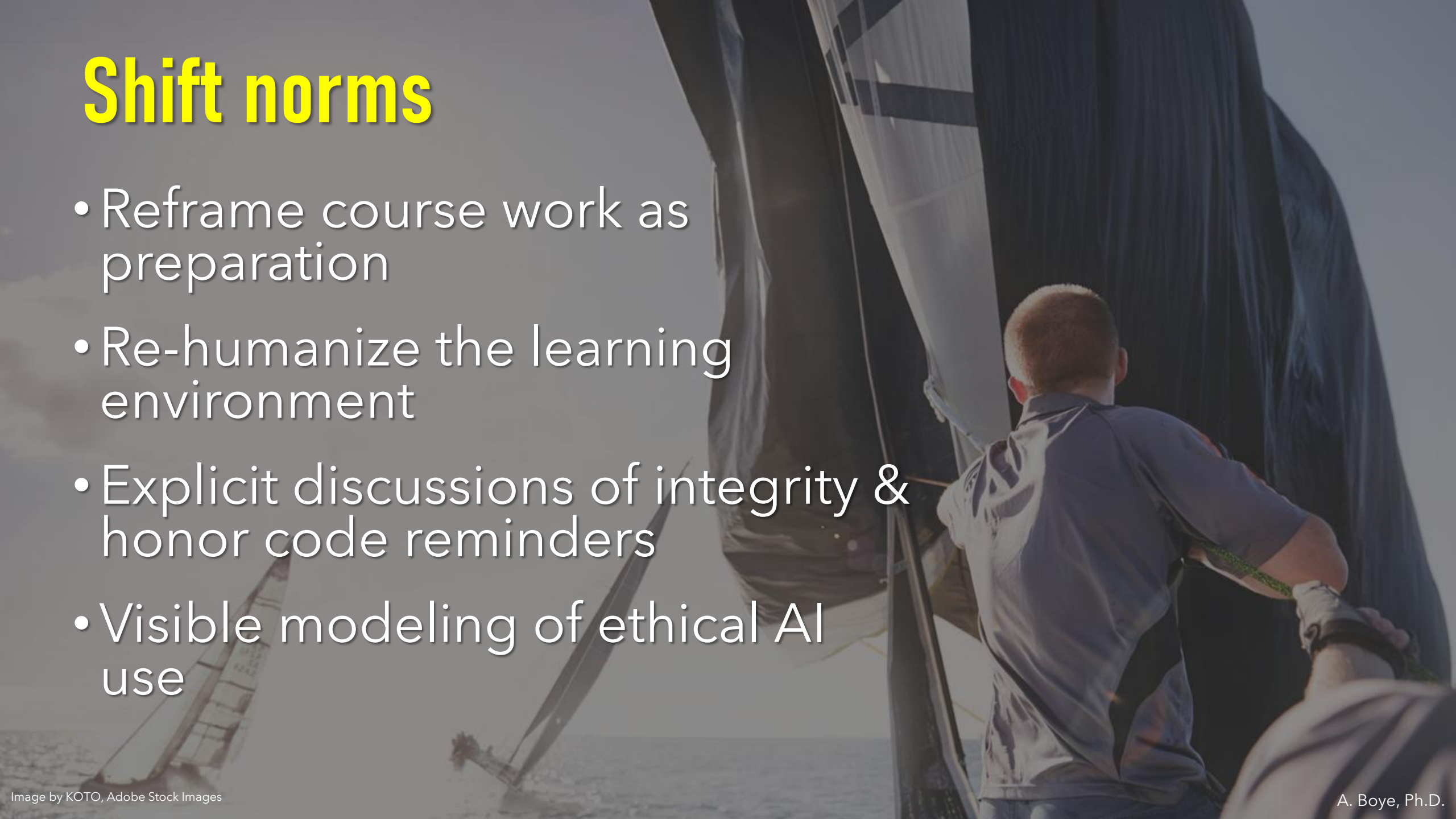
Shift norms

- Reframe course work as preparation
- Re-humanize the learning environment
- Explicit discussions of integrity & honor code reminders
- Visible modeling of ethical AI use



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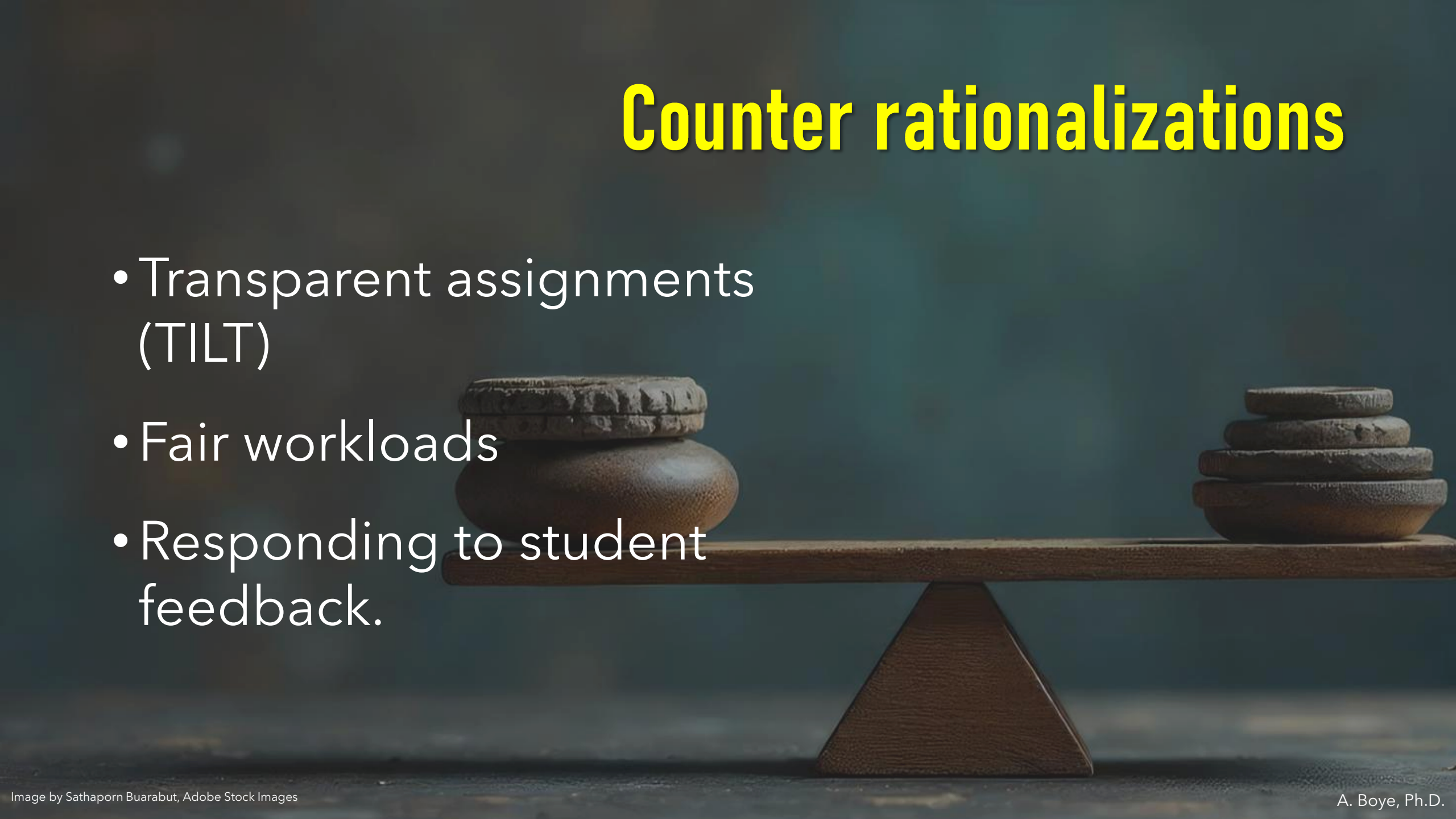
Counter rationalizations

- Transparent assignments (TILT)
- Fair workloads
- Responding to student feedback.



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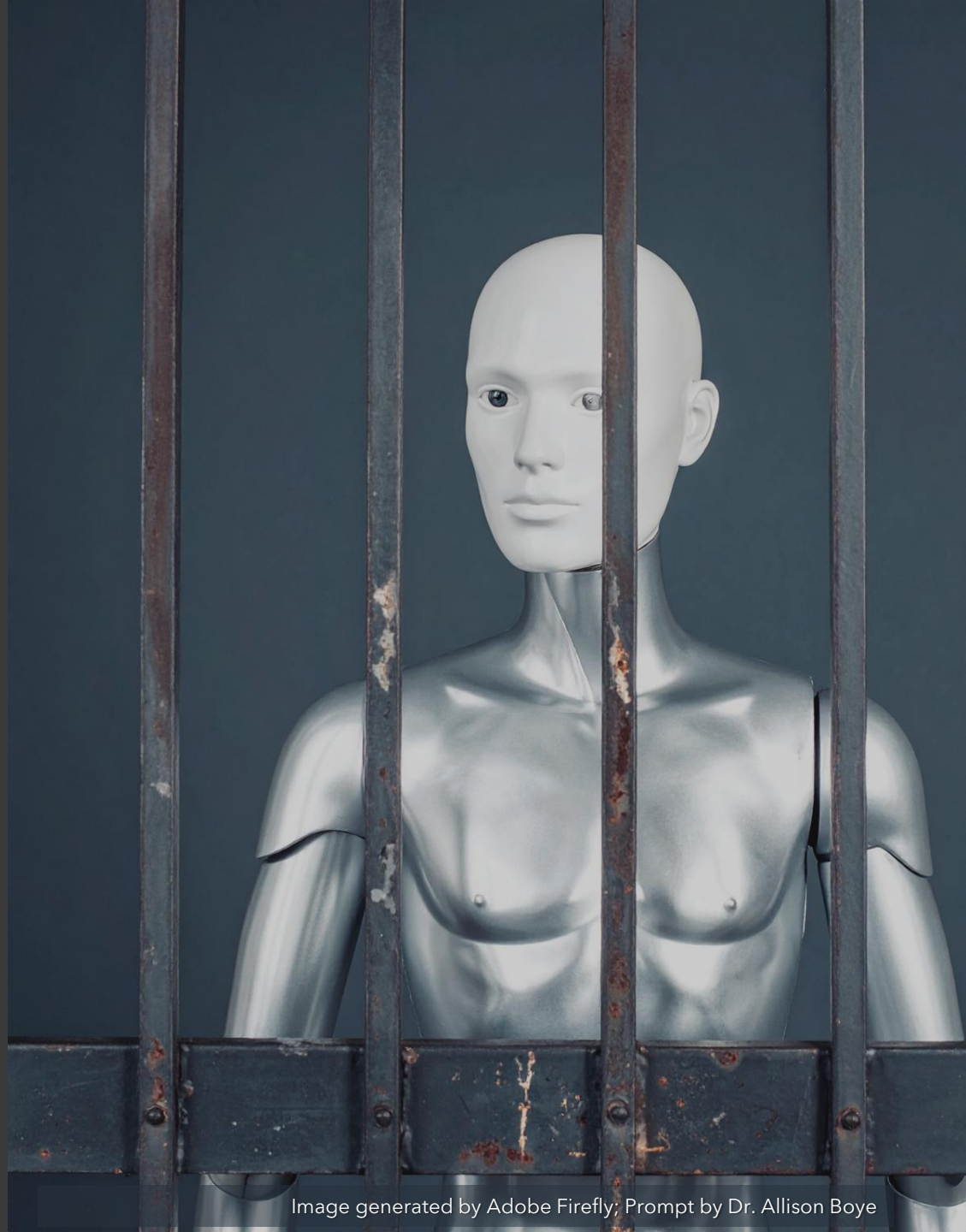
Adjust teaching triggers

- Authentic assessments
- Unique prompts
- Process logs
- AI critiques

Clarify AI expectations

- Clear boundaries:
  - *Allowed?*
  - *Not Allowed?*
  - *Required Disclosures?*



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Redesigning for Integrity

Review the sample assignment provided, then consider the following:

- How might a student attempt to cheat here (with *or* without AI)?
- What changes would reduce the incentives or opportunities to cheat?
- How could AI be incorporated *ethically*?
- What clarity could be added to the instructions and/or rubric?



https://tinyurl.com/Y-cheat

Final Thoughts

"It is time for a change. Yes, we've changed before […] but the change that is required now in the age of AI is foundational. The times do not call for a tinkering around the edges, but for a fundamental rethinking and reframing of what we as educators identify as knowledge, how we teach knowledge, and how we assess knowledge – and, of course, how we define and conceptualize cheating and academic integrity."

(Gallant & Rettinger 2025)

Upcoming Designing Learning workshops & opportunities

- **ENGAGE Mini-Course (Engage through Guided Experiences)**
  Wednesdays 10/21, 10/28, 11/4, 11/11 | Virtual
- **We Flipped our Classrooms. Ask us Anything: A Faculty Panel Discussion**
  Monday, Oct. 26 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Virtual
- **Beyond the Prompt: Fostering Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking for Students around AI**
  Tuesday, Dec. 1| 2:00 – 3:00 | Virtual

REGISTER HERE

https://tinyurl.com/teach-well-with-DL