

# THE PEDAGOGICAL PERIODICAL

Monthly news and updates related to teaching at WSUTC

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

Assessment of Teaching and Learning



## IN THIS ISSUE

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**ATL @ WSUTC**

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**MY SIDE OF THE DESK**

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**FACULTY FOCUS:  
KATIE BANKS**

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**NOVEMBER TEACHING  
OPPORTUNITIES &  
TRAININGS**

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## Kimberly Green and Scott Benson from ATL visit WSUTC

*by Janet Peters, Coordinator of Faculty  
Teaching Development*

Last week WSUTC had the pleasure of hosting colleagues from WSU's office of Assessment of Teaching and Learning (ATL). During Kimberly & Scott's visit, they hosted a workshop, met with faculty, and shared ideas for collaboration.

If you missed the workshop on creating transparent assignments and would like to learn more, let me know and I can provide a copy of the materials to you ([janet.peters@wsu.edu](mailto:janet.peters@wsu.edu)).

# My side of the desk

*Musings from someone who loves teaching*



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## The Fall Stretch

It's that time of the year...the leaves have changed, the air is colder, and the days are shorter. It's also the time of the year that students and faculty alike start to feel the accumulated effects of stress; we've all got too much work and not enough time. Early in the semester, we have the resources to cope with these demands, but as the semester progresses and we deplete our reserves, we become vulnerable to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and suppressed immune systems (and getting sick only compounds our stress!).

All of this is true for our students as well. As you look across the sea of faces, you have likely noticed that those faces are a little more haggard and students are less responsive in class. The fall stretch impacts all of us; students and faculty alike.

## What can we do?

It's hard to be an effective effective student or instructor if you're experiencing burnout. I've scoured the research and have a few evidence-based suggestions for you (and your students)!

## Take time off, if only for an evening

The autonomy and flexibility of our jobs is often touted as a positive aspect of our profession. However, this can create tension when we're unable to disconnect from email, research, grading, or lesson planning. Recent work from Kinman (2016) underscores the importance of allowing yourself time away from work that is guilt-free (no ruminating about that stack of papers!).

## Identify your resources

Most occupational stress theories include the idea that every job has a series of demands (workload, complexity, emotional labor) and resources (leadership support, training, etc.). Thus, one way to help cope with stress is to identify and use your resources. This can include delegating where possible or using your social support system to deal with emotional demands.

Another way to help cope with stress is to make explicit your resources: According to Mintner (2009, p.3), here are some of our resources as faculty: "university environments nurture academic freedom and provide faculty with the freedom to decide what and how we will teach; control over pedagogy and selection of material to teach; establish student performance standards; set our own research agendas; create opportunities for self-actualization; benefit from an estimated 32 week work schedule (not including summer teaching); enjoy extensive time off for thanksgiving, Christmas, spring break, and summer; teach or not teach during the summer months. Many of these perks are not available in the corporate sector"

# Faculty Focus: Katie Banks

## Bio Sketch

Department: School of Politics, Philosophy, and Public Affairs

Years at WSUTC: 4

Classes taught: American Gov, Internat'l Politics, US Foreign Relations, Human Issues in Internat'l Development, Politics and Identity, Ind. Research, Internships, Global Leadership, Social Problems, and Developing Effective Communication and Life Skills

## What's the best advice about teaching you've ever received?

Don't take yourself so seriously, it's okay to be vulnerable and honest in front of your students, and meet students where they are.

## Briefly tell us about your favorite lecture topic/course to teach

I teach a version of "good-enough activism," adapted for three of the courses I teach—American politics, international politics, and intercultural leadership. It contrasts how we traditionally think about hierarchical leadership with this idea of daily, small "activism" that we can take to improve the lives of those around us. It challenges the idea that we have to be some megastar change-maker; instead, we can take small actions that are "good enough" to radically change the communities we belong to. I really enjoy students' responses to this content and how they apply it in their own lives.



In 2018, Katie received the Richard G. Law Excellence Award for Undergraduate Teaching. Faculty receiving this award inspire curiosity and help students develop lifelong learning skills by integrating concepts to solve real problems.

## Briefly describe a favorite assignment or in-class activity

My favorite in-class activity is a simulation to complement the "federalism" lecture in American Politics. Essentially, federalism is the concept that political power is shared between national and sub-national governments.

Students are placed into states that all live on the Isle of Ted, a new country that is trying to build roads to support its economy and an army to fend off attacking pirates. Each round, states (with unequal access to resources) try to figure out how to benefit themselves and save one another. I've played the simulation dozens of times, and it always shakes out differently, but it always allows us to talk about the ways that the Founders thought about these issues in constructing a Constitution for the United States.

# Faculty Focus: Katie Banks



## What teaching or learning techniques work best for you?

I try to vary teaching strategies so that students have access to the information in a couple of different ways. Students watch clips or read a text, complete worksheets, take weekly reading quizzes, listen to lecture content, and work in small groups to either respond to prompts or fill knowledge gaps. I find that I learn best when I have to restate ideas in my own words and apply the content in my own life, so I try to make opportunities for this connection of course concepts to “real” life.

In POL S 101, for example, students complete a course-application exercise, where they find relevant community events (City Council meetings, political party meetings, on-campus events) and reflect on how course concepts showed up in that activity. They also complete a political letter-writing assignment that requires them to think of an issue important to them, research it from multiple sources, write a letter to a politician, write a reflection essay on the political action experience, and convey this political content in a 2-min oral presentation.

## Three words that best describe your teaching style

Building reflective curiosity

## What tech tool could you not live without?

I can't imagine teaching without a CMS, though Blackboard isn't my favorite. I am learning how to integrate TopHat into my lectures to allow more opportunities for student engagement, gauging knowledge, and polling opinions.



## What is something your students or colleagues would be surprised to learn about you?

I've traveled to 45 countries, I have three rescue Chihuahuas, and I make glass art in my spare time.

## Want to nominate yourself or a colleague?

Do you know someone who is excelling in the classroom? Should they be featured in an upcoming issue? If so, use the Qualtrics link below to nominate (self-nominations accepted!) Link: [https://wsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_25XPOcYrovqDDFz](https://wsu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_25XPOcYrovqDDFz)

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# Upcoming Trainings

*Trainings on WSUTC Campus in Red*

## November 13

**AVID Organization Strategies**  
**12 -1pm in FLO223 OR 4-5pm in East208**

No registration necessary

**Goals and Outcomes and the Creation of Effective Rubrics**  
**12:10pm via AMS**

This conversation will focus on the general concepts behind effective rubric design. Participants are asked to bring an assignment/idea for that can serve as a catalyst for the rubric conversation.

Register: <https://li.wsu.edu/trainings-workshops-tutorials/register-for-faculty-led-workshops/>

## November 14

**Blackboard Basics 10am via AMS**

For those new to Bb Learn. We will show you how to create, upload and edit content, including a review of the feature-rich content editor. We'll also suggest valuable ideas, short-cuts, and tips designed to save you time and energy managing your online class.

Register: <https://li.wsu.edu/trainings-workshops-tutorials/register-for-blackboard-learn/>

## December 6

**Rubrics for Research Papers 12:10pm via AMS**

Register: <https://li.wsu.edu/trainings-workshops-tutorials/register-for-faculty-led-workshops/>