

Active Learning Problems for Discussion

Problem 1: You are teaching a small introductory course in sociology with mostly non-majors. One of the major topics you want to students to learn is social stratification. Social stratification roughly refers to the ways that social systems privilege some members of society and disadvantage others (social class, degree of power, race, or gender). How would you design an active learning assignment that allows members of the class to experience the systems of stratification first hand?

Problem 2: You are teaching a large world history class with mostly non-majors. Students often have trouble grasping the historical events, technological changes, and social currents that foster changes. How can you incorporate active learning techniques into your lectures to bring history to life?

Problem 3: You are teaching an introductory course in Physical Geography with a mix of majors and non-majors. While covering a section on rivers you approach the subject of stream discharge (the volume of water flowing through a cross section of the river over a specified period of time). Discharge is calculated by multiplying the water velocity by the average stream width by the average stream depth. The class is having a difficult time grasping this concept because it is too abstract for them. What could you do to make the concepts more concrete and help to solidify the process for the students?

Problem 4: You are teaching an anatomy course which requires the students to memorize the names of all of the muscles in the body. Several students in the course are overwhelmed by the number of muscles they must learn and have expressed great concern about an upcoming test. What could you do to help these students learn and retain the names and locations of all of the muscles in the body?