

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Learning History Through Interactive Stations

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

For this innovative teaching practice, the instructor creates several content-related stations for small group activities in the classroom. The instructor assigns students to groups of three or four, depending on the class size. Students rotate through five or six stations the instructor sets up prior to class. Station examples from an American history class focusing on the Progressive Era include Tammany Hall, the muckrakers' role during this time, Ida Tarbell's attack on Standard Oil, Teddy Roosevelt and his role as a trust buster, and working conditions and other labor issues. Each station has a brief description of the topic, primary resources, and policy solutions.

At each station, students work together in their groups to discuss the station material and how to connect it to the class readings. The instructor includes questions and prompts at each station to facilitate student discussion. During the activity, the instructor circulates throughout the class, listening and asking probing questions to encourage participation among all group members. After completing the station work, students come together and have a class discussion about their experiences with the activity.

A variation of this teaching practice is for the instructor to provide small groups of students a packet of information on a topic; the instructor assigns each group to take on the role described in their packet.

For example, in a world history course, one topic is the African slave trade and the abolitionist movement. Each packet includes information and materials about a different aspect of that time in history such as the role of women in the abolitionist movement or the role of free African Americans at the time. This activity requires two class periods to complete. During the first class period, each group discusses the role of their group as described in their packet and then presents their group's contribution to the abolishment of slavery to the class. In the second class, the instructor facilitates an examination of modern slavery including slave labor, human trafficking, and child labor. The instructor gives each group a case study of an exploited group along with testimonials about people involved in the slave trade. Each group reviews and discusses the case study and testimonials. The instructor assigns homework in which students participate in an interactive tutorial that asks them questions about their purchasing habits. The project reveals to students how many enslaved persons worldwide are producing the materials the students use.

Notes from the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

Resource link: http://slaveryfootprint.org/survey/#where_do_you_live