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Hannah R Robbins* (robbins@roanoke.edu). *A Hands-On Introduction to Knot Theory*.

I have taught basic knot theory a number of times, and each time I have started with the same activity. Small groups of students are given a bag of knots and asked to work together to answer the most basic question of knot theory: Which of their knots are the same?

This activity has been a great success every time! It works on a number of levels: motivating students to care about knot theory, getting them thinking about how to create a good (mathematical) definition of “the same”, and getting them talking to each other to support their ideas.

In this talk we will discuss how to facilitate the students investigation and discussion, as well as how to modify the activity for students with differing levels of mathematical sophistication. (Received September 12, 2012)