Overview:

Instructors and professors are experts in their field of study. Learning Fellows, too, likely have more expertise in the subject matter than students taking a course for the first time. Experts are not just familiar with the material; they have strategies that help them learn their subject matter efficiently and master its complex relationships. The strategies used by experts may be different from those used by first-time learners, and it may be difficult for novices and experts to communicate their different strategies to one another. In this activity, Learning Fellows examine some concrete examples of how novices and experts differ in their strategies.

Learning Objectives:

- Examine how novices and experts may experience the same questions differently.
- Consider ways to bridge the gaps between how novices and experts communicate.
- Develop ways to help transform novice-thinking into expert-thinking.

Reading:


Activity:

- Break the Learning Fellows into pairs or small groups.
- Have each pair or small group review one of the examples in the reading, then share a summary of the example to the whole group.
- Facilitate discussion among the Learning Fellows regarding 1) how novices and experts might see the world and 2) how they can help the students in their class think more like experts.

More inspiration:

An example cited in Chapter 1 of How People Learn is Fish is Fish, by Leo Lionni. Although a children’s book, Fish is Fish has a powerful message about how our experiences shape the way we learn about the world. Find a copy and share it with your students!