

Expertise and Relevance: Looking beyond the course

Introduction

Time: 20 minutes

Group size: Pairs, up to 30 people total

Materials: 1 computer per pair

Goal: Help learners identify additional resources that can help them achieve their goals.

Background: Online learning and university programs often make it seem like knowledge is separated into different subjects and that you can learn these things by consulting a single resource, like a textbook or an online course. In reality, this is never the case. No single subject, like biology or mathematics, exists independently of the world around it, and it's impossible that a textbook or online course can meet all the needs of an individual. Therefore, it's important to be able to identify additional sources of information beyond the course or book you are using. Knowing where to find something is often times more useful than memorizing it!

Instructions

1. Ask participants to come up with a question related to the topic that they are studying that is not addressed by the online course that they are using.
2. Once everybody has a question, have them get into groups of 2, share their question with one another, and then work as a team to find the answer search to both questions. You may want to recommend particular resources to help them, such as a search engine such as Google, Wikipedia, or a resource in your library or community center.
3. After about 15 minutes, come back into a circle and invite reflections on how this activity might influence the ways that participants work going forward.