How this works

Sheet one is the questions: your course, your topic, and the questions you'd say out loud in that room. **Sheet two** turns the surviving questions into something students do, and something they make.

Every step is on the screen as we go, with one real course worked all the way through on the right so you can see the shape before you write.

Nothing here is hypothetical. Use a course you're actually teaching next term.

If your topic changes halfway through, that's fine. Cross it out and keep going.

Sheet one · the questions

1
Your course, your topic

2
Write the questions
Solo

3
Share with the person next to you
Paired

4
Keep what you can act on
Solo

Sheet two · the doing and the making

5
Skills your course gives them
Solo

6
Choose the doing
Solo, then Paired

8
The authenticity test
Solo

7
Audit the making
Solo

9
Defend it
Paired

10
Into week one
Solo

1 Your course, your topic

REAL COURSE. REAL WEEK.

SOLO · 4 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Write the course you're teaching next term** on the left-hand line. One course, not your whole load.
2. **Then one topic inside it** that you already know how to teach well, and roughly which week it lands.
3. **Pick the topic you're comfortable with,** not the one that's giving you trouble. This works better on solid ground.

> *A topic you've taught many times is the best material here. Familiar is the point.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **THE BIG BOX, QUESTIONS**

ONE COURSE, WORKED ALL THE WAY THROUGH

1 Your course, your topic

THE COURSE

BUS 310, Markets and Pricing

THE TOPIC, AND THE WEEK IT LANDS

How wholesale energy prices get set, and how they reach a household bill. Week 6.

I've taught this unit five times. I know where students glaze over.

2 Write the questions

THE ONES YOU'D SAY OUT LOUD IN THAT ROOM

SOLO · 12 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Two kinds of question count.** Questions about the discipline itself, and questions about what the work of your discipline does out in the world.
2. **Write them as you'd speak them.** If it sounds like a learning objective, rewrite it until it sounds like a person talking.
3. **Leave the right-hand column empty.** Your partner fills that in a few minutes from now.

> *Nobody is judging these yet, including you.*
> *Write the ones you'd be slightly nervous to ask.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **TURN TO THE PERSON BESIDE YOU**

THE SAMPLE · BUS 310, WEEK 6

2 Write the questions

1. *What do data centers have to do with the price of electricity in my apartment?*
2. *Who actually sets the price we pay, and who just passes it along?*
3. *Why does the price change by the hour when my bill doesn't?*
4. *If demand keeps climbing, who pays for the new capacity?*
5. *Which local employers negotiate their own rates, and how?*
6. *What would our own campus bill look like on a different tariff?*
7. *Is a green plan actually cheaper for anyone?*
8. *Who around here pays the biggest share of their income for power?*

3 Share with the person next to you

THEIR REACTION IS THE DATA

PAIRED · 6 MIN EACH

RIGHT NOW · SIX MINUTES PER PERSON

1. **Read your questions to your partner and listen.** Watch their face as much as you listen to their words.
2. **Then hand them your sheet.** They rank your questions in the right-hand column, most interesting to least, and tell you why.
3. **Write down what they said,** not what you meant. Their follow-up questions matter most.

> *Rank honestly for each other. A polite ranking helps nobody in week six.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **BACK TO YOUR OWN SHEET, CROSS THINGS OUT**

THE SAMPLE, RANKED BY A PARTNER

1	*What do data centers have to do with the price of electricity in my apartment?*	1
2	*Who sets the price, and who just passes it along?*	2
6	*What would our campus bill look like on a different tariff?*	3
7	*Is a green plan actually cheaper for anyone?*	8

THEIR TOP-RANKED QUESTION, AND WHY

The data center one. She said everyone has read a headline about it and nobody knows whether it's true.

WHAT THEY ASKED NEXT

"How much of a bill is generation versus delivery?" and "Can students even find local numbers?"

RANKED LOWEST, AND WHY

The green plan question. She said you can settle it with one search, so there's nothing left to do.

4 Keep what you can act on

INTERESTING ISN'T ENOUGH ON ITS OWN

SOLO · 5 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Cross out any question students couldn't do something about** inside your course, with the time and skills they'll have.
2. **Cross out anything a single search settles.** If the answer arrives before the thinking does, there's no work left for a student.
3. **Copy three to five survivors** into the list on the right of your sheet. Those travel to sheet two.

> *Crossing one out isn't a loss. It's a question waiting for a different course.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **PULL SHEET TWO**

THE SAMPLE, CULLED

1	Data centers and the price of electricity in my apartment	✓
2	Who sets the price, and who passes it along	✓
3	~~Why the price changes hourly when the bill doesn't~~	
6	Our campus bill on a different tariff	✓
7	~~Is a green plan cheaper for anyone~~	
8	Who pays the biggest share of income for power	✓

Four survive. The hourly-pricing one is a lecture, not a project, so it stays in my slides.

5 Skills your course gives them

ONLY WHAT YOU TEACH, NOTHING ASSUMED

SOLO · 5 MIN

RIGHT NOW · SHEET TWO

1. **Top box:** what your course has already taught them by the week your topic lands.
2. **Bottom box:** what comes later, in case the work runs past your topic and into the rest of the term.
3. **Skills, tools, methods.** The concrete things: a spreadsheet model, an interview, reading a technical document.

> *Whatever students bring from elsewhere is a bonus. Plan for what you know you've given them.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **THE BIG BOX, CHOOSING THE DOING**

THE SAMPLE

IN HAND BY THIS TOPIC

Reading a published rate schedule. Unit-cost math. Building a small cost model in a spreadsheet. Writing a one-page brief.

COMING LATER IN THE COURSE

Simple regression. Presenting to an outside client in week eleven.

So the work has to run on a spreadsheet and a rate sheet. That's the real constraint.

6 Choose the doing

DOING IS WIDER THAN EXPERIMENTING

SOLO, THEN PAIRED · 12 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Circle every action your students could actually take** on a surviving question, using the skills you just listed. Circle generously.
2. **Add your discipline's own verbs** in the dashed blanks. Your field has words the list doesn't.
3. **Then write the sentence:** students will _____ so that they can _____. Read it to your partner.

> *If your partner can picture the class from that one sentence, it's ready. If they ask what you mean, it isn't yet.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **THE AUDIT, AND BE HONEST WITH IT**

THE SAMPLE

observe · measure · **trace** · audit · **interview** · survey · analyze · **compare** · **model**

forecast · **fact-check** · prototype · build · redesign · critique

THE SENTENCE

*Students will **trace** one month of a real household bill back to the wholesale market and **compare** it against local data-center growth, so that they can say which part of the price is generation and which part is policy.*

7 Audit the making

YOUR WHOLE COURSE, AS IT STANDS TODAY

SOLO · 8 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Circle one:** across the whole course, how many times do students actually make something? Count honestly. A submission is not the same as something a student builds.
2. **Roughly how much of the course** do they spend making it? Hours, or a share of the term.
3. **What do students produce,** and who sees it besides you?

> *Most courses land on "once," and that's worth knowing rather than defending. You can only change what you've counted.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **THE HARD QUESTION, AUTHENTICITY**

THE SAMPLE, COUNTED HONESTLY

Never | **Once** | Twice | More

HOW MUCH OF THE COURSE

About six hours out of forty-five, all of it in the last three weeks.

WHAT STUDENTS PRODUCE, AND WHO SEES IT

A written report. I'm the only reader. It gets a grade and then it's gone.

Writing that down was uncomfortable, which is probably the point.

8 The authenticity test

WILL IT ACTUALLY BE THEIR WORK?

SOLO · 8 MIN

RIGHT NOW

1. **Where could this be handed in** without a student having done the thinking? Answer it plainly. Every design has a soft spot.
2. **Then name the incentive.** What makes doing it properly worth their while, beyond the grade?
3. **If you can't name one,** change the design rather than the rules. Detection is not an incentive.

> *The strongest answer is usually that the work needs something only that student can get.*

WHEN I CALL TIME · **HAND YOUR PLAN TO YOUR PARTNER**

THE SAMPLE

WHERE IT COULD BE HANDED IN WITHOUT THE THINKING

All of it, honestly. As written, the report is a summary of public sources, and a summary is exactly what a model is good at.

THE INCENTIVE

The local numbers only exist if they go and get them. Each pair takes a different neighborhood, and the class builds one rate map together. Next term's cohort starts from it, with this year's names on it.

The design changed, not the rules.

9 Defend it

YOUR PARTNER'S JOB IS TO FIND THE WEAK JOINT

PAIRED · 5 MIN EACH

RIGHT NOW · FIVE MINUTES PER PLAN

1. **Explain the whole plan:** the question, what students do, what they make, and why it'll be their own work.
2. **Partner, take it apart.** Be specific and be kind. "That won't work" helps nobody; "the timing breaks in week eight" does.
3. **Write their strongest objection,** then your answer, or the change you're making because of it.

Changing your plan here is a win, not a retreat. Better it breaks in this room than in week six.

WHEN I CALL TIME · **THE NAVY BOX, ONE COMMITMENT**

THE SAMPLE, UNDER FIRE

THEIR STRONGEST OBJECTION

"Utilities won't answer student emails inside a three-week window. Half your pairs will have nothing."

THE ANSWER, AND THE CHANGE

Fair. So published tariff sheets become the required source, and any interview is a bonus. Every pair gets a fallback dataset in week one of the unit so nobody is waiting on a stranger to reply.

That objection improved the assignment in about ninety seconds.

10 Into week one

ONE QUESTION, ONE WEEK, WRITTEN DOWN

SOLO · 4 MIN

BEFORE WE CLOSE

1. **Fill the navy box:** the question you'll ask your students first, and the week you'll ask it.
2. **Specific enough that a colleague could hold you to it.** A date beats a season.
3. **Leave both sheets on the table.** They're photographed into a shared CEPI collection and returned to you.

> *The question can go up in week one even if the project runs in week six. Curiosity keeps.*

THEN · **THANK YOU, AND SEE YOU TOMORROW**

THE SAMPLE COMMITMENT

10 Into week one

The data center question goes on the board in week one and stays there. Week 6 is when we chase it. First thing I'll say: bring me one month of your own electricity bill, and we'll find out together where the money went.

One question. One course. Written down where someone can hold me to it.