# The Relationship-Rich Assignment

Sheet one of two · about 40 minutes

Redesign one assignment so a student leaves your course knowing someone they didn't know before. **Zones 1 and 2 live on this sheet. Zones 3 to 5 continue on sheet two.**

SFBU CEPI AT SFBU

## 1 Audit your course for an opening

PAIRED · 4 MIN EACH

Find a **peer in the room** and interview each other, one at a time. Your peer asks you these three questions, out loud: **Which course are you teaching this fall? Which assignment in it has an opening for human connection? Why that one?** Discussing with a peer helps you refine your thoughts and reflect on your answers.

**1a** Name the course you've selected for this project

**1b** Name the assignment selected for this project, and briefly describe what students currently do in it

**1c** Why this assignment? Explain it to your peer first. Then write what you said.

**1d** What clarifying questions did your peer have?

**1e** Circle the kind of connection this assignment will make

| New | Renewed | Deepened |
|---|---|---|
| someone students would never otherwise meet | a relationship that lapsed | a relationship they already have, taken deeper |

Small openings count. One conversation inside an existing assignment is enough. A worked example: *Starred Deepened: the uncle who's an electrician has carried applied physics for twenty years, and nobody ever asked him about it.*

**1f** Why is this the right kind of connection for this assignment? One or two lines.

## 2 Draft the redesign

SOLO · 12 MIN

**2a** Who will students reach out to? Circle generously. One or more assignment partners; if no name comes to mind, write the kind of person.

a parent or grandparent · an alum of this course · a practitioner downtown · a former manager · a school friend, drifted · a neighbor with the knowledge · a mentor lost to time · a community organization · a client from a past project · an expert one intro away · a museum or archive worker

**WHEN NOBODY SURFACES.** SFBU can step in: our Student Academic Support Specialists, members of the wellness community, and fellow SFBU students can serve as assignment partners. Keep this as the backup. The first search is the student's own world.

**2b** What will students do with them? Select the interaction verb, then tailor the task.

interview them · record a story they tell · shadow an hour of their work · ask them to review a draft · take their suggestions into a design · test a prototype with them · co-create something small · gather their questions for the field

**2c** The role of AI, if any: in preparation, in execution, in delivery. Where does AI handle the mechanical load, transcribing, formatting, so human hours go to the human?

**2d** What will students deliver as the output?

**2e** What goes back to the assignment partner: the finished work itself, a gratitude note, or something else?

Ran out of lines? Continue on sticky notes and press them onto the sheet.

# The Relationship-Rich Assignment

Sheet two of two

Zones 3 to 5: peer review, the final design, and your commitment.

CEPI AT SFBU

## 3 Peer review and pre-mortem

PAIRED · 5 MIN EACH

Explain your assignment to a peer. Then hand them your draft and ask them to fill section 3a.

**3A · YOUR PEER WRITES HERE**

Every place this design could fail or fall weak: the ask, the timing, the partner's side, the authenticity, the workload. List them all. The more you find now, the stronger the final design.

**3B · YOU WRITE THE RESPONSE**

As a result of this feedback: what you're removing, what you're adding, and what you're changing.

**TWO DUTIES OF CARE.** Assignment partners consent to any recording. Students choose their assignment partner; nobody is walked into a tender relationship they didn't pick.

Not finding a partner in time is a design constraint, never a penalty. The backup path is part of the assignment.

## 5 Reflection and commitment

SOLO · 3 MIN

5a Reflection: what changed in your thinking about this assignment today?

5b Commitment: the term I'll run this, and the first step I'll take

5c The first thing I'll tell my students

Photograph both sheets and upload them here.

## 4 The final design

SOLO · 6 MIN

The same five questions as zone 2, written clean after the feedback in zone 3.

4a Who students reach out to, finally: the assignment partner, and the backup

4b What students do with them

4c The role of AI: preparation, execution, delivery

4d What students deliver

4e What goes back to the assignment partner