Learning Self-Assessment
End-of-Quarter Activity

What types of meta-learning did you do?

In my work as an educator, I feel very strongly that one of the most powerful gifts I can give you is to coach you to be a more sophisticated learner. This includes helping you develop system-navigation strategies to help you thrive in school despite many of the harmful policies that undergird our education systems. I also work hard to help you learn how to be a deep learner. This first set of reflection questions is designed to get you to reflect on how you've changed as a learner based on your experiences in this course.

1. Let's define the phrase *meta learning* as the process of learning how to learn. This includes an explicit focus on helping you describe, reflect on, and improve your own learning and learning processes. What kinds of meta learning did you do because of your involvement in this course?

2. Let's define *deep learning* to be learning that involves an intense, distraction-free focus on growing your abilities by pushing beyond the limits of your current capacity. When you engage in deep learning, you actively reach for and repeat skills that you want to build by paying extra special attention to your performance during each repetition. When were you most engaged in deep learning during this quarter? What led to that engagement? How did your work in this class contribute to or detract from your deep learning experiences this quarter?

3. Let's define the phrase *system navigation* as the process of protecting yourself against harmful policies that you encounter in your formal education so that you can accomplish your academic and career goals without internalizing the harm you suffer along the way. What new learning strategies did you develop this quarter that you plan to use in future quarters to more effectively navigate the higher education systems in which you are a part? In other words, what new skills did you develop that you feel will make you more effective in your other classes?

4. Let's define the phrase *system transformation* as the process of imaging and advocating for educational policies that more closely align with your desires for your life, your loved owns, and your society. Given your experiences in this course, what types of system transformation would you like to see? What changes would do you feel would make your college classes and your experience as a college student more valuable and less painful?

What content did you learn?

5. What did you learn about the content of this course?

6. How proficient do you feel with the content of this course? What are you good at? What new technical skills did you build during your time in our course?

7. What weaknesses do you have with the content of this course? Let's presume, for a moment, that you have a deep interest in the content of this course. What would you need to do to become more skilled in this content? If you'd like, brainstorm parts of a plan you might implement to work towards deeper proficiency with this content.

What have you learned about yourself and your motivations for education?

8. Why are you in college? How has your understanding of your own motivation for college and for your education changed since the beginning of this class? What can you do to strengthen this motivation when learning gets hard and how can you tap into this motivation to thrive in college and beyond?

9. What do you plan to do differently in future classes based on your experience in this class? What lasting changes do you plan to make in the way you learn, work, and navigate your college degree create because of our work together?

Determine Your Own Grade

The state of California tasks me, as your teacher, to come up with ways to measure your proficiency in this class. This quarter, I have perhaps the most sophisticated and accurate measurement tool that I've ever used to determine grades: you. I choose to trust you and to put my faith in your genius. I believe you are the world's leading expert on your own learning. Of course, I recognize that I have deep expertise in both mathematics and the science of learning that are valuable for your learning. But ultimately, what matters most about your experiences in this class is what you do with the resources I've provided and what you know is true about yourself. You will be assigning your own grade in this class.

Before you make that decision, I want to share some thoughts about grading with you. The dominant narrative our society has about the purpose of grades is that, when we assign grades, we are using those single letters as efficient ways to describe student performance. Ironically, there is a mountain of scientific evidence that shows that grades do not do what our society says. In fact, all of the following observations have been found to be true in research studies on learning and education:
1. Grades tend to reduce students' interest in learning itself.
2. Grades tend to reduce students' preference for challenging tasks.
3. Grades tend to reduce the quality of students' thinking.
4. Grades are NOT valid, reliable, or objective.
5. Grades distort the curriculum.
6. Grades waste a lot of time that could be spent on learning.
7. Grades encourage cheating.
8. Grades spoil teachers' relationships with students.
9. Grades spoil students' relationships with each other.
10. Grades are not good incentives: they incentivize the wrong stuff including product over process, what the teacher thinks over what the student thinks, performance over deep learning, etc.
11. Grades impose a hierarchical system that pits teachers against students and encourages competition by ranking students against each other.
12. Grades are currency for a capitalist system that reduces teaching and learning to a mere transaction.
13. Grades are an institutional instrument of compliance, domination, and control.
14. Grades are tools of a massive, coordinated effort to take humans out of the educational process.
15. Grades are not good feedback: grades are too simplistic and attempt to turn something that is extremely complex (learning) into something very simple (single capital letters).
16. Grades are not good markers of learning: grades often communicate more about a students' ability to follow instructions rather than how much that student has learned.
17. Grades aren't fair and they will never be fair.

As you decide on your final grade in this class, please think about your answers to questions 1 – 9 of this self-assessment and remember these facts about grading.

ASSIGN YOUR OWN GRADE	
In the space to the right, please indicate the grade you earned for your learning in this class.	

10.   Why did you make this choice for your final grade? What led to this decision?

11.   How meaningful is this single letter in summarizing your learning during your 12 weeks of experiences in this class? How accurate is this "measurement" of your performance?