



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 ones, 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. Thus, 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, education, and about the context of the letter grading system:

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 (a small set of capital letters: A, B, C, D, F, FW, W, EW and I).
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.

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

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?

## Next Steps – Keep Building Your Reading Systems

12. Perhaps the most important part of this class is not what you’ve finished this quarter but what you plan to do in the future with the learning experiences you created during our time together. As you think about your future, I suggest that perhaps the most powerful habit you can create is the habit of reading.

To highlight this idea, I was inspired by the work of the Black female educator [Harriet Ball](#) and the description of her amazing work in the book [\*Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How We Heal\*](#) by [Dr. Bettina Love](#). Using this as inspiration, I share the following phrase with you:

Reading is knowledge, knowledge is power, power is money. What are you going to do with the money you earn from the knowledge you build to transform your world in ways that you care about?

As you think about this quote, please read the following blog post:

<https://jeffandersonmath.wordpress.com/2024/01/01/key-questions-to-build-reading-systems/>

Begin drafting your responses to the 10 questions I pose in that post. You’re welcome to share your drafts in this reflection or keep those responses private. Remember, if you’re doing good work, your draft responses to those questions now will look very different to your responses in five years. The point of this exercise is to encourage you to develop and refine your reading habits to propel your learning for years and decades to come.

13. Let's end this reflection with some hope for your future.

Please identify a list of books that you want to read to enhance your abilities as a learner, a knowledge worker, and a citizen. These books might focus on meta-learning, productivity, content expertise in your chosen discipline, financial planning for your future, building your abilities to engage in system transformation work, or any other learning that you believe will have a substantial impact in your professional life.

Note: please do not list books that you read for entertainment. While entertainment reading is both fun and valuable, I'm asking you to make a wish list for books you believe will propel your professional life. Of course, if you plan to be a fiction writer and you want to study the works of those that came before you to propel your career, that counts. The point of this exercise is that your intention for the reading matters.

For some fun ideas from Jeff related to our five learning objectives, you might enjoy the following list:

<https://jeffandersonmath.wordpress.com/2022/12/13/40-books-to-enhance-and-deepen-your-college-education/>

If you'd like detailed ideas about how to read a lot, please check out the following video:

Develop Your Deep Reading Systems: <https://youtu.be/EVwQ8deW6ig?feature=shared> (37min, 07sec)

Below, please some possible titles that you are interested in reading. For each title on your list, identify how you plan to get access to that book (like at the library, by purchasing a copy, by borrowing a copy from a friend, etc.). Remember, when you make this list, you're not committing to finishing these books. Instead, you are capturing your interest as a way to guide your future work. Cheers to your learning and to your ability to grow your brain.