Transforming Exams

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Designing Assessment for Growth, Trust, and Learning

This book presents a systems-based approach to assessment that reframes exams as part of a continuous learning process. Rather than treating exams as isolated judgments, the framework connects preparation, performance, reflection, and long-term mastery into a coherent cycle that supports student growth while remaining fair, rigorous, and scalable.

Part I — Reframing the Exam

Chapter 1: What Exams Are Actually Measuring (and What They Aren't)
Distinguishing performance from understanding and reframing exam results as data rather than verdicts.

Chapter 2: Fear Is Not a Motivator
Exam anxiety, time pressure, and the unintended consequences of stress-based assessment.

Part II — The Framework

Chapter 3: Building a Framework for Growth
Introducing the four-phase exam system that connects preparation, performance, reflection, and mastery.

Part III — The Four Phases

Chapter 4: Phase 1: Preparation
Building trust, modeling study habits, and aligning expectations before the exam.

Chapter 5: Phase 2: Performance
Teaching students how to navigate exams strategically and write for understanding.

Chapter 6: Phase 3: Reflection
Turning exams into learning resources through structured feedback and guided self-analysis.

Chapter 7: Phase 4: Sustained Mastery

Using videos, scalable systems, and creative reinforcement to support long-term growth.

Part IV — Design Choices That Matter

Chapter 8: Transparency, Fairness, and Grading with Humanity

Rubrics, partial credit, consistency, and building trust through grading practices.

Chapter 9: Supporting Students After a Setback

Recovery plans, reweighting options, and language that lowers the emotional temperature.

Chapter 10: Training TAs to Teach, Not Just Grade

Shared philosophy, calibration, and compassionate consistency.

Part V — Scaling the System

Chapter 11: Large Courses, Limited Time

What scales, what doesn't, and how small design choices compound.

Chapter 12: Using Data Without Losing the Human Story

Error patterns, exam archives, and evidence-informed redesign.

Appendices

- *Sample welcome surveys*

- *Exam reflection prompts*

- *Student-facing explanations of exam scores*

- *TA training materials and grading rubrics*