

# Empower Students with Habit Creation

Charles Duhigg's best-selling *Power of Habit* (2012) investigates the science and stories of habit as a powerful way to take control of our lives. Teach students the basic science of habit, and empower them to own their learning and plot their success. In turn, mold habits to boost your own productivity.



## CUE

Stimulus that triggers a behavior

## ROUTINE

observable behavior of the habit

## REWARD

Signal of the completion of the routine; offers satisfaction

Taking control of habits requires three actions:

- identifying the cue, routine and reward of a habit
- commandeering old routines by supplanting parts of this cycle
- crafting new habits by planning each part of the loop

Neurological studies of the brain show that habits leave a permanent impact on the brain, meaning that old habits never truly die, but they can be hijacked by supplanting the old routine or reward with a new one.

### How does this relate to teaching and learning?

#### 1. Help student identify habits that hinder their learning or overall success as a student.

Ask them to identify the cue, routine and reward, and have them consider how they can either supplant parts of this loop or override the loop with a new habit. For example, if a student always wants to eat when they smell food, and eating leads to watching TV, students should either study in a food-free environment (creating a new loop) or eat a snack while studying and make TV a reward (using the same cue to revise the routine and move part of that routine to the reward).



**2. Use the habit loop in class to prepare students to learn.** What are the most important learning behaviors and activities in your class? Carefully planning a few habit loops in class on a regular basis can help get students focused faster, solidify what they have learned at the end of class and even subvert negative reactions to assessments. Green slides for specific activity can serve as a cue, and a class-relevant comic or gif can be a reward.

*The Power of Habit* provides narratives how this science of habit can be applied to individual lives, groups, and organizations. In teaching students this loop, you may empower them to apply it in ways you wouldn't have imagined. You might just create positive habits of your own.

### **Resources**

Duhigg, C. (2012). *The power of habit: Why we do what we do in life and business*.

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