



# NEBRASKA CAREER READINESS STANDARDS

*Nebraska Department of Education | Nebraska Career Education*



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### HOW CAN A SCHOOL INCORPORATE HABITUDES INTO PROGRAMMING THROUGHOUT A SEMESTER OR ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR?

*Habitudes for Career Ready Students* contains 11 chapters. Each *Habitudes* chapter teaches one principle through an image and story that leads to small group conversations and an interactive learning experience. You can teach the content over a single semester or a year:

- **Semester Implementation:** A typical semester is approximately 18 weeks. If you were to teach one image per week, you could cover the entire book within the semester and still have several weeks leftover for holiday breaks, final week, etc.
- **Yearlong Implementation:** A typical school year is two semesters and approximately 36 weeks. If you were to teach the *Habitudes* book throughout the entire school year, you could cover two chapters per month (one chapter every other week) and really have time to focus longer on each image and help students explore the application of the principle. With this model, you would still have plenty of time left over to buffer weeks for holiday breaks, final week, spring break, etc.
- **Note:** Other books in the *Habitudes* series contain 13 chapters. These books can also be used in a semester or yearlong implementation.

### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO KICK-OFF A HABITUDES PROGRAM IN A SCHOOL AND KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING STRONG?

As described in *A Manifesto for Growing Leaders on Your Campus*, the best way to kick-off *Habitudes* is to first invest time training teachers and staff to fully understand why the program is important to their school so they teach with passion and purpose. We recommend a kick-off event/training for teachers and then a separate event to launch *Habitudes* with students through a fun, catalytic event for all of the students who will be involved



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

in the program. During this event, you can briefly introduce one to three *Habitudes*. You can pull ideas from the lesson plans, case studies, show movie clips, do student interviews and find other ways to use students to help coordinate and plan the event. Remember that students support what they help create.

The *Habitudes* curriculum is best used in a small group format of 6-8 students. If you are taking an entire class through the material, put the students in small groups for discussion after you introduce the image. You can also use the curriculum in mentoring communities or other so-curricular activities.

As Growing Leaders, we are committed to helping you create great EVENTS and a great PROCESS following the event and would be honored to work with your school to design this process for your specific school culture and needs.

## **WHAT ARE SOME CLASSROOM BEST PRACTICES WHEN IMPLEMENTING HABITUDES?**

### **1. Use interactive and fun activities to drive home the big picture.**

Enter into each Habitudes lesson with the perspective that the next 15 to 20 minutes is a conversation on leadership and life. Just like normal day-to-day conversations, people like to laugh and have fun. Nobody likes a dry, boring conversation; they immediately tune out and start daydreaming. Whether it's due to a game, story, real-life example, or video, let these drive home the big picture and be the sticky moments.

### **2. Allow for half the time to be used for small group interaction.**

Students report their favorite time while learning Habitudes is the discussion. We believe there is no “life change” without “life exchange” in small group discussions. So guard the time you have. Get them used to conversation in smaller communities, where they weigh in on the issue. Make sure half your time allows your students to answer a couple of well-crafted questions on the topic and weigh in with what they think. Then, take time to listen to their ideas. For today’s students, listening to their input earns you the right to be heard. What’s more, this approach also lessens the work on your part. There is no need for you to put together this 20-minute speech on a certain leadership habit.

### **3. Create a culture of accountability by asking how students practiced the Habitude from the previous week.**

The truth is, students live up or down to our expectations. So before each week, ask your students or athletes how they were able to (or not able to) practice the truth they discussed. It may sound cheesy, but this kind of accountability is what actually transforms our habits and attitudes.



## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES MADE WHEN TEACHING HABITUDES?**

### **1. Leaders teach it in a traditional fashion and consume all the time with instruction.**

Instead of anchoring the lesson time with the Habitude only—and consequently, turning the time into an engagement of their imagination—the image was inserted somewhere in the midst of lists and facts to remember. It felt like a class.

In order to differentiate your lesson time, use the image up front to anchor all you plan to say. These young people listen to traditional lectures all day and crave instruction to be engaging and different. To be remembered, the image should be the “steering wheel,” not a “spare tire” that you bring up briefly at some point. So guard the time you have. Get students used to conversation in smaller communities, where they weigh in on the issue. Make sure half your time allows your students to answer a couple of well-crafted questions on the topic and weigh in with what they think. Then, take time to listen to their ideas. Earn your right to be heard.

### **2. Leaders don't translate the timeless principle into a relevant issue.**

Instead of introducing a dilemma that's common to young listeners, instructors simply jump in, talking about the principle without tying it to something relevant they're facing. The facilitator forgets that students learn on a need-to-know basis.

In order to be viewed as relevant, facilitators should create a dilemma in the minds of their audience first. Introduce a common problem, perhaps even from a story in their own life that the Habitude will address. For example, before teaching the Starving Baker, talk about a time you faced burnout. Remind them of how common burnout or plateauing is in today's world—then expose them to the principle.

## **I'M ALREADY USING OTHER HABITUDES BOOKS AND MATERIALS. HOW CAN I INCORPORATE HABITUDES FOR THE CAREER READY STUDENT (NCE HABITUDES) WITH THE OTHER HABITUDES MATERIALS I AM ALREADY USING?**

There are a number of schools that use different *Habitudes* books with unique groups of students. For example, one school may take their freshman through *Habitudes Book 1: The Art of Self-Leadership* while their juniors and seniors are going through *Habitudes for the Career Ready Student*. The Growing Leaders team is available to brainstorm the best ways to use the *Habitudes* materials in our school.



## **NOT ALL OF THE TEACHERS IN MY SCHOOL WENT THROUGH THE TRAINING OFFERED BY NCE STAFF. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREPARE THEM TO USE THE HABITUDES CURRICULUM SO WE CAN IMPLEMENT IT SCHOOL-WIDE?**

The *Habitudes for Career Ready Students* book is available for purchase from Growing Leaders. However, in order to receive the lesson plans and case studies developed by NDE, training is required. Additional trainings will be offered annually. If a school would like to request a teacher training for their staff, they should contact Dr. Cory Epler directly ([cory.epler@nebraska.gov](mailto:cory.epler@nebraska.gov)).

NDE has also developed a train-the-trainer experience for schools or Educational Service Units that wish to conduct their own teacher trainings. This training will be held as needed throughout the year.

While training is very important, the first and most important step is that teachers understand why their school is going through the *Habitudes* program. Schools will see the most success when their administrator(s) cast a vision for their teachers and help them understand the purpose that *Habitudes* has at their school specifically. Here are some resources that may be helpful in supporting this first important phase:

- “In Other Words” – a free resource that explains the research behind teaching and learning through images
- Blog – Dr. Tim Elmore’s blog is full of informative, useful insights. You can sign up to receive Dr. Elmore’s blog daily or weekly.
- *Habitudes* Facebook group – This group exists to connect *Habitudes* facilitators to enable sharing of best practices, ideas, stories, and more. Just search Facebook for the group titled “Habitudes Champions” and come join the conversation!

The NCE staff plans to offer additional training in the future. However, there are also steps you can take right now to make sure your teachers feel prepared to use the *Habitudes* resources.

**Here are some ideas that have worked in other schools:**

- Host a training event for all of the teachers in your school. Growing Leaders has team members available to do on-site training events that are no more than two hours long and help get all faculty prepped and ready to teach *Habitudes*.
- Some schools have a faculty meeting to review the image and brainstorm ideas on presenting the material one to two days before they will teach it to the students. This creates a strong sense of community among the faculty and provides a way to share best practices. The more prepared and excited the teachers are, the better the student session will be.

