



YOUTH DRIVING LEARNING

Imagine a world where you drive your own learning, and everything you learn is linked to your passions and goals, today and tomorrow.

WHAT IS THE GRIPTAPE LEARNING CHALLENGE?

The GripTape Learning Challenge is a call to action to youth ages 14–19 years old to design, create, and execute their own learning pursuits outside of school. What is an idea, topic, or skill you've always wanted to learn? An experience you can invent, design, and drive yourself? GripTape youth have learned about rap communities, coding, fashion design, girls' wrestling, drawing, mixing music, blockchain technology, cryptocurrencies, social justice, the brain, and teaching. All you have to do is tell us who you are, answer four application questions, and if selected, we'll give you resources and support to pursue what you are passionate about. Learn more at griptape.org.



WHY SHOULD YOU APPLY?

When you take part in the GripTape Learning Challenge, you're fully in charge of deciding what you pursue and how you'll do it. We give you complete decision-making authority over the what, when, where, how, and why of your learning; grants up to \$500 to ignite your passion; a Champion to offer encouragement; and up to 10 weeks to complete your Challenge.

Learn more at griptape.org!



"The Learning Challenge helped me realize how much impact I can have on people around me, and I am much more inclined to try new things with future impact in mind. I learned that each learning experience is what you make and get out of it, and that it takes focus and dedication to learn to do something."

— GripTape Youth



YOUTH DRIVING LEARNING

What's next if I'm selected to be a Challenger?

You'll be contacted by your Champion (a GripTape team member who supports and encourages you throughout your Challenge), and together you'll schedule a good time for a video call to talk about what you want to learn during your GripTape experience.

You can begin your Challenge at any time, whether it's before or when you get your grant — it's up to you! We'll get the grant processed and sent as soon you've completed the first steps outlined in the Welcome Email we send you. You'll have up to 10 weeks to carry out your Challenge, and you'll decide the final date when you first meet with your Champion.

You'll have regular check-in calls with your Champion at a time that's convenient for you.

You are part of the GripTape community forever, so you'll be able to connect with other young people on GripTape's social media channels, and we'll share new opportunities even after your Challenge ends.



Learn more at griptape.org!



YOUTH DRIVING LEARNING

The GripTape Learning Challenge is a call to action to youth ages 14–19 years old to design, create, and execute their own learning. Read what GripTape youth have to say about their experiences.

"My learning journey has allowed me to gain confidence in my ability to overcome obstacles and see problems through to the end."

"I have seen my potential as a teenager. I think that is one thing that others must realize: Once you understand what you are capable of, you can open doors yourself instead of waiting for them to open for you."

"I had never been in a situation where I was in charge of everything. You have to be really responsible, have social awareness, and learn to work with everyone. [This experience] was very impactful for me and has started me thinking about what I want to do in life."

"You are able to learn whatever you want to learn. You can explore your passions, discover new ones, and learn life skills. For anyone who is thinking about applying for the Learning Challenge, this was a life-altering experience for me and has helped me to grow as a person. My experience with GripTape gave me the tools to do everything I am doing now."

"This program is for anybody with a dream and the drive to accomplish it."



Learn more at griptape.org!



LEARNING CHALLENGE APPLICATION TIPS

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to a strong Learning Challenge application because every youth is different in how they learn, how they define success, and what they're passionate about. First, decide what topic or skill you want to explore. Then, ask yourself how you want to answer the four application questions. You can write an essay, send an email, upload a video, provide a digital link to a presentation, interview with a GripTape youth leader ... It's totally up to you!

APPLICATION TIPS

- Remember that we're not judging your essay-writing abilities or grammar or vocabulary. We want to understand what you are passionate about learning. And we want to understand why this learning matters to you!
- We have lots of ways you can answer the four main application questions, so feel free to submit art, a video, poetry, a voice recording — or any other medium that lets you express what you're passionate about in the way that is best for you.
- Check out the Preparing Your Application page on [our website](#) to see examples of what some past GripTape youth pursued and how they created their applications. They may inspire you!

FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you have any questions about GripTape, the application process, or the Learning Challenge, please email hello@griptape.org, and one of our youth Leaders or a GripTape team member will reach out to answer your questions.



How to Prepare Your Learning Challenge Application

We're SO excited you're interested in the GripTape Learning Challenge and eager to know what you're passionate about and how you plan to learn about it!

GripTape Learning Challenge Guidelines

- You're completely in charge of deciding what you explore and how you do it.
- Your learning doesn't depend on school, so you can do the Challenge on your own outside of class.
- You lead your learning, so no more than 1/3 of your time in the Challenge is spent in adult-led experiences like classes, camp, or study abroad programs.
- You have 10 weeks to complete your Challenge.
- You are between 14 and 19 years old.
- You live or go to school in the U.S.

What to Think About Before You Apply

We'll ask for some basic information in the online application, and you'll need to answer these four questions to apply for the Challenge

1. Share your passion. Tell us about the topic you want to pursue for your Learning Challenge.
2. The BIG Why? It's important for us to know why this Learning Challenge matters to you.
3. This is a learning challenge. As you dive into your learning, what do you want to discover about your topic?
4. The 10 weeks are in your hands. In detail, tell us what you plan to do during that time.

Decide how you want to submit your answers. It could be as a poem, video, song, essay, presentation, voice recording — or something else! These answers are where you get to tell us, in detail, what you want to pursue with this opportunity. Inspire us!

Tips and Ideas

- You don't have to be a writer! In fact, we love to get video applications!
- We'd love to see your passion, goals, and initiative! Be the most authentic version of who you are.
- You can use videos, pictures, songs, poems, drawings ... you decide. It's ALL up to you!

Note: You have to finish the online application form in one session, regardless of how you choose to share the responses to the four main application questions. Visit griptape.org to learn more.

Thanks, and good luck!

The GripTape Team

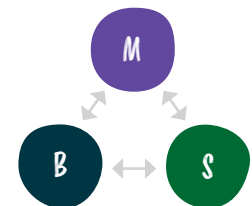
THE GRIPTAPE FRAMEWORK

IN PURSUIT OF AGENCY

GripTape asserts that learner agency—defined as the ability to make intentional choices about and take an active role in the course of one’s own learning—is the key to a self-reinforcing cycle of learning and development.

When youth have opportunities to drive their own learning, exercising learner agency, it leads to dramatic outcomes—the cultivation of **MINDSETS**, **SKILLS**, and **BEHAVIORS** that are essential to success as adults.

But this development is not happening for the vast majority of our young people. Instead, youth often feel that learning is something that happens to them, resulting in a disempowering environment that robs them of the opportunity to develop agency and pursue their learning interests.



In 2017, we highlighted this problem with a framework based on decades of research. Now, after two years spent working directly with more than 400 young people nationwide designing and testing approaches to solve this challenge, here are the punchlines:

DESIRE

Teenagers want the opportunity to learn more and to tailor their learning endeavors to their interests

CONDITIONS

The “inputs” are simple and inexpensive, but also unfamiliar

PROCESS

Taking ownership of learning and driving it forward is where the magic happens

OUTCOMES

They are significant and immediate, including changes in **MINDSETS, SKILLS,** and **BEHAVIORS**

We observe that the emergence of learner agency is a dynamic and self-reinforcing cycle, not a static and linear relationship between inputs and outcomes. Rather, as a young person experiences changes in their mindsets, skills, and behaviors during the pursuit of their learning journey, they then develop stronger and stronger outcomes in these same areas which, in turn, propel them to seek out additional opportunities to exercise—and strengthen—their agency.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

We started by asking and testing, “What set of conditions do youth need to lead their own learning?”

1 PASSION/INTEREST

Youth expresses strong interest to pursue a self-identified learning topic

2 MEANINGFUL

Youth expresses a belief that the learning experience will help them be successful, now and/or in the future

3 DECISION-MAKING

Youth exercises fully autonomous decision-making over what they are learning, how they are learning it, and how success will be defined

4 A “CHAMPION”

Another person expresses interest in the youth and their interests, belief in their potential for success, and asks questions for self-reflection, but critically without giving advice or direction

5 FUNDING

Youth has access to money (e.g., \$500) to pursue their learning, with full decision-making authority to use funds as they decide

6 SELF-DIRECTED TIME

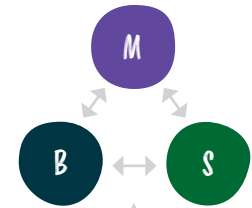
Youth dedicates time to carry out the learning experience (e.g., 10 weeks) and decides how this time is spent

Based on data through our eight learning cycles, we posit that these six conditions are interconnected and critically important. When they are all in place, and not watered down nor bounded by adult guardrails, young people build and practice strong levels of learner agency resulting in powerful outcomes that deepen with time. But despite the strength of the outcomes, we rarely see this set of conditions made available to our young people.

We recognize that this approach pushes the boundaries of what some people consider comfortable (e.g., learners have complete decision-making authority over the design, implementation, and assessment of their self-led learning journey with zero accountability for failure). What we ask you, the reader, to explore is what this set of conditions means for the development of agency. And to do that, we ask you to consider the outcomes we are seeing with young people.

WHAT HAPPENS? IMPROVED MINDSETS, SKILLS, AND BEHAVIORS

Building off the findings from our learning cycles, we have identified a set of changes in mindsets, skills, and behaviors of youth who have increased learner agency.



Our two most recent set of research findings from June and December 2018 respectively found that youth gained critical knowledge as well as meaningful and sustained changes in their mindsets, skills, and behaviors as a result of the full set of conditions outlined above. **Our findings show:**

INCREASES IN MINDSETS AND SKILLS

- Confidence
- Self-motivation, determination, and perseverance
- Self-awareness and awareness of others
- Goal-setting, forethought, self-regulation, and self-reflection

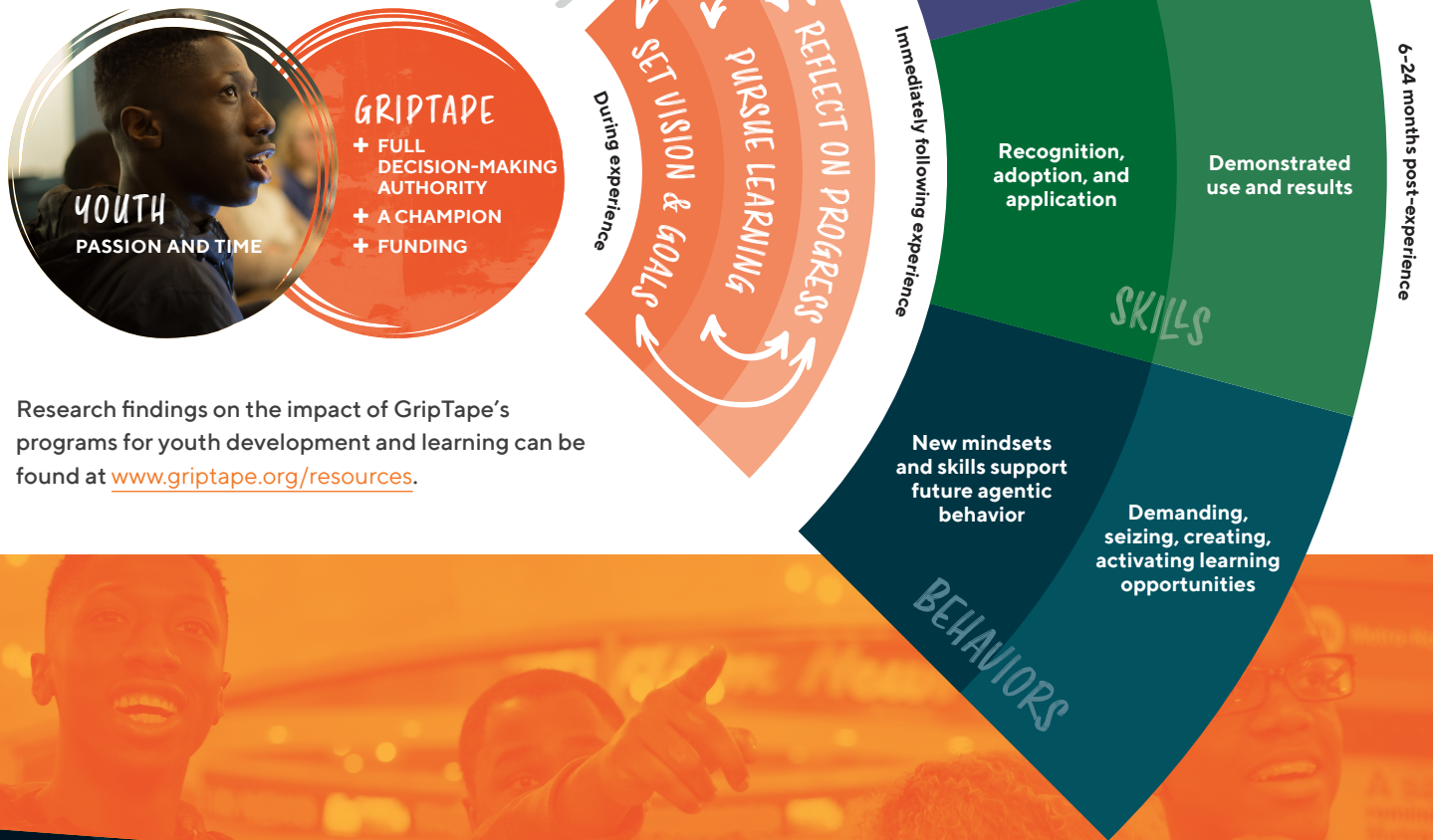
CHANGES IN BEHAVIORS

- Seizing new learning opportunities previously ignored
- Creating new learning experiences, often including other people
- Taking action to improve a current learning experience
- Inspiring and helping other youth to lead their learning

Significantly, these outcomes emerge very quickly. While conventional wisdom might suggest that learner agency takes years to develop, we see dramatic changes in these outcome areas in as few as 12-14 weeks. And then we see the outcomes deepen and endure in the coming months and years.

WHAT'S NEXT?

GripTape sees this framework as an evolving work. It is our intention to continuously test the hypotheses embedded herein through ongoing rapid learning cycles such as the GripTape Learning Challenge, as well as through data collection, analysis, and collaboration with a select group of youth and adult partners across formal and informal learning settings.



Research findings on the impact of GripTape's programs for youth development and learning can be found at www.griptape.org/resources.




READY TO JOIN US?

Each and every day, GripTape is giving young people the traction they need to take control of their own learning, choose their purposes, and achieve their full potential. Does this mission light up your mind, stir something in your heart? Join us! From young people, to volunteers, to partners and staff, we are an energetic and passionate team. Are you a funder, a researcher, someone who is inspired to ignite the interests and passions of our youth? Join our effort. We want to hear from you, right here—info@griptape.org

> GRIPTAPE >

YOUTH DRIVING LEARNING

GripTape
100 W 33rd St, Suite 917
New York, NY 10001
www.griptape.org

-  [@griptapeLC](https://www.facebook.com/griptapeLC)
-  [@griptape.youth](https://www.instagram.com/griptape.youth)
-  [@GripTape_Org](https://twitter.com/GripTape_Org)