



# Family Newsletter

## Discovering Your Student's Learning Style

Many people have a primary learning style, meaning they learn best participating in activities with that particular learning style. Other people learn best when they are able to use two or all three of the learning styles. There is no right or wrong learning style; it's whatever works best for each student. EducationPlanner.org lists three primary types of learning styles:

**Auditory:** Auditory learners learn best when they are listening and can follow spoken instructions.

**Visual:** Visual learners learn best when they can visualize or see what they need to do.

**Tactile:** Tactile learners learn best when they do hand-on activities to apply what they've learned and are able to utilize touch.

GEAR UP Iowa encourages you and your student to take the learning styles inventory. Understanding how your student learns will help you support them as they develop study skills to guide them through their education. You can find more information on study skills inside this issue and a learning style inventory at <http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles.shtml>

### What is GEAR UP Iowa?

GEAR UP (which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a program made possible through a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education aimed at preparing students and families academically, financially and inspirationally to enroll and succeed in college.

Beginning in Fall 2014, this seven-year project supports nearly 6,300 students beginning in 7th grade and follows them as they progress through school. GEAR UP Iowa is a long-term partnership between Iowa College Student Aid Commission, 12 school districts and nearly 40 institutions of higher education and community-based organizations.

For more information, visit our website:  
[www.gearupiowa.gov](http://www.gearupiowa.gov)

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### Attention parents!

Please fill out our online survey to help GEAR UP Iowa best meet the needs of your students and schools!

**English:** [tinyurl.com/GUIParents2015](http://tinyurl.com/GUIParents2015)

**Spanish:** [tinyurl.com/GUIPadres2015](http://tinyurl.com/GUIPadres2015)

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Iowa!**



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[gearup@iowa.gov](mailto:gearup@iowa.gov)

# Alumni Success

**Amy Luong**  
Des Moines Lincoln High School  
GEAR UP Iowa Alum

Each issue, GEAR UP Iowa recognizes the success of program graduates and their accomplishments beyond high school.



**College:** University of Iowa

**Major:** Journalism and Mass Communications with a certificate in Entrepreneurial Management

**College Activities:** Delta Zeta sorority, writer for a national website (Her Campus Ulowa), Country Club Prep Ambassador and No Labels

**Highlight:** Learning more about myself by traveling with college friends for school and for fun

**Words of Wisdom & Encouragement:**  
Some places will accept you and some places won't, but **you should always make the best out of your experience.**

## GEAR UP Iowa Facilitator Corner

GEAR UP Iowa Facilitators work with school districts to offer support for students, families and school staff working with GEAR UP Iowa. By assisting with programming at schools, Facilitators help ensure students learn about their educational options, graduate from high school and move easily into their education beyond high school. This issue, they discuss learning styles:

**Flor Slowing**, M.S. International Development, Iowa State University  
**Denison, Perry & Storm Lake**

**Nathan Svare**, B.S. Psychology, Bemidji State University & M.S. Social Responsibility, St. Cloud State University  
**Fort Dodge, Clinton, Columbus Junction & Davenport**

"I have always been a visual learner. During high school, **I made flash cards with key concepts and diagrams to study.** In college, I kept using these techniques, especially for biology and anatomy classes which required a lot of memorization."

"As a tactile learner, **I learn by touching and doing.** In one of my favorite college classes, I learned about the Socratics role-playing as Ancient Greek lawmakers. We were graded on how well we understood our characters and acted in a way that was consistent to what really happened in history."

**Tiffany Berkenes**, B.A. K-12 Art Education, Simpson College  
**Des Moines & Marshalltown**

"I'm very much a visual learner, which makes sense since I'm an artist. **I remember more, and I am able to stay focused, when I actually see what I'm learning.** Taking notes or visualizing stories that spark imagination are methods that help me learn. Since I'm easily distracted, I sat closer to the front of class and studied in a space with fewer visual distractions. When preparing for tests or writing papers, it helped to organize my notes with arrows, charts, symbols and color highlights."

**Denise Riley**, B.S. Child, Adult & Family Services, Iowa State University  
**Cedar Rapids, Ottumwa and Sioux City**

"As a visual learner, I need to see things to best understand. When spelling a word, I visualize myself writing it in my head. Knowing your learning style is an important piece to succeeding in both school and the workplace. Do what you can to **learn in the style that works best for you** and avoid conditions that would limit your learning."

# School Spotlight: Storm Lake Middle School

Students from Storm Lake Middle School explored colleges as part of their 8th Grade Academy class. They researched various colleges, learned about admissions requirements, financial aid, the differences between public and private and **talked with an admissions representative** from Buena Vista University. Using what they learned, each of the students sent letters to an admissions department to request information. Every time a new package from a college came in, it would be opened in class so everyone could share in the excitement.



After attending the First Generation Conference this fall, guidance counselor Ben Pullen took the tools he learned and put them into practice with his GEAR UP Iowa students. They watched College Board's "Why Not Us?" documentary and talked about the challenges each person featured in the film faced. **Students wrote a short essay describing challenges and accomplishments they have experienced in their lives to help students see that all young people face challenges that can be overcome.** This project will also help future students when they read these anonymous essays written by previous students, and get the chance to write their own.

## Parent Tip

Low- & moderate-income students with dedicated college savings between \$1-\$499 are 3x more likely to attend college and 4x more likely to graduate. Open a new account at [www.collegesavingsiowa.com](http://www.collegesavingsiowa.com) and GEAR UP/College Savings Iowa will match up to \$50!

## Matching Study Skills With Learning Types

Study skills are the strategies students use to study and learn well. GEAR UP Iowa encourages you to take a few minutes to learn more about learning styles and ways you can support your student in developing effective study habits.

Don't be afraid to try these study skills from [EducationPlanner.org](http://EducationPlanner.org):

### Auditory

Auditory learning is based around sound

- Ask the teacher's permission to record the lecture so it can be listened to later
- Students should sit where they can hear their teacher best
- Make flashcards to read out loud when studying
- Read assignments out loud and "whisper read" questions during a test

### Visual

Visual learning is based around sight

- Students should sit where they can see what the teacher is doing
- Highlight or use colors to organize assignments and homework
- Visualize or imagine what they hear or what is read to them

### Tactile

Tactile learning is based around touch

- Students should participate in activities that involve touching, building, moving, or drawing
- Use flashcards to arrange in groups to show relationships between ideas
- Encourage your student to take frequent (but not long) breaks during reading or study periods

## Myth vs. Reality

### Myth:

Learning is hard for me, so I probably won't get into college.

### Reality:

Learning study habits that work best for how you learn and believing you can improve will help you do better in school. We all have subjects we're good at and ones that are more challenging. It's okay to ask for help. Also, there are different types of colleges and majors. It's all about finding the best fit for your skills and interests.



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## GET CONNECTED

College Savings Iowa is a convenient, tax-advantaged way to help your student save for future college expenses and set them up for success!

College Savings Iowa is offering matching contributions to GEAR UP Iowa families who open a College Savings Iowa account. **GEAR UP Iowa students with an existing College Savings Iowa account will receive \$25 toward the account and students who open a new account will receive \$50 toward the account.** Once you open a College Savings Iowa account, or if you already have one, please notify us at [gearupiowa.gov](http://gearupiowa.gov) or 515-725-3430 in order to receive the matching contribution.

Accounts can be opened with a minimum contribution of \$25. The program is open to GEAR UP Iowa students who are U.S. citizens or resident aliens. matching contribution.

Si desea leer este boletín en español puede visitar:  
[www.gearupiowa.gov](http://www.gearupiowa.gov)



College Savings Iowa  
[www.collegesavingsiowa.com](http://www.collegesavingsiowa.com)  
Twitter: @Iowa529Plan  
Facebook: "College Savings Iowa 529 Plan"

## Welcome to GEAR UP Iowa!

Congratulations, your child is a GEAR UP Iowa student!

Look inside this newsletter for information on GEAR UP Iowa programs at schools around the state, plus tips and advice for helping improve student success.

GEAR UP Iowa is a program of:



[IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://IowaCollegeAid.gov)  
Because College Changes Everything