



The Path

From GEAR UP Wyoming | Fall 2025 | Vol. 5.2



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The fall semester has gone by so fast, and as usual, the GEAR UP Wyoming team has stayed busy! From showcasing our incredible students to participating in professional development, read below to see what we've been up to.

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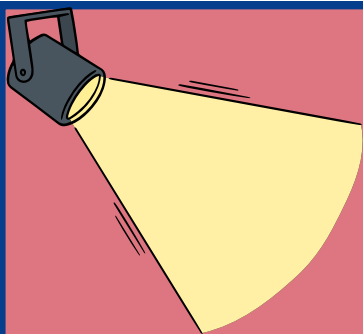


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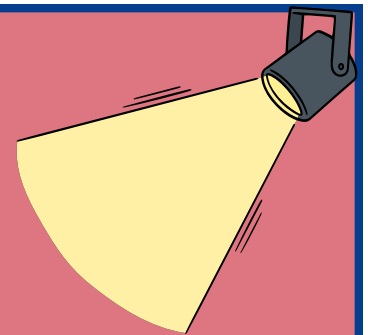
What is our mission?

GEAR UP Wyoming strives to increase the number of low-income students who graduate high school and enter a post-secondary educational institution to improve their access to career and life opportunities. [Visit our page!](#)

Here are our fall updates:



Student Spotlight: Gabe Wiswell



This spring, Western Wyoming Community College will proudly celebrate the early graduation of one of GEAR UP Wyoming's dedicated students: Gabe Wiswell, a freshman whose remarkable work ethic and academic focus have stood out from the moment they arrived on campus.

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Although Gabe enrolled at Western as a first-year student, he brought with him extensive credits earned as a dual-enrolled high school student. Instead of slowing down, Gabe continued to grind, taking between 18 and 22 credits this fall semester. Their determination and work ethic are clear in their actions and success. This semester, with approval from the Director of Admissions and their instructor, Gabe joined a course that had already begun, and still managed to finish the course ahead of schedule. Their motivation and discipline have allowed them not only to keep up, but to excel.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Gabe is an active and positive presence in GEAR UP Wyoming. He consistently attends meetings and events, offers thoughtful feedback, and contributes meaningfully to group discussions. His dedication makes him a role model for his peers and a standout member of the broader campus community. Gabe's advisor, Jessida, shared high praise for their achievements and character. "Gabe is a driven and focused college freshman whose commitment to education shined through. Thanks to their hard work and dual enrollment success, they're already on track to graduate early — a true example of what it means to stay motivated and make the most of every opportunity."

As Gabe prepares to cross the stage this spring, his journey stands as an inspiring reminder of what grit, ambition, and perseverance can achieve. GEAR UP Wyoming is proud to celebrate Gabe and all of his accomplishments. Congratulations, Gabe! We look forward to seeing where your ambition and dedication take you next!

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Destress Before Your Test

It's normal to feel anxious before a test. Wanting to earn strong marks, and worrying that you might not, is a sign that you care about your academic performance. In moderation, this is a good thing! Issues arise when this test anxiety becomes overwhelming and interferes with your ability to self-regulate and prepare effectively.

Test anxiety can take many forms. According to the University of Colorado Boulder notes that test anxiety may appear physically, mentally, or emotionally, with symptoms including but not limited to: rapid heartbeat, procrastination, racing thoughts, or more. For more information on the effects of test anxiety, view [10 Ways to Manage and Overcome Test Anxiety](#).



Simply knowing about test anxiety can be intimidating, even before the actual test. To help, we've gathered a few tips on how to reduce test anxiety so that you can effectively destress before your tests.

First, give yourself plenty of time to prepare. In the same article from Colorado Boulder, students are encouraged to reach out to their professors if you are struggling to understand content, create structured study plans, and review lecture slides.

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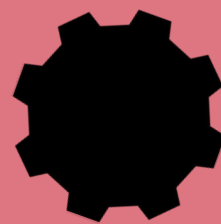
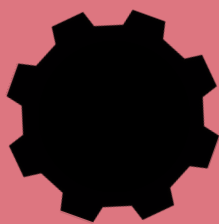
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Destress Before Your Test Continued

Second, remember that sleep is important! Many students stay up late cramming the night before the test. This can actually be harmful. According to a [National Library of Medicine](#), partial sleep deprivation can cause a lack of attention and vigilance. The same article suggests that an average person should try to get between 7 - 8.5 hours of sleep per night.

Third, accept your stress. An article from the [Virginia Association of Nurse Anesthetists](#) suggests allowing yourself to feel the anxiety before a test. Practicing positive self-talk and relaxation techniques can help ease this tension. The worst thing you can do is become stressed about being stressed, which ultimately pulls focus away from your goals.

Test anxiety is common, but it does not define your abilities or your future success. With preparation, rest, and a healthy mindset, you can manage your stress and perform at your best. Your test is only one part of your academic journey, and you have the tools you need to succeed. Take a deep breath, trust your preparation, and give yourself the chance to shine.

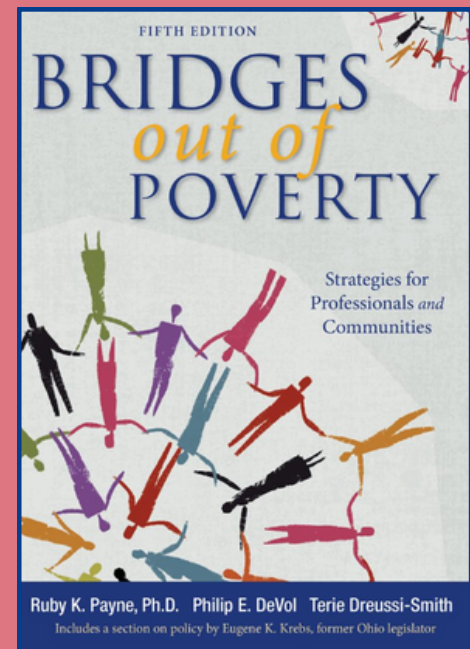


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How Educators Can Help Break Cyclical Poverty

Poverty is a social issue, and social issues require social solutions. While we cannot complete a full social reform overnight, we can be thoughtful and consider how we discuss poverty. Whether we realize it or not, every person plays a role in shaping the narrative. This makes it critical to be intentional when defining and discussing the causes of poverty.



This year, GEAR UP Wyoming has been working to share the Ruby Payne, Ph.D., Bridges Out of Poverty framework to help educators understand how their individual views contribute to a broader dialogue about poverty. To work toward a solution, we must first define the problem, and there is no chance of success if we are all using a different definition.

Ruby Payne defines poverty as *“the extent to which an individual goes without resources.”* This definition broadens the way we think about poverty, emphasizing that poverty extends beyond money. Resources include financial, emotional, mental, language, social capital (particularly bridging capital), health, spirituality, integrity and trust, motivation and persistence, relationships and role models, and a familiarity of hidden rules of the economic classes.

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Think of these resources as a web. When one strand weakens, the others can sometimes stretch to fill the gap, but the web as a whole becomes more fragile. Poverty encompasses far more than a shortage of money, yet financial resources often make it easier to maintain the others. Stability in one area supports stability in other areas.

With a collective understanding of the intricacies of poverty, we can work together to ensure that our classrooms, offices, and schools help rather than hinder our most at-risk populations. Recognizing that poverty involves more than finances allows us to respond with strategies that address the full range of resources people need to thrive. If you're interested in joining a Ruby Payne, Bridges Out Of Poverty book study, please complete [this quick survey](#) about creating a book club experience catered to your personalized needs and interests.

PD: Past, Present, and Future

This year's GEAR UP Wyoming (GUWY) sponsored professional development is off to a strong start! On October 6th, Dr. Kyle Reyes of Utah Valley University joined GEAR UP Wyoming staff and educators in Rock Springs, WY through a full-day "Lenses of Humanity" workshop, focusing on empathy-based leadership and creating welcoming learning environments for students of all backgrounds.

Then, in early November, GUWY sponsored Dr. Darrin Peppard as a featured speaker at the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals Conference in Casper, WY.

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PD: Past, Present, and Future

Peppard spoke on “The Road to Awesome,” offering principals solutions for building positive school culture and strengthening relationships within their school communities. During the same conference, Christian Cabral from GUWY led a session on the Individual Lens of Bridges Out of Poverty by Ruby Payne, Ph.D., focusing on the practical steps educators can take to help disrupt the cycle of generational poverty.



These events highlight GUWY’s ongoing commitment to providing impactful, inspiring, and empowering professional development opportunities for educators throughout Wyoming. As we continue planning future sessions, we are exploring the launching a Bridges Out of Poverty book club as a continued learning opportunity. If you are interested in participating, please take our [quick survey](#) to indicate your interest so that we can begin planning a professional development book club designed to meet the multiple learning needs of educators throughout the state.

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