

# AGHEXCHANGE

AGHE | ACADEMY FOR GERONTOLOGY  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION®

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## See You Soon at GSA

When this issue lands in your mailbox, we will only be a few weeks away from being together in Seattle for GSA 2024. I look forward to seeing many of you in person and attending excellent workshops and presentations that seamlessly blend our commitment to research, teaching, and application. In this issue, you will see many AGHE-specific presentations highlighted by our AGHE Chair and Chair-Elect. I want to take a moment of personal privilege and invite you all to attend the Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Aging Research, part of the policy series, at the Annual Scientific Meeting on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024, at 10 AM. This unique session brings together experts from across the varying GSA Member Groups to discuss the increasing role of AI in Gerontological Research. I am honored to be representing AGHE at this event.

As you can see, though, this issue is full of excellent content, opportunities, and announcements. I'd specifically draw your attention to our three submitted pieces that focus on innovations and opportunities to engage learners in the gerontology curriculum and aim to reduce ageism. In addition, you may notice our next call for material is due in January 2025. After a prolonged period of discussion, and with the support of AGHE leadership, we have decided to make the *AGHEXchange* a tri-annual publication rather than quarterly. This new publication schedule better aligns with our members' work schedules and responsibilities and helps ensure each issue contains exciting material and submissions.

Of course, that does not mean you will hear from AGHE any less. We hope you will take advantage of the variety of interest group meetings, webinars, and meetings throughout the year. We also hope you will take some time to read the Educational News Column in Gerontology News – each month features content focused on pedagogy and resources for gerontology educators. Additionally, do not forget about the AGHE Community on GSA Connect – a great place to engage with your colleagues throughout the year.

Finally, I'd like to say thank you for the opportunity to serve as the AGHE Communications Working Group Chair over the last two years. Onwards –

*Aaron Guest, PhD, MPH, MSW  
AGHE Communications Working Group Chair  
and Editor, Gerontology News Education Column & AGHEXchange  
Assistant Professor of Aging, Arizona State University*



## **The Chair's Corner**

### **The Fortitude Factor: AGHE's Presence at GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting**

It is with great excitement that I share highlights and not-to-miss sessions at the **2024 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) of the Gerontological Society of America** (Seattle, WA; November 13-16, 2024). This year's theme, The Fortitude Factor, set by **GSA's President Dr. Judith Howe** encourages us to think about how we persevere to do great work uplifting gerontology and geriatrics education. In the spirit of AGHE members' fortitude, I am proud to report that AGHE had a record-breaking year for abstract submissions, totaling 112. And, I want to emphasize how excited I am to see so many (a total of 32) student papers and poster submissions and personally thank the mentors encouraging students to submit abstracts. ***Well done, everyone!***

This year at the ASM, you will find 54 poster sessions and 24 paper/symposia AGHE sessions, not to mention several late-breaker posters/papers that are still being sessioned. Pedagogical topics covered during the ASM will include age-friendly universities, age-inclusivity in higher education, careers in gerontology, education and training, and workforce development. Content-driven topics of AGHE presentations will address ageism, cognition, family and intergenerational relationships, loneliness and social isolation, long-term care, social and health equity, and technology. These are just a few areas presenters will discuss – please be certain to attend the ASM so you can learn about the breadth and depth our colleagues are working on.

In addition to AGHE members' individual presentations, several not-to-miss events at the ASM include (1) AGHE's 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Teaching Institute focusing on utilizing advocacy and impacting policy through aging-related courses, (2) the AGHE-ESPO symposium addressing technology and artificial intelligence in the classroom (please note: the AGHE/ESPO Jr Leaders also organized a GSA Webinar on October 17, 2024, addressing these same topics. You can find the **recording here**.), (3) the AGHE Presidential Symposium and Awards Celebration - I think you will enjoy learning from the presenters about gerontology and geriatrics engagement-related teaching, research, service and policy, and (4) finally, please also plan to attend the AGHE recognition event (immediately following the AGHE Presidential Symposium) where we will continue our AGHE Live discussion with dedicated conference space to connect after the AGHE Presidential Symposium and Recognition celebration.

On behalf of AGHE leadership, we hope that you will also find time to explore Seattle with your AGHE colleagues – I look forward to seeing all of you in November at the 2024 ASM, and I hope to see all of you at the President's Opening Plenary Session on Wednesday, November 13, with Keynote Speaker, Dr. Richard J. Hodes, Director of the National Institute on Aging. In the meantime, keep embracing 'The Fortitude Factor'.



***Christine A. Fruhauf, PhD., FGSA, FAGHE,***  
Vice Chair, Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education  
Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS),  
Colorado State University  
Director, HDFS Engagement and Extension Programs and Initiatives  
Healthy Aging Division Director, Prevention Research Center  
Coordinator, Gerontology Interdisciplinary Minor

## Off the Presses

**AgeWorks:** The GSA Career Center exists to Connect talent with opportunity. If you are looking for a new position, or hiring one, post with AgeWorks. Accessible [here](#).

### Welcome to the Age-Friendly University Global Network

Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University

Frontier Nursing University

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

University of Indianapolis

University of Limerick

University of Mississippi

West Virginia University

### Updates from the Age-Friendly University Global Network

The Age-Friendly University Global Network announces the formation of multiple work groups focused on: Membership, Age-Friendly Practices, and Age-Friendly Policies.

University of Queensland (Australia) has been named the Oceania Regional Lead.

Pontifical Catholic University of Campinas has been named the South America Regional Lead.

The Global Network continues to develop materials to support members and host regional meetings. [To remain informed about AFU activities sign-up for the newsletter.](#)

## Accreditation for Gerontology Education Council Reminder

Letters of Intent for Cycle 3 and Cycle 2 (2025) are now available to be submitted.

To learn more about gerontological accreditation, visit: [GeroAccred.org](http://GeroAccred.org)



## Call For Ideas: Gerontology News Education Column

Each month, AGHE aims to bring you up-to-date news and material relating to gerontology education. A member benefit of GSA, we are now welcoming submission of ideas for the 2025 publishing year. Topics should focus on gerontology education, pedagogical advances, or emerging trends in higher education. E-mail your idea to Dr. Aaron Guest, Editor, at [Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU](mailto:Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU).

## Please Join Us for AGHE's 13th Annual Teaching Institute Workshop at GSA

The 13th Annual Teaching Institute will focus on aging advocacy and how to make an impact through our teaching, mentoring, and community efforts. Aging research can impact advocacy and be encouraged in classrooms (in line with AGHE competencies) even without a deep understanding of the steps needed to help advocacy efforts and directly impact aging-related policies and programs. This year's teaching institute will explore how advocacy efforts can be organized at the micro, meso, and macro levels depending on scope, audience, and overall goals. Through various hands-on workstations, participants will be guided through the steps and processes necessary to create an actionable advocacy plan (by faculty and/or students) in an understandable and doable way. A panel will share teaching and learning strategies to expand participants' repertoire of advocacy resources to help gain inner confidence and empower students and their understanding of advocacy and policy implications. Time will be spent on the GSA advocacy toolkit website and how to utilize the *AGHE Gerontology Competencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Education* around such efforts. Participants are encouraged to attend from across GSA member groups to foster interprofessional knowledge from various backgrounds, interests, and specializations and to enhance the learnings and discussions generated within the workshop. **The workshop will take place on Wednesday, November 18, from 8-12 noon. There is still room! You can register through the Annual Scientific Meeting website.**

## Public Health and Dementia Training

The Alzheimer's Association's Healthy Brain Initiative is excited to announce the new, free, interactive public health learning module, Public Health and Dementia — Part 1: Understanding the Public Health Impact of Dementia. This module explores the public health impact of dementia and the role of public health organizations in promoting brain health and supporting people living with dementia, their caregivers, and the communities in which they live. To learn more about this and other existing curriculum modules, please visit [alz.org/publichealthcurriculum](https://alz.org/publichealthcurriculum).



## Gerontology News: *Educational Column*

Did you know past issues of Gerontology News are available online? You can access past issues of Gerontology News and the Educational News Column going back to 2020. **Take a look** and see the excellent pieces of educational news we have had over the years!

## Participate Now: Survey on Micro-Credentials

The AGHE Micro-Credential Working Group is conducting a survey to understand gerontological educators' perceptions of micro-credentials. Your insights are valuable in shaping how micro-credentials can be used to enhance education in aging. The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and has been approved by the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board.

Participation is voluntary, and all responses will remain anonymous. Thank you for your time and input!

CLICK TO PARTICIPATE

## New Faculty Announcements

**Dr. Minzhi Ye** joined the School of Social Work at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on July 15th as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. Her diverse research interests include older adults' Health Interventions, Long-term Care, Cancer, Family relationships, Adult Abuse and Neglect, Life Course and Aging, Technology and gerontology, LGBT aging studies, and Methodology. Her appointment as a joint hire with the Department of Sociology in the College of Liberal Arts is expected to foster interprofessional collaborations.



*The University of Utah Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program* is honored to welcome **Cathy A. Maxwell, PhD, RN, FAAN, FNAP** as the Robert L. and Joyce T. Rice Presidential Endowed Chair in Healthy Aging.

Dr. Maxwell's research focuses on the aging process and the concept of frailty. She is passionate about empowering middle-aged and older adults to manage their personal trajectories of aging by helping them understand changes in their bodies as they age. Dr. Maxwell has developed three interventions aimed at proactive aging, including a literacy-friendly booklet titled, *Aging: Important Things to Know*; a health and wellness program known as AFRESH (Aging: Resilience and Energy in the Second Half of Life); and a science communication intervention, titled, *How to Slow Down Aging through Mitochondrial Fitness*.

Dr. Maxwell will be teaching the Fall semester gerontology course, *The Aging Mind*, and will join our Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program Advisory Committee as a voting member. We are delighted to have Dr. Maxwell here!



# Mortality Matters: Strategies for Teaching Death and Dying in Higher Education

Raven H. Weaver Human Development, Washington State University  
Cory Bolkan Human Development, Washington State University  
Autumn Decker Public Health, Pacific University

*“Losses (death and non-death) across a lifespan are a standard part of being human, and the sharing of vulnerable, lived experiences can empower and strengthen our capacity to find connection and meaning.” N.P. Trujillo*

As we embark on the start of another new academic year, we want to encourage instructors in gerontology to feel more empowered to address challenging topics in their classrooms, such as grief, loss, or end of life issues. Despite increasing life expectancy, continued growth of the aging population, and a recent global pandemic that raised awareness of issues related to loss, death, dying, grief, and bereavement, these topics are still generally avoided in the U.S. and remain mostly absent from public discourse, policy initiatives, intervention research, and education. Yet, loss is a universal human experience that can connect learners in classrooms and engender more empathy and understanding within our future health, human, and aging services workforce. Teaching about issues related to loss, death, dying, grief, and bereavement should also be a vital component of all gerontological education.

Understanding end-of-life issues, knowing how to provide support for the bereaved, and acquiring a high level of comfort in death literacy are essential skills for most health, human, and aging services professionals, but most receive little to no classroom training despite decades of research recognizing the increasing need for it (Jeffers et al., 2021; Sutherland, 2019). For example, author and physician Dr. Atul Gawande wrote in *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (p. 1, 2014):

I learned about a lot of things in medical school, but mortality wasn't one of them... Our textbooks had almost nothing on aging or frailty or death. How the process unfolds, how people experience the end of their lives, and how it affects those around them? That all seemed beside the point. The way we saw it — and the way our professors saw it — the purpose of medical schooling was to teach us how to save lives, not how to tend to their demise.

It is difficult to determine how many formal death education courses exist in higher education. However, it is estimated that less than 10% of all colleges/universities in the U.S. provide these offerings (Reese, 2014). We are fortunate to be able to provide this course at our own institution and we routinely receive positive feedback from students who take the course; they reflect on how society and social media makes them feel disconnected from humans but, as one former student reported: “At the end of the day, we literally are just humans who are experiencing similar events, losses, emotions, celebrations, and struggles together.” Another student shared: “This class is ‘first-step activism’ in changing how we view and treat those who are dying and grieving; and with mortality in mind, we can live a more genuine life full of care and connection.”

However, because most students do not have access to death education, they are often inadequately prepared for being able to meet the end-of-life and/or bereavement needs of their future patients and their families. They also frequently report lacking the skills to manage the high emotional toll of this work on their own psychological wellbeing and resilience. Professionals in helping fields are not immune from the experience of their own grief and

bereavement, yet they are expected to perform through continual exposure to death and loss (e.g., experiencing death of a patient; supporting a client coping with loss of health), often without adequate support to acknowledge and process the cumulative and collective grief that accompanies it. Unaddressed stress and unresolved grief can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout, further highlighting the value and need for more access to death education.



Despite the clear and widespread need for more death education opportunities, trainings, outreach, and interventions, there is very little known about how to increase offerings, improve consistency and quality of curricular content, prepare faculty to teach these courses, or measure the impact of these educational interventions on student outcomes. To begin addressing this issue, we conducted in-depth key informant interviews with experienced faculty across the nation (N = 27) who routinely teach these courses to: (1) help guide future directions for best practices in normalizing death education, (2) identify evidence-based educational interventions in thanatology, and (3) increase access and preparation for diverse students – especially those who will likely be confronted with death and grief as a regular part of their future careers in health, human, or aging services. Some insights from these faculty interviews, shared below, offer valuable resources for the AGHE membership.

Overall, faculty experts shared their perspectives, experiences, and challenges/opportunities regarding teaching death and dying in postsecondary settings and many important themes from this work emerged (e.g., the need for culturally specific and diverse resources difficulties addressing suicide and other traumatic deaths, significance of a lifespan approach to address communicating with children/families). While more details and study findings can be found in a forthcoming manuscript (Decker et al., under review) and symposium at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America in Seattle this November, we have compiled a wealth of faculty-recommended resources that we believe will be of interest to the broader AGHE membership. In this “living” document












(<https://www.DeathandDyingResourceGuide.com>),

we provide extensive, collated lists of multimedia recommendations that can be incorporated into classroom/online teaching or utilized for personal learning. More specifically, these resource suggestions

include ideas for films, documentaries, podcasts, activities, websites, print media, and field trips/guest speaker suggestions for death and grief education. As a living document, we also intend to update this resource guide periodically and are always open to additional suggestions, so please feel free to share input at any time to [gatherlab.hd@wsu.edu](mailto:gatherlab.hd@wsu.edu).

### PODCASTS

*Podcasts are an excellent way to provide another perspective for students. Many students regularly listen to podcasts and enjoy the opportunity to learn course content in this way.*

			
All there is with Anderson Cooper	The Allusionist: Death	A Path Home: A National Home Funeral Alliance Podcast	The Art of Dying Well
			
Ask a Death Doula	Coming Back: Life After Loss	Death, Grief & Other Sh*t We Don't Discuss	Dying Matters
			
Good Grief	Griefcast	Grief Encounters	Grief Out Loud

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Results from our study make important contributions to the field by identifying national gaps in death education and leveraging death educators' expertise in establishing an evidence-base for death education. This is shaping future directions for educational intervention research in this area; our next steps include proposing and developing an edited handbook inclusive of specific teaching strategies, assignments and exercises relevant to loss, death, dying, grief, and bereavement topics that can be applied to a wide variety of courses (e.g., gerontology, health sciences, social work). We welcome and invite others who are engaged in this type of work to reach out to us if interested in learning more, collaborating, or being involved in our death and dying educator's consortium.

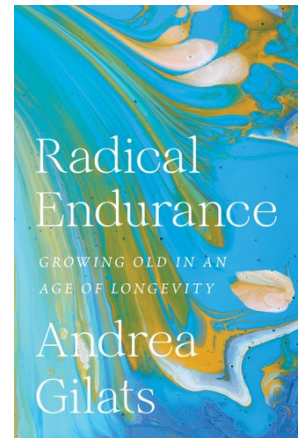
In sum, teaching about death is not solely about understanding the end of life, but about enriching the experience of living itself, especially for those in later stages of life. We encourage gerontological educators to mindfully address how mortality matters in their classes – doing so can lead to conversations that foster empathy, resilience, and a deeper connection to the human condition, all of which are crucial in the field of gerontology.

## **New Book from University of Minnesota Press: *Radical Endurance***

A personal guide to the transformations, hard truths, profound pleasures, and infinite possibilities of aging

One May morning shortly before her seventy-fifth birthday, Andrea Gilats awoke to a startling, sudden spike in consciousness that she was about to leap from older to old. *Radical Endurance* is the story of the reckoning that followed, a candid, clear-eyed journey of discovery through the pitfalls and possibilities of aging. Facing the realities of her age, Gilats explores her fears of failing health and loss of independence while navigating the terrain of an ageist culture. But among such troubling uncertainties, she also encounters the singular pleasures of “growing up again,” of finding fresh and unexpected ways of understanding herself and making meaning during this new era of her life.

*"Radical Endurance is one of those books that I didn't want to put down. Every page offered a new insight and personal gift that I felt in my heart and mind. Andrea Gilats shares her vulnerability and hope for aging through beautiful stories and reflections in a relatable and heartfelt way. A must-read for anyone who is aging (which is all of us)." —Tracey Gendron, director, Virginia Center on Aging, Virginia Commonwealth University; author of Ageism Unmasked: Exploring Age Bias and How to End It*



*Radical Endurance* invites us to hold an empathetic mirror up to our own lives so that we can find ourselves in the stories of others and allay any fears we may have about growing old. It is a book that helps us learn that old age can be a time of life that is as fully satisfying and rewarding as any other time of life. And, of course, it addresses ageism head-on.

<http://andrealgats.com>.



# AGHE In Action: Integrating Content on Aging in the Classroom: Resources for Reaching Young Children Through the 100th Day of School

**Tina M. K. Newsham**, PhD, Professor and Gerontology Program Coordinator, University of North Carolina Wilmington **Cynthia Hancock**, PhD, Teaching Professor and Director of Gerontology Program, University of North Carolina Charlotte **Daniel Alston** PhD, Associate Professor, University of North Carolina Charlotte **Katherina Nikzad-Terhune**, PhD, Associate Professor and MSW Program Director, Northern Kentucky University **Lisa Borrero**, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Indianapolis **Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock**, PhD Lecturer, University of North Carolina Wilmington

The **100<sup>th</sup> Day of School** is often celebrated as a major milestone in elementary education. Students are encouraged to dress up, bring in 100 of something, and engage in the day in various ways. As part of this day, students often dress up as older individuals.

Given that some celebrations of the 100th day of school involve young children **dressing up** “like a 100-year-old,” our team questioned the ageist ideas this activity could reinforce. Children adopt beliefs about various social groups **at an early age**. Children are **inundated** with ageist messages through books, TV, and other sources and internalize those ideas without questioning them.

To prevent ageism and its **adverse outcomes** (e.g., reduced life expectancy, self-imposed limitations and disengagement, poor health, strained relationships and intergenerational tension, and more), children must be taught early accurate and positive information about aging and older adulthood.

We sought to do just that by developing an evidence-based education campaign. This project aimed to provide early elementary school teachers with evidence-based educational materials related to aging (centenarians, in particular).

We created a toolkit about aging and ageism with options for celebrating the 100th day of school in a way that draws on national education standards to reinforce academic content while supporting age-inclusivity.

The toolkit includes resources on the 100th Day of School and a table of centenarians, educational standards, and sample letters from parents to teachers and principals about the program. The toolkit includes lesson plans for science, math, health, social studies, and financial literacy.

Our pilot study revealed a statistically significant improvement in expectations about aging among participating teachers ( $p < 0.05$ ) and strong qualitative support for the value of the toolkit. This resource is publicly available, and we hope our colleagues will use it for community engagement projects and share it with those who teach their children.

The toolkit can be **accessed here**. Also, if you have feedback on the toolkit or suggestions for improvement, we want to **hear from you!**

# Engaging Strategies for Teaching about End-of-Life and Advance Care Planning

Alissa Dark-Freudeman, Associate Professor of Psychology & Tina M. K. Newsham, Professor of Gerontology University of North Carolina Wilmington

Since the pandemic, many faculty have reported declining student engagement and motivation within their classrooms, going so far as to label disengagement as “stunning” (McMurtrie, 2022). Further, the value of higher education is being challenged across the country (Carlson, 2024) and among gerontology programs specifically (Schmidt, 2024). While we may hope that students reengage on their own as we continue to reestablish norms and comfort in group settings as we move further from the state of emergency/dumpster fire of the pandemic, being intentional in fostering engagement will likely be a more effective approach. We describe here two approaches to help students reengage and to find value in our courses and in their educational experiences overall.

## **Interdisciplinary Learning Partnerships:**

The field of gerontology is, at its core, interdisciplinary. Leaning into this strength and building interdisciplinary connections with colleagues both in and outside of gerontology can provide our students with fresh perspectives and experiences that may ignite their passion for a future career focused on aging.

Interdisciplinary learning is defined as the “capacity to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines or established areas of expertise to produce a cognitive advancement—such as explaining a phenomenon, solving a problem, or creating a product—in ways that would have been impossible or unlikely through single disciplinary means” (Boix Mansilla, Duraisingh, Wolfe, & Haynes, 2009, p. 337).

It is important to note that interdisciplinary learning is distinct from multidisciplinary learning. In multidisciplinary approaches, students are exposed to different disciplines, but each discipline stays within its own lane and is not integrated with the others. In contrast, an interdisciplinary approach provides students with opportunities to make connections between what they are learning from within each discipline and hopefully come away with a comprehensive whole that is larger than the sum of its individual parts.

An interdisciplinary approach is essential in preparing students for future careers in aging. These careers often require students to work with team members from different disciplinary backgrounds and specialties to achieve common goals. Creating interdisciplinary experiences in the classroom will allow students to discover the strengths and limitations of different disciplines, explore the relevance of their own discipline in novel contexts, uncover potential biases (both within themselves and within different disciplines), and come away with a broader understanding of a topic that what could have been achieved in their discipline alone. Further, such interdisciplinary experiences are associated with a variety of positive academic outcomes (Bear & Skorton, 2019).

For example, we recently worked with a team of faculty from psychology, philosophy, respiratory therapy, and gerontology to address barriers to Advance Care Planning (ACP) in our respective classes. Together, we created an online module where our students could engage with faculty and students from different disciplines and explore this topic together in depth. In addition to their own disciplinary grounding, this unique experience provided students with multiple perspectives on a real challenge that is personally and professionally meaningful. This

interdisciplinary approach could be adapted across a range of courses and disciplines to address important issues in gerontology in novel ways.

### **Applied Learning Opportunities with Community Partners:**

Applied learning is defined as a pedagogical approach in which students are encouraged to apply what they have learned to real-world problems or settings (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Applied learning can take many forms both inside and outside of the classroom and can be used on its own or in addition to an interdisciplinary approach. For example, applied learning typically includes service-learning, undergraduate research, and internships (AAC&U, 2024), but can also include projects and assignments in which students work together to solve a problem or address a need within their local community.

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) applied learning experiences are considered high-impact practices (HIPs), "based on evidence of significant educational benefits for students who participate in them—including and especially those from demographic groups historically underserved by higher education" (AAC&U, 2024). These experiences provide students with an opportunity to actively engage with course content in new ways and discover the purpose and value of their coursework.

Although applied learning is not novel, we found that some tried and true assignments and projects could use a fresh and more targeted approach. One key recommendation is to create projects that address challenges that students can relate to and that will directly impact their local community in meaningful ways. This allows students easily to identify the purpose of their projects and find meaning in what they are doing. For example, within our interdisciplinary module, we asked our individual students to interview an adult over and under the age of 65. The interview questions were designed to elicit interviewees' experiences with, understanding of, and perceived barriers to ACP and palliative care. Students then came together in interdisciplinary teams to synthesize their interview data and identify the barriers that emerged from their qualitative responses. Next, they created discussion guides to address directly the reported barriers to ACP. These discussion guides will be used among caregiver peer mentorship dyads at our county's local Senior Resource Center. The caregiver program pairs a new caregiver with a current or former caregiver to support the new caregiver as they begin navigating their new, complex, and stressful role. Students reported really valuing this project because the experience was grounded in a real challenge (low rates of ACP in the U.S.) and resulted in a final product that actually helped address the challenge directly (helping new caregivers start these difficult ACP conversations with their loved ones) in their local community. This approach could be modified to meet many challenges within any local community.

Finding new ways to engage students that focus on interdisciplinary learning and applied experiences may help reinvigorate both you and your students. Taking time to create projects that are grounded in purpose and meaning is worth the effort, is positively received by students, and has tangible real-world results. End-of-life issues are not limited to aging-related courses and not all gerontology courses incorporate content about death and dying; however, where such content is included, we encourage instructors to draw on the suggestions we provide here.

Interdisciplinary projects expand gerontology students' understanding of the world and introduce students and faculty from other disciplines to gerontology. The more people across our campuses see the value added by the presence of gerontology students and programs, the more allies we might have in the ongoing struggle to advocate for the continuation of our programs. Applied learning projects likewise ensure community partners and community members are aware of the skills and passion of gerontology students, which may help increase

demand for graduates with gerontological knowledge and competence. Community partners can be strong allies in campus advocacy for gerontology programs, joining the Age-Friendly University Global Network, and more.

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## **Remember To Renew Your AGHE Institutional Membership**

GSA offers an institutional membership through the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education. If you are interested in affiliating with AGHE and you are not an institutional member, join GSA and select AGHE as your primary or secondary member group. Learn more about the [member benefits](#) and [levels](#) then join today!



# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Submit Your Program Updates, Announcements,  
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*AGHExchange*.

**Deadline January 15, 2025**

Submit To **[Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU](mailto:Aaron.Guest@ASU.EDU)**

Subject: AGHExchange

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# Gerontology & Geriatric Education

*Gerontology & Geriatrics Education (G&GE)*, the official AGHE peer-reviewed journal, encourages submissions that highlight "the exchange of information related to research, curriculum development, program evaluation, classroom and practice innovation, and other topics with educational implications for gerontology and geriatrics."

Most Recent Issue: [Gerontology & Geriatrics Education, Volume 45, Issue 3 \(2024\)](#)

**Call For Reviewers:** We are accepting submissions from new reviewers to enhance our existing expert pipeline. Consider becoming a reviewer today! You can learn more [here](#).

**From the Vault:** Rull, G. M., Rosher, R. B., McCann-Stone, N., & Robinson, S. B. (2009). Aging Couple Across the Curriculum. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 30(3), 243–253.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960903133521>

Aging Couple Across the Curriculum is a unique program designed around a couple who “age” a decade with each year of medical school. In these half-day sessions, students encounter the aging couple through a standardized patient experience. Interactive breakout sessions conducted by multidisciplinary professionals enhance student learning and appreciation of the contributions of the team of professionals. A panel of elder specialists provides personal insight into how they have overcome and/or adapted to various health-related problems. Evaluation measures have indicated that students are benefiting from the program and that it is affecting their attitudes in a positive way toward caring for older adults.

**Fresh Off the Press:** Stephan, A. T., Martinez, V., Moss, D., Walton, A., Bonetto, J., Hertzfeld, A., ... Ross, L. A. (2024). Undergraduate students engaging in hands-on gerontology research: A participatory case study of value gained and lessons learned. *Gerontology & Geriatrics Education*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701960.2024.2395995>

As the population ages, professionals can have experience and competence working with older adults. Though experiential learning opportunities have been extensively documented as a tool to accomplish this goal, student engagement in gerontology research has not been examined in detail. This participatory case study highlights the perspectives of undergraduate student researchers involved in a hands-on pilot research study that explored connections between cognitive, physical, and everyday function in midlife and older adults while testing the feasibility of a mobile app for early detection of cognitive decline related to Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. As participants, students ( $n = 11$ ) completed a survey about their experience and participated in focus groups. As researchers, students and faculty coded open-ended surveys and focus group responses. We found that students gained both personal and professional skills from their experience. Emergent themes relevant to their experience included the overarching research lab environment and study-specific conditions related to interpersonal and technical aspects. Although these findings reflect student perspectives in one case, they can be used as a guide to support future endeavors to include undergraduate students as testers in gerontology research.

**Do you know a deserving student who we should spotlight? What about a program or faculty member? Nominate them for an AGHE Spotlight. We accept student, faculty, and program spotlights.**

**For more information, visit:**

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Join us in Seattle, WA, to collaborate & network with colleagues and discover the newest innovations in research, clinical practice, and education across the diverse disciplines that come together under gerontology's wide scope, from biosciences and psychology to policy and industry. With a large variety of scientific sessions, posters, award-winning lecturers, and other featured speakers, you're guaranteed to learn about the latest cutting-edge scholarship and innovations in your specialty and gain valuable new insights into what's happening across the spectrum of aging research. [Register Now.](#)

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# Ongoing Considerations for LLM AI in Gerontological Education

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The rapid innovation in artificial intelligence has led to confusion. Indeed, even my recent column feels dated. Advances in AI can potentially change the relationship between instructors and students. As we begin our third academic year with a readily available large-language AI model, let's look at where we find ourselves.

## ***The Good:***

AI-powered tools can enhance personalized learning by adapting to student needs through tailored content and real-time feedback. Instructors can leverage AI to automate administrative tasks and identify learning gaps. AI is being used to develop virtual teaching assistants and automated grading systems. It is important to know where your university stands on AI use.

## ***The Bad***

Increased use of AI can exacerbate inequalities, as factors such as the cost of the various applications and the learning curve for use can limit engagement. Privacy concerns are heightened as AI systems collect and analyze extensive student data, posing confidentiality and data security risks.

Additionally, systems such as Turnitin have launched software to identify when students have relied on AI; these systems are still in their infancy and are increasingly being found to be unreliable. They can only tell you when a sentence is structured in a way that AI may have written— but what is to say that is not just how someone writes?

## ***Now What?***

AI has been part of the college experience for some time now. Think about spellcheck, predictive text, e-mail spam boxes, or plagiarism checkers. We have become so accustomed to their use we rarely think about the underlying technology that powers them. As we enter the new academic year, there are a few best practices to consider:

**Be Upfront About Your Acceptance of AI:** The course syllabus should include a statement about the acceptability of using AI in the course. This can include anything from a free-for-all to no acceptance at all. You can find examples of some language here. I meet in the middle and state that specific assignments may be appropriate to use AI to support the student's work. Which leads us to...

**Transparency:** If students are using AI, it is essential that they appropriately disclose the use and cite appropriately (if applicable). Students must also understand that AI does not absolve them if the AI commits plagiarism – they must be sure the information they are using is accurate. The use of AI does not negate their responsibility to academic integrity.

**Ethical Considerations:** Students should be advised to consider how the data they provide to any AI will be used. Currently, Chat GPT 4.0 has an option to prevent the AI from learning from the data you provide – but not all do.

Although the promised AI revolution was oversold, we must prepare students for careers that expect familiarity.

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