

TITLE PAGE

Submission to the Hawaii International Conference on Education

Project Title: Virtual AGE (Alliance for Gerontology Education)
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ABSTRACT

This is a presentation of a work-in-progress. Virtual AGE (Alliance for Gerontology Education) is a personnel preparation project funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA #D37HP00853-02). The project's purpose is to provide allied health students with the interdisciplinary team competencies needed to serve an aging and culturally diverse population. It will employ a curriculum presented through a unique, electronic interface currently under development, and will graduate allied health clinicians with competencies in the following areas:

- ◆ Effective use of technology in knowledge acquisition and professional practice;
- ◆ Effective interdisciplinary team membership;
- ◆ Cultural competence and ethical decision making in practice; and
- ◆ Health promotion for older persons in the community and long term care facilities.

The need for well-educated and interdisciplinary-educated allied health care professionals has become urgent in geriatrics. Because of the growing aging population, increasing survival rates, chronic, age-related disabling conditions, and the introduction of technologically advanced treatment modalities, aging Americans need the assessment and therapeutic services of allied health clinicians. The Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook handbook well documents the need for allied health clinicians (<http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>).

A pedagogical need also exists, to effectively, efficiently, and ethically integrate the use of technology into the educational process. Because an ever-increasing number of students are non-traditional and require novel learning environments, universities are increasing their use of computer-based technologies. Similarly, universities are responding to practicing clinicians who do not have fiscal latitude to be released from work obligations to continue their education.

The goals of presenting this work-in-progress are to 1) introduce educators to the design of the electronic environment and some of the educational "objects" under development, and 2) invite educators to use the project and its components as they become available.