

# IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING ELECTRONIC LEARNING RESOURCES FOR USE IN ADULT-GERONTOLOGY NURSE PRACTITIONER EDUCATION

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Enhancing existing curricula to meet newly published adult-gerontology advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) competencies in an efficient manner presents a challenge to nurse educators. Incorporating shared, published electronic learning resources (ELRs) in existing or new courses may be appropriate in order to assist students in achieving competencies. The purposes of this project were to (a) identify relevant available ELR for use in enhancing geriatric APRN education and (b) to evaluate the educational utility of identified ELRs based on established criteria. A multilevel search strategy was used. Two independent team members reviewed identified ELR against established criteria to ensure utility. Only resources meeting all criteria were retained. Resources were found for each of the competency areas and included formats such as podcasts, Web casts, case studies, and teaching videos. In many cases, resources were identified using supplemental strategies and not through traditional search or search of existing geriatric repositories. Resources identified have been useful to advanced practice educators in improving lecture and seminar content in a particular topic area and providing students and preceptors with additional self-learning resources. Addressing sustainability within geriatric APRN education is critical for sharing of best practices among educators and for sustainability of teaching and related resources. (Index words: Web-based education; Virtual learning; Geriatric education; Nursing; Advanced practice registered nurse) *J Prof Nurs* 30:155–161, 2014. © 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**D**EMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN the United States indicate that the percentage of adults age 65 years and older is increasing, with the slope of this trend getting steeper as the first baby boomers began reaching age 65 years in 2011 ([Administration on Aging, 2011](#)). This trend heralds increased health care needs, with approximately 80% of older adults having at least one

chronic condition ([Centers for Disease Control, 2011](#)) and older adults filling more than half of all acute care beds ([Rosenfeld, Bottrell, Fulmer, & Mezey, 1999](#)). Nurse practitioners (NPs) provide primary care services and lead programs in various health service venues; they must be prepared to provide health screening and clinical management to prevent the onset or slow the progression of chronic diseases and symptom conditions in older adults. Demographic trends and emerging professional organization directives mandate that NPs working with adults be comprehensively prepared to work with older adults.

According to the American Nurses Credentialing Center's (ANCC) 2011 Primary Care NP Role Delineation Study, in May 2011, only 4,124 individuals held active ANCC certification as a gerontological NP compared with 18,912 adult NPs and 46,065 family NPs (ANCC,

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2012a, 2012b). Of the more than 32,700 primary care NPs with active certification at the end of 2011 from the American Academy of Nurse Practitioner Certification Program (AANP-CP), only 218 were certified as a gerontologic NP (AANP-CP, 2012), further demonstrating the lack of available, trained practitioners in this area. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) recently acknowledged the need for gerontology expertise among the advanced practice nursing (APRN) workforce; with the support of the John A. Hartford Foundation they launched an initiative, Ensuring the APRN Workforce is Prepared to Care for Older Adults. This initiative advances APRN education recommendations noted in Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education (LACE; APRN Consensus Work Group & the National Council of State Boards of Nursing APRN Advisory Committee, 2008). The LACE model was developed in a 5-year, collaborative process involving many nursing organizations; it was endorsed by the AANP-CP (2008) and by 46 national nursing groups, including all major organizations that set standards for APRN education. The Consensus Model stipulates that, by 2015, all NPs educated in adult programs must be educated broadly across the entire scope of adult and gerontology practice. In addition, graduates of the newly reconceptualized adult-gerontology NP programs must be nationally certified through comprehensive assessment mechanisms to ensure competence across the entire adult-gerontology scope of practice.

In 2010, AACN published the Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Competencies for Primary Care and subsequently published competencies for acute care in 2012 (AACN, 2010, 2012). These publications build upon the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties NP core competencies and outline entry-level competencies for NPs whose practice focus is the adult-gerontology population (National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 2006). Content within the AACN Competency Statements for Adult-Gerontological NPs are organized within the following domains:

- Management of health/illness status.
- NP patient relationship.
- Teaching–Coaching function.
- Professional role.
- Managing and negotiating health care delivery systems.
- Monitoring and insuring the quality of health care practice.
- Culturally sensitive care.

The University of Washington's School of Nursing (UW SoN) has offered specialty preparation at the graduate level for both the adult NP and the gerontological NP examinations since the early 1990s. With a clear understanding of the imperative to prepare more advanced practice nurses to care for the growing numbers of older adults and the LACE Consensus Model, UW SoN faculty merged the adult and older adult NP pathways into a new adult/gerontological NP (A/G NP) pathway.

Simultaneously, we sought to ensure that we would fully meet the new competency statements and enhance geriatric/gerontological content across the graduate program, in order to transform the NP program to prepare our A/G NP graduates to provide direct care services for the aged in a complex, evolving health care system.

Incorporating shared, published electronic learning resources (ELRs) in existing courses may be an appropriate means of efficiently enhancing or refining the curricula to meet newly published adult-gerontology NP competencies. ELRs use the Internet as a primary means of content delivery and include methods such as streaming videos, interactive learning modules, and case studies and podcasts. Although identified as a valuable means of teaching and learning (Choules, 2007; Mohanna, 2007), ELRs are not without challenges including the substantial time and effort required to develop these resources, the wide variety of content to cover, and matching the format to address the various learning styles of students (Billings, Skiba, & Connors, 2005; Huckstadt & Hayes, 2005; Ruiz, Teasdale, Hajjar, Shaughnessy, & Mintzer, 2007). Many institutions have already invested significant resources toward the development of ELRs, and several digital repositories exist, such as the American Association of Medical College's MedEdPortal and the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT.org). A digital repository specific to geriatric content, the Portal of Geriatric Online Education (POGOe) has also been created; however, there is currently no coordination or standardization resulting in variable quality across resources (Ruiz). The challenge then to nurse educators interested in using these ELRs lies in identifying the most appropriate teaching tools in order to assist students in achieving competencies. The goals of this project were therefore to (a) identify relevant available ELRs (e.g., Web based, CD-ROM, mobile applications) for geriatric APRN education, (b) classify the ELR based upon AACN's published A/G NP competencies, and (c) to evaluate their educational utility based on established criteria. This article presents two exemplars resulting from that project: Domain 5 (managing and negotiating health care delivery systems) and palliative care/end of life, which crosses multiple areas within Domain 1 (management of health/illness status) of the A/G NP competencies.

## Methods

A multilevel search strategy was used based on similar work in critical care by Kleinpell et al. (2011). First, a literature search was performed from 2001 to 2011 using PubMed and CINAHL with the terms *geriatric* or *gerontology* and each of the following terms: *Web-based learning*, *Web-based education*, *computer-assisted instruction*, *e-learning*, *distance learning*, *virtual learning*, and *continuing education* to identify relevant articles. Second, we searched two available repositories for available ELR geriatric/gerontological resources: the POGOe and

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