GERT Suit Immersion Project

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Introduction
Declines in physical, mental, and social function are a normal part of aging. Most people expect to grow old. Some might not fully realize how aging impacts well-being. In order to age well, it is best to achieve a balance between a good versus bad aging experience.

Purpose
The purpose of the GERT Suit Project was to create a hands-on aging experience. The GERT suit changes sensory and physical functioning and is designed to give caregivers a realistic view of aging.

Methods
Human Sciences faculty met with a total of 28 participants. The study was held at the 2017 Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE) meetings. All participants took a pre-survey. Then, participants put on the GERT suit. Three tasks were completed. Finally, participants took a post-survey.

Results
Participants benefited from the GERT Suit Project. The GERT suit changed participant views regarding aging. Participants felt the decline that comes with aging. Feelings of empathy increased. The participants were more aware of what older adults’ experience.

Conclusions
The GERT Suit Project promotes aging education and awareness. Completing tasks while wearing the GERT Suit can improve the lens by which persons view the impact of the aging process on self and others.