Animation Script

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Gerontology with Dr. Tina Brinkley

To make the most out of this script, you could:

- Stick it in your book as a record of watching Tina's animation
- Pause the animation and make notes as you go
- Add your own illustrations to the sheet
- Create your own animation to accompany it
- Add notes from classroom discussions
- Make notes of areas you will investigate further
- Make notes of key words and definitions
- Add questions you would like answered – you can message Tina through the comments box at the bottom of her article: **www.futurumcareers.com/gerontology-with-dr-tina-brinkley**

SCRIPT:

As a teenager, Tina loved playing volleyball and tap dancing. During high school, she participated in a summer internship program that piqued her interest in scientific research. Her interest in health, fitness, science, and research led her to pursue a bachelor's degree in chemistry in college, with a minor in exercise and sport science. She followed this with a PhD in kinesiology, which is the science of human movement. She studied how exercise impacts the aging process, which set her on the path to investigating how lifestyle interventions can promote health in older adults.

Today, Tina is a gerontologist at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in the US. Gerontology is the study of aging, focusing on the physical, mental, and social changes that people experience as they grow older. With the global population living longer than ever before, gerontologists are vital for helping society to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population.

As a gerontologist, Tina is exploring how lifestyle factors, such as diet and exercise, can protect against cognitive decline in older adults. Cognitive decline is a hallmark of conditions like dementia. Dementia is not a specific disease, but a general term for impaired cognitive ability that is severe enough to interfere with everyday life. Someone with dementia might have trouble remembering or making decisions. Globally, more than 55 million people have dementia. Because of this, researchers from around the world are trying to find ways to prevent or treat dementia.

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Tina is part of a nationwide study to determine the effectiveness of lifestyle interventions on cognitive health in older adults at risk for cognitive decline and dementia. Half of the study participants are involved in an intensive program of exercise, nutritional counseling, cognitive training, and social activities. The other half are following a self-guided intervention, which is less intensive but still encourages healthy behaviors.

To investigate the effectiveness of the interventions, researchers collect data from participants before, during, and after the trial. For example, participants complete questionnaires about their lifestyle, monitor their activity levels with wearable devices, and undergo cognitive and clinical tests to measure factors such as memory and blood flow to the brain.

Tina and her colleagues will study these data to determine whether the interventions are effective at improving cognition and overall brain health, and if so, what factors are contributing to these improvements. Tina hopes that the outcomes of the trial will lead to national public health policies that promote healthy lifestyles as a method to improve cognitive health during aging.

As the global population is aging, gerontology research is becoming increasingly important to ensure that older adults around the world have a high quality of life.

Now that you've heard Tina's story, what could you achieve as a gerontologist?

Let us know what you think of this educational and career resource. To provide input, simply scan the QR code or use this link: redcap.school.wakehealth.edu/surveys/?s=NPK347RYHCR3FNDC