

A person wearing a plaid shirt and a dark jacket is holding a vintage-style compass and a ruler. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a path and trees, suggesting a hiking or travel theme. The lighting is warm, likely from the sun being low in the sky.

# *Putting Experience to Work:*

## Leveraging Student Attributes and Abilities in the Development of an Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program

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# A Climate for Change

# facts

- **US Department of Education HEOA of 2008**
    - “The student’s satisfaction with the student’s preparation for such job and guidance provided with respect to securing the job”
  - **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**
    - “Institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students”
-

**Significant skills gap between student and employer perception of skill mastery (Chegg, 2013)**

**Experiential learning applies knowledge and conveys what does and doesn't work in the real world (Pittaway and Cope, 2007)**

**The best preparation for the job market is a mix of classroom learning that can be applied in real world experience (Sellingo, 2015)**





# Initial Response to Higher Education Climate

- Professional Readiness Pledge created in 2014
  - “fully institutionalized commitment to professional readiness- helping all students discern their sense of purpose, discover their talents and interests, explore potential careers and cultivate necessary skills through experiential learning”
- Professional Readiness Experience (PRE) passed in April 2016 for Traditional Undergraduate Students
  - But what about adult learner needs?

# Scope and Approach

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# Project Scope



## Impact on Organization

- Multiple locations
- Numerous faculty/staff/students not centrally located

## Impact on Processes and Systems

- Consideration of Adult Learners in programs and processes
- Access to services

## Impact on Boundaries

- Faculty and Administration
- Needs of students
- Impact on community
- Perception of GWU

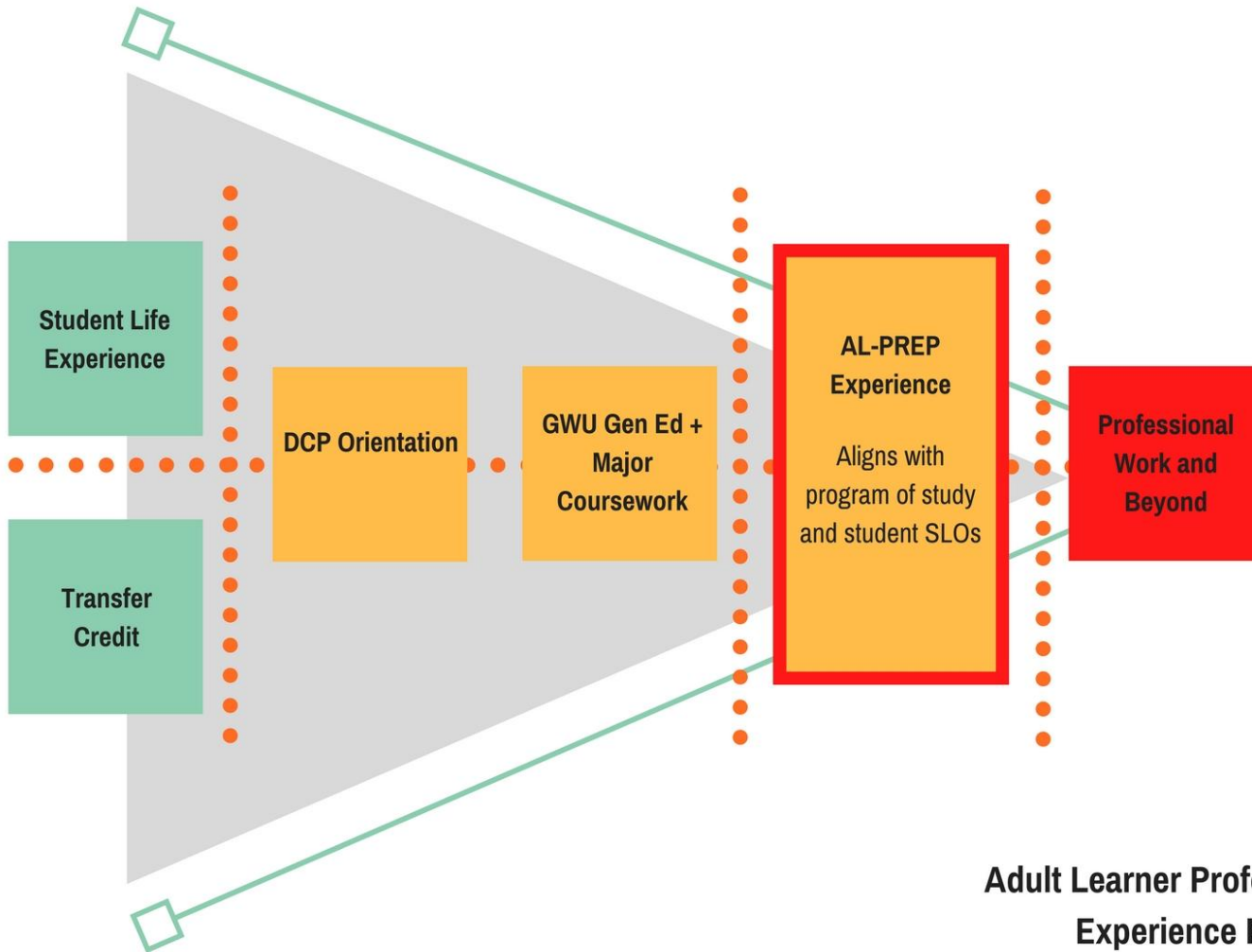
# Project Approach



## Mission Statement

In alignment with the mission and vision of Gardner-Webb University, the Adult Learner Professional Readiness Experience Program seeks to **provide professional development skills and major-specific job training** for all students in the Degree Completion Program through the **utilization of student work experience and existing content knowledge** with new skills, knowledge acquisition and reflection gained in the student's degree program of choice.





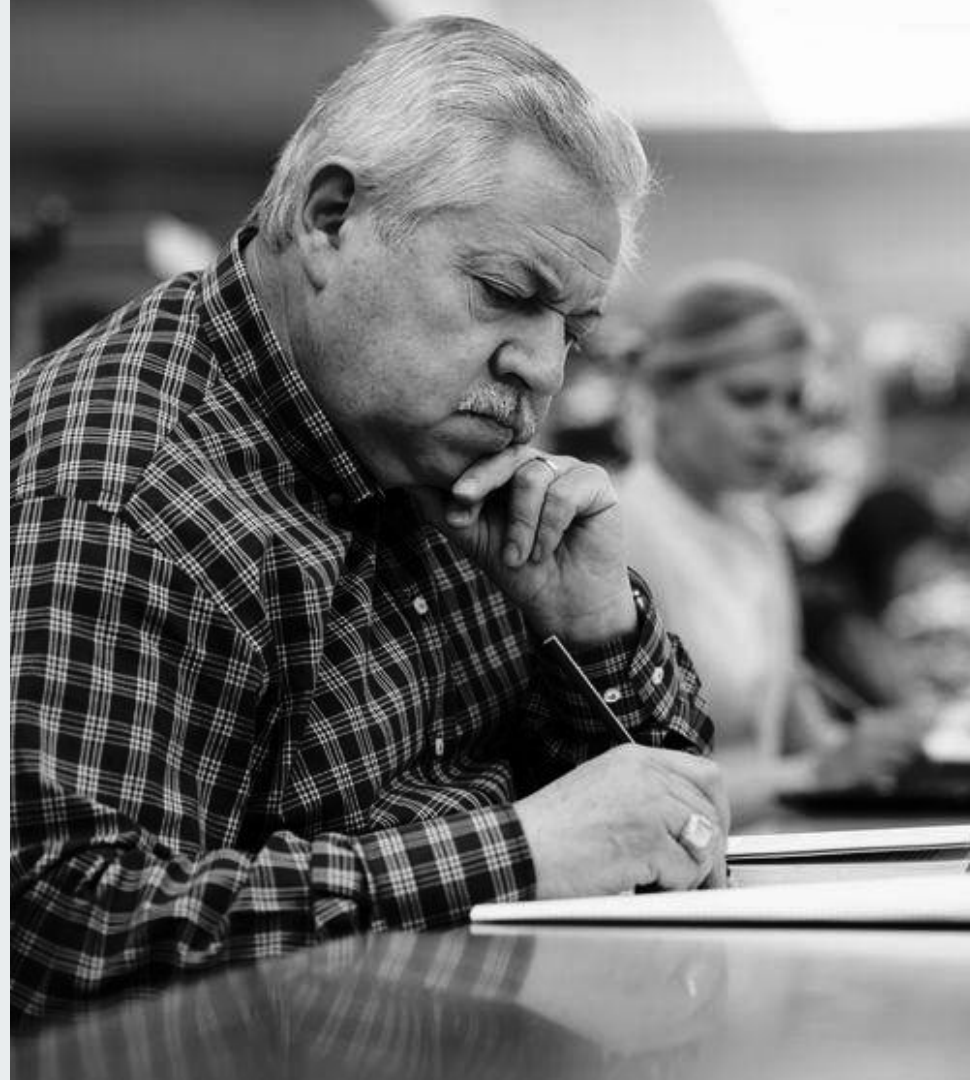
GARDNER-WEBB  
UNIVERSITY

**Adult Learner Professional Readiness  
Experience Program (AL-PREP)**

# Timeline of Work

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- **Statement of Need:** December 2015
- **Project Scope:** Summer 2016
- **Report to DCP Council:** Fall 2016
- **Development of HUS Course:** Spring 2017
- **HUS Course starts:** Fall 2017
- **Policy Development for full integration:** December 2017
- **Policy Presentation:** Spring 2018



# Risks, Constraints & Quality Assurance

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# Risks and Constraints



- Technology
- Training Requirements
- Professional Readiness Content
- Program Sustainability

<b>Likely</b>	Utilization of faculty outside Professional Development to teach the ALPREP		
<b>Possible</b>	Possibility of major concerns arising because of lack of training on web-based tools with students or faculty		Reliance on web-based tools to implement the ALPREP
<b>Unlikely</b>	Possibility of the ALPREP outliving its need within the DCP population		Resistance to the concept of the ALPREP from faculty, administration or DCP Council
	<b>Low Risk</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b>	<b>High Risk</b>

# Quality Assurance Plan

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- Demonstrate need
- Establish stakeholders
- Develop options relevant to Adult Learning
- Demonstrate value to students
- Connect to vision and marketing of organization

# Results

- Implementation of HUS 304 Course
- Development of AL-PREP Policy
- Ready for future opportunities for adult learners



# Reflection



## SUCCESSSES

- Passing of first integrated Professional Development Course, HUS 304
- Implementation of course
- Identification of professional readiness components in all DCP programs
- Holistic development of professional development resources
- Foundation set for professional development with adult learners

# Reflection

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## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Use momentum and conversation to drive change
- Focus on buy-in and push for commitment
- Don't expect everything to have a bow on it at the end
- Pause does not mean stop



# Areas for Future Study



- Utilization of double-loop learning in addressing the “why” behind existing culture/systems
- Ability to share adult learner theory principles campus-wide
- Review of how professional readiness connects to adult learner admission, retention, and post-graduate success
- Possibility of resurfacing initiative

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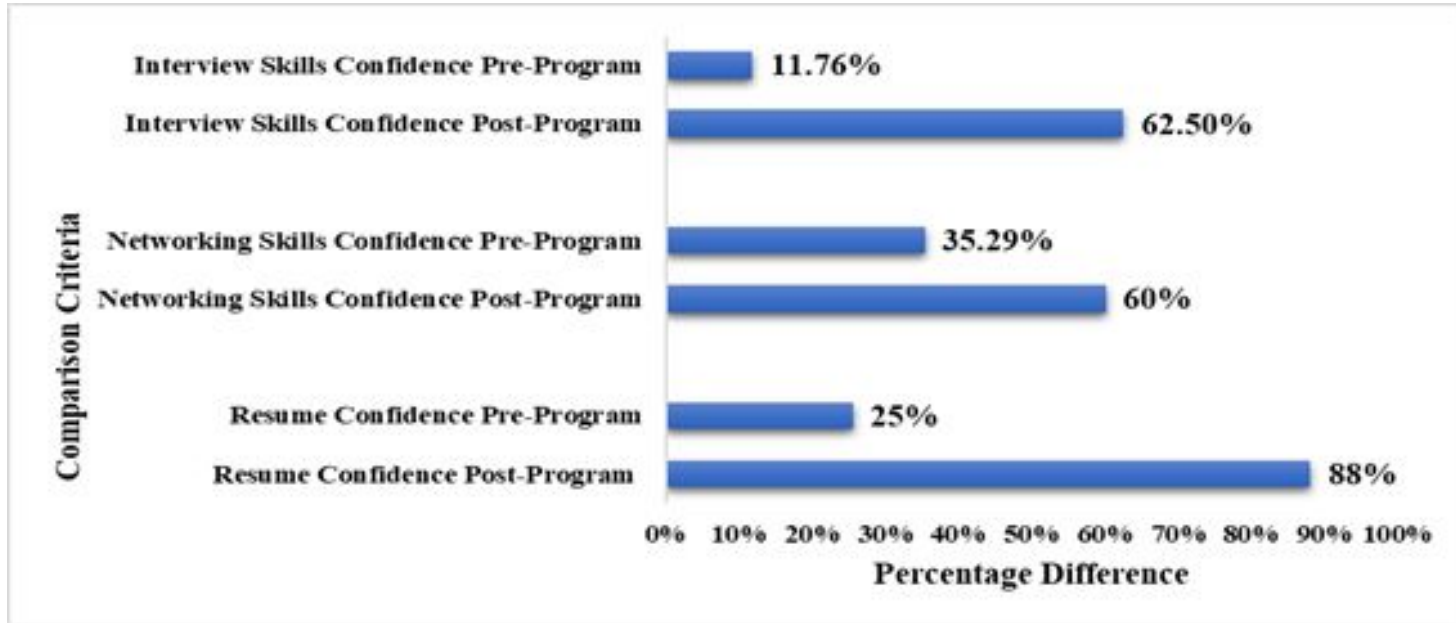
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# Questions?

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# Supplemental Material

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**HUS 304**

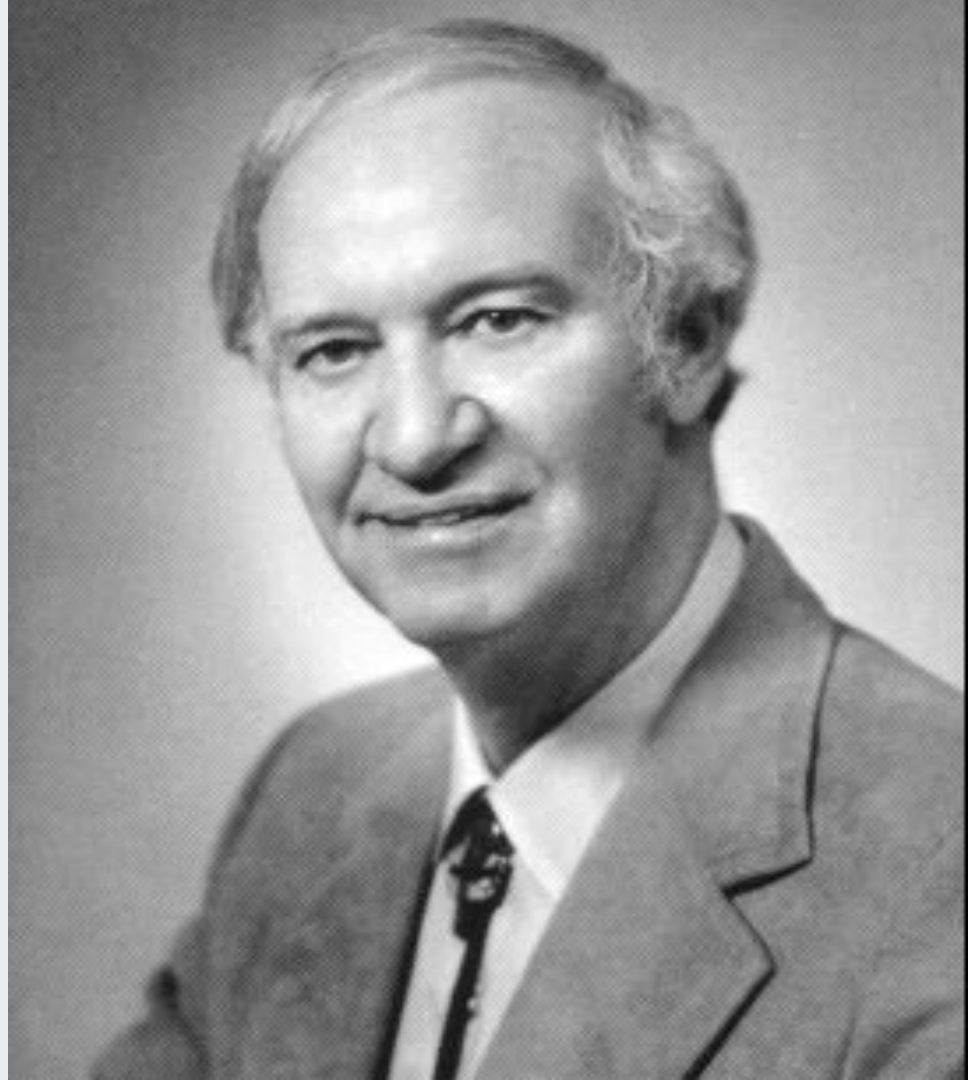
**Pre- and Post-Course Survey Data (n=51)**

# Malcolm Knowles

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## Principles of Andragogy

- Adult Learners need to be **involved** in their process
- Adult Learning is **problem-centered** not content-centered
- Adults look for **immediately relevant information** that can be applied to real life
- **Experience** (good and bad) is the lens used to view future learning



# Peter Senge: Systems Theory

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- **Systems Thinking** discusses connections within a system
- **Building a Shared Vision** through a common picture of “the future we seek to create”
- **Compensating Feedback** where interventions causes a response from the system that offsets the benefits
- **Collaboration and Knowledge Management** are two sides of the same



# NACE Career Readiness Competencies

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral/Written Communication Skills
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Digital Technology
- Leadership
- Professionalism/ Work Ethic
- Work Ethic
- Global/Intercultural Fluency



# partnerships

