

2026 Adult Education Institute

Friday, September 18, 2026

Please note: The 2026 AZ Adult Education Institute schedule may be subject to change.

9:00 - 10:15						
General Session and Keynote Presenter - Dr. Kiesha King						
Welcome by Beverly Wilson - Deputy Associate Superintendent, AZ Arizona Department of Education - Adult Education Services						
Time	Session	Presenter(s)	Concurrent Session Title	Concurrent Session Description	Strand	Room
10:15 - 10:30				Transition/Vendor Fair		
10:30 - 11:45	Session 3	Yesenia Flores & Melissa Juliet Ochoa	Importing and Connecting TABE Data for Target Student Instructional Planning	Unlock the power of data-driven decision-making to transform student outcomes. In this session, we will provide a professional and supportive walkthrough of Essential Education's innovative TABE/LACES integration. You will learn to efficiently pull comprehensive student performance reports and identify skill-development needs directly within the Essential Education LMS, even if you cannot access LACES. We will review a sample student account, demonstrating how to interpret TABE results and leverage the enhanced TABE 13/14 Skill Correlations for precise DRC skill mapping and targeted instruction. Participants will also discover how simplifying student assignment management can streamline reporting processes and make data analysis easier and more effective for their programs.	ABE	VOS E
		JakinDee Perez Kosaka	Navigating O*NET: Strengthening Skills and Empowering Adult Learners	Bridge the gap between classroom learning and career success. This session equips adult education instructors with practical strategies for turning the O*NET platform into an active learning tool. Participants will learn how to navigate and explore what O*NET has to offer, teach contextualized reading, math, and digital literacy, and use O*NET vocabulary to help students build résumés and cover letters. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use classroom activities to confidently guide their students forward.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain
		Jill Scott	Clicks, Claims, and Credibility: Strengthening Media Literacy Skills	This session equips teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach media literacy effectively. Participants will explore tools, resources, and practices to help students analyze media messages, recognize bias, and develop informed opinions.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback B
		Dr. Kiesha King	Technology Without Fear: A Facilitated Conversation on Digital Integration in Adult Education	This session extends the keynote conversation in an open, facilitated format designed for honest dialogue. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions, share what is and is not working in their programs, and identify practical next steps. The goal is to make the conversation as valuable as the people in the room, drawing on the collective experience, expertise, and challenges of Arizona's adult education community.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley
		Sara Gutting	Think Like a Scientist, Reason Like a Historian	This engaging workshop helps adult learners build the knowledge and confidence needed to succeed on the HSE Science and Social Studies tests. Participants will explore strategies for teaching reading comprehension, critical thinking, and data analysis through hands-on, interactive activities. The session highlights ways to make abstract concepts accessible while supporting understanding and retention. Educators will also learn active learning techniques that encourage engagement, collaboration, and inquiry while supporting diverse learning needs. Participants will leave with practical classroom activities, ready-to-use instructional resources, and effective approaches for integrating literacy into science and social studies instruction.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A
		Beverly Wilson	State of the State	Please join Beverly Wilson, State Director of Adult Education, for a review of national and state data sets for the adult education system. Administrators will have an opportunity to discuss data trends and observations on the current state of adult education.	ADMIN	Deer Valley

10:30 - 11:45	Session 3	Corey Muren	Data Driven Decision Making and Next Steps with Burlington English	Discover how Burlington English empowers adult education programs to turn learner data into meaningful action. This session explores practical strategies for using real-time reports, assessment results, and student performance data to guide instruction, strengthen retention, and support measurable outcomes. Participants will learn how to identify learning gaps, personalize next steps for students, and align data insights with program goals and reporting requirements. Through examples and actionable takeaways, attendees will leave with tools to make informed decisions that improve learner engagement, persistence, and achievement. Whether you are an instructor, administrator, or advisor, this session offers immediately applicable strategies to support continuous improvement.	ESOL	VOS D
12:00 - 1:00				Lunch		
1:10 - 2:25	Session 4	Lisa Pool-Osorio	GED/Leveraging GED & ME in the Classroom: How the New App Is Boosting Engagement, Progress, and Test Success	GED® learners are independent, mobile, and seeking support that fits into their daily lives. With over 300,000 downloads, the GED® & Me™ Mobile App meets learners where they are—on their phones—combining targeted practice, short instructional videos, and personalized guidance to support progress and motivation. Attendees will explore how the app is driving learner engagement and improving test outcomes by helping learners practice consistently and stay persistent. The AI-powered tutor delivers immediate, step-by-step support, helping learners overcome challenges in the moment and build confidence. Participants will review engagement data and leave with practical strategies for integrating the app into independent or classroom-based instruction.	ABE	VOS E
		Megan Baker	Best Practices for Intake and Orientation	A well-designed intake and orientation process sets the foundation for participant engagement, retention, and successful outcomes. This interactive training is designed for College and Career Navigators who play a critical role in helping participants access services, establish goals, and navigate pathways to education and employment. Participants will explore best practices for conducting participant-centered intake interviews, gathering and documenting required information, assessing eligibility, identifying barriers and strengths, and building trust from the first interaction. The session will also cover the key components of a managed intake process. Through real-world scenarios, discussion, and practical tools, navigators will learn strategies to create a welcoming orientation experience that clearly communicates program expectations, participant responsibilities, available resources, and next steps. Attendees will leave with actionable techniques to improve consistency, efficiency, and participant engagement while meeting program requirements.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain
		Kevin Imes & Michelle Martinez	CTE Pathways and Career Clusters: A Blueprint for Career Development	This session will explore the CTE Programs and Standards that can be used in supporting strong and impactful IET programs. Participants will get an overview the CTE clusters, pathways, and standards frameworks that they can use with adult learners in their own IET programs.	CCN/DATA, ABE, ESOL	Camelback B
		Cathy Elizondo & Jana Harper	AI in Adult Education: Supporting Teachers and Empowering Students (Double Session)	AI is no longer the future—it is today's classroom reality. Join us for a dynamic two-part session designed specifically for adult educators. Part one explores how instructors can leverage AI to increase efficiency, create meaningful learning experiences, and devote more time to student success. Part two shifts the focus to learners, providing effective strategies for teaching students how to use AI ethically, effectively, and confidently. Through demonstrations, guided practice, and hands-on activities, participants will actively explore AI tools and applications they can use immediately. Attendees will leave with hands-on experience, classroom-ready resources, and strategies to transform teaching and learning in an AI-driven world.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley

1:10 - 2:25	Session 4	Heidi Schuler	A CALM Approach to Algebraic Reasoning	This hands-on workshop will examine how to develop conceptual understanding of algebraic reasoning and linear equations using everyday scenarios. Participants will engage in an activity from the Curriculum for Adults Learning Math (CALM) that connects real-life situations to rules, equations, and graphs, and explore the progression of how algebra topics are addressed in CALM. The activity examines how to use input-output table patterns and rules to predict future outcomes and solve problems. This session is accessible to educators of all experience levels, regardless of how often they teach algebraic reasoning or linear equations.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A
		Joann Bueno	Bridging the Gap: Registered Apprenticeships as a Career Pathway for Adult Learners	Registered Apprenticeships offer a powerful tool to connect learners with industry-recognized credentials and sustainable careers. This session explores how adult education programs can collaborate with employers and apprenticeship sponsors to create seamless pathways for adult learners. Attendees will learn key program components and co-enrollment strategies with WIOA and other funding streams to support apprenticeship success. Participants will walk away with actionable steps to integrate apprenticeship pathways into their programs and services.	ADMIN	Deer Valley
		Dr. Daisy Shah	Engaging Learners: Strategies to Spark Motivation and Build Connection	The first weeks of class play a critical role in shaping the learning experience and setting expectations for success. This interactive session provides instructors with practical, proven strategies to engage learners from day one and build lasting classroom momentum. Participants will explore energizing icebreakers, effective routines, and creative instructional approaches that foster curiosity, connection, and active participation. The session will also highlight learner-centered practices and meaningful technology integration that strengthen engagement and motivation. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use strategies and activities designed to create a positive classroom culture, increase student participation, and support learner persistence throughout the course.	ESOL	VOS D
2:25 - 2:55			Transition/Vendor Fair/Pop-Up PD/Snack Break			
2:55 - 4:10	Session 5	Kathy St. John	Writing from the Basement to the Roof	Are you trying to teach your students writing skills like a builder building a house from the roof down? Many teachers focus on higher-level, challenging tasks, such as essay writing, to help their students prepare for the GED, HiSET, and other academic goals. While academic writing is essential for many of our students, it can be overwhelming for those who lack foundational writing skills. Foundational writing skills can be taught using fun, low-key activities that encourage learners to express their ideas in writing. Participants will discuss activities that engage students in writing about topics they know and care about while building the foundational skills needed for more advanced writing assignments.	ABE & ESOL	VOS E
		Wendy Scheder Black	From Learner to Leader: Pathways for Student Leadership, Advocacy, and Impact	Every adult learner has a powerful story to tell. When students learn to share their educational journeys, they not only celebrate their own successes, but they also become advocates for adult education and leaders within their programs, communities, and beyond. This session will share how student stories can serve as the foundation for student leadership and advocacy. Participants will learn practical strategies for helping students identify, develop, and share their stories in ways that raise awareness about the importance and impact of adult education. The session will also highlight opportunities available through COABE and AALL that help students continue their leadership journey, including Adult Learner COABE Membership, Student Ambassador training, educational scholarships, and national advocacy initiatives. Attendees will leave with tools, resources, and actionable strategies for creating pathways that empower students to become ambassadors for adult education and raise awareness of its impact.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain

2:55 - 4:10	Session 5	Rob Podlasek	Teaching with Northstar Digital Literacy Instructional Materials	Northstar Digital Literacy provides a variety of instructional resources for teaching basic digital literacy skills to adults. We will look at the instructor-led curriculum modules and the Northstar Online Learning modules, designed for more independent learning. We will also explore a couple of additional resources: the digital skills video tutorials and Routines to Build Essential Digital Literacy Skills in ESL Classrooms. All of Northstar's materials are designed for instructors who aren't necessarily digital literacy experts (no need to know how pivot tables work!).	CCN/DATA, ABE, ESOL	Camelback B
		Cathy Elizondo & Jana Harper	AI in Adult Education: Supporting Teachers and Empowering Students (Double Session)	AI is no longer the future—it is today's classroom reality. Join us for a dynamic two-part session designed specifically for adult educators. Part one explores how instructors can leverage AI to increase efficiency, create meaningful learning experiences, and devote more time to student success. Part two shifts the focus to learners, providing effective strategies for teaching students how to use AI ethically, effectively, and confidently. Through demonstrations, guided practice, and hands-on activities, participants will actively explore AI tools and applications they can use immediately. Attendees will leave with hands-on experience, classroom-ready resources, and strategies to transform teaching and learning in an AI-driven world.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley
		Jill Scott	Math for Life: Personal Finance as a Pathway to Engagement	This interactive session helps teachers connect core math standards with personal finance and economics concepts. Participants will explore strategies to teach budgeting, interest, credit, and decision-making using real-world scenarios. The goal is to empower students with the mathematical fluency and financial literacy needed for real-world decision-making.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A
		Beverly Wilson	Roundtable Discussions with Administrators	Join fellow adult education program administrators for a collaborative roundtable discussion focused on the challenges, opportunities, and emerging needs shaping adult education programs. Participants will help shape the conversation by selecting discussion topics that matter most to their work, allowing time to share ideas, problem-solve with peers, and explore promising practices. This session offers a valuable opportunity to connect, reflect, and learn from the experiences of administrators across the state.	ADMIN	Deer Valley
		Emily Marderness & Margaret Casady Rutter-Herding	Listen Up! Engaging Low-Beginning ESOL Learners through Purposeful Listening Tasks	Participants will be able to identify key listening subskills that support comprehension and communication for low-beginning-level ESOL learners. We will explore ways to incorporate purposeful listening activities into familiar classroom materials and learn how to adapt or design activities that target specific listening skills within participants' own classroom contexts.	ESOL	VOS D
4:10 - 4:25	Transition/Vendor Fair					
4:25 - 5:00	Session 6	AEHSES (Facilitators)	Round Tables (Program Debrief Discussions)	After a full day of rich learning and inspiring sessions, this roundtable invites program teams to come together to debrief and reflect. This is a space to discuss key takeaways, share insights across programs, and collaboratively explore how today's learning can be transformed into tomorrow's action. Join us for a dynamic and engaging conversation that bridges inspiration and implementation. Participants will leave with a clearer vision, renewed energy, and actionable strategies to strengthen adult education in their communities.	ADMIN, CCN/DATA, ABE, ESOL	Paradise Valley & Deer Valley
6:00 - 9:00	Boots & Bling Event					