

2026 Adult Education Institute

Saturday, September 19, 2026

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

9:00 - 10:15 Joint ADE and AALL Awards Celebration						
Time	Session	Presenter(s)	Concurrent Session Title	Concurrent Session Description	Strand	Room
10:15 - 10:30	Transition/Vendor Fair					
10:30 - 11:45	Session 7	Yesenia Flores	Next Steps with Essential Education	This session is designed for educators who are ready to move beyond the basics and fully integrate the Essential Education platform into their instructional practice. Learn practical strategies for customizing the student experience, efficiently managing classes, and implementing best practices for instruction, remediation, and test preparation. We will take a deep dive into the platform's comprehensive reporting tools—including Study Time, Skill Mastery, and Student Readiness—to help you gain actionable insights into student progress. Discover effective methods for monitoring achievement, providing targeted feedback, and using strategies such as goal setting and incentives to increase student engagement and persistence. Unlock the full potential of the platform to drive measurable student growth and improve program outcomes.	ABE	VOS E
		Mike Johnson	TABE and TABE CLAS-E: Using Reports and Resources to Support Gains!	This session will review TABE and TABE CLAS-E student reports and the On-Demand Extract in conjunction with the TABE Instructional Strategies Guide to support measurable gains for ABE and ESL students. Additionally, participants will learn how to prepare students for the most appropriate post-test and how to connect TABE blueprints to students' areas of need. The session will also include an overview of the new TABE Edge Practice Resources and best practices for post-testing.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain
		Corey Muren	Open Doors to New Opportunities with Burlington Workforce	Discover how Burlington Workforce courses prepare adult learners for success in technical education and career training programs. This session introduces new workforce content designed to help learners explore careers, workplace tasks, and employer expectations before entering a training pathway. Participants will learn how these courses build essential communication, foundational, and professional skills while supporting informed career decisions and smoother transitions into workforce training. Ideal for learners entering the workforce, changing careers, or returning to education, Burlington Workforce provides a practical bridge to in-demand careers. Attendees will leave with strategies for integrating these resources into adult education, workforce readiness, and career pathway programs.	CCN/DATA, ABE, ESOL	Camelback B
		Kathy St. John	Game-Changing Strategies to Help Students Understand and Remember What They Read	Do your students struggle to understand and remember what they read? Does a lack of reading comprehension and the ability to synthesize information affect their success in achieving academic, personal, and career goals? Are you frustrated and looking for solutions? Many teachers focus on helping students understand individual texts rather than teaching strategies that can help them make sense of any text they encounter. Likewise, many adult learners are unfamiliar with the strategies that support comprehension, retention, and application of content. Participants in this workshop will learn about and practice several tried-and-true, evidence-based comprehension strategies that can be game changers for many students.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley

10:30 - 11:45	Session 7	Heidi Schuler	Teaching Word Problems to Beginning Math Learners (Double Session)	Many students struggle with word problems, even when they are competent readers and can perform calculations accurately. What makes word problems so challenging? How can we help students build the skills they need to be successful? This two-part workshop breaks down the language, mathematical, and cognitive skills involved in solving word problems. Participants will learn how to more accurately diagnose the specific gaps students may have when struggling with word problems. The workshop will also help instructors plan units intentionally to address the wide range of skills students need to be successful in this area. The strategies presented in this workshop can be used with students studying mathematics at any level; however, the examples focus on beginning math learners (GLE 2–4), who may require more intentional scaffolding and support.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A
		Jon Lee	Data Entry Best Practices in LACES	Good data starts with good habits! This session focuses on the fundamentals of clean, consistent, and efficient data entry in LACES—because the quality of your reports and outcomes is only as strong as the data behind them. We'll cover the essential workflows you'll return to throughout the program year, including entering new students, creating and duplicating classes to save time, advancing assessments, and leveraging views to streamline processes such as batch editing. Whether you're managing high-volume intake or staying on top of day-to-day updates, this session will help you work smarter, not harder. As always, questions are welcome. If you can click it in LACES, it's on the table.	ADMIN	Deer Valley
		Jennifer Lane	Tech With Purpose: Building English and Digital Skills Together	Are you looking for practical ways to help your ESOL learners build digital skills while learning English? In this interactive session, you'll explore ready-to-use strategies that support both language development and the digital skills students need for work, school, and everyday life. Through hands-on activities, you'll step into your learners' shoes as you practice real-world tasks such as completing online forms, communicating with workplace tools, and searching for jobs. You'll leave with adaptable ideas you can implement immediately, along with practical tools to make digital skill development more meaningful, engaging, and manageable in your classroom.	ESOL	VOS D
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch					
1:15 - 2:30	Session 8	Lisa Pool-Osorio	Recruit Smarter, Manage Better: How GED Prep Connect and GED Direct Strengthen Adult Education Programs	Programs face ongoing challenges in recruiting, enrolling, and supporting learners while efficiently managing testing, budgets, and reporting. This session provides a practical, end-to-end overview of how GED Prep Connect™ and GED Direct™ within GED Manager™ work together to help programs recruit learners, streamline test management, and monitor learner progress with greater confidence and clarity. GED Prep Connect™ helps programs identify prospective students who have expressed interest in adult education classes, making it easier to connect with learners and guide them into local programs. The session will also explore GED Direct™, an e-commerce tool that allows educators and administrators to digitally purchase, assign, share, and monitor tests with ease. Participants will gain a better understanding of how these tools can support recruitment efforts, improve program efficiency, and enhance learner outcomes.	ABE	VOS E

1:15 - 2:30	Session 8	Jon Lee	Getting Off to a Good Start with LACES	Kick off the new fiscal year with confidence! This session is designed to help you hit the ground running in LACES by focusing on the key data points and system features that matter most at the start of a new program year. We will walk through best practices for setting up and using views, conducting targeted searches, and generating reports that provide a clear picture of where your program stands—and where it is headed. Whether you are a seasoned LACES user or still finding your footing, this session offers practical tips and strategies you can apply immediately. This is also your opportunity to ask questions—lots of them. If you can click it in LACES, it is on the table! No topic is too big or too small, so come ready to dig in, troubleshoot, and learn alongside your peers.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain
		Rob Podlasek	Assessing Basic Computer Skills with Northstar Digital Literacy	Northstar Digital Literacy is a comprehensive suite of tools for assessing and teaching basic digital literacy skills to adults. Join us to learn about its key features, including the digital literacy standards, assessments, instructional resources, and learner management system. We'll also explore strategies for integrating Northstar certification into your program. This session is designed for those who are new to Northstar, as well as experienced users seeking a refresher or updates on the latest features and resources.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback B
		Kathy St. John	Learning to Achieve: Workforce Preparation Strategies (Double Session)	Many students struggle to understand and navigate the process of finding employment that aligns with their interests and abilities. This challenge can be especially significant for students with diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities (LD). This workshop focuses on practical strategies that adult educators can use to help students with LD develop the skills needed to find, obtain, and retain meaningful employment. Participants will learn instructional strategies that support student success at each stage of the employment process, from career exploration and job search to workplace retention. In addition, participants will explore workforce-related resources available to individuals with LD and learn how to connect these resources to instructional practices and students' career goals.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley
		Heidi Schuler	Teaching Word Problems to Beginning Math Learners (Double Session)	Many students struggle with word problems, even when they are competent readers and can perform calculations accurately. What makes word problems so challenging? How can we help students build the skills they need to be successful? This two-part workshop breaks down the language, mathematical, and cognitive skills involved in solving word problems. Participants will learn how to more accurately diagnose the specific gaps students may have when struggling with word problems. The workshop will also help instructors plan units intentionally to address the wide range of skills students need to be successful in this area. The strategies presented in this workshop can be used with students studying mathematics at any level; however, the examples focus on beginning math learners (GLE 2–4), who may require more intentional scaffolding and support.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A
		Megan Baker	New Administrator Series: Part 4	This session is Part 4 of the Blended Learning Series and is required for new administrators. It will focus on the requirements and guidance for Integrated Education and Training (IET), while providing dedicated time for discussion and questions. Participants will have the opportunity to connect and deepen their understanding of content covered in previous virtual sessions.	ADMIN	Deer Valley

1:15 - 2:30	Session 8	Natalie Ferguson	Build Around a Book: Anchoring Intermediate/Advanced ELL Curriculum with Novel Studies	Adult ESOL classrooms often use practical and informational texts to help learners build the language skills they need for work, education, civic engagement, and everyday life. While important, these texts do not provide a complete education. Literature offers another powerful opportunity for language development by inviting learners to explore meaningful stories, discuss complex ideas, and make connections to their own experiences. A strong novel can anchor instruction while building background knowledge, vocabulary, writing, grammar, and discussion skills. Though using a novel may seem like a significant time commitment, the benefits are substantial. Drawing from my experience designing novel studies for multilingual learners, this session explores how novels can become a meaningful part of standards-based instruction for intermediate- and advanced-level adult ESOL classes. Participants will leave with novel recommendations, a curriculum integration framework, and ready-to-use materials to help implement engaging novel studies in a variety of adult education settings.	ESOL	VOS D
2:30 - 2:45	Transition/Snack Break					
2:45 - 4:00	Session 9	Carolyn Urish and Marilyn Mumaw Anderson	The Story Matters: Elevating Adult Education Through Marketing	This interactive session explores effective strategies for marketing your program or classes and highlights the critical role of outreach in learner recruitment and retention. Participants will learn how to use digital storytelling and data to engage audiences, communicate program impact, and attract prospective learners. The session will also examine ways to maximize your website's effectiveness to increase visibility, expand reach, and strengthen community engagement.	CCN/DATA	North Mountain
		Brenna Da-Tokpah	Plans with Purpose: Crafting Effective Pre-IET and IET Plans	This interactive session supports administrators in developing high-quality Pre-IET and IET plans aligned with Arizona's high-demand employment fields. Participants will explore effective tools and strategies while collaborating in small groups to evaluate sample Pre-IET and IET plans. They will then apply their learning to begin developing plans tailored to their own programs.	ADMIN, CCN/DATA, ABE, ESOL	Camelback B
		Kathy St. John	Learning to Achieve: Workforce Preparation Strategies (Double Session)	Many students struggle to understand and navigate the process of finding employment that aligns with their interests and abilities. This challenge can be especially significant for students with diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities (LD). This workshop focuses on practical strategies that adult educators can use to help students with LD develop the skills needed to find, obtain, and retain meaningful employment. Participants will learn instructional strategies that support student success at each stage of the employment process, from career exploration and job search to workplace retention. In addition, participants will explore workforce-related resources available to individuals with LD and learn how to connect these resources to instructional practices and students' career goals.	ABE & ESOL	Paradise Valley
		Michelle Blanks	Breaking Up with Whole-Group: It's Not You, It's the Data	Whole-group reading instruction has its place, but diagnostic data often show that adult learners need different types of support. In this immersive session, participants will become the "students" in a model adult education classroom and experience how EBRI small-group instruction can be organized, facilitated, and managed. Participants will explore how to group learners according to reading needs, run focused teacher-led instruction, and keep the rest of the class engaged in meaningful, accountable independent learning activities.	ABE & ESOL	Camelback A

2:45 - 4:00	Session 9	Jennifer Durcan and Yesenia Cordalis	Unlocking Student Agency in ESOL Classrooms Through Focused Writing Journals	Join this standards-driven writing session designed to enhance learning through focused writing journals. Participants will explore a practical approach to journaling that strengthens communication skills while fostering student agency. This interactive session offers strategies that can be immediately applied in the classroom. Educators will leave with an adaptable tool to support learners across all levels of English proficiency. Whether you are new to journaling or looking to deepen your practice, this session provides a meaningful way to empower ESOL students through purposeful writing.	ESOL	VOS D
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