Agenda

Monday, September 28th

8:30-9:15am – Breakfast & Check-In– Ballroom

9:15-10:15am – Keynote – Ballroom

Never Judge a Book by Its Cover: The Value of Adult Education for Families Touched by our Justice Systems

10:30-11:45am – Breakout Session 1 – Rooms TBD

- 5.09 Rubric for Renewal and New Programs
- From Course Competency to Classroom: Keeping It Clear Without the Overwhelm
- Updates from GED Testing Service
- Language Justice for All: Advancing Health Equity in Wisconsin
- Building A Community-Wide Literacy Ecosystem Using Cross-Sector Collaboration & Human Centered Design

12:00-1:00pm – Lunch – Ballroom

1:15-2:15pm – Breakout Session 2 – Rooms TBD

- Strengthening Spanish and Multilingual Learner Success in HSED 5.09: Resource Sharing, Alignment, and System Feedback
- Burnout! Am I Nearing Burnout in My Life?
- Education & Recreation: Recipe Ingredients for Literacy Success
- Bridging the Gap: Preparing English Language Learners for Credentials, Training, and Careers
- Closing the College Gap: Initiating a Pre-College Academy Behind Bars

2:15-2:45pm – Snacks with Vendors

2:45-4:00pm – Breakout Session 3 – Rooms TBD

- Incorporating the STAR reading program throughout all levels of reading and watch your students succeed!
- County Jail Literacy Panel
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction & Wisconsin Technical College System Updates
- Creating Welcoming Intake Processes for Emergent Learners
- The State of Adult Literacy and Charting a Way Forward: Building a Strategic Plan from Community Member Insights

4:15-5:00pm – Vendor Lightning Round & Appetizers – Sponsored by Intercambio

Agenda

Tuesday, September 29th

7:15-8:30am – Breakfast & Check-In – Ballroom

8:30-9:30am – Plenary – Ballroom

It's All Connected! How Education and Literacy Touch Individual Lives and the Families and Communities that Surround Them

9:45-10:45am – Breakout Session 1 – Rooms TBD

Setting the Stage for Success: Orientation, Goal Setting, and Their Impact on Outcomes	When the Need is Specific, the Curriculum Should Be, Too: In-House Curriculum Development for Adult Literacy Programs	Leveraging GED Tools for Learner Success	Education Over Incarceration, Breaking the Cycle Through Literacy and Workforce Trends/Partnership with CEA	The Literacy Link: Strengthening Bonds between Parents and Children during Parental Incarceration

11:00am-12:00pm – Breakout Session 2 – Rooms TBD

Strengthening Systems: Transforming Program Data and Workflows	Why Adults Learn Differently - and How to Teach Accordingly	5-Minute Reviews for Reading and Language Arts	County Jail Roundtable	From Curiosity to Collaboration: Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Office Efficiency in a Nonprofit

12:15-1:45pm – Awards Celebration Luncheon – Ballroom

2:00-3:00pm – Breakout Session 3 – Rooms TBD

What Adult Learners Need Most: Lessons from Student Feedback	Rethinking How We Teach Literacy-level Learners: Curriculum, Methods, and Materials	Don't Forget Your Why	Community Health Workers: A Vital Link in Health Literacy	Worrying Words: Taking the Problem Out of Word Problems

Session Descriptions

Monday, September 28th

Never Judge a Book by Its Cover: The Value of Adult Education for Families Touched by our Justice Systems

9:15-10:15am, Keynote, Ballroom

Jeffrey Abramowitz, JD, CEO at And Then What Consulting Group, LLC, And Then What Foundation

This presentation will explore the value of adult education for individuals and families touched by our criminal legal systems. Over one-third of our country has been touched by our legal systems and the reality is that a loved one goes to prison or jail, their entire family goes with them. Join me as we take a journey together to see how we can all get smarter as we face challenging times. The very first lesson is; never judge a book by its cover.

5.09 Rubric for Renewal and New Programs

10:30-11:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Holly McCoy-Perez, Executive Director at Literacy Services of Wisconsin

5.09 Consortium Committee Members

Under the leadership of Sherry Holly at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin's 5.09 Consortium brings together High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) 5.09 program leaders from across the state to support high-quality, consistent programming.

In 2025, the Consortium developed a comprehensive rubric and review process to establish clear, statewide expectations for HSED 5.09 programs. New programs may apply for approval annually, while existing programs complete the rubric and renewal process every three years as part of ongoing quality assurance.

This session will provide an overview of the HSED 5.09 rubric, explain the review and renewal process, and clarify program expectations. Consortium members will also answer questions and share insights from their collective experience to help both new and existing programs better understand the standards and successfully navigate the approval process.

Designed as an interactive learning opportunity, this session encourages collaboration, knowledge sharing, and open discussion to strengthen HSED 5.09 programming and ensure equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities for adult learners throughout Wisconsin.

From Course Competency to Classroom: Keeping It Clear Without the Overwhelm

10:30-11:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Cristina Parente, Director, Adult Education & English Language Learning at Wisconsin Technical College System

Teachers are often asked to break down course competencies, but the process can feel overwhelming or become a checklist exercise. This session offers a simple, practical approach that keeps the big picture in focus. Participants will begin with the competency to identify the "big learning"—what students should actually be able to do—and then use criteria to define what success looks like. Rather than treating them separately, the session shows how competencies set the goal while criteria provide the evidence.

Using a clear process, participants will practice identifying types of learning (knowledge, reasoning, skill, or product), breaking criteria into meaningful learning targets, and designing a single strong assessment that captures multiple outcomes.

Participants will learn to:

- Distinguish between competencies and criteria
- Identify the main type of learning
- Break criteria into clear learning targets
- Match targets to appropriate assessments

Participants will leave able to:

- Define goals starting from competencies
- Use criteria to clarify quality work
- Avoid disconnected, overly small tasks
- Design one strong assessment measuring multiple criteria
- Apply a simple planning process immediately.

Updates from GED Testing Service

10:30-11:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Mellissa Hultstrand, WI GED State Relationship Manager

This session is designed specifically for GED® Instructors/Educators as well as Program Managers and Program Coordinators. First, we will review 2025-present WI GED testing data and then we'll review the many updates we have made in the last year to the GED App, GED Manager, the GED® website and student accounts, ensuring you are informed about the latest enhancements. Some time will also be spent reviewing the GED® Educator Portal, where we'll show you how easy it is to locate valuable teaching resources, recordings of professional development sessions, classroom materials, and print-ready guides—all available for free to GED® instructors.

We encourage you to ask questions or share feedback during the session to help us serve you better. We look forward to seeing you and sharing these valuable resources with you!

Language Justice for All: Advancing Health Equity in Wisconsin

10:30-11:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Dr. Chu May Paing, Executive Director at Winnebago Area Literacy Council

Dr. Juan Garcia Oyervides, Director, Chicana/x & Latino Studies Program at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Amanda Martinez, Senior Policy Analyst at Kids Forward

The Winnebago Area Literacy Council, in partnership with Kids Forward, is developing a community-informed Language Justice Framework to improve access to health care and public services in Wisconsin. This project recognizes that language access is not simply a service issue but a fundamental equity issue that enables individuals to fully participate in their communities using their primary language.

Using a community-based participatory research approach, the project will convene five Language Justice Circles to identify barriers to language access, document the experiences of multilingual communities, and develop policy and practice recommendations to advance health equity. The project will engage approximately 40–60 multilingual community members and 40 stakeholders, including providers, interpreters, advocates, and policymakers.

Led by a multiracial, multigenerational team that includes immigrants, non-native English speakers, and children of immigrants, the initiative centers lived experience and community expertise. Through direct engagement, it aims to reduce communication barriers, improve access to care and essential services, strengthen trust between providers and communities, and address disparities in health outcomes.

This interactive presentation will share the project's approach and invite literacy educators and language workers to identify language access challenges and opportunities they see in communities across Wisconsin, helping inform a statewide framework for language justice.

Building A Community-Wide Literacy Ecosystem Using Cross-Sector Collaboration & Human Centered Design

10:30-11:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Sarah Beckman, Executive Director, Achieve Brown County

Eden Weller, Founder, Facilitator, Coach at WELLER Workshops, LLC

Achieve Brown County and WELLER Workshops will share how they have been building a community-wide literacy ecosystem through cross-sector collaboration and human-centered design over the past four years.

We will highlight several connected efforts, including:

- The forWORDS Literacy Initiative and its Collective Impact Approach
- The Launch of Built Literacy Environments across Brown County (bringing literacy into parks, laundromats, grocery stores, and other everyday spaces)
- Kindergarten Readiness work and cross-sector alignment
- How community voice and co-design have shaped these efforts

Attendees from this session will:

- Learn what this work looks like in Brown County
- Gain access to tools and resources to further explore both Collective Impact Approach and Human Centered Design
- Walk away with case examples of how small acts of change might be replicated in other communities across Wisconsin

Strengthening Spanish and Multilingual Learner Success in HSED 5.09: Resource Sharing, Alignment, and System Feedback

1:15-2:15pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Cristina Parente, Director, Adult Education & English Language Learning at Wisconsin Technical

Lenard Simpson, Director Justice Involved Populations at Office of Student Success, Wisconsin Technical College System

Sherry Holly, Alternative Education Consultant and GED/High School Equivalency Diploma Administrator at Department of Public Instruction

As Wisconsin's HSED competencies are revised, educators have a critical opportunity to strengthen alignment between standards, instruction, and the realities of multilingual learners in HSED 5.09 programs. This interactive session will focus on resource-sharing, collaborative reflection, and systems-level feedback to ensure access and success for multilingual learners.

The session will also provide structured opportunities to evaluate how newly revised HSED competencies support will be used to modify existing curricula and identify resource gaps.

Attendees will contribute actionable feedback for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) regarding needed resources, professional learning, and guidance to better serve adult multilingual learners in HSED 5.09 programs.

Burnout! Am I Nearing Burnout in My Life?

1:15-2:15pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Maria Boettcher, Volunteer at Wisconsin Literacy

Burnout is often associated with work, yet it can affect many areas of life beyond the workplace. Are you feeling overwhelmed in multiple areas of your life, with little relief in sight? You may be experiencing one of the stages of burnout. This session will explore the different stages of burnout and help participants recognize common signs and symptoms. By identifying where you may be along the continuum, you can take proactive steps to slow, stop, or even reverse its progression. Whether you are currently experiencing burnout or simply want to prevent it, the session will include practical activities and strategies that anyone can use to reduce stress and support overall well-being. Life is meant to be lived and enjoyed - don't let burnout diminish its joy.

Education & Recreation: Recipe Ingredients for Literacy Success

1:15-2:15pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Katherine Clausius-Thompson, ABE Teacher at Department of Health Services - Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

Ashley Differt, Recreation Therapist at Department of Health Services - Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

The presentation will cover an alternative pathway to an adult HSED while focusing on re-entry life and leisure skills. Specifically, highlighting the development of recreation and leisure skills while building upon math and reading comprehension related to cooking. Our adult learners are committed to a secure mental health facility and as part of their commitment they no longer have the option to use the internet-based GED testing. Due to this restriction Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center (SRSTC) staff have implemented the WI 5.09 HSED program for adult learners. Part of this program provides adult learners the opportunity to learn and show their skills in alternative methods. Clausius-Thompson and Differt have developed and facilitated multiple adult learning-based cooking classes for all patients at SRSTC. Recreational therapy assists in the development of preferences, a healthy leisure lifestyle, and increased autonomy when coupled with lifelong learning. This education and recreation therapy collaboration has provided staff and patients with the opportunity to expand leisure capacities for meaningful engagement at SRSTC while preparing for re-entry into the community.

Bridging the Gap: Preparing English Language Learners for Credentials, Training, and Careers

1:15-2:15pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Patrice Vnuk, Manager of ELL Programs at Literacy Services of Wisconsin

Hannah Lingenfelter, Manager of Waukesha Operations at Literacy Services of Wisconsin

Many adult English language learners face barriers when transitioning from ELL classes to credential programs, Integrated Education and Training (IET), post-secondary education, or career advancement opportunities. Bridge programs can help address these challenges by providing a clearer route to learners' goals while continuing to support English language development.

This presentation will explore how Literacy Services of Wisconsin (LSW) uses bridge programming to prepare ELL students for success in more rigorous educational and workforce-focused settings. Participants will learn how LSW integrates language instruction with digital literacy, social and cultural literacy, and college and career readiness skills in a supportive learning environment. The session will highlight strategies for building learner confidence, increasing persistence, and fostering meaningful engagement in future coursework.

Relevant for ELL instructors, case managers, program coordinators, and adult education leaders, this presentation will provide practical insights into designing and implementing transition-focused programming. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of how bridge programs can strengthen learner outcomes, improve readiness for credentials and training programs, and create more equitable pathways to employment, post-secondary education, and community participation.

Closing the College Gap: Initiating a Pre-College Academy Behind Bars

1:15-2:15pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Kristi Levy, Education Supervisor at Oshkosh Correctional Institution

DJ Hinz, Pre-College Academy Teacher at Oshkosh Correctional Institution

Chris Willems, Higher Ed Coordinator at Oshkosh Correctional Institution

In the fall of 2024, Oshkosh Correctional Institution began a partnership with Prison Education Initiative, UW-Green Bay, eight students, and one course. Two years later, that partnership had grown into a full-fledged degree earning program with nearly 15 students on their way to earning a bachelor's degree. There was just one problem – most of them had earned a GED while incarcerated and were missing key foundational Literacy skills needed to succeed at the college level. Join us for an overview of how we solved for one of our Higher Education program's biggest challenges by implementing a Pre-College Academy. Attendees will also get a glimpse into how this shed light on gaps in preparing students for all of our post-secondary offerings and how we are working to "future-proof" our programming through improved vertical alignment in Literacy and Math. In this session you will learn what we have implemented, hear our key takeaways, and benefit from our lessons learned along the way.

Incorporating the STAR reading program throughout all levels of reading and watch your students succeed!

2:45-4:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Denise Hoffstatter, Adult Basic Education and Vocational Instructor at Wisconsin Department of Corrections – DAI

Julie Scheidler, Adult Basic Education and Vocational Instruction at Wisconsin Department of Corrections - DAI

Learning to read is challenging. Watching students realize they're capable of reading is exciting! As a trained STAR instructor (Students Achievement in Reading) I've incorporated the 4 areas of reading - Alphabetics, Vocabulary, Fluency, and Comprehension throughout all levels of Reading Language Arts (RLA) taught at SCI. Join me as I outline and explain the 3-tiered system I've created to transition students from one level of reading to the next. Realizing not all students learn and process material at the same speed, I proposed a grant 10 years ago to begin IQ and Achievement testing with CESA 10. This partnership has been invaluable to the lower level learners who have been granted GED/HSED testing accommodations to help them attain their goals of a GED/HSED diploma. Students don't "know what they don't know." As an educator I coach them to realize learning is fun! Pushing each one further than they thought they could go, while giving them the positive reinforcement needed to succeed! Join me as I take you on my journey as an educator, striving to make a difference in my students' lives.

County Jail Literacy Panel

2:45-4:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Jon Philipp, Education Coordinator at Outagamie County

Join other County Jail Educators in discussing a variety of topics centering around teaching in jails.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction & Wisconsin Technical College System Updates

2:45-4:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Sherry Holly, HSED/GED Administrator & Alternative Education Consultant at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Andrew Lopez, Education Specialist at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Cristina Parente, Director, Adult Education & English Language Learning at Wisconsin Technical College System

Lenard Simpson, Director Justice Involved Populations at Office of Student Success, Wisconsin Technical College System

This presentation will give an overview of the current updates at both agencies impacting High School Equivalency and GED programs. We will focus on changes to current policies and procedures along with discussions regarding personal financial literacy requirements, 5.09 competencies and future initiatives. There will time for discussion and questions.

Creating Welcoming Intake Processes for Emergent Learners

2:45-4:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Bria Dolnick, Community Literacy Program Manager at Literacy Works

Keighty Ward, Community Literacy Program Director at Literacy Works

In this presentation, attendees will reflect on current intake processes and how they impact English learners with beginning levels of literacy. We will consider various strategies to make intake processes more inclusive for all students, so that all students feel welcomed from the beginning. Attendees will consider new ideas about how to approach outreach, registration, assessment, matching students with tutors, class placement, and more.

The State of Adult Literacy and Charting a Way Forward: Building a Strategic Plan from Community Member Insights

2:45-4:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Heather Chantelois-Kashal, Program and Operations Director at Fox Valley Literacy

Brian Leone Tracy, Executive Director at Fox Valley Literacy

In 2025, Fox Valley Literacy completed an adult literacy community needs assessment that over 800 individuals and 37 organizations participated in. We will share the findings, highlighting the extent that community members struggle with multiple forms of literacy in their daily lives and how this research is guiding our strategic plan and redirecting our program development. This presentation will help provide other literacy program leads with data on the complexity of literacy needs facing our communities and ideas for program and organizational development rooted in community insight and collaboration. Participants will have time to discuss how the challenges and possibilities presented might relate to your communities or organizations and brainstorm possible next steps.

Vendor Lightning Round

4:15-5:00pm, Location TBD

Sponsored by Intercambio

Join us for appetizers in the vendor area and have some fun! It's your chance to win some great prizes and get to know about the products our vendors have to offer during these Lightning Rounds. You'll choose three vendors to visit, spend five minutes with each of them hearing about the products that are right for your students. At the end of each five minutes, you'll drop your name into the drawing for that vendor's prize and then move on to the next quick presentation. In just 15 minutes you'll have heard about new and exciting products and entered to win three valuable prizes. Come back on Tuesday to see what you may have won! Don't miss this fun mixer.

Tuesday, September 29th

It's All Connected! How Education and Literacy Touch Individual Lives and the Families and Communities that Surround Them

8:30-9:30am, Plenary, Ballroom

Anna Bierer, Director of Program Compliance and Product Strategy at Wisconsin Literacy

This session will cover:

- How literacy and education intersect with food security, health, digital access
- How our education models community literacy, correctional, and higher ed settings foster mutual growth and learning for students and teachers, focusing on peer-to-peer learning and support
- And how multigenerational learning benefits individuals, families and communities

Setting the Stage for Success: Orientation, Goal Setting, and Their Impact on Outcomes

9:45-10:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Bianca Johnson-Ortiz, Manager of Adult Education Programs & Chief Examiner at Literacy Services of Wisconsin

Adult learners enter programs through a variety of pathways, bringing diverse academic backgrounds, goals, and support needs. This session explores how intentional alignment of enrollment, placement, orientation, and instructional support across multiple entry points—including Foundations, Level E, Level M, HSED/GED pathways, and accessible community-based sites—can significantly improve learner persistence, retention, and measurable skill gains.

Participants will examine a systems-based approach that begins at first contact, helping learners identify meaningful goals and connect those goals to appropriate instructional pathways. By creating consistent orientation experiences, refining placement practices, and embedding targeted supports at each level, programs can reduce barriers that often lead to early exit and disengagement. The session highlights strategies for building seamless transitions between levels while maintaining learner momentum toward educational and career goals.

Through program examples, data-informed practices, and practical tools, attendees will explore how a unified entry and support model can strengthen outcomes across an entire adult education program. Participants will leave with actionable ideas for designing learner-centered intake and goal-setting processes that foster engagement, increase level advancement, and support successful progression from entry to credential attainment.

When the Need is Specific, the Curriculum Should Be, Too: In-House Curriculum Development for Adult Literacy Programs

9:45-10:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Shannon Schuren, Literacy Council Coordinator at Sheboygan Family Resource Center

Denise Stueven, Workplace Literacy Program Supervisor at Sheboygan Family Resource Center

Adult literacy learners' needs don't always fit off-the-shelf curriculum. This panel discussion shares practical, field-tested strategies for developing literacy curriculum in-house, with discussion from three program practitioners who have built curriculum from scratch, including a health literacy curriculum for one-on-one tutoring pairs, a safety curriculum for adult refugee learners (water, bike, and outdoor safety) and a workplace English curriculum for workers in manufacturing settings.

Panelists will share their step-by-step development processes — needs assessment, drafting, piloting, and revision — and compare how that process shifts across delivery models, from one-on-one tutoring to group and workplace-embedded instruction. The discussion will also address the time, staffing, and expertise tradeoffs involved in building curriculum versus buying or adapting existing materials.

This session is especially relevant to programs serving English Language Learners, tutoring-based models, and workplace literacy settings where generic materials often miss the mark. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists specific to their own learners and settings and will leave with practical examples they can apply to their own programs.

Leveraging GED Tools for Learner Success

9:45-10:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Mellissa Hultstrand, WI GED State Relationship Manager at GED Testing Service

Rachel Ludwig, VP of Global Operations & Strategic Partnerships at GED Testing Service

This session will connect Wisconsin's workforce opportunities with practical strategies to support adult learners on the path to earning a GED credential. We will highlight key labor market trends, and the role Adult Education and Corrections Education programs play in helping learners build skills, access credentials, and prepare for career pathways across the state. Attendees will receive updates on tools and resources designed to support learner engagement and persistence, including the latest enhancements to the GED mobile app. Finally, attendees will learn about partnership opportunities and leave with a stronger understanding of how GED tools can help learners stay connected, make progress, and move toward education and workforce success.

Education Over Incarceration, Breaking the Cycle Through Literacy and Workforce Trends/Partnership with CEA

9:45-10:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Percy H. Pitzer, Founder, President of the Board at Pitzer Family Education Foundation

This presentation, Education Over Incarceration: Breaking the Cycle Through Literacy and Workforce Partnerships, will highlight how targeted education, workforce training, and strategic partnerships can reduce recidivism and create sustainable pathways to success for justice-involved individuals and their families. Led by Percy Pitzer, Founder and President of the Board of the Pitzer Family Education Foundation (PFEF), the session will explore innovative approaches that integrate literacy, post-secondary education, and hands-on workforce development.

The objectives of this presentation are to demonstrate how education-based reentry programs improve employment outcomes, to showcase effective program management strategies, and to emphasize the importance of partnerships, particularly with organizations like CEA, in expanding access to quality instruction and training. The discussion is highly relevant to corrections staff, educators, and community leaders seeking practical, scalable solutions that connect tutoring, teaching, and career pathways.

Attendees will gain key insights into building impactful reentry programs, aligning literacy with workforce demands, and fostering collaborations that support long-term success. The session will also highlight real-world outcomes from PFEF initiatives, offering a replicable model for empowering individuals to choose education over incarceration while strengthening families and communities.

The Literacy Link: Strengthening Bonds between Parents and Children during Parental Incarceration

9:45-10:45am, Breakout Session 1, Room TBD

Ronda Davis, Justice-Involved Families State Outreach Specialist at UW Madison Division of Extension

The Literacy Link session will explore the critical role of literacy and learning opportunities for young children with parents or caregivers in local correctional systems. The presentation will highlight evidence-informed approaches that integrate literacy development with parenting education to promote meaningful parent-child engagement despite physical separation.

Participants will learn about the award-winning Literacy Link project's research-based interventions that address the needs of parents, caregivers and their children through five targeted strategies. The session objectives will focus on: (1) examining how literacy-based programming enhances communication between incarcerated parents and their children; (2) identifying strategies for embedding family-centered literacy practices into correctional education settings; and (3) understanding the connection between family engagement, improved literacy skills, and reduced recidivism outcomes.

The session directly aligns with reentry-focused work by demonstrating how maintaining family bonds contributes to post-release stability and supports intergenerational educational success. Attendees will gain practical tools, program examples, and actionable strategies to implement or strengthen initiatives within their own facilities.

Key takeaways include adaptable literacy activities that foster connection, techniques for supporting parents as educators, and insights into creating programs that improve both individual outcomes and family resilience.

Strengthening Systems: Transforming Program Data and Workflows Pact

11:00am-12:00pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Jennifer Knoeberr, COO at CommonTeri Services

This session explores how one literacy organization transformed its intake and program management processes to better support staff, improve data quality, and strengthen program outcomes. Through a real-world case study, attendees will learn how the organization recognized that its existing system no longer met its needs, evaluated alternative solutions, managed implementation, and successfully guided staff through organizational change. One year after implementation, the organization has realized more efficient workflows, improved reporting, and stronger operational decision-making.

Designed for program directors, data managers, and staff responsible for intake, reporting, or program operations in adult and family literacy organizations, this presentation addresses the growing need for technology that supports evolving program requirements. Participants will gain practical strategies for assessing whether their current systems are meeting organizational goals, planning for successful implementation, and increasing staff adoption during times of change. Attendees will leave with a framework for evaluating their own data systems, actionable approaches to managing technology transitions, and ideas they can apply to strengthen data collection, streamline operations, and enhance the impact of their literacy programs.

Why Adults Learn Differently - and How to Teach Accordingly

11:00am-12:00pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Anne Damiecka, ESOL Specialist, Cambridge University Press & Assessment

Adult ESL learners bring experience, goals, and a strong sense of purpose to the classroom. This session examines what adult ESL learners consistently respond to, using adult learning theory (andragogy) as a guiding framework. Participants will explore how principles such as relevance, respect, autonomy, and the use of learner experience are reflected in effective ESL instruction. This session highlights concrete, adult-centered practices that support engagement and persistence across proficiency levels. Participants will leave with practical strategies they can immediately apply in their own contexts.

5-Minute Reviews for Reading and Language Arts

11:00am-12:00pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Carrie Melin, Adult Basis Education Instructor at Jackson Correctional Institution

Do your students have trouble with where to put an apostrophe? Do they struggle with distinguishing between they're, there, and their? Do you sometimes have a few minutes at the end of a class period and want to find a useful way to spend the time? These Reading and Language Arts activities are meant to provide adult learners with multiple opportunities for review and practice after the skills have already been taught. The goal is to help students become confident when using basic rules for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization in their writing. This presentation is geared to ELL and level 1-2 Reading and Language Arts students but may also benefit some RLA level 3 and 4 students.

County Jail Roundtable

11:00am-12:00pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Jon Philipp, Education Coordinator at Outagamie County

Join other County Jail Educators in discussing a variety of topics centering around teaching in jails.

From Curiosity to Collaboration: Using Artificial Intelligence to Improve Office Efficiency in a Nonprofit

11:00am-12:00pm, Breakout Session 2, Room TBD

Cristina Parente, Director, Adult Education & English Language Learning at Wisconsin Technical College System

Teachers are often asked to break down course competencies, but the process can feel overwhelming or become a checklist exercise. This session offers a simple, practical approach that keeps the big picture in focus. Participants will begin with the competency to identify the "big learning"—what students should actually be able to do—and then use criteria to define what success looks like. Rather than treating them separately, the session shows how competencies set the goal while criteria provide the evidence.

Using a clear process, participants will practice identifying types of learning (knowledge, reasoning, skill, or product), breaking criteria into meaningful learning targets, and designing a single strong assessment that captures multiple outcomes.

Participants will learn to:

- Distinguish between competencies and criteria
- Identify the main type of learning
- Break criteria into clear learning targets
- Match targets to appropriate assessments

Participants will leave able to:

- Define goals starting from competencies
- Use criteria to clarify quality work
- Avoid disconnected, overly small tasks
- Design one strong assessment measuring multiple criteria
- Apply a simple planning process immediately

Awards Celebration Luncheon

12:15-1:45pm, Ballroom

Join us as we celebrate six outstanding students, volunteers, programs, businesses or other advocates who are doing incredible work in the field of adult literacy! Enjoy a delicious meal as you hear about the achievements, dedication and innovation happening across the state of Wisconsin and the difference the honorees are making in the lives of limited literacy individuals.

What Adult Learners Need Most: Lessons from Student Feedback

2:00-3:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Rachel Fuchs, Assistant Director of Product Sales and National Network at Intercambio Uniting Communities

Marcella Weaver, Customer Success Manager at Intercambio Uniting Communities

What separates a good teacher from a truly impactful one? Drawing on real feedback from adult English learners, this session explores the teaching behaviors, classroom practices, and relationship-building strategies that students consistently say help them succeed. Participants will see examples of effective teaching techniques in action, examine case studies of common classroom situations, and reflect on how these insights connect to their own teaching experience.

Rethinking How We Teach Literacy-level Learners: Curriculum, Methods, and Materials

2:00-3:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

David Nohara, Founder & Content Creator at Making Sentences

This session is intended for teachers and tutors of literacy-level adult ELs; that is, students with little or no oral English ability and little or no literacy, often in any language. It will begin with a discussion of why the needs of these students are radically different from those of other English learners, why even experienced ESL teachers struggle with this population, how instruction often ends up in one of 3 models: "Day by Day," "Cough Medicine," or "Frankenstein," and the resulting demand for innovation in curriculum, methods, and materials. The presenter will then share examples from his work of the past few years as the basis of discussion, starting with a unique scope and sequence that integrates a high-need, life-skills-based oral language curriculum with current best practices in K-12 early literacy, adapted for adult ESL learners. He will also present numerous examples of classroom-ready print and online activities that address head-on the unique needs of this population. Attendees will leave having heard a new perspective on literacy-level adult EL instruction and seen examples that they can use to create activities and materials for their own students.

Don't Forget Your Why

2:00-3:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Mercedez Butts, Founder & Chief Executive Officer at Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Why are we doing what we do?

Most of us didn't choose adult education because it was easy. We chose it because we believe in people. We believe in second chances. We believe education can change the direction of someone's life.

When learners first walk through our doors, they're usually motivated. They're excited. They're ready for a fresh start. But then life happens. Work happens. Children happen. Bills happen. Setbacks happen.

That's why I believe motivation isn't enough.

My passion is for me, but my purpose is for others. The same is true for our learners. If we only help them stay motivated, they'll struggle when motivation fades. But if we help them discover their "why," they'll have something deeper to return to when the journey gets difficult.

In this interactive session, I'll share how Joyce's Legacy Learning Center helps adult learners identify, revisit, and stay connected to their "why" throughout their educational journey. Participants will leave with practical coaching conversations, reflection activities, and simple tools they can immediately use to help learners build resilience, strengthen persistence, and remember that earning a GED isn't just about a diploma. It's about finishing the story they started and creating a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Community Health Workers: A Vital Link in Health Literacy

2:00-3:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

Patricia Wilson, Regional Literacy Consultant Assistant at Wisconsin Literacy

Shannon Mason Young, Northwest Regional Literacy Consultant at Wisconsin Literacy

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are trusted partners who help individuals and families understand health information, navigate healthcare systems, and access essential services. This presentation explores how CHWs improve health literacy by addressing language, literacy, cultural, and digital barriers that affect health outcomes. Participants will learn how CHWs support English language learners, adults with limited literacy skills, and individuals with limited digital skills through clear communication, culturally responsive education, and personalized guidance.

The session will highlight practical strategies for improving health communication, increasing patient engagement, and building confidence in using digital health tools such as patient portals and telehealth. Attendees will also explore opportunities for collaboration between healthcare providers, adult education programs, literacy organizations, and community agencies to strengthen health literacy efforts and promote equitable access to care.

Key Takeaways

- Understand the role of CHWs in improving health literacy and healthcare access.
- Learn communication strategies that support English language learners and adults with varying literacy levels.
- Identify approaches to address digital literacy barriers in healthcare.
- Explore collaborative practices that strengthen community partnerships and improve health outcomes.

Worrying Words: Taking the Problem Out of Word Problems

Christine Roberts, Teacher at Waupun Correctional Institution

2:00-3:00pm, Breakout Session 3, Room TBD

The sight of word problems can put students into a state of panic. They often struggle with words problems. This presentation will show a variety of ways to solve word problems. Attendees with go away with a packet with ways to solve word problems with examples and worked solutions.