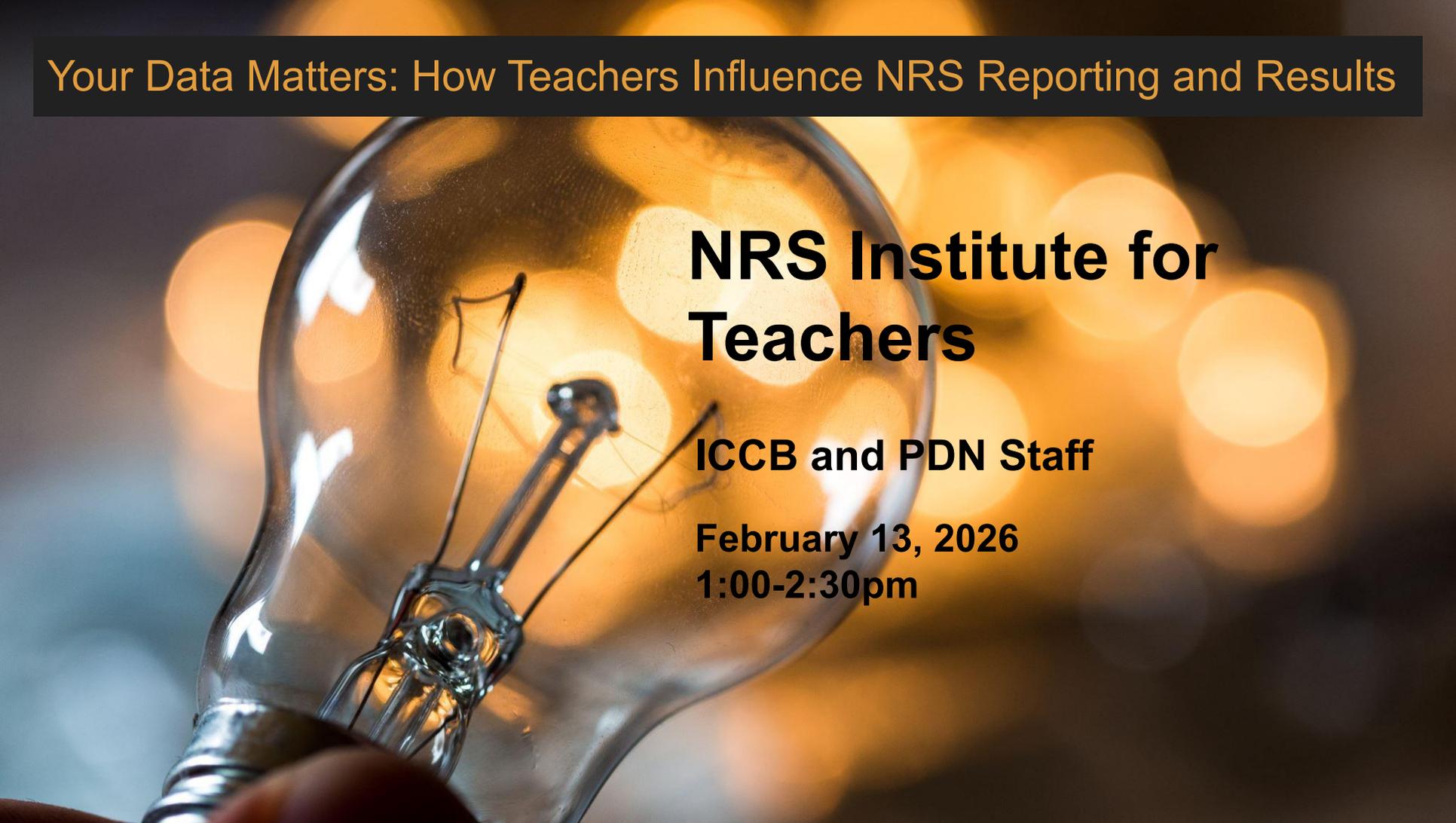Your Data Matters: How Teachers Influence NRS Reporting and Results
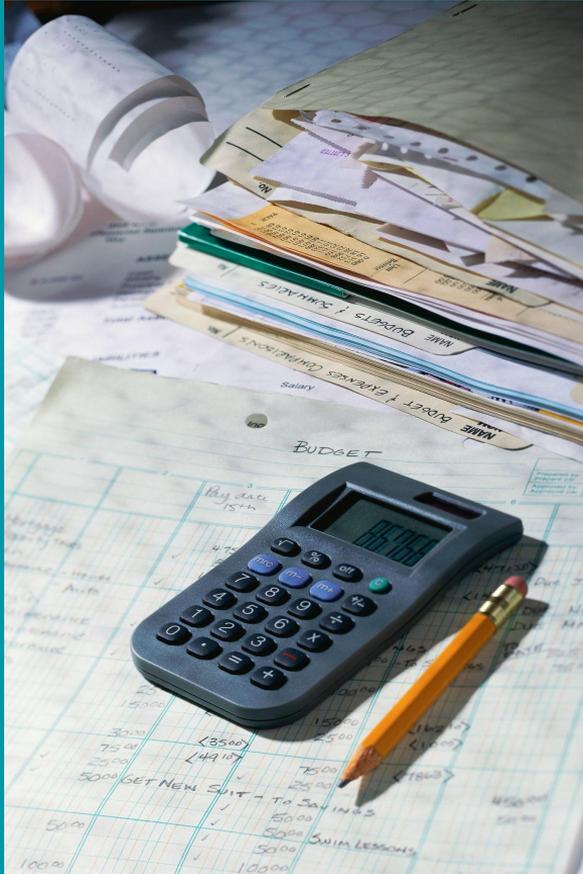
NRS Institute for Teachers

ICCB and PDN Staff

February 13, 2026
1:00-2:30pm

Data is how we tell our students' stories as they progress through their adult education journey.

The Student Journey - Data Tells the Story

Enter program; proper placement through assessment

Complete IL High School Diploma

Improve employment outcomes

Instruction to improve basic literacy skills, as measured by post-test

Complete ICAPS and earn credential

Increase median earnings

Introduction to WIOA & NRS
Partners, Funding, and the Role of AE

The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** is the **federal** legislation that directs all Adult Education programs. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services needed in the labor market and to match employers with workers.

WIOA requires each state to have a [unified state plan](#) that describes how it will work across the **four titles**. Illinois has:

Title I: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Adult, Dislocated Worker, & Youth programs

Title II: Illinois Community College Board **Adult Education** and Literacy

Title III: Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) Employment Service program

Title IV: Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Vocational Rehabilitation program

Why This Matters!

WIOA legislation provides funding to states.

States must follow the terms of the grant and prove they are meeting the requirements with the data they report.

Testing, attendance, level gains, retention, student completions - it ALL MATTERS!

We must do our best to serve our learners, help them meet their goals, and make sure we remain here to do so!

Defining Some Key Terms

OCTAE: **Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education** - *National decisions about adult education policy (including assessment and funding) are made by this office, part of the U.S. Department of Education*

NRS: **National Reporting System** - *Collects assessment, employment, and other data from each state*

EFL: **Educational Functioning Level** - *The NRS defines 6 EFLs for ABE/ASE Reading, 6 EFLs for ABE/ASE Math, and 6 EFLs for ESL. These are sometimes referred to as **NRS Levels.***

MSG: **Measurable Skill Gain** - *ICCB adult education programs must meet MSG targets each fiscal year.*

Ways to Make a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG)

➔ **MSG Type 1a**: Educational Functioning Level Gain (from post-test)

➔ **MSG Type 1c:** Entering postsecondary education

➔ **MSG Type 1d**: Successfully completing/passing one individual subtest (GED® or HiSET)

➔ **MSG Type 2**: Attainment of IL High School Diploma

➔ **MSG Type 4**: Successful completion of training portion of ICAPS

➔ **MSG Type 5**: Earning an Industry Recognized Credential (for students in a Bridge or ICAPS program)

Our IL Performance Targets for FY26

Performance Targets	FY26
Employment 2nd quarter	31.5%
Employment 4th quarter	34.5%
Median Earnings	$6,150.00
Credential Attainment	32%
Measurable Skill Gains	41.5%

Failing to Meet Federal Targets

Consequences	Explanations
➔ All WIOA Title partners fail when one fails to meet targets ➔ Federal funding is reduced when performance targets are not met statewide	➔ Employment targets are demonstrated by a data match using Social Security Numbers ➔ When IL AE students don't have or don't report a SSN, there is no data match, even if the student began or retained employment

Student Names and SSNs

Why this information matters so much

The ICCB adheres to all federal privacy laws and works diligently to protect student data.

The Social Security number is used for data matching to meet federal and state requirements and initiatives.

Names Matter!

DAISI	Student GED.com account	IL Constitution Module
Student name and birthdate should match in each system.		

MSG Type #2 - Attainment of HS Diploma or Equivalent
Captured through **data match** between DAISI and GED® Manager

Data Match

TestType: **GED Series 2014**
Passed: Yes
Test Date: 11/09/2022
Total Score: 617
Match Level: 4
Has Taken All Parts of the Test: Yes

DAISI identifies the level of data match

Test Date	Test Type	Test Score
07/20/2021	Mathematical Reasoning	159
10/01/2021	Social Studies	148
10/07/2022	Reasoning Through Language Arts	155
11/09/2022	Science	155

* Match Level - The four match levels are as follows:

1 = ssn/birthdate/lastname
2 = lastname/birthdate/zipcode
3 = lastname/birthdate
4 = ssn only

Be careful with Level #3 matches!

Megan Jones, IACEA presentation 2023

Strategies for Verifying Names and Collecting SSNs

Teachers can **review their student files** / information quarterly - it's great to do it as a team, when possible! Review student data, check for missing information, and help capture and report it.

Teachers could assist with the review of student data submitted via online portals and help identify missing or incorrect information.

Create an intentional **follow-up process** several weeks after student intake to collect Social Security Numbers. Students who did not provide their SSN initially may feel more comfortable providing it to their teacher after they've been in class a while.

Relationships are the key!

Importance of Relationships

Building Trust: Establishing trust with students is critical to gathering accurate biographical data. When students feel their information will be used respectfully and for meaningful purposes, they are more open to sharing personal details.

Engagement: When students feel valued in the learning environment, they are more willing to provide detailed and honest biographical data. By actively engaging with students and showing interest in their stories, educators can collect more complete and reliable information for DAISI reporting.

Safety and Privacy: Creating a secure environment where students understand their personal data will be kept confidential will encourage them to disclose it. Adhering to privacy standards and clearly communicating data-use protocols helps students feel safe.

Explain what you need and why during intake / registration

Lincoln Land Community College
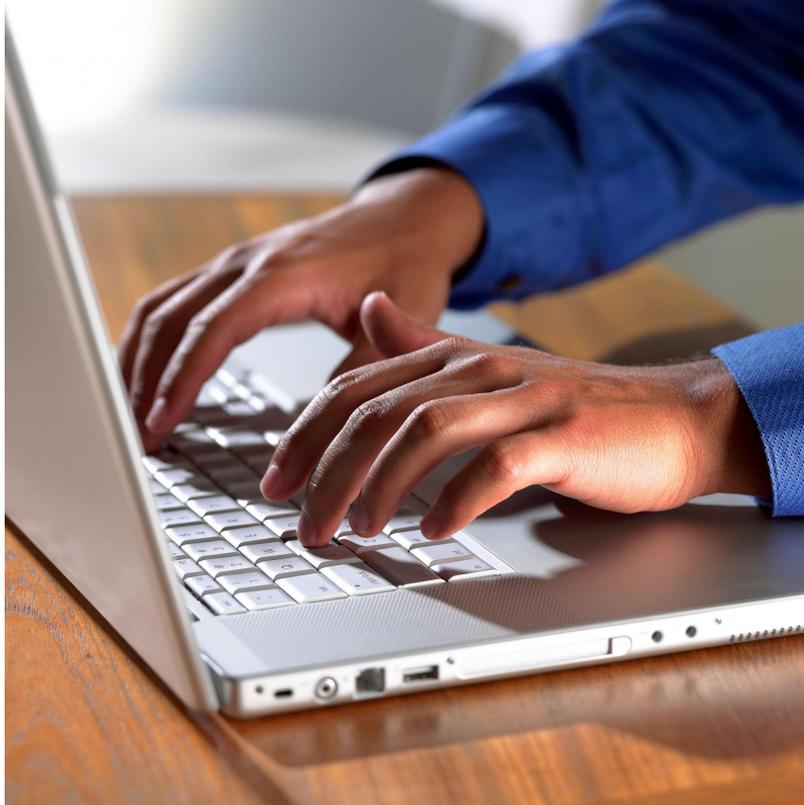
Hello and welcome to our ESL program! Our program is free thanks to the money we receive from the government. One of the conditions for us to continue to receive this support is that our students complete 40 hours of attendance, or approximately 10 weeks of classes, and then take another test.

Step 1: The Application

Lincoln Land Community College

- Our application asks for your social security number so we can submit it to our school. You can enroll in our program with or without providing a Social Security number on the form, but if you have one, it helps us transition you to other programs at our school AND it helps our school maintain our funding to continue offering free courses.

Barriers to Employment

Teachers help by asking and reporting

Barriers to Employment

- Demographic measures that may affect a participant's ability to obtain employment after exiting the program

- Defined by WIOA

- Participants with barriers may require additional or more intensive services

- Collect at intake and reported for each Period of Participation

The 11 Barriers in WIOA

Displaced homemaker	Individual with disabilities
English language learner, low literacy level, cultural barriers	Single Parent
Exhausting Temporary Aid for Needy Families within 2 years	Ex-offender
Low income	Homeless or runaway youth
Migrant and seasonal farmworker	Long-term unemployed
Youth in foster care or who has aged out of the system	

Revealing Challenges
"If it is okay with you, I would like to talk about any situations or challenges you are facing that need to be planned around."

When you learn a student has one of these barriers to employment, who do you share the information with and how?

NOT A BARRIER…

Just a consideration that needs planning

Turning Closed Questions Into Open-Ended Questions

Closed Question	● Do you have childcare needs that would prohibit your participation in the program? ● Do you have childcare in place for your children?
Sort of Open	● What kind of assistance do you need for your children? ● Will childcare present any issues that you need help with?
Open Question	● If you enroll in class, what options do you have for childcare? ● In the past when you needed to go somewhere, how did you arrange for your children to be cared for? ● How have you solved childcare issues in the past?

Breakout Room Discussion

- How do you talk to students about their barriers? (employment, attendance, etc.)

- What strategies could help us gather this information with sensitivity and respect?

Co-Enrollment

What it is and how we can help document it

What is Co-Enrollment?

Co-Enrollment is an individual who is a Participant and/or Reportable in more than one WIOA partner program within a program year. *Co-enrollment is not trying to share students across CBOs, school districts, or community colleges. It is also not an alternative method of credentialing.*

Co-Enrolled AE students should be recorded in DAISI.

Co-Enrollment

Enrolling a participant in more than one WIOA Title program at the same time

Not just a referral - student must meet eligibility AND be accepted into another Title program

Purpose: Maximize services, avoid duplication, and support success

Example: A student can be served under Adult Education (Title II) and also Title I Workforce or Title IV Voc Rehab

What can this look like in Illinois programs?

Co-enrollment Examples   ([IWDS Referral Guide](#))

Example 1

Title II:

Pat takes adult education classes at the local community college in preparation for an HSE.

Title IV:

At the same time, she receives vocational training through rehabilitation services.

Example 2

Title II:

Mel participates in an ICAPS program for HVAC certification. He takes adult education ELA/ESL classes.

Title I:

Mel is getting funding from his local American Job Center for his HVAC classes.

# Post-Testing Practices & Student Persistence

Why it matters that students stay AND test

Ways to Make a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG)

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EFL Gain Examples

Educational Functioning Levels		Reading GOALS Scale Score Ranges	NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) for ESL		Reading STEPS Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ABE Literacy	165-203	1	Beginning ESL Literacy	160-183
2	Beginning Basic Education	204-216	2	Low Beginning ESL	184-196
3	Low Intermediate Basic Education	217-227	3	High Beginning ESL	197-206
4	High Intermediate Basic Education	228-238	4	Low Intermediate ESL	207-216
5	Low Adult Secondary Education	239-248	5	High Intermediate ESL	217-227
6	High Adult Secondary Education	249 & above	6	Advanced ESL	228-238
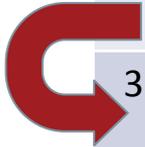
NRS EFLs correlate to adult education standards at the national and state level.

The EFLS correlate to ABE/ASE and ESL standards:
- College & Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education
- English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education
- Illinois Adult Education Standards for ABE/ASE Language Arts & Math
- Illinois English Language Acquisition Standards

Current, widely used textbook series also correlate to the standards and the EFLs.

TABE, CASAS, and BEST tests also correlate to the standards and the EFLs.

Messaging for Student Assessments

Message: Teachers to students

Why do you need to test?
- The money to offer free classes comes from test results. Your test helps us continue to have classes in the future.
- Pre-test results help us know how to put students in the correct classes and what information and skills to teach.
- Post-test results help you see how much progress you have been making and they help the teacher see where you still need more work.

Why should you give your best effort on the test?
- When we know exactly where you are strong and where you have challenges, we can adapt our teaching for your needs and get you to your goals on your timeline.

Why should you not guess on your pre-test?
- On a pre-test we are trying to learn where you are strong and where you have challenges. If you guess a lot and happen to get some questions correct, we won't know all the information we need to help you reach your goals. So if you don't know the answer, you can leave it blank.

Teachers: Use eTest sampler / sample questions to prepare students for what the test will be like, particularly before they post-test. Each test publisher also offers a simulation of what the test looks like when taken on a computer. Allowing students time in class to discover the tools, features, and structure of the computer-based test can help ease test anxiety.

How does student persistence impact MSGs?

Students must achieve at least 40 hours of attendance in a class before they can be post-tested.

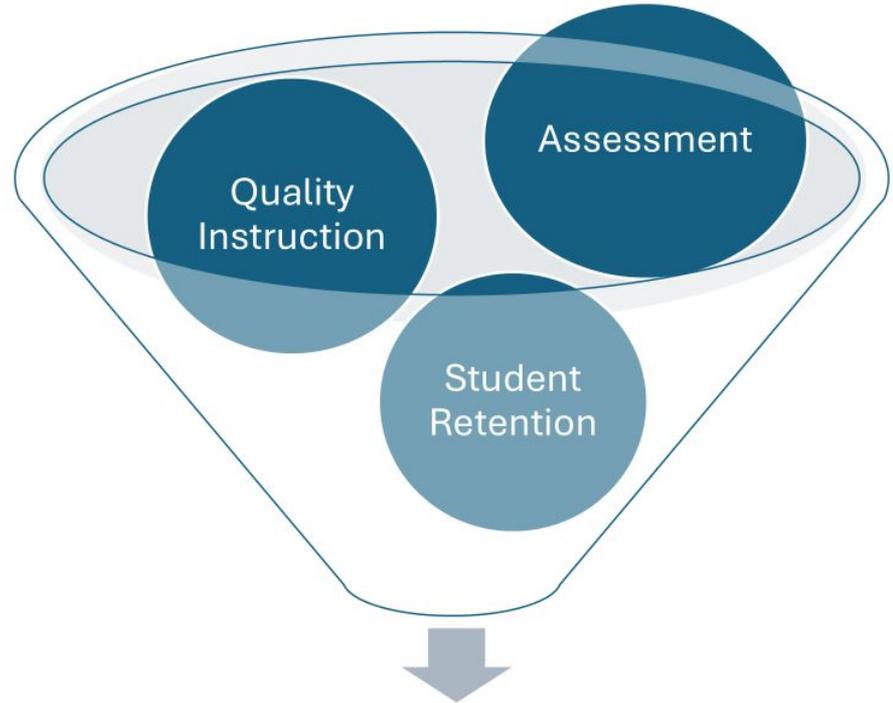If students don't persist until 40 hours of attendance, they cannot be post-tested.

If students don't post-test, they cannot earn a Measurable Skill Gain #1a.

What can teachers do to help students persist in class?

We're all on the same team, striving for student success!

When IL Adult Ed students take a post-test, they do GREAT! (**61%** of post-tested students showed a level gain and earned an MSG in FY25)
Let's help our students be part of that success!

Aim High!

MSG Stretch Goal
for FY26:
65%

Let's Check In…

Confident **Not sure** **Don't know**

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Resources to Review and Share

- WIOA and AE Foundations [iLEARN course](#)
- Orientation to AE for Instructors [iLEARN course](#) - Lesson 3.2 on Data
- Lesson Bank [Responsible Internet Use](#) lesson - includes guidance for handling personal information
- [WIOA 11 Barriers to Employment](#)
- WIOA Partner [Referral Guide](#)
- Assessment Messaging [document](#)

These training slides and a time-stamped recording of today's presentation will be shared with the field.

Help our students succeed, our AE programs to succeed, and Illinois to share the value of Adult Education

PDN Pulse

GET ON THE LIST!

Subscribe to the Professional Development Network's email list to find out about great PD opportunities for Illinois adult educators!

https://rebrand.ly/pdnlist

We do not share our email list and promise not to fill your inbox!