



Original Photo by Jonathan Miske. Edited

October 4, 2019

All Hail Fall

Active weather. A sure sign of fall in the Pacific Northwest where [this](#) happened last week. Here's wishing you a [golden-mooned](#), [Honeycrisp-y](#), and [jack-o'-lantern](#)-full October. This month, we're awash in credentials – 738,428 of them according to the latest [Credential Engine](#) report. Whether apprenticeship, certificates, or industry-recognized credentials, education and workforce professionals seek to determine their value in the labor market and build them into skills strategies where they have the greatest potential. An enduring data challenge to be sure.

#ICYMI

During this month's WDQI webinar, we welcomed two subject matter experts:

- [Joshua Mallett](#), who spoke to the importance of repeatable processes in increasing efficiency and improving data quality, championed the benefits of shared documentation (and code) using platforms like [GitHub](#), and made us want to see more of his #dataviz!
- [Dr. Marian Negoita](#), who shared highlights from two of the (many) TAACCCT research and evaluation projects he worked on, explained methods-centered innovations from a recent gang violence prevention project, and introduced a new approach to service contracting that requires a more integrated approach to tracking and metrics.

We also shared quite a few **WDQI grantee announcements**, summarized briefly here:

- We will be scheduling our annual **deep-dive interviews with Round VI WDQI teams** in the coming months. These may require some preparation ahead and participation by more than a single team lead. Watch your email for more information.
- If you seek the help of a **subject matter expert** in your WDQI work, use this [super-short request form](#).
- If you think you will need a **grant extension**, contact your federal program officer immediately.
- We crowdsourced responses to a couple of questions we'd received. One of them was *"What software applications are most helpful for data matching?"* Have a good response? Colleagues from multiple states would like to know! [Email Maureen](#).

- We added another episode to our growing [podcast](#) archive – this one with [Jenna Leventoff](#), who has just left WDQC for [Public Knowledge](#). We will miss her and look forward to continued collaboration with Kermit Kaleba and the [National Skills Coalition](#)'s workforce and skills data team.

Finally, we're thrilled to welcome the [Round VII](#) grantees to the WDQI community! During our webinar, we invited your ideas about how to best leverage the knowledge and expertise of both Round VI and Round VII cohorts going forward. This is one of the topics we will cover in our coming deep-dive interviews. As a reminder, the Round VII states include:

- [Maine](#), [Michigan](#), and [New Jersey](#), all active participants in the WDQI community for the duration – grant or no grant!
- [California](#), [Colorado](#), and [Wisconsin](#) – all first-time WDQI grantees with high-level leadership behind them!
- [Illinois](#) and [North Carolina](#), both prior award winners, innovators, and providers of these timely and important reports!
- Idaho, which [pioneered the use of DMV data](#) to help link individual records across education and workforce programs; and
- Texas, an early leader in LDS, which joins [Rhode Island](#) and [Mississippi](#) as "supergrantees" with a vision for modernizing its [CREWS](#) system and integrating performance and tracking systems to generate real insight and intelligence.

And we can hardly wait to introduce our new TA partners, Natalie, Laura, and Matt from [BrightHive Inc.](#) in our next webinar! (There's a sneak preview below.)

Yours in data,

Kristin Wolff (@kristinwolff) &
Maureen Sarver (@maureensarver)

Have a Look



"It's very easy to get stuck."

We had so many good videos last month that we opted to hold this one to share with you now. It's **Roadtrip Nation's** latest, featuring three adults (who do not hold university degrees) navigating career transitions. No other medium captures the impact of change on real people as

effectively, and no other team does it like Roadtrip Nation. Get yourself some popcorn and pull up a chair.

 roadtripnation.com



Defining Quality Non-degree Credentials

Non-degree credentials, such as certificates, industry certifications, apprenticeship, and occupational licenses, are a key component of state economic development and credential attainment goals, helping workers obtain better jobs and serving to reconnect them to further post-secondary education and training. This report advances the field's understanding of *quality* so we can decide how to invest in credentials and assess their impact ongoing.

 nationalskillscoa...



Closing Opportunity Gaps through Racial Equity in Workforce Development

Jobs requiring skills training beyond the high school level, but not a four-year degree make up the largest portion of the labor market in the United States (and in every single state). Yet too few workers can access the skills, training, and education necessary for these jobs, especially people of color who face barriers to equitable education and workforce training opportunities and quality employment. Learn how to explain and address the disparities evident in your data.

 nationalskillscoa...



Solid Foundations: Four State Policy Approaches for Supporting College-Connected Apprenticeships

Although funding and incentives are the primary focus of this [New America](#) report, because apprenticeship is such a critical workforce strategy, and because the structure and funding of apprenticeships affect whether and their outcomes can be measured, we thought you might find

it useful as you work with partners to integrate, share, or make use of apprenticeship data (see in particular the five-state [comparison table](#) and the [budget and enrollment growth charts](#) for North Carolina, Texas, and California). All states cited in the report are current WDQI grantees.

 newamerica.org

Have a New Language?

Emsi Skills: A new language for employers, educators, and students

What could you do with a library of 30,000 skills? Emsi invites you to find out. The company just released its [new tool](#) with the intent of providing people, employers, and providers of education and training with a common language.

 economicmodeling.com

Have (a) Data Catalogue!

Announcing the Urban Institute Data Catalog!

Whoa. [LODES](#), [EITC](#), there's even an [education data portal](#). And then there's [this terrific narrative](#) about how Urban came to "really open, open data." We're guessing there may be lessons in it for others.

 medium.com

Have a Tool(kit)

A Glossary for AI & Machine Learning

This AI glossary was written for educators (higher education specifically). Since we've talked about the implications of these technologies for what we do, we thought some of you might find some utility here.

 admithub.com

Stephanie Evergreen's Ninja Ratings

How did Stephanie Evergreen know this topic just came up in our Tuesday webinar? She and her team believe that you should become the master of the tools you own. And they also provide a handy table that rates the #dataviz topic tutorials by level of difficulty,

across the three platforms. So there are the directional answers to the "R vs" questions you didn't have time to ask Joshua.

 stephanieevergreen.com

Why Finding Out How Much College Costs is Harder Than It Looks

Since most of you are in the report card business, we thought you might benefit from this PBS primer about college scorecards. It's a difficult read, but instructive. Swallow hard and proceed.

 pbs.org

Pearson's Global Learner Survey

The project produced two reports – one on the survey results and the other on opportunities for higher education – and a summary of eight key trends. Take a look at trends 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in particular.

 pearson.com

Evaluation and Research Hub on Workforce GPS

We've shared this new resource during webinars but not we're making it easy. Just once click and you are in (with a WorkforceGPS account). The EvalHub community of practice (CoP) supports workforce development professionals in their efforts to use evaluations to improve workforce services and programs and cultivate evidence-based policy and practice. Webinar materials and other resources are posted in the community of practice. (We've seen some of you on webinars hosted there and hope to see more of you soon!)

 evalhub.workforcegps.org

Have a Listen

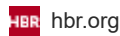
Natalie Evans Harris and her BrightHive Colleagues to Join the WDQI TA Team!

SPR has partnered up with BrightHive, Inc. to boost our TA capacity and share the joy of WDQI and LDS! Together with you, we'll be designing a package of support for Round VI and Round VII grantees through the end of their respective grant periods. We can't wait to introduce you to Natalie and her co-founder Matt Gee and colleague Laura Faulkner formally, but for now, *this* should wow you.

 youtube.com

How Robots and AI Are Changing Job Training

Matt Beane, assistant professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, finds that robots, machine learning, and AI are changing how we train for our jobs — not just how we do them. The interview (recording and transcript are both available) focuses on high-level applied skills, such as surgical procedures for physicians, but having attended an AR/MR/VR/XR/gamification demo last night on the potential of these technologies for learning and training in general, I saw applications for a wide range of fields. (I'm resisting the temptation to insert a 'mind-blown' GIF here and will share this [brief guide](#) instead.)



Our Very Own #WDQI #MakingBetterWork Podcast Now Has Nine Episodes! (

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Search for **Making Better Work** (or for **SPRA** on Google Play, a quirk of the platform).

Again, we hope these new communication channels will bring work happening behind the scenes into the public domain so that kindred spirits in different parts of the growing public data ecosystem can find each other. It's a big job but somebody's got to do it. Why not the WDQI community?

Information Wants to Be Shared

This is edition number nine of *Making Better Work*, the perpetual beta newsletter of the longitudinal workforce data community.

We'd love your continued help in making it great (and your generosity of spirit when we don't quite get there). Our interviews and conversations with you over the past few months, together with our observations and encounters with the field, have led us to the following themes which will guide our editorial choices this year.

- **Impact** (Products, legislation, key policy decisions and more – what difference is WDQI making in your state, community?)
- **Governance** (In the words of one of our subject matter experts, "It's everything.")
- **Ecosystem** (How do we better align public data efforts and work with nonprofit, foundation, university, and other partners more effectively to address critical workforce and education issues? How do we do this consistently, ethically, and responsibly?)
- **Themes that run through WDQI events and activities:**
 - Federal legislative mandates (WIOA – and evaluation, HEA, Perkins, etc.)
 - Non-degree credentials – such as certificates and industry-recognized credentials (increasingly called "credentials of value" and the main focus of our May newsletter)
 - Future of Work – using data to help policymakers, institutional leaders, and the rest of us navigate it

We've already amended this list based on your feedback, so keep it coming.

Just in case you've received this from a friend or colleague and don't know how to find us, we've provided our contact information below.

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Know someone who needs this newsletter? Forward it or send them here.