

# Doña Ana Community College Assessment Committee Newsletter

Our objective is to support and showcase effective and meaningful academic and institutional assessment.

## Measuring Progress and Improving Student Learning

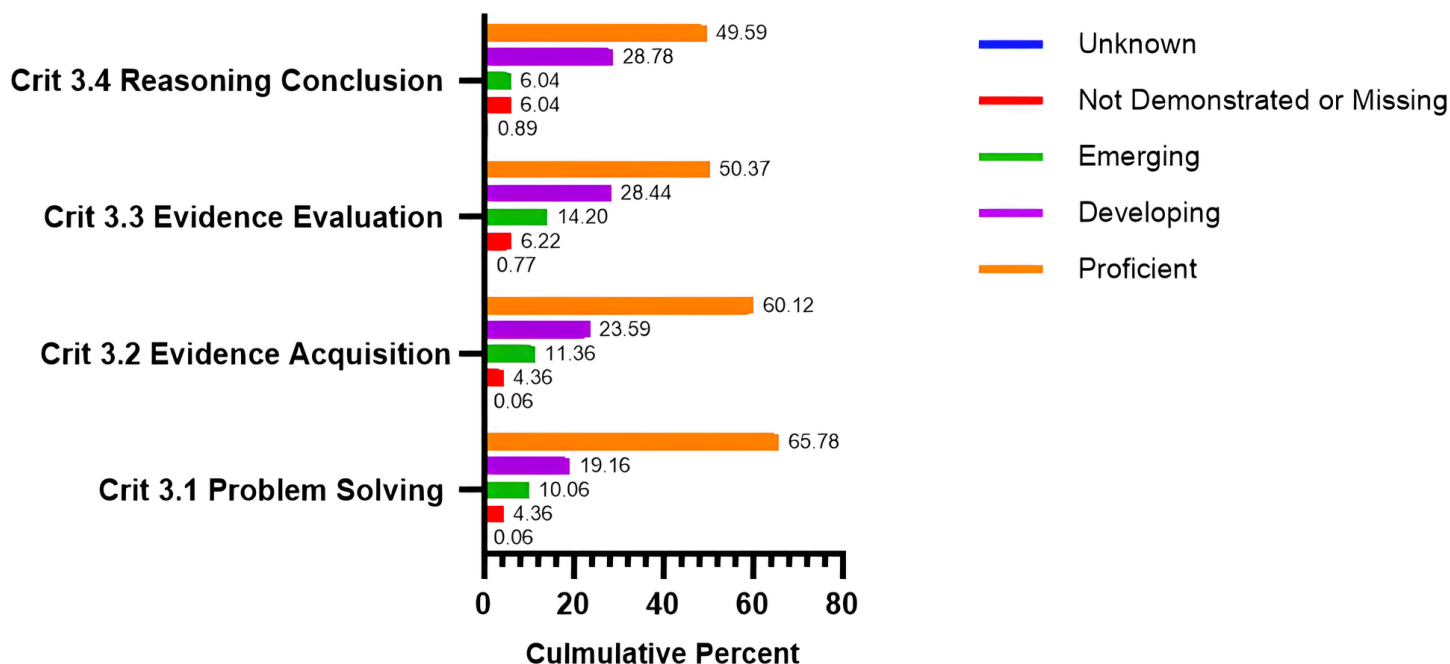
Shannon Bradley, AVP Academic Affairs



DACC has reached an exciting milestone in our assessment journey. As we enter the fourth year of our rolling General Education Assessment, all courses have returned to assessing Critical Thinking, marking a full cycle of our comprehensive assessment process for general education.

This re-assessment phase represents a valuable opportunity for continuous improvement. Instructors are now analyzing data from the first year of Critical Thinking assessment (Fall 2022), identifying both strengths and areas for growth in our curriculum. With targeted improvement plans implemented over the past three years, we anticipate seeing measurable gains in student performance, particularly in areas previously identified as gaps. This year, departments will document and track these changes, enabling us to measure the long-term impact of our enhancement efforts.

### Outcomes by Rating Level - Critical Thinking Fall 2022



In parallel, we are implementing a new assessment process for Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) across all courses. This initiative has been supported by significant progress in updating PLOs college-wide. Departments have dedicated considerable effort to analyzing and refining their PLOs, working collaboratively with the Academic Assessment Committee and through SALT meetings. Additionally, each department and program developed a curriculum map to ensure every PLO is intentionally aligned with program content and assessed appropriately. A key achievement has been the submission of the first assessment plan for each department and program in this new academic assessment process. The Academic Assessment Committee has reviewed these plans and provided feedback to support their implementation. We look forward to seeing how these plans are put into practice and to reading the reflections that departments will provide after completing their first cycle of assessment.

## Faculty & Unit Focus

### Emanuel Medina: DACC's Renaissance Employee

Dr. Erik Braeden Lewis, *Humanities & Social Sciences Faculty*

I had the pleasure of interviewing Emanuel Medina about his dedication to fulfilling multiple tasks at DACC. His skill set as both a Training Specialist and a Part-Time Faculty member in the Arts Department enables him to bridge the gap between students and the viewpoint of DACC institutional operations. The best way to conceptualize his achievements is to frame his efforts as a Renaissance Employee, someone with extensive knowledge and expertise across various fields. In his role with VLIT, he has made significant contributions, including assisting students with Canvas—especially during new-student orientation—and distributing iPads. Emanuel is hands-on throughout the college.

Aside from efforts to help learners overcome technological issues, Emanuel underscored that most students need wraparound services, particularly mental health and career services, and that his role as liaison between students and the college positions him to facilitate these interventions. Moreover, he stated that course design issues and inconsistent communication between instructors and students were the most significant concerns contributing to student frustration. Concerning DACC's culture of assessment, Emanuel participates at multiple levels. Not only does he track the frequency and reasons for student visits, but he also tracks outcomes and repeat visits, to make students agents of their own learning. This data is combined with qualitative feedback to evaluate achievements and identify potential new interventions to support the overall success of the DACC student body. Emanuel's attitude and work ethic deserve commendation; DACC has and will continue to benefit from his contributions.



## DACC Program Focus

### Transforming the Classroom

Natalie Streander, *Film & Digital Media Arts Faculty &*

Bonnie Rinkels, *Dental Hygiene Faculty*

For film instructor Stephen Osborn, filmmaking first “clicked” while working at an ad agency during his piano performance studies. The blend of art, music, and physics led him to DACC in 2005, initially part-time, and then full-time in 2013, where he has watched the film program expand far beyond his expectations. Osborn's newest initiative reflects his deep commitment to authentic, skills-based assessment. Instead of a stand-alone course, he designed a set construction project that transforms DACC's new sound stage into both a professional resource and a teaching laboratory. Working alongside International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 480 craftspeople from Albuquerque, NM, students learn real-world carpentry, painting, and on-set safety while receiving immediate performance feedback from industry mentors.

Assessment occurs naturally in this environment as students demonstrate competencies through the quality of the finished set, their reflective discussions on the shop floor, and the ways their future film productions utilize the set to enhance storytelling and technical execution. The approach aligns with current industry standards, guided by a practicing union foreman who models contemporary tools, procedures, and expectations. The impact extends beyond a single project. The completed set becomes a living assessment tool, used repeatedly in production courses to measure growth in lighting, design, and cinematography. As Osborn notes, it's “one more feather in our hat”, a lasting example of how assessment and authentic experience merge to elevate both learning and program quality.

## General Assessment at DACC

### Numbers Aren't Everything: The Skill of Qualitative Analysis

Dr. Erik Braeden Lewis, *Humanities & Social Sciences Faculty*

In a data-driven world, we tend to focus on statistical information: passing, retention, and graduation rates; percentages related to salary increases; or even the number of students with iPads. What's missing is a sense of humanity. Qualitative data makes students, faculty, and research subjects human again, not just a data point. The methodology can be a difficult analytic skill to acquire. Qualitative analysis employs thematic interpretation to explore individual agency and interactions with the world, addressing a myriad of questions about human existence.

In practice, qualitative analysis uses layers of qualitative data to investigate and/or challenge standing theories, notions, and practices – it's open-ended, concrete, and vivid – yet rich and nuanced, allowing respondents full agency to share their experience and information, providing the researcher with enough depth to formulate new theories, remedies, or highlight the human condition. While this is a common methodology in the Humanities and Social Sciences, qualitative analysis can be used across all Divisions, Programs, and Offices at DACC to provide a more holistic understanding of the faculty and student body.

Reference Material:

Graebner, Melissa E., Jeffrey A. Martin, and Philip T. Roundy. "Qualitative data: Cooking without a recipe" in *Strategic Organization*. 10, no. 3 (August 2012): 276-284.

## Literature Review

### Artificial Intelligence & Assessment

Kathryn Million, *Early Childhood Education Faculty*

Meakin offers a clear and grounded look at how AI is reshaping the landscape of assessment. She argues that traditional text-heavy timed assessment methods often struggle to capture genuine learning, and the rapid growth of generative AI only heightens that challenge. What I find most valuable is her focus on strengthening assessment design rather than policing student behavior.

She encourages educators to create assessments that make student thinking visible. Approaches like oral assessments, in-class demonstrations of understanding, adaptive questioning, and project-based evaluations reduce the likelihood that AI can substitute for real learning. Her discussion of the AI Assessment Scale is especially helpful because it provides faculty with a structured framework for clarifying when AI use is appropriate and when it compromises the validity of an assessment.

Meakin also stresses the importance of transparency. Students need clear guidance about how AI fits into assessment expectations and why certain assessment conditions matter. By naming both the benefits and the limitations of AI tools, she reminds us that responsible assessment in this era is less about restriction and more about intentionally designing opportunities for students to demonstrate authentic understanding.

Meakin, L. A. (2024). [\*AI and assessment: Rethinking assessment strategies and supporting students in appropriate use of AI\*](#). *Impact*, 21, 52.