The state of New Mexico recently adopted a new model for General Education (GE) focused on five “essential skills” – transferable competencies such as critical thinking deemed vital for students’ educational attainment and post-graduate success. There is a broad consensus about the need for students to learn essential skills. Nevertheless, faculty are often reluctant to embrace essential skills instruction due to fears about sacrificing vital content or concerns that they are unqualified to teach these skills.

This workshop presents an approach to essential skills instruction that respects and enriches a course’s disciplinary context and that validates the crucial role disciplinary faculty play in that process. Specifically, by participating in this workshop, you will:

- Learn how to frame the purpose and value of GE essential skills for your students and colleagues
- Develop plans for integrating critical thinking instruction into your GE course. Critical thinking is the only one of the state’s five essential skills required for all disciplines.
- Explore strategies for integrating the other essential skills into your GE course

The workshop will also provide general information on the expectations of GE faculty for teaching and assessing essential skills, on resources available to support faculty in those functions, and on the role GE plays in achieving our strategic goals for student success and social mobility.

Dr. David Smith is the director of assessment for NMSU’s Las Cruces campus. He began this appointment in 2015 after serving for 21 years on the faculty of the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. Throughout his teaching career, David was a leading proponent of classroom assessment on the NMSU campus and a mentor to numerous graduate student and faculty instructors. He received the NMSU Teaching Academy Innovation Award in 2009 and Best Workshop Award in 2011. As director of assessment, David provides resources, support, and feedback for faculty and staff across campus in their efforts to improve the learning and the overall experience of our students. He has also served as a member of the statewide steering committee for the reform of general education and is currently chair of the General Education Course Certification Committee (GECCC). As a fellow, David facilitates occasional book discussion groups and teaches a short course on Using Assessment to Document and Improve Learning (and Teaching!).

Registration is required at teaching.nmsu.edu. If you have problems registering online, call 646–2204 for help.