The LaGuardia Center for Teaching & Learning
Principles of Effective Practice

The LaGuardia Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers and supports programs designed to advance innovative teaching and enrich student learning at LaGuardia Community College. Founded in Fall 2001 as a center for professional Collaboration. Reflection, and exchanges, the Center provides programs and support for faculty who wish to work together to advance learning and teaching. Here are some of the key principles of good practice that the Center seeks to manifest in all of its programs:

Respect Faculty Knowledge. Effective professional development builds on faculty's tremendous expertise. Faculty leaders are critical to success. So are formal and informal opportunities for faculty participants to share and learn from each other. Encourage multiple perspectives and approaches.

Focus on the classroom. Classroom practice is the nexus of professional growth. Link questions of theory to practical possibilities for the LaGuardia classroom.   Focus on activities, classroom resources, technologies and approaches that faculty can actually use with students.   Model good classroom practice. Faculty should be able to walk away from each seminar with new skills and resources. Make it useful.

Support Collective Inquiry.   Meaningful professional development provides opportunities to explore important questions about learning and teaching through a gradually unfolding inquiry process. Faculty are master learners—help them apply the tools of scholarship to their own classroom practice. Innovative faculty see their classrooms as laboratories, sites for thoughtful pedagogical experimentation and documentation, with the seminar providing opportunities for reflection and exchange.

Create Opportunities for Sustained Work. Change in professional practice happens over time. One-shot workshops are primarily outreach, not faculty development. Faculty need structures and support that enables them to engage in a long-term and recursive learning process.

Break Boundaries. Bring faculty together in groups that don't normally work together. Create opportunities for faculty to explore contrasting disciplinary perspectives, and to collaborate across departmental lines, focusing on the wholistic student experience. Help faculty develop ways to combine skill-building and discipline-based learning. Link classroom issues to larger questions about learning, teaching, and our highest goals for the College.

Create a Supportive Professional Community.   Teaching is a challenging profession. Innovation involves risk-taking. Establish a climate of support and thoughtful reflection, generating safe spaces, where faulty can talk about and learn from what doesn't work, as well as what does.

Respect Faculty Time. Make sure that seminars and workshops are carefully planned and well organized. Think about the details. Make sure that hand-outs and activities are clear and accurate. Work hard to start on time and end on time. Provide good food.