



## **Faculty Learning Community in Higher Education**

### ***Questions and Answers***

#### ***What is a Faculty Learning Community (FLC)?***

A FLC is a professional learning community consisting of approximately 5 to 7 faculty who voluntarily come together on a periodic basis. Group members are committed to improving their professional practice through collaborative dialogue and discussion focused on supporting student achievement utilizing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

#### ***What are the goals of an FLC?***

- Create a professional learning community
- Make teaching practice explicit by “talking about teaching
- Help faculty work collaboratively in democratic and reflective ways
- Establish sustained professional development based on a spirit of inquiry
- Provide a context to understand our teaching practices and a form to consider our assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning

#### ***How will a FLC help me?***

While faculty may constantly consider how to support student achievement in higher education, rarely do we have the opportunity to collaborate with each other on how to refine our practice. A Faculty Learning Community (FLC) brings faculty together in a facilitated, monthly meeting to look at their syllabus, coursework and assignments in a structured way and explore how they can improve their own teaching practices. While talking with peers about instructional issues is rare, once faculty experience it they realize the significant value it offers.

#### ***How does it work?***

Initially, group members receive training in the basic principles of UDL as well as the specific structure of the FLC process adopted by EnACT~PTD. In addition to the EnACT~PTD faculty development workshops, FLC meeting are held on a regular basis. For each meeting one or more faculty member(s) will prepare for the FLC meeting by following the guidelines provided in [Preparing for a Faculty Learning Community Meeting](#).

In preparation, faculty consider their course syllabus or critical issue they would like to address in their course (e.g., course syllabus, a particular assignment, an examination, specific course content) within the context of UDL.

During the FLC meeting, participants follow the Guided Protocol for a Faculty Learning Community Meeting, ask probing questions, and provide feedback to the faculty presenter. Thus, in a structured setting of mutual support and honest critical feedback from peers, faculty work to adapt and revise their teaching goals, pedagogical strategies and course assignment within the context of Universal Design for Learning.

***How long are FLC meetings?***

The duration of a FLC meeting depends upon the number of group participants and how many FLC meetings can be scheduled throughout the year to ensure that all members have a chance to present. Typically if only one member is presenting, it is anticipated that a FLC meeting should not exceed one hour in length.

***Given the nature of group work, what mutually agreed upon elements are required for an effective FLC meeting?***

- Openness to improvement
- Trust and respect
- A foundation in the knowledge and skills of teaching
- Willingness to offer and accept supportive and constructive feedback
- Shared commitment to teaching and learning

***Why do FLC participants say that FLC work is more satisfying when compared to other kinds of professional development?***

- It is continual.
- It is focused on their own teaching and their own students' learning.
- It takes place in a small group of supportive and trusted colleagues.
- Participants have control over their own professional learning needs.