

Using On Course Principles to Support Student Success

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Palomar College faculty have recently received four-day On Course Workshop training on incorporating On Course strategies in their classrooms. On Course is a series of learning strategies for empowering students to become active, responsible learners. There is abundant data that demonstrates how On Course active learning strategies have increased student retention and success. Dr. Skip Downing details On Course strategies in his textbook, *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life* (Cengage Learning), which is used in college success courses.

On Course instructional strategies model current understanding of how meaningful learning occurs. As such, On Course strategies are designed to engage learners in the active construction of knowledge and are guided by the following principles:

- Students construct learning primarily as a result of what they think, feel, and do (and less so by what their instructors say and do). Consequently, in formal education, the deepest learning is provided by a well-designed educational experience.
- The most effective learners are empowered learners, who are characterized by self-responsibility, self-motivation, self-management, interdependence, self-awareness, life-long learning, emotional intelligence, and high self-esteem.
- At the intersection of a well-designed educational experience and an empowered learner lies the opportunity for deep and transformational learning and the path to success—academic, personal, and professional.

During the past two years, more than 90 Palomar College faculty from a variety of disciplines have attended the On Course I Workshop at Palomar College. During the summer of 2013, 32 of those faculty will continue to learn about how to successfully implement On Course strategies by attending the On Course II Workshop at Palomar College. A cohort of On Course-trained faculty has attended the On Course National Conference, where many faculty have given presentations about active learning. Palomar College faculty who have attended On Course workshops have also given a series of Professional Development workshops on campus to other faculty about incorporating On Course strategies into their courses.

Some of the challenges of infusing On Course principles campus-wide include resistance by faculty to new teaching strategies (even though they are proven to increase student retention and success) and the high cost of attending On Course Workshops to train faculty.

More details about On Course can be found at: <http://www.oucourseshop.com/>.

There is also an annual On Course National Conference (see:

<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/default.aspx?EventID=1128944>).

How On Course improves student retention and success rates is detailed here:

<http://www.oucourseshop.com/Data.htm>