Supplemental Instruction (UMKC, 2013)

An academic assistance program that utilizes peer-assisted study sessions. SI sessions are regularly-scheduled, informal review sessions in which students compare notes, discuss readings, develop organizational tools, and predict test items.

Purpose:
• To increase retention within targeted historically difficult courses
• To improve student grades in targeted historically difficult courses
• To increase the graduation rates of students
• To improve student connections with faculty and other students

Students learn how to integrate course content and study skills while working together.
• Collaborative Learning approach
• Complement & enhance students’ classroom learning
• Non-remedial, inclusive learning environment for all students
• Confidential peer support for course
Top Outcomes & Benefits of SI Programs:

- Students earn higher course grades while they learn effective study skills.
- SI provides an opportunity for students to develop relationships with other students and staff, an important factor in retention.
- SI places the responsibility of learning with the students.
- SI helps to develop self confidence and independence in students.
- SI is proactive and participatory rather than reactive and passive.
- SI improves communication skills.
- SI accommodates various learning styles.
- SI provides students with team work experiences.
- SI promotes a non-remedial “stigma” while offering academic support to all students enrolled in historically difficult subjects.
The SI Model

How it Works:
• SI Sessions begin the second week of classes and run through the last day of classes.
• SI Leaders work 8 hours/week: 3 in class; 3 sessions, 2 CSA office

SI Leader Responsibilities:
Inside the Class:
• 1st Day of Class: SI Leader Introduction/Session Surveys
• Attend each class, model positive student behavior, & promote SI sessions

Outside the Class:
• Create materials and session plans during CSA Planning Hours
• Meet with course instructor for feedback and support
• Meet with SI program staff for supervision
• Track student attendance & promote session attendance

During Sessions:
• Facilitate activities promoting critical thinking, discussion, problem solving, and study skills
• Field questions and prompt group thinking
SU’s SI Program

History:
• Piloted in 2009
• Supports 80-85 sections per semester
• Employs 60-70 SI Leaders per semester

Key Players:
• CSA Staff: Assistant Director, Coordinator, Graduate Assistants
• Undergraduate SI Leaders
• Course Instructors
• Department/School Support

Program Coordination
• CSA staff oversees all functions of the SI program
• Trainings follow CRLA International Mentor Training Program Guidelines
• All costs covered by the Division of Student Affairs

Program Evaluation:
• Student usage & feedback
• Faculty feedback
• Students’ mean final course grades & DFW rates
• Tracking student retention & persistence
• Track course DFW rates
Key Factors for Course Selection:

- “Historically difficult”— 25% or higher DFW rate, over academic years
- Course design — material lends itself to group discussion/practice
- Large course enrollment

Process:

- CSA staff contacts Department Chairs for course requests
- Requests are approved after review of key factors and available funding
- Section numbers are changed to -5XX in GullNet
- SI leaders are assigned
  - If needed, new SI leaders are recruited, interviewed, and hired
Student Qualifications:

- Undergraduate student
- Earned a grade of an A or B in SI course at Salisbury University
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Obtain a faculty recommendation from the SI course’s department (instructor)
- Obtain an additional faculty/staff recommendation
- Availability to attend SI class meeting time

Process:

- Nominate a student!
- Candidates submit applications, interview, and are hired by CSA staff
- No candidate is considered without a faculty recommendation
Training & Evaluating SI Leaders

Training:
• CRLA International Mentor Training Program Certification Guidelines Level I ([http://crla.net/imtpc/certification_requirements.htm](http://crla.net/imtpc/certification_requirements.htm))
  • 15 hours of training/academic year
    • Two-day initial training; 3 hours of continuous training/semester
  • Topics Include:
    • Role of peer mentor, professionalism, & ethics
    • Establishing rapport & motivating students
    • Facilitation & communication skills
    • Learning theories
    • Study techniques
    • Leadership styles

Evaluation:
• Session observations & feedback
• Mid-semester conversations
• End-of-semester student survey
Supporting SI

**The Faculty Role with SI Partnerships:**

- Help the CSA staff select good candidates for SI leaders
- Allow periodic announcements in class regarding SI sessions
- Maintain your SI leader’s peer leader status by not asking them to take on any authoritative responsibilities within the class (i.e. teaching/proctoring/grading)
- Support your SI leader in developing content resources for sessions
- Encourage SI session attendance to all enrolled students
- Avoid requiring or incentivizing students’ usage of SI sessions
- Provide feedback and ideas to CSA staff
- Respect the non-disclosure of participant names
- Share your experience with colleagues
Additional Resources & References

College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)
http://www.crla.net/

CRLA Training Certification Programs
http://www.crla.net/

International Center for Supplemental Instruction, University of Missouri-Kansas City
http://www.umkc.edu/asm/si/index.shtml

Supplemental Instruction Annotated Bibliography of Articles, Book Chapters, Dissertations and Monographs (Rev. 2009) http://www.umkc.edu/asm/si/si-docs/sibib.htm

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