

Iowa State University
Dean of Students Office
Supplemental Instruction-Academic Success Center

**Supplemental Instruction Student Feedback
2008-2009**

Authors: Craig Zywicki, Supplemental Instruction Program Coordinator
Elena Ballam, Supplemental Instruction Graduate Assistant
Amy Pettit, Supplemental Instruction Undergraduate Research Assistant

Contact: Craig Zywicki, czywicki@iastate.edu

Supplemental Instruction Student Feedback, 2008-2009

Abstract

Students enrolled in courses for which Supplemental Instruction (SI) is offered are eligible to complete a program evaluation during the final weeks of each semester. This report uses descriptive statistics to highlight the results of the program evaluations from fall 2008 and spring 2009, and to determine additional ideas for program improvement.

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to describe students' perceptions of the SI Leaders, use of the SI website, educational achievement, and reasons for not attending SI.

Methodology

Two online program evaluations—one for SI participants and one for non-participants—were developed based on prior versions of the program evaluation. One new question was added to assess the helpfulness of the e-mail updates sent to students.

Students received an e-mail notification of the program evaluation, directing them to the online location of the evaluation. Students self selected which evaluation form to complete. Following conclusion of data collection, frequency data were compiled and reported.

Findings

Table 1 and Table 2 summarize frequency data for participants and non-participants.

Discussion and Recommendations

SI Leader Evaluation. The following results indicate a generally high evaluation of SI Leaders' skills.

	% SI Participants Indicating "Good" or "Excellent"
Knowledge of the subject matter	85.31%
Effectiveness in communicating subject matter	78.95%
Patience in explaining the subject matter	83.56%
Promptness and reliability	85.54%
Approachability	84.90%
Effectiveness in involving participants	76.73%

These results are quite similar to 2007-2008 results. Effectiveness involving participants dropped three percentage points, which could be attributed to more SI participants and larger sessions. These results suggest greater emphasis on learning how to work with larger or diverse groups.

Use of the Website. Three questions about website use appear on both the participant and non-participant evaluation forms. By February, 2009, we noticed a significant increase in the number of views of the SI webpages. This increase is reflected in the survey results, as shown in the next chart comparing this year with the previous academic year.

This increase is due to the growth of resources on our website to communicate with students, and likely due in part to the SI Leaders' use of the online tools. Additional comments in the evaluation indicate students are seeking greater use of the website.

Growth of the website use also corresponds to the use of the "automatic e-mail updates." We found that 95.7% of the SI participants who received these e-mail updates reported that these e-mail updates were

helpful. Even 90.2% of the non-participants receiving the e-mails indicated the e-mails were helpful. Minor modifications to the website are planned for implementation for fall 2009.

		% SI Participants Indicating “Once a Week” or “Several Times a Week”	
		2008-2009	2007-2008
How often did you go to the SI website for information regarding SI session times and locations?	SI Participants	37.84	28.25
	Non-Participants	12.36	5.68
How often did you print off handouts from the SI webpage?	SI Participants	29.27	24.3
	Non-Participants	9.88	4.24
How often did you check the SI webpage for SI session agendas or topics?	SI Participants	33.06	22.91
	Non-Participants	11.25	4.34

Academic Achievement. The following chart compares students’ predicted academic achievement in the program evaluation to their actual achievement based on final grades. Obviously, the evaluation participants, on average, are earning final grades higher than the students who did not participate in the program evaluation.

		SI Participants	Non-Participants
All Students	Actual Final Grade	2.72 (n=6892)	2.37 (n=18710)
Evaluation Participants	Actual Final Grade	2.96 (n=703)	2.91 (n=515)
	Predicted Final Grade	3.12 (n=703)	3.14 (n=515)

We also ask SI Participants to report their level of grade improvement due to SI, and ask non-participants to predict how SI could have helped improve their final grade.

- ◆ 84.0% of SI Participants self-report that SI helped them improve their final grade at least ½ letter grade, and
 - ◆ 69.7% of Non-Participants stated SI *could have* helped them improve their final grade.
- Since no pre-test is available, these self-reported statistics are our best predictor of the grade difference that can result from SI participation.

Reasons for not attending SI. We have been able to predict the common reasons students to do not attend SI sessions, but we are doing our best to minimize reasons why students do not attend SI. Based on the percent of students who agreed or strongly agreed with statements provided, results produced the following order of emphasis:

	% Agreeing with Statement	
	2008-2009	2007-2008
I would be more likely to attend SI if I knew a specific agenda or topics for each session.	59.12%	59.71%
I didn't attend SI because I didn't need assistance for the course.	45.19%	47.19%
I would be more likely to attend SI if we change the time of the sessions.	44.67%	40.52%
I intended to go to SI but couldn't due to schedule conflicts.	44.34%	41.27%
I would be more likely to attend SI If there were more sessions held per week.	42.90%	43.17%
I didn't attend SI because I don't really know what SI could do for me.	31.65%	34.14%
I would be more likely to attend SI if the location of the sessions was changed.	27.40%	25.42%
I didn't attend SI because I was not concerned about my grade in this course.	22.30%	20.94%

Many of the changes made for 2008-2009 were meant to improve on these reasons why students do not participate in SI sessions. Specifically, the website changes and changes to scheduling should have

decreased the percentage of people unable to attend for these reasons; however, as shown by these statistics, there are still many other students not being accommodated by the changes. We could presume these percentages would be more favorable if they factored in the students served by the changes. Nonetheless, we see that there is room for additional creativity by SI staff members.

We do know that SI is not being made available to all students, and that not all students would want to use SI. Many students are using other campus resources. Future versions of this program evaluation may explore these areas as reasons why student are not attending.

Additional Comments. Students also had the option to add comments about SI. These comments are quite variable, and many contain ideas valuable to the SI Leaders or the program. For example, some comments that suggest improvement include:

“The worksheets were very helpful so I suggest continuing to use them.” Leaders who use worksheets often have many more views of their website, and also provide resources to an unknown number of students who are not attending the SI sessions.

“The SI website is not updated enough ahead of time before having to leave to go to the SI sessions.” Growth of website features have occurred without setting specific expectations for Leaders’ use of the website. It is time for us to set these expectations.

“The times of S.I. were not very convenient for me, or I would have attended more. I could only attend one a week, maybe. I don't know how to address this because it's hard to correlate that many schedules, but I thought the times could vary a little bit.” and **“The times that SI was scheduled didn't work for me the greatest but you can't please everyone.”** Very true, as shown within our new scheduling process. These comments typifies the perception of many students for whom SI is not available.

“One of the main reasons that I did not attend the SI is due to the fact that the leader would come to class and not pay attention or she would fall asleep. This made me feel that she did not care about the class and would not do a good job explaining it if she had slept through it.” This is a serious error by one of our SI Leaders.” We have learned that students attend SI if they have confidence in their Leader, and sleeping is one of many mistakes a Leader could make that severely alters students’ perceptions of the Leaders’ ability. This incident is one that has inspired modifications to SI Leader accountability during training/orientation.

Table 1 SI Participant Responses

Course: All Courses
 SI Leader: All Leaders
 Instructor: All Instructors
 Semester: 2008-2009
 Number of Surveys Completed: 1715

Course Enrollment: 25687
 % Completed by Participants: 6.68%
 % Completed by Non-Participants: 5.95%
 Total % Completed: 12.63%

ATTENDANCE	Frequencies					N	Mean*
	0	1	2	3	4		
How many SI sessions did you attend this semester for this course?	0	1-2	3-5	6-10	More than 10	1715	2.39
	0	448	538	336	393		
	0	26.12%	31.37%	19.59%	22.92%		

* Mean based on scale of 0 to 4 (0="zero sessions"; 1="1-2 Sessions"; 2="3-5 Sessions"; 3="6-10 Sessions"; 4="More than 10 Sessions")

RESIDENCE	Where do you live?	RCA	UDA	TRA	Greek House	N	
		433	335	23	128		1715
		25.25%	19.53%	1.34%	7.46%		
		BUCH	SUV	FC	Off Campus		
		46	32	193	525		
		2.68%	1.87%	11.25%	30.61%		

SI LEADER EVALUATION: Please rate the qualities of your SI Leader.		1	2	3	4	5	N	Mean*
		Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent		
	Knowledge of the subject matter.	29	70	153	649	814	1715	4.25
		1.69%	4.08%	8.92%	37.84%	47.46%		
	Effectiveness in communicating subject matter.	50	103	208	692	662	1715	4.06
		2.92%	6.01%	12.13%	40.35%	38.60%		
	Patience in explaining the subject matter.	34	70	178	589	844	1715	4.25
		1.98%	4.08%	10.38%	34.34%	49.21%		
	Promptness and reliability.	30	60	158	578	889	1715	4.30
		1.75%	3.50%	9.21%	33.70%	51.84%		
	Approachability.	18	69	172	562	894	1715	4.31
		1.05%	4.02%	10.03%	32.77%	52.13%		
	Effectiveness in involving participants.	41	100	258	688	628	1715	4.03
		2.39%	5.83%	15.04%	40.12%	36.62%		

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 5 (1="Poor"; 2="Fair"; 3="Satisfactory"; 4="Good"; 5="Excellent")

SI WEBSITE USE:		1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Never	Once a Month	Once a Week	Several times a week		
	How often did you go to the SI website for information regarding SI session times and locations?	453	613	489	160	1715	2.21
		26.41%	35.74%	28.51%	9.33%		
	How often did you print off handouts from the SI webpage?	734	479	373	129	1715	1.94
		42.80%	27.93%	21.75%	7.52%		
	How often did you check the SI webpage for SI session agendas or topics?	626	522	429	138	1715	2.05
		36.50%	30.44%	25.01%	8.05%		

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Never"; 2="Once a Month"; 3="Once a Week"; 4="Several times a Week")

E-MAIL UPDATES:	Did not Receive E-mail Updates	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Unhelpful	Neither Helpful or Unhelpful	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful		
	353	51	272	587	452	1715	3.06
		2.97%	15.86%	34.23%	26.36%		

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Unhelpful"; 2="Neither Helpful or Unhelpful"; 3="Somewhat Helpful"; 4="Very Helpful"; Students not receiving e-mails are excluded from the mean calculation.)

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:	Q(L): What grade do you expect to earn in this course? Mean value based on calculable grades of a 4.0 scale	0	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		F	D+, D, D-	C+, C, C-	B+, B, B-	A, A-		
		4	33	322	685	644	1688	3.09
		0.24%	1.95%	19.08%	40.58%	38.15%		
	Incalculable grades: Incomplete	Incomplete	N/A	N/A	N/A	Pass	N	
	N/A (implies course was dropped)	6	16	5			27	
	Pass (corresponding to Pass/Fail Grading)	22.22%		59.26%		18.52%		

* Mean based on scale of 0 to 4.00 corresponding to a traditional 4.0 GPA scale.

Q(M): To what degree do you think your final course grade improved due to SI?	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
	None	1/2 letter grade	1 letter grade	more than 1 letter grade		
	310	832	420	153	1715	2.24
	18.08%	48.51%	24.49%	8.92%		

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="None"; 2="1/2 Letter Grade"; 3="1 Letter Grade"; 4="More than 1 Letter Grade")

Q(N): Participating in SI has improved my overall academic achievement.	Q(O): I would recommend SI to a friend.	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
		79	210	1068	358	1715	2.99
		4.61%	12.24%	62.27%	20.87%		
		71	91	910	643	1715	3.24
		4.14%	5.31%	53.06%	37.49%		

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Strongly Agree"; 2="Disagree"; 3="Agree"; 4="Strongly Agree")

Table 2: Non-Participant Responses

Course: All Courses
 SI Leader: All Leaders
 Professor: All Instructors
 Semester: 2008-2009

Course Enrollment: 25687
 % Evaluations Completed: 5.95%

Number of Evaluations Completed: 1529

		Frequencies		N	Mean*
		1 No	2 Yes		
KNOWLEDGE OF SI:					
Were you aware SI was offered for this course?		285 18.64%	1244 81.36%	1529	1.81
Did you know when the SI sessions were held?		503 32.90%	1026 67.10%	1529	1.67

* Mean based on scale of 1 or 2 (1="No;" 2="Yes")

		1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Never	Once a Month	Once a Week	Several times a week		
Q(C): How often did the SI Leader make announcements or write information on the board about SI?		521 34.07%	281 18.38%	320 20.93%	407 26.62%	1529	2.40

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Never;" 2="Once a Month;" 3="Once a Week;" 4="Several Times a Week")

		1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Never	Once a Month	Once a Week	Several times a week		
SI WEBSITE USE:							
Q(D): How often did you go to the SI website for information regarding SI session times and locations?		1024 66.97%	316 20.67%	153 10.01%	36 2.35%	1529	1.48
Q(E): How often did you print off handouts from the SI webpage?		1173 76.72%	205 13.41%	113 7.39%	38 2.49%	1529	1.36
Q(F): How often did you check the SI webpage for SI session agendas or topics?		1153 75.41%	204 13.34%	137 8.96%	35 2.29%	1529	1.38

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Never;" 2="Once a Month;" 3="Once a Week;" 4="Several Times a Week")

		Did not Receive E-mail Updates 694 45.39%	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
			Unhelpful	Neither Helpful or Unhelpful	Somewhat Helpful	Very Helpful		
E-MAIL UPDATES								
How helpful were the e-mail updates you received about SI for this course?			103 6.74%	310 20.27%	306 20.01%	116 7.59%	1529	2.52

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Unhelpful"; 2="Neither Helpful or Unhelpful"; 3="Somewhat Helpful"; 4="Very Helpful")
 Students not receiving e-mails are excluded from calculation of the mean.

		1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
PLEASE INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS:							
Q(G): I intended to go to SI but couldn't due to schedule conflicts.		331 21.65%	520 34.01%	505 33.03%	173 11.31%	1529	2.34
Q(H): I didn't attend SI because I didn't need assistance for the course.		255 16.68%	583 38.13%	508 33.22%	183 11.97%	1529	2.40
Q(I): I didn't attend SI because I was not concerned about my grade in this course.		593 38.78%	595 38.91%	278 18.18%	63 4.12%	1529	1.88
Q(J): I didn't attend SI because I don't really know what SI could do for me.		344 22.50%	701 45.85%	429 28.06%	55 3.60%	1529	2.13
Q(K): I would be more likely to attend SI if there were more sessions held per week.		217 14.19%	656 42.90%	522 34.14%	134 8.76%	1529	2.37
Q(L): I would be more likely to attend SI if the location of the sessions was changed.		266 17.40%	844 55.20%	349 22.83%	70 4.58%	1529	2.15
Q(M): I would be more likely to attend SI if we change the time of the sessions.		195 12.75%	651 42.58%	510 33.36%	173 11.31%	1529	2.43
Q(N): I would be more likely to attend SI if I knew a specific agenda or topics for each session.		147 9.61%	478 31.26%	712 46.57%	192 12.56%	1529	2.62

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="Strongly Agree;" 2="Disagree;" 3="Agree;" 4="Strongly Agree")

		0	1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		F	D+, D, D-	C+, C, C-	B+, B, B-	A, A-		
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:								
Q(O): What grade do you expect to earn in this course?		3 0.20%	47 3.14%	334 22.30%	535 35.71%	579 38.65%	1498	3.05
		Incalculable grades: <i>Incomplete</i>		N/A		Pass	N	
		N/A (implies course was dropped)	0 0.00%	24 77.42%		7 22.58%	31	
		Pass (corresponding to Pass/Fail Grading)						

* Mean based on scale of 0 to 4.00 corresponding to a traditional 4.0 GPA scale.

		1	2	3	4	N	Mean*
		None	1/2 letter grade	1 letter grade	more than 1 letter grade		
Q(P): To what degree do you think SI could have helped you improve your final grade in this course?		427 27.93%	700 45.78%	297 19.42%	105 6.87%	1529	2.05

* Mean based on scale of 1 to 4 (1="None;" 2="1/2 Letter Grade;" 3="1 Letter Grade;" 4="More than 1 Letter Grade")