

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

Motivation Factors Leading to Participation in Supplemental Instruction

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Abstract

Supplemental Instruction (SI) scheduling surveys are distributed during the first week of each semester. In addition to the information gathered to determine ideal times and locations for SI sessions, the survey provided information about prior participation in SI sessions, prior enrollment in the course, and the student's interest level in SI. Attendance sheets were filled out at every SI session and this data along with final grades were compiled. This report summarizes the important findings from this data.

Executive Summary

Purpose

This assessment uses data from scheduling surveys for SI from the two semesters for the school year of 2007-2008 at Iowa State University to answer research questions prompted by prior reports. Results address the usefulness of the scheduling survey.

Methodology

Students completed a survey at the beginning of each semester answering a few questions, three of which are used in this assessment. SI session attendance data was also collected throughout the year by SI Leaders and final grades were accessed at the end of each semester.

The questions used for this assessment from the scheduling survey were:

- ◆ On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=Not Interested; 5=Very Interested) please indicate your interest in attending SI for this course.
- ◆ Have you taken or attempted to take this course before?
- ◆ Have you ever attended an SI session (in this or other classes)?

Correlations and independent sample t-tests were performed using SPSS in order to answer these questions:

1. What is the correlation between level of interest in SI and actual attendance in SI?
2. Does level of interest in SI serve as an indicator for "motivation" to attend SI sessions?
3. How is the level of participation (based on number of sessions attended) in SI affected by previous enrollment in a course and prior SI participation?

The four variables used in the assessment were *level of interest in SI*, *number of SI sessions attended*, *prior SI attendance*, and *taken course before*. Level of interest was measured on a scale from 1 (not interested) to 5 (very interested). Number of SI sessions attended ranged from 0 to 42. Prior SI attendance was answered as "yes" or "no", along with whether the student had taken the course before.

Findings

Significant correlations for level of interest in SI and number of SI sessions attended were found. For the entire school year, there was a significant correlation of 0.211 between *level of interest* and *number of SI sessions attended*. There was a higher correlation for *level of interest* and *number of SI sessions attended* in the spring semester (0.238) than in the fall semester (0.189).

Significant differences amongst means were found using independent sample t-tests performed on prior SI attendance with actual attendance from the current semester and prior SI attendance with level of interest. There was a significant difference (<0.001) in both cases between "yes" *prior SI attendance* and "no" *prior SI attendance*. Those who had attended SI before reported a higher mean level of interest and a higher mean attendance score.

Significant differences amongst means were found using independent sample t-tests performed on the variable *taken course before* with actual attendance and *taken course before* with level of interest. There was a significant difference (<0.001) in both cases between “yes” *taken course before* and “no” *taken course before*. Those who had been enrolled in the course before reported a higher mean level of interest in SI and also a higher mean attendance score.

Discussion and Recommendations

The correlation between level of interest in SI and actual attendance shows that the scheduling survey does serve a purpose in defining those who are more interested in SI. It appears that level of interest may be an indicator for “motivation” to attend SI sessions, given this information. Also, the spring semester reported a higher correlation than the fall semester. This may be due to the fact that many students in the fall are taking courses at the university for the first time. They may not have had as much access to or familiarity with SI. Most students enrolled in the spring semester have been at the university for a previous semester and have heard more about the program from advertising and also from their peers.

Prior attendance in SI may predict future attendance in SI and a higher level of interest as well, most likely because students are finding SI to be helpful in past instances and are looking for a similar experience. Students have familiarized themselves with the program and most gain a sense that the program is beneficial.

Being previously enrolled in a course also appears to increase level of interest and attendance in SI. This is probably due to the fact that a student would like to do better in the course the second time around and is more willing to use outside sources to accomplish the task of getting a better grade.