

Supplemental Instruction (SI) Collaborative peer learning

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ABSTRACT

Active participating collaborative peer learning

I INTRODUCTION

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support program that aims at increasing student success in “difficult” courses (M. Hurley, G. Jacobs, and M. Gilbert, “The Basic SI Model”,2006). SI was developed at the University of Missouri in Kansas City in the early seventies and has since spread to over 1500 universities and university colleges in nearly 30 countries (D. Martin, “Foreword,” Australian Journal of Peer Learning Vol. 1, pp. 3-5, 2008.) It was implemented in Sweden and Lund University 2004 and Lund University serve as and Scandinavian centre for SI.

The main component of SI is an informal collaborative learning environment under the guidance of a “senior” student. This SI leader is a student who has previously completed the course successfully and can therefore act as a model student. The role of the SI-leader is not that of a teacher – they do not impart new knowledge. Instead the SI leader facilitates the process of understanding difficult course material.

It generally commences in a relatively easy-going fashion with some 5-10 minutes of talk, guided by the SI leader (the SI-leader is usually a 2nd or 3rd year student) about occurrences in the course during the previous week. Thereafter the participants decide which areas they want to focus on during the SI session –concepts that need clarification, or problems that have been difficult to understand and solve. The SI leader usually divides the group into smaller sub-groups to ensure that all participants may be active and able to contribute to the work with the material. The SI leader’s main task is thereafter to act as a facilitator to ensure that the work and discussions in the groups progresses smoothly. This is done for instance by asking or redirecting questions within the group, helping to break down problems, and encouraging participants to help each other towards understanding, by posing critical or probing questions. It is essential that the SI leader works to obtain an open climate in the group whereby all participants are free to ask the questions they would like to have answered. The SI sessions are generally concluded with the participants presenting for each other, the solutions and answers they have arrived at, using the blackboard.

Hands on Session

This hands on session will demonstrate some strategies in a SI session and will involve participant in the activity and will then provide an open discussion about what occurred in the session. This hands on session will also will provide the participant with an understanding of the role of the SI-leader, what strategies that can be used and also learn what outcomes the SI participant will get by taking part in a SI session

