

# Overview of SI

## **SI Program Overview**

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an academic support program of the Bepko Learning Center that has been founded on a student-to-student philosophy. The SI program has been proven to have a significant impact on student performance and retention, improving GPA by 0.5 to 1.5 points. The SI program targets academic courses with a DFW rate of 30 percent or higher and provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer-facilitated sessions for those courses.

## **What is SI?**

SI is a nonremedial academic support program of the Bepko Learning Center that targets traditionally high-risk courses (courses that have a high rate of D and F grades and withdrawals). The SI program has demonstrated a positive impact on student performance and retention. SI provides regularly scheduled, peer-facilitated sessions for students enrolled in targeted courses. SI identifies high-risk classes rather than high-risk students.

## **Who are SI mentors?**

The mentors are not teaching assistants; they are IUPUI students who have been trained in using collaborative learning techniques to assist students in mastering the course material. Mentors are selected based on several criteria. The students have demonstrated outstanding performance in the course, are able to work well with students, and model the ideal student on campus. As role models, mentors are expected to present exemplary behavior in the classroom and model class participation such as taking notes and encouraging student response. To help facilitate this modeling behavior and help fine-tune communication skills with students, mentors participate in ongoing training throughout the semester. In addition to training, the director and SI coordinators are available as additional resources to assist with the daily duties of a mentor.

## **What happens during SI sessions?**

During the first class session, the mentor describes the SI program and provides the class with a schedule of SI sessions for the course. SI sessions begin the second full week of the semester and are held two or more times a week. These last for approximately an hour and a half. SI sessions are free and open to all students enrolled in the course. They may be attended on a voluntary basis. These sessions are comprised of students of varying abilities, and no effort is made to segregate students based on academic ability.

The students who attend SI sessions discover appropriate applications of several study strategies such as note taking, graphic organization, questioning techniques, vocabulary acquisition, test preparation, and ways of reviewing material. Students have the opportunity to become actively involved in the course material as mentors use text, supplementary readings, and lecture notes as vehicles for instruction.

## **What is the faculty member's role in SI?**

The success of the SI program is linked to the active participation of IUPUI faculty. Instructors can assist the Bepko Learning Center staff by recommending qualified students to serve as mentors, maintaining communication with mentors who conduct SI sessions for their classes, and providing feedback on the program. Students benefit greatly from the collaboration that can take place between faculty, staff, and mentors in providing top-notch academic assistance.