

Overview of SLA

SLA Program Overview

Providing students with opportunities to improve study and learning skills is the idea behind an exciting and unique academic program at IUPUI called Structured Learning Assistance (SLA). SLA was developed in 1994 by Terry Doyle at Ferris State University, which was awarded the Hesburgh Certificate of Excellence in 2000 for its SLA program. The SLA program at IUPUI has been modeled after the program at Ferris State.

What is SLA?

- Mandatory, weekly 75-minute study and practice session that is attached to a high-risk-for-failure gateway course.
- Combines study skills, learning styles, classroom assessment, and collaborative learning techniques with content enhancement to support students enrolled in gateway courses.
- Mentors assist students in making connections between lessons and concepts learned in class through the application of various learning techniques.

Who are SLA mentors?

- Mentors are not teaching assistants.
- Mentors are IUPUI students who have performed well in the class in the past and have been trained in using collaborative learning techniques (CoLTs) with study skills assistance to best help students master course material.
- Mentors do not simply regurgitate material provided by instructors; mentors do help students to see things through different methods that might happen in class with the instructor.

What is the faculty member's role in SLA?

The success of the SLA 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 SLA sessions for their classes, and providing feedback on the program. Students benefit greatly from collaboration between faculty, staff, and mentors in providing top-notch academic assistance.

SLA Program Objectives

- Increase the C– or better student pass rates by 10 percent or more
- Increase the academic independence of the students
- Facilitate learning of content through collaborative methods and study skills implementation
- Be an affordable alternative to private tutoring for gateway courses
- Help students develop study skills through application to the course content
- Foster student efforts
- Integrate the application of valuable study skills
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration among students
- Promote academic responsibility
- Model behaviors that are characteristic of successful students