The soft values of SI: Using surveys to assist in providing quality assurance for an SI program

Short abstract: The presentation will focus on additional soft goals of SI besides improving student performance and increasing retention. Different kinds of methods to evaluate these goals like questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups are discussed together with session participants. An example of soft goal achievements for a specific SI program is presented.

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Welcome

• …to the room:
  – Who are you?
  – Your programme (existing/planned/of interest):
    • Describe shortly (~10 sec) your programme
GOALS OF SI/PASS

• Improve learning
• Improve student performance
• Increase continued enrollment/retention

(taken from ppt-presentation used in International SI center’s (UMKC) supervisor training 2016)
Percentage of DFW Final Course Grades for SI and Non-SI Participants Separated by Discipline

National Data, Fall 2005 – Fall 2015, 70 Institutions, 5,809 Courses, \(n = 703,876\) Students

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Your goals with SI?

• …in groups:
  – What additional goals do you want to achieve with SI besides improving student performance and increasing retention?
  – Who are the stakeholders for those goals?
Methods and results when evaluating your goals with SI?

• ...in groups:
  – To what extent do you use surveys or qualitative methods like focus groups and interviews to evaluate these additional goals?
  – What type of questions do you ask?
  – What results did you get from these additional evaluations?
Examples of studies of ”soft” values in SI obtained from surveys at Lund University, Sweden
History of Supplemental Instruction (SI) at Lund University

- SI STARTED IN SMALL SCALE 1994 IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
- 2001 SI INTRODUCED INTO THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
- 2002 LUND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS BRING SI TO HIGH SCHOOLS
- 2003 SCANDINAVIAN CENTRE FOR SI IS ESTABLISHED IN LUND
- 2007-2014 SI REACHES INTO MEDICINE, BUSINESS, SOCIAL SCIENCES
- 2017 SCANDINAVIAN CENTRE BECOMES EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR SI-PASS
Extent of the SI-programme at Lund University

- 6 FACULTIES
- SI IN ~150 COURSES (MOSTLY DIFFICULT INTRODUCTORY COURSES)
- OVER 4500 STUDENTS ATTEND SI EACH YEAR (OF ~7600 POSSIBLE)
- ~230 SI-LEADERS
Reasons why I attended SI-sessions

- **Because I noticed it is an efficient way of studying**
- **Because it is fun to discuss the course content with fellow students**
- **To understand the subject better**
- **To pass the course**

- **Agree**
- **Agree to 50 %**
- **Disagree**
The SI-meetings influence on the course

- Been an efficient support in the course
- It is very likely that I will improve my result in the course
- I get a better understanding of what is expected of me in the course
- Contributed to deepen my interest for the subject of the course
- Given me a deeper understanding of the course content

![Survey Results Graph]
The SI-meetings general influence

Attending SI-sessions ..... have developed my abilities in problem solving
have developed my ability for teamwork and collaboration in groups
have trained my ability to present course material in front of others
have developed my critical thinking
have developed my way of studying
have given me a better sense of self-confidence in my studies
have been of great importance to get study partners

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Agree Agree to 50 % Disagree
What were the best aspects of the SI-meetings? – three themes

**Discussion and collaboration**

• "It is a good complement to lectures where you can discuss with others and reflect on presented course material”

• "You become a team that take the course together, where you compare how you understood lectures and course demands. You help each other and learn to use each others knowledge and study together”
“What were the best aspects of the SI-meetings?”
– three themes

Understanding

• ”It is here you start to understand all concepts and theories. When fellow students explain different parts of the course they explain at a level you understand much better than at lectures”

• ”The best part with the SI-meetings is that they help you to help yourself. The meetings I have attended have given me a better understanding of the course and the tasks ahead of us”
“What were the best aspects of the SI-meetings?”
– three themes

Easy-going and supportive atmosphere

• ”A free atmosphere where you can ask whatever you want without being seen as stupid”

• ”Wonderful atmosphere and good support which gives a good confidence in your studies”
I have developed my ability to communicate with others
I have developed my ability to listen to other people’s thoughts and reasoning
I improved my ability to talk in front of others
I got a considerably deeper understanding of the course content
I improved my self-confidence

Disagree (minor agreement)  50 % agreement  Agree (agree to a large extent)
SI-leaders Agreement with Statements
(All statements beginning with – By being an SI leader …)

- I have developed my ability to make a group of individuals enthusiastic about performing a task
- I improved my ability to meet and inspire different individuals
- I have developed my ability to get students to help each other
- I improved in organizing the work for a group
- I feel more secure in leading a discussion
- I feel more secure in being a leader of a group

Disagree (minor agreement) 50% agreement Agree (agree to a large extent)
Examples of answers from former graduated SI-leaders:

“Seen in hindsight – What skills did you develop during your SI leadership?”

• I have improved my leadership abilities, seen the value of involving and engaging those who participate in projects by promoting active participation and own initiatives

• Not to stress for answers. To let people explain their way of thinking a second time. Not to be afraid of silence!

• Knowledge sharing, planning and responsibility. Besides my confidence grew regarding my ability to handle problems that were new for me within unknown areas. To handle different kinds of people and understand their problems and difficulties.
Examples of answers from former graduated SI-leaders:

“Which competencies developed through your SI leadership have you had use for in your work and in which way?”

• **Leadership is something I use almost every day in my work as I have responsibility for parts of projects or smaller projects. As almost all work is done in groups such experiences are of value.**

• **Very good use since I am often in charge of different jobs. It is about communication, patience to explain in different ways etc. It has also made me feel comfortable when I am in charge of meetings.**
“Describe a situation where you used the experiences of your SI leadership in your job”

• Every day in principle. For example. I was part of a team that lost its leader. In spite of my “junior” position I could transfer my SI experiences to working life and take the role of a natural leader. I already had all tools and experiences that were needed to lead, motivate and run a problem oriented work forward.
Thank you for participating in the session!