2018 SI Conference: “Sustaining Safe Harbors: Community, Inclusivity, and Accessibility”

Beth DeVerna – Director of The Tutoring Center at Oakland University
WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

Dictionary.com

- A social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests and perceived or perceiving itself as distinct in some respect from the larger society within which it exists (usually preceded by the):
  
  *the business community; the community of scholars.*

BusinessDictionary.com

- Self-organized network of people with common agenda, cause, or interest, who collaborate by sharing ideas, information, and other resources.

- Virtual communities consist of participants in online discussions on topics of mutual concern, or of those who frequent certain websites.
Icebreakers

- **Skittles or M&M’s Game**

Create a list of topics for each color of candy. For example: Red is your favorite band, Yellow is your most embarrassing moment, Green is your secret celebrity crush, Orange is the superpower you would have if you could choose any. Put the candy in a bowl and have everyone choose one. Everyone must introduce themselves and answer the question from their chosen category. Then everyone can just eat the rest of the candy.

- **Three in Common Game**
- **The Pocket/Purse/Backpack Game**
- **Who/What is in your phone?**
- **2 Truths and A Lie**
### Human Bingo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has green eyes</th>
<th>Has twins in their family</th>
<th>Can recite the Pledge of Allegiance</th>
<th>Has driven a convertible</th>
<th>Can whistle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td><strong>FREE</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Has visited Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has attended an OU athletic event</th>
<th>Has pierced ears</th>
<th>Has a pet dog or cat</th>
<th>Has attended a professional sporting event</th>
<th>Has worked at a fast-food restaurant</th>
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Getting to Know You/Icebreaker Questions
Used both in SI Leader training and in introductory SI sessions

1. What’s your favorite thing to do during the summer?
2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
3. What is your dream job?
4. If you could trade places with a famous person, who would you like to be?
5. What are your favorite hobbies/what do you do for fun?
6. Name one unique or quirky habit that you have.
7. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
8. If you were stuck on an island with one other person, who would you bring?
9. If you were a professional athlete, which sport would you play?
10. If you could meet any historical figure, who would you pick?
11. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
12. What job did you have that you would never want to work again?
13. What was some good advice you were given that you did not follow?
14. If you had 10 minutes on a popular TV talk show, what would you talk about?
15. If you could go on a vacation anywhere in the United States where would it be?
SIL TRAINING EXERCISES

- Icebreaker activity (with other newbies and then with veterans)
- Get to know your SI Peers (Returning SI Leaders join training)
- Race to find time clocks around campus
  (team activity based on location of SI room)
- Lunch in student center or lunch catered in
  The Tutoring Center (SI Leaders only)
- Plan a creative SI session with your group based on a
  video shown to all (random mix of newbies and
  veterans since video is non-subject specific)
CONT.

- Sharing your Mock SI Session (kudos and critiques from SILs and staff)
- Explanation of espace usage (sometimes done pairing veterans with newbies)
- Group pictures (all SILs in no particular seating arrangement)
Three one-hour meetings are held each fall and winter semester.
One one-hour meeting is held each of the seven week summer semesters.
Groups are limited to a maximum of five to six Leaders.
Due to space issues, meetings are held at 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in the Center.
Sign-up is on a shared Google doc and no changes are allowed after reserving a meeting slot.
Meetings are usually a mix of veterans and “newbies” and groups vary each meeting.
One staff member facilitates two meetings each week to keep Leaders focused and on task.
First attempted to let students meet on their own with a “veteran” Leader facilitating-failed
Next attempted organized meetings with no assigned facilitator-failed
Meetings are structured to provide professional development instead of just an opportunity to vent
Meetings consist of interactive activities, discussion topics and videos.
SAMPLE MEETING AGENDAS

- **Meeting #1**
  Test Anxiety - watch video and share ideas about how to help students with the fears discussed
  Self-Appraisal – the importance of doing one, following through with action plan, final reflection
  Encouraging Students’ Questions – discuss methods covered in handout and suggest others

- **Meeting #2**
  Activity Worksheet – Planning an SI session up to the minute
  ✓ Adhering to the time constraints of your session (50 minutes to 67 minutes)
  ✓ Mapping out an agenda for the day
  ✓ Shifting focus and steering conversations back to the material
  ✓ Adjusting as your session flows

- **Meeting #3**
  Video - Student issues and location of appropriate on-campus offices for referrals
  Discussion - How to create a WOW experience in SI sessions through student engagement
SI Leader Suggestions

- “Make sure to get to know each person’s name. Address people by name. Get to know a thing or two about each person.” – Adam

- “Know what will be helpful to them. Know the professor well enough to help. Know how to motivate them. I know students well enough to know what will help them while knowing the material enough to assist and aid in their learning. Know the topics they will need to know to be successful.” – Brittany

- “I can make small talk about your life. I adapted to your learning style, making sure you understand the material. I understand when you need help, even if you don’t ask.” – Maxx

- “I have taken this course, I had this struggle and know what I did to overcome it. I care about your success, that’s why I’m here to help you. We can figure out this problem together.” - Olga

- “We (the SI Leader with the class) did an icebreaker on the first day – bring up what was mentioned in it. Give advice unrelated to the class. Provide some help with other classes. Chat with students outside of class, joke with students in SI.” - Anonymous
More SI Leader Suggestions

- “Ask individually how people are doing in class and if it is going as well as they had hoped. Ask the group as a whole about their progress in the class. Be flexible with SI so that everyone feels included. Call on different people so others can have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge.” – Adam

- “I often tell students that I want them to succeed and earn the grade that they want. I tell them that SI is for them and that we can structure the sessions in ways that they feel will help them be successful. It’s important to encourage students and let them know that their SI Leader is cheering them on and working to help them be successful. I also make sure to give students a lot of positive feedback when they are doing well, as well as extra encouragement when they are struggling.” – Dayna

- “Have a reflection session (after an exam) and discuss what worked, what they liked or didn’t like and ask them for feedback on how you can improve. Be welcoming, make sure you allow them to feel comfortable asking questions by saying, “That’s a good question”. Asking them what they want to work on or what they’re struggling with rather than going over material you think is important.” – Shreeya

- “Doing fun activities and having them interact with each other. Creating material that you know will help them on their quizzes and tests. Utilizing different resources that you know, like videos. Showing them special tricks you use to remember things.” – Katia
Some SI Session Strategies

- **Worksheets, worksheets, worksheets!**
- Games – Kahoot, Quiziz, Jeopardy, Battleship(?)
- Set of bones to pass around for human anatomy
- Molecular model for organic chemistry
- Videos from The Tutoring Center, Kahn Academy, and YouTube to clarify concepts and/or provide examples
- Fill-in-the-blank power points (created by SIL who then uses for q & a)
- Study tips/strategies particularly on note-taking and test-taking
- Practice quizzes/exams
- Development of sanctioned “cheat sheets” for tests
- Exam review (pre-test)
- Exam reflection (post-test)
**INCLUSIVITY THROUGH ESPACE**

- **Moodle is the free course management system used by Oakland University**
  - Courses only offered to faculty
  - Students automatically enrolled if registered for the course

- **E-space is an online learning resource for faculty and staff**
  - “Courses” assigned to The Tutoring Center to accompany each SI section
  - Students registered in course section must be manually enrolled in e-space by TTC staff member
  - All material developed by an SI Leader must be uploaded to e-space for access to all students
  - Material from previous semesters of the course is archived and “hidden” for a cleaner, less confusing page
  - SI Leaders are required to upload a minimum of one document/worksheet/power-point, etc. per week
  - TTC staff members are administrators on each e-space and, therefore, receive copies of all sent emails
  - Faculty are only added as participants if they request access
  - All emails are sent to students in their SI section via e-space (sample of first day email on next page)

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Hi everybody!

Happy first day of fall semester! I wanted to send you all a quick message before the first class today and introduce myself. My name is Abby Foster and I’ll be your Supplemental Instruction leader for this BIO 1200 class. I’m going to be passing out a short flyer today in lecture that details when and where our SI is and why you should come. I’ll also be scanning and posting the flyer on Espace tonight in case anybody wants to make an extra copy, give one to someone who missed class, etc. To access it, type in **espace.oakland.edu** and log in with your NetID and password, just like you would Moodle. It’s the same general platform so it’s pretty easy to use and should feel familiar to you!

As far as SI tomorrow goes, it should be a lot of fun! We meet at 1:00pm in the same room that we’ll have lecture today. After SI tomorrow, I’ll post the Google Slides that I used so anybody who missed it and would like to catch up can see the materials.

Feel free to email me if you have any questions! I’ll be making an announcement today, but I’ll also send out my contact information here: my Oakland email address is **abigailfoster@oakland.edu**. I’ll do my best to respond within a 24-hour period!

See you guys in a little while! Abby
Hi everyone!
I've uploaded the set-up of the last problem and it's answer from SI today under Ch.15 on eSpace. If you find that you have time this weekend and are planning on doing any studying following your quiz, try solving this problem before SI on Wednesday. It would be a good idea to do at least one physics problem from Ch.15 to keep with it over the long weekend! We will be going over the solution in SI on Wednesday as well as one of your WebAssign problems.
I have also uploaded an outline that explains step-by-step how to solve a 1-dimensional force problem as well as a couple animations and a "hockey game." The animation and game will help you better visualize how two charges interact with one another. It will also show how their interaction will affect nearby particles and/or what direction and magnitude the force vector will be in.
If you get stuck on this problem or the quiz and need some guidance, feel free to email me and I'll do my best to get back to you asap! Good luck and enjoy your weekend! Grace

Hope everyone feels confident for the exam tomorrow. I just wanted to remind you all we still have SI tomorrow from 12-12:50. I know it's hard to go to SI after an exam but I'll do my best to make it worth your time. I plan on helping you guys with an outline as well as a making a chart with all of the enzymes you will have to know. As always if anyone has any questions while studying feel free to send me an email and I'll do my best to help. Brittany

Hi everyone,
I just wanted to take the time to say thank you! It sounds quite dramatic, but you guys changed my life and introduced me to a field that I never considered before (teaching). I truly loved getting to work with students such as yourselves and I'm going to miss it. This was my first time as an SI and I am so lucky to have had the pleasure of interacting with all of you. I'm excited to see what all of you accomplish in life! Keep up the hard work and as always, let me know if you ever need anything. I'll be here all of next semester, so if you need a science tutor, I'd be more than happy to help. Good luck studying!
THE RESULTS

- Students feel a bond with the SI Leader
- SI students become SI Leaders/Peer Tutors
- Veteran SILs become mentors to new SILs
- Students unable to physically attend SI sessions participate and benefit from e-space use
- Students feel more engaged in the course
- Usually results in higher grades for those students who attend
- SI attendees form friendships and study groups
- Students find the course more enjoyable
- All students feel included regardless of academic ability
- Favorable survey responses from students!
Qualities They Liked in SI Leader

- Very approachable / friendly / upbeat / enthusiastic
- Did group activities and actually helped me learn
- Patient / kind / non-judgmental / listened
- Teamwork emphasized
- Seemed like he genuinely cared how we did in the class
- Extremely personable and reliable
- Cares about his students’ success and achievement
- Made you feel welcome and didn’t make you feel stupid
- Went over the hardest stuff and made things fun
- Very excited and happy to help and teach the subject
- Always willing to help
- Was invested in the students and wanted to help us succeed
- Very relaxed (environment), but informative
- Encourages questions
- Knows how to connect with students
- Supportive and encouraging
Sense of Community They Felt

- “I think the two major strengths we (our SI section) have are our sense of community and the leader’s eagerness to help. This provides multiple ways to us to get the help we need.” SIL James – BIO

- “We go over problems and he helps us through them and then we go over them as a class. We are kind of like a community, we are encouraged to work as a group. He is wise and helpful and answers a majority of our questions.” SIL Abdel – PHY

- “Community – our class working together.” SIL Chad – MTH

- “It’s a nice big community study group. He knows what he’s talking about. He explains as much as he can & tries to help students.” SIL Caleb – BIO

- “Sense of community: we were all engaged by the first class” SIL Ahmad – MTH

- “Sense of community” SIL Kari – BIO

- “Community: she has us all work together in groups to figure out new information” SIL Yasmine – BIO

- “Community” SIL Louis – ECN

- “Community” SIL Reagan – BIO

- “Good sense of community.” SIL Emma – MTH

- “We are a strong community and there are open discussions everyday.” SIL Emma – MTH
QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS
RESOURCES

- http://www.dictionary.com/browse/community
- http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/community.html
- http://hative.com/ice-breakers-for-college-students/
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Atme26C0l5E
- https://www.oakland.edu/tutoring/
- https://espace.oakland.edu