Supplemental Instruction Leader Orientation Evaluation, Fall 2013

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Abstract
The Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leaders completed pre- and post-orientation surveys to assess the effectiveness of SI Leader orientation. Results suggest that orientation is effective for new SI Leaders, and only minor improvements are needed.

Executive Summary

Purpose
The purpose of this report is to show the effectiveness of the SI orientation sessions, in terms of SI Leaders’ perceived comfort and growth in knowledge and skills desirable for effective completion of SI Leader responsibilities.

Methods
The weekend before fall 2013 classes begin, new SI Leaders attend a two-day orientation. The purpose of the orientation is to prepare SI Leaders to begin their responsibilities. At the start of orientation, new SI Leaders are asked to fill out a 15 question survey regarding their knowledge of SI. The survey was filled out again after orientation.

The initial survey consisted of 15 questions, including:

- Questions 1-11 were statements regarding knowledge of the SI Leader position, requesting Leaders rate statements based on their level of agreement (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5= agree, and 5=strongly agree).
  1. I feel comfortable with my knowledge of the history and goals of Supplemental Instruction.
  2. I understand what is expected of me as an SI leader.
  3. I understand the policies of Supplemental Instruction.
  4. I feel comfortable promoting Supplemental Instruction.
  5. I understand learning styles and learning retention.
  6. I understand techniques to facilitate an SI session.
  7. I understand SI session basics.
  8. I understand SI session strategies and techniques.
  9. I feel comfortable incorporating study skills into SI sessions.
  10. I am familiar with the resources available to help me as an SI leader.
  11. Overall, I understand and am comfortable with my responsibilities as an SI leader.

- Questions 12-14 were qualitative questions requesting SI leaders to identify their strengths and areas where they need improvement.

- Question 15 was an open-ended “questions/comment” item allowing them to express any ideas that were not already mentioned.
The follow-up survey consisted of 15 questions such that questions 1-14 were identical to the first survey. Question 15 was revised to allow the Leaders to recommend improvements to orientation.

Both surveys took approximately 5 minutes to complete individually. Quantifiable results from questions 1-11 were recorded and analyzed using SPSS to produce frequency data and comparisons of means between pre- and post-orientation surveys.

**Results**

19 new Leaders in Fall 2013 completed both the pre- and post-orientation surveys. Table 1 shows the mean scores for each question on a Likert scale of 1-6. As expected, the scores for the orientation post-test were significantly higher than those for the pre-test scores ($p<.01$). This result demonstrates that SI Leader orientation has a positive, significant impact on the skill development and knowledge of SI Leaders.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Pre-Test Mean</th>
<th>Post-Test Mean</th>
<th>Change in Mean</th>
<th>Significance of Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. History and goals</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>+1.1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Expectations</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>+1.1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Policy</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>+1.8</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Promotions</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Learning</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>+0.9</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Facilitation</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>+1.1</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Session basics</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>+1.2</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Session strategies</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>+1.6</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Study skills</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>+0.7</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Resources</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>+1.9</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Overall</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>+1.2</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The reliability of the scale was also tested and found to be significant (Cronbach’s Alpha=.76).

**Discussion**

These findings show SI orientation supports the growth in desirable knowledge and skills for SI Leaders. The mean scores indicate these students are more comfortable being an SI leader after they have completed orientation.

Recommended improvements to orientation by leaders (post-orientation survey Q15) were:

- More facilitation techniques
- Practicing real situations that could occur during a session
- More time spent learning from past leaders
- More time to meet the other leaders
- Allowing the leaders to create a worksheet or plan a session
- Make it more interesting
- Have introductions and similarities at the beginning to make it more personal
- Teach opening and closing activities
• Help others to stay on task
• Create a problem jar where leaders can come up with solutions as a group
• Snacks
• Unsure at this point in time
• More mobile team building activities
• Give out less paper
• A better explanation of the paperwork and Cybox

These recommendations will be considered with planning orientation for Spring 2014. Small tweaks to orientation may be warranted, but it is obvious that large changes or a makeover for the program are not necessary. More hypothetical situation activities could prove to benefit leaders as well as previous leaders offering insight as to what to expect in a session. Other documentation will be updated as needed to incorporate recommendations.