Supplemental Instruction Leader Orientation Evaluation, Fall 2014

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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 orientation is effective for new SI Leaders, and minor improvements are still needed to orientation activities.

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 the 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 were asked to fill out a 15 question survey regarding their knowledge of SI. The survey was again filled out 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, 6=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 identify their strengths and areas of improvements.
- Question 15 was an open-ended “questions/comments” 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.

**Findings**

28 new Leaders in Fall 2014 completed both the pre- and post-orientation surveys. Table 1 shows the mean scores for each question, on the Likert scale of 1-6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Item</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. History and goals</td>
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<td>2. Expectations</td>
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<td>3. Policy</td>
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<td>4. Promotions</td>
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<td>5. Learning</td>
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<td>6. Facilitation</td>
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<td>10. Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Overall</td>
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*\(p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001\)

The reliability of the Pre-Test scale was tested and found to be significant (Cronbach’s Alpha=.893).
The reliability of the Post-Test scale was also tested and found to be significant (Cronbach’s Alpha=.797).

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

Leaders’ recommended improvements to orientation (post-orientation Q15) were analyzed using an open coding method, allowing categories to arise. These categories were then summarized into themes, using the language of the Leaders as descriptors. Each of the themes found in the open-ended question of suggested improvements are listed below.

- **Primary themes** (mentioned by 3 or more Leaders):
  - More time spent on administrative business (logistics, paperwork, scheduling, CyBox, website, handbook)
  - More time to talk to SI mentors and returning leaders
  - More practical explanations, demonstrations and examples of sessions and worksheets
  - Share learning techniques and study strategies

- **Secondary themes** (mentioned by 1-2 Leaders):
  - More practice sessions and creating worksheets for our subject
These recommendations will be considered with planning orientation for Spring 2015. Early ideas to incorporate these recommendations include the following:

- Add a computer lab session to explain CyBox and have Leaders begin setting up their website.
- Modify Saturday’s homework to include finding 3 posted worksheets for previous SI sessions (applicable content areas); designing a skeleton for the first session’s worksheet.
- Opening the computer lab one hour prior to Sunday’s session, staffed by mentors, to complete homework
- Demonstrate 2-4 example SI sessions (previously recorded, modeled/role-played by mentors, etc)
- Provide a Facilitation Ideas worksheet. After each activity, provide a few minutes to record how that activity could be applied/utilized in the leaders’ content area. This will provide a log of ideas for the leaders to reference in the future.