

# Ways Instructors Can

# Increase SI Attendance

## Things to do early in the semester

1. **Allow your SI Leader surveys class for the most popular times, schedule SI sessions around those times.** Make an eye-catching flyer that announces the time and place of the classes' SI sessions. Post these outside the classroom, the SI room, and the professor's office. Also pass out a copy to all students in the course during the first week.
2. **Post detailed information about SI on your web or OAKS page.** This should include days/times/place of SI, your SI Leader's name and email address. Additionally a weekly update which informs students of the topic of that week's SI sessions and advertisements about SI successes (see #22-26 below) can be helpful
3. In the classroom and the SI room, hang a **poster that** reminds students of the advantages of attend SI sessions.
4. **Professor should "sing the praises" of their SI leaders!** Tell the students in the course what great students they are (especially if the SI leader was a student in the course), and how much they will be able to help!

## Things to do throughout the semester

5. **Encourage SI attendance for all students on a weekly basis.** Without this visible verbal support, SI has little chance of success. Encouragement works best when it is tied to a **reason** to attend. Statement like, "Your SI Leader and I worked on a great activity that I think will really help you with this critically important material", are great ways to provided reasoned encouragement.
6. It is critical that the instructors not just invite students who receive poor grades. If a reputation develops which suggests that SI is only for poor students, students will not come to avoid the remedial stigma.
7. **Have your SI Leader sit in different places in the classroom** to meet students, be more accessible for questions on SI, and provide a convenient visual model of good lecture notes. Also **issue personal invitations** to students in the class to attend SI sessions.
8. Have the SI Leader put **times and locations of SI sessions on the board** each time the class meets.
9. Put 1 **difficult problem or concept on the board** in class and mention this will be **covered in SI** this week. Or tell the students that if they are having trouble with this problem or question, that that is an indication you should be going to SI.

10. Announce in class that you will **present a possible test question on a particularly difficult problem or concept in the next SI sessions**. Add that an accurate and complete answer will be built collaboratively in SI. This is a great way to encourage students who would not normally participate in SI to go for the first time!
11. **Give some old tests/test questions to your SI Leader for use in SI sessions** or help them formulate possible study questions for upcoming exams.
12. When students struggle in courses, it is most often due to study habits and the strategies employed during studying. Tell your students that **study skills handouts are available in SI sessions, and that one of the main purposes of SI is to help students develop better ways of studying and learning course material**.
13. Point out to the class that the **knowledge necessary to earn good grades is a an outcome of applying one's learning strategies to the subject matter** and that is why effective learning skills are an important focus of SI.
14. Have your SI Leader take the exams right along with the students in the class! This keeps you sharp, and lets the students in the class know that the SI Leader is in the “trenches” with them!
15. Put 1 **difficult problem or concept on the board** in class and mention this will be **covered in SI** this week.
16. **Include 1 or more SI sample test questions on a real exam**. This increases student interest in and relevancy of SI rapidly.
17. Attach an SI promotional page (or sticky note) encouraging students to go to SI to student exams/papers/homework as they are returned.
18. **Offer a minimal amount of extra-credit** for attending a certain number of SI sessions during the semester. Students often have had bad experiences with group studying with others in class because they were poorly planned and executed. These negative preconceptions about group studying can prevent students from even trying SI. A little extra credit sometimes gets them in the door, and then they come to realize the benefits of SI. If you prefer not to offer extra credit another option is to offer a private final exam help session to the top 5-10 SI attendees of the semester! (Note – often students who attend SI the most are the students who are struggling most with the material).
19. Help your SI Leader develop sample questions for their SI sessions that explore course material deeply (conceptual, synthetic, and application questions). This way the SI leader can say that the instructor has seen the questions and approves of them.
20. Make sure your SI Leader is **not re-lecturing**. Help them keep the focus of SI is on *how to learn* the material, the benefits of collaboration, and getting students to the point that they don't need SI help any longer. What a wonderful day that is!

### Things to do right before each exam

21. Help your SI Leader to **prepare (or approve) a mock examination** and announce to the students that these worksheets, while available to everyone in the course, will only be discussed during the SI sessions.
22. Plan with your SI Leader to do a post-exam review. Announce in class **that** your SI leader will do **a critical review of students' exams**. See the SI web page for hints on how to do this ([http://csi.cofc.edu/supplemental-instruction/si\\_leader/si\\_session\\_resources/](http://csi.cofc.edu/supplemental-instruction/si_leader/si_session_resources/)). Make sure that students are aware that this exam review will take place (perhaps put it on the 1<sup>st</sup> page of the test).

### Things to do right after each exam

23. **Report the differences in test scores of SI vs. non-SI students to the class after each test or quiz.** The purpose of reporting these scores is to encourage more students to attend SI sessions and not rigorous statistical analysis or research! Therefore, creativity is valuable and honesty essential. Refining the skills for learning is a process and takes time, so the true differences may not appear early on in the course. So report any favorable comparison.

Some items for reporting are:

- Mean for SI vs non- SI on exam
- Mean for SI regulars (use a cutoff # of attendances) vs non SI or SI infrequenters.
- Numbers/percentages of grouped grades/scores between SI and non-SI students: Examples are 1) AB grades vs. CDF, 2) ABC vs. DF, 3) report averages or percentages for each grade separately, 4) 100-80 vs. 79-lower) the fact that no SI attendees scored below a certain score, etc.
- Amount of improvement from the last test of SI vs. non-SI students
- Number/percentage of passing grades of SI vs. non-SI students
- Number of students who increased test scores over the previous test in SI vs. Non-SI students.

24. Pass out catchy **flyers** in class about the test scores and/or final grades of SI and non-SI attendees in the past in this class.
25. Report the **number and/or percentage of questions on the test that were also covered in SI sessions.**
26. Read, post, or elicit in class testimonials (written or verbal in class) **from past SI participants** on how SI helped them with their learning.

### As a last resort to address low attendance!

27. Have your SI Leader do a **mock 10-15 minute SI sessions in class.** And follow-up by discussion with the class why things like this will help students better prepare for exams.
28. **Re-survey the class and perhaps readjust SI session times** to accommodate the greatest number of students....though this is rarely the reason for low SI attendance.

29. If attendance is very low, have the **SI Supervisor meet with the class** for the last five minutes of a class session. During this time the course professor leaves the room and the SI Supervisor solicits comments from the students on reasons for low attendance, and discusses or does a demonstration on how SI can help learning. The SI Supervisor may inform the class that if attendance does not improve the SI sessions will be canceled.

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