

# Improving Student Success with Supplemental Instruction

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The Learning Centre is piloting a version of supplemental instruction in the winter of 2017 called Supported Learning Groups.

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a proactive, non-remedial and peer-facilitated approach to support students through regularly-scheduled, informal sessions. In these sessions, students can discuss readings, develop learning strategies, predict test items, compare notes and develop organizational tools while learning how to integrate course content and study skills together (The International Center for Supplemental Instruction, 2016). Typically, this model is associated with courses that students historically find difficult.

Through the collaboration of the SI supervisor (full-time staff through a learning centre), trained peer leaders and Faculty (who agree to allow SI leaders to audit their courses), the students combine “what to learn with how to learn it, and are able to develop both content competency and transferable academic skills that pay off in higher grades during future academic terms” (Martin and Arendale, 1994, p. 15).

Peer leaders are senior students who have demonstrated competence in the relevant subject matter and are trained in study strategies and proactive learning. The peer leader attends every lecture, takes notes, and reads all of the assigned material to ensure consistency between the class lecture and facilitated study groups. Faculty provide critical support by recommending potential peer leaders, providing permission for the peer leaders to audit their class, and by encouraging attendance at the study sessions.

Research demonstrates that SI participants earn statistically improved final grades and higher success rates (Fayowski and MacMillan, 2006). In semesters where SI was available, SI attendees re-enrolled at statistically higher rates than non-SI attendees (Malm, Bryngfors, & Mörner, 2012).

For more information about Seneca’s Supported Learning Groups (SLG), please contact Kathryn McMillan, Manager, Learning Centres, at [Kathryn.McMillan@senecacollege.ca](mailto:Kathryn.McMillan@senecacollege.ca).

## References

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