



Faculty & Staff FAQs

What are the Peer Learning Programs?

The ACE Peer Learning Programs provide peer-to-peer support for students enrolled in historically challenging courses at CSUSB. A well-trained team of Peer Learning Facilitators serving as SI Leaders, Embedded Tutors, or Embedded SI Leaders provide course-specific academic support to promote student success, improve content mastery, strengthen college success skills such as test preparation, time management, and effective study strategies.

Supplemental Instruction (SI)— The internationally accredited CSUSB Supplemental Instruction program offers peer-led academic support designed to improve student success in historically challenging courses. SI Leaders facilitate regular, small-group study sessions outside of class, focusing on core course concepts, strategic learning techniques, and discipline-specific study skills. This model is especially effective in lecture-heavy courses with limited in-class active learning, offering students a collaborative environment in which to deepen their understanding and improve performance.

Embedded Tutoring— Embedded Tutors are placed directly within selected courses to work alongside instructors, offering immediate, course-specific academic support. Unlike traditional tutoring, which occurs outside of class, this model integrates assistance into the learning environment to promote deeper engagement, clearer understanding of course material, and the development of effective academic strategies. Embedded tutoring is best suited for courses in which at least 30% of each class meeting involves active learning (collaborative work, applied problem-solving, or other interactive formats).

Embedded Supplemental Instruction (SI)— Embedded SI integrates the evidence-based Supplemental Instruction model with in-class academic support. In this hybrid approach, SI Leaders assist with active learning activities in class and also host course-aligned, outside study sessions. Embedded SI is ideal for courses in which some portion of weekly instructional time is dedicated to active learning, supporting both real-time engagement and extended learning beyond the classroom. Embedded SI is not recommended for courses with 30% or more of class time dedicated to active learning as the SI sessions may be redundant.

How are courses identified as potentially benefiting from PLP support?

Peer Learning Programs do not target “high-risk” students, but rather use Institutional Research and other data to identify historically difficult courses. Qualifying courses may be characterized by...

- High D, F, W, and I rates (especially those 20% or higher)
- Infrequent examinations that focus on higher cognitive levels
- High student to instructor ratio (student has little opportunity for interaction with the professor or the other students)
- Those serving as a gateway or key sequence course
- Large amounts of weekly readings from both difficult textbooks and secondary library reference works
- Faculty or academic department identification as exceptionally challenging within a major course of study

What is Embedded Tutoring?

Embedded Tutoring integrates trained peer tutors directly into selected courses to provide real-time, course-specific assistance during class. Rather than a stand-alone service outside of class, Embedded Tutoring is intentionally aligned with the course's instructional design and active-learning components, allowing students to receive support at the moment they are engaging with course material.

Embedded Tutors support students by:

- Clarifying concepts and processes during in-class activities and collaborative work
- Reinforcing course content through guided practice and targeted questioning
- Supporting the development of effective academic strategies within the context of the course

At CSUSB, Embedded Tutors also hold tutoring/office hours outside of class once or twice each week to engage with students one-on-one who may need additional or more targeted assistance.

Embedded Tutors attend class regularly and work in close coordination with the instructor to ensure alignment with course goals, expectations, and instructional pacing.

What is Supplemental Instruction (SI)?

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is an evidence-based, locally-proven method for helping students succeed in challenging courses by providing additional subject-matter discussion, support, and guidance to strengthen critical college skills. The CSUSB SI Program is fully accredited by the International Center for Supplemental Instruction.

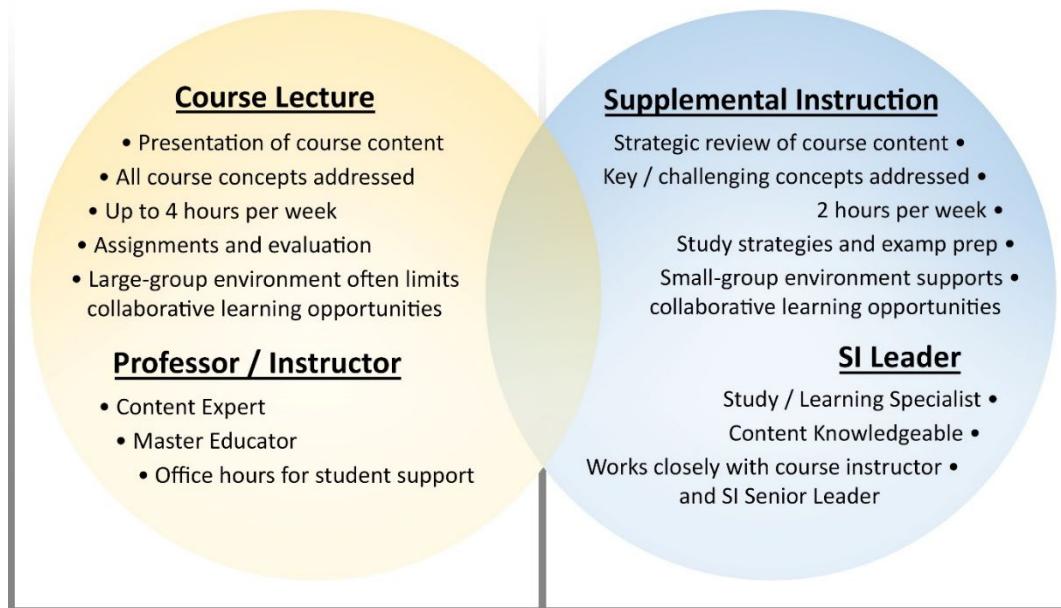
Supplemental Instruction sessions are designed to help students:

- Strengthen their understanding of the material presented in course lectures and texts
- Develop both general and content specific learning strategies and study skills
- Review for exams and develop effective test taking strategies

SI sessions meet twice a week for 50 minutes each (usually just after the content course lecture)

SI is open to all students enrolled in the corresponding content course. SI sessions are limited to 20 students to maintain a small group environment. Seats are filled on a first-come basis.

How do course instructors and SI Leaders partner toward student success?

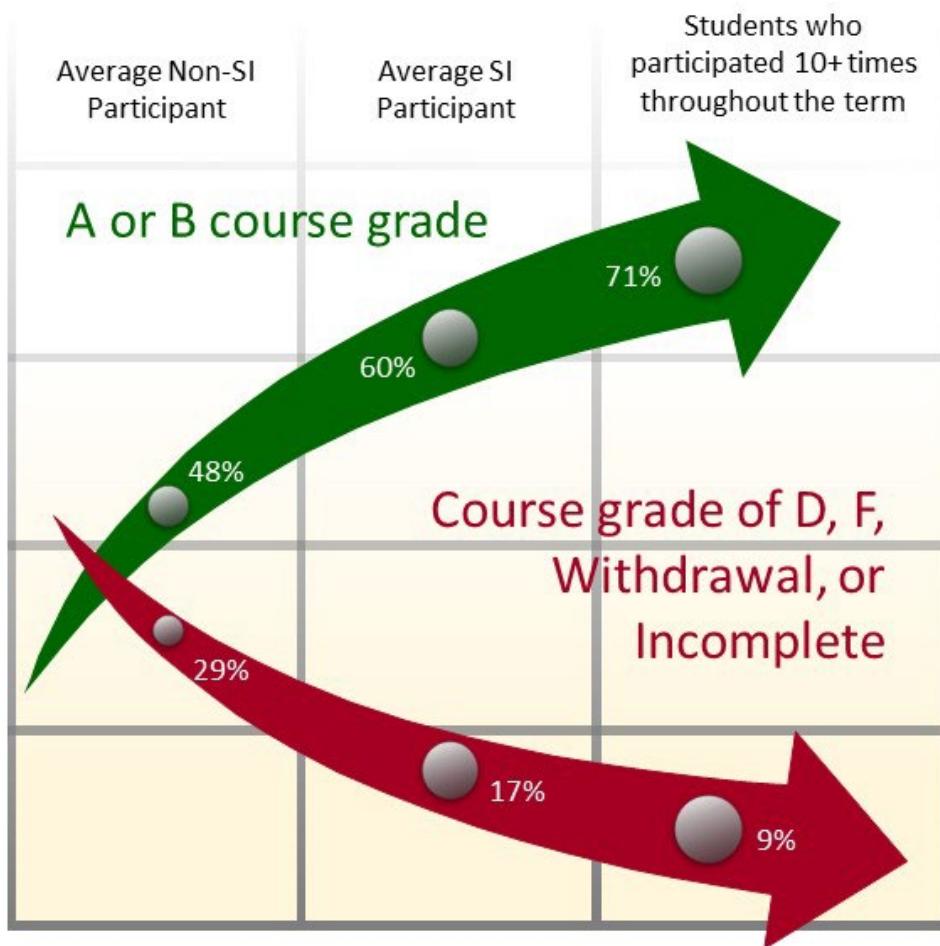


Are there notable trends among students who choose to participate in SI?

According to a report by the Office of Institutional Research on SI trends at CSUSB:

- Full-Time and course-repeating students attended more SI sessions than their counterparts.
- No significant difference was found on SI participation across ethnic groups.
- Matched sample data analysis demonstrated statistically significant associations between SI participation and course success (higher course GPA and lower DFWI-rates) compared to non-SI participants regardless of course, gender, ethnicity, student level, Pell grant status, cumulative GPA, high school/transfer GPA, full/part-time status, and course repeat status.

Is SI an effective academic support model for CSUSB students?



* Based on averages of all SI supported courses during the fall 2022 term

What learning strategies are typically used in SI sessions?

- Identifying Key Concepts
- Paired Problem Solving
- Teaching to Learn
- Visual Mapping
- Informal Quizzes
- Note Processing
- Sequencing
- Jigsaw Text Review
- Interactive Games
- Study Planning and Techniques
- Practical Application

Who are the Peer Learning Facilitators (SI Leaders & Embedded Tutors)?

Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs) are undergraduate (sometimes graduate) students who have previously been successful in the corresponding content course or an equivalent course in the subject area.

PLFs are employed by the Office of Academic Support and Undergraduate Advising as Instructional Student Assistants and are selected through a screening process from a bank of applicants recommended by the faculty member or department for which they will provide support.

Prior to each semester, PLFs are trained in designing and facilitating active learning sessions, small group learning dynamics, general and discipline specific learning strategies, effective test taking skills, etc.

PLFs attend all corresponding content course lectures. Embedded Tutors help facilitate the active learning components designed by the course instructor for use within the course lecture session. SI Leaders design and facilitate 50 min. SI sessions twice a week, working closely with the course instructor throughout the semester.

What are the characteristics of highly qualified Peer Learning Facilitators?

Active understanding of concepts covered in the supported course

Strong interpersonal communication skills

Ability to establish and maintain rapport with students and faculty

Effective personal study habits demonstrated by overall academic success

Exemplary work ethic with experience in independent preparation, task, and time management

Ability to identify, design, and employ effective small group learning strategies relevant to course material