

Enhancing Student Success in Biology 171 through Supplemental Instruction

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Step 1: Performance Outcome (for the Biology Department)

To improve student academic performance and success rate in Biology 171 (Evolution and Biodiversity), a historically challenging course.

Step 2: Methods and Measures

Supplemental Instruction (SI) was developed and offered to students in Biology 171. Student course GPAs were documented and compared to examine the impact of SI. Student perception of the effectiveness of SI was captured using a home-grown survey.

Step 3: Criteria of Success

None indicated.

Step 4: Results

Results show that SI participants performed significantly better than non-participants. More excitingly, the positive impact of SI seems to be particularly pronounced for underrepresented minority (URM) students. In addition, most students (~90%) expressed the view that SI helped them perform better in the course.

Step 5: Improvement Actions

The results suggest that SI should be sustained and expanded to help students in other challenging courses. The university has established a dedicated team that manages SI and offers SI to a greater number of students in multiple disciplines.