



Self-Determination in Supplemental Instruction: A Case-Study Approach to Program Assessment

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Abstract



Supplemental Instruction (SI) interventions are typically designed to provide students with academic support for content in courses that are institutionally difficult in the postsecondary setting (Martin & Arendale, 1992). Recent quantitative studies have explored whether non-academic outcomes are also potentiated by SI (Ning & Downing, 2010). The present study investigated non-academic outcomes of self-determination in a case-study approach bounded by a particular SI course at West Texas Christian University. The research question in this study was “How do SI students describe personal changes in self-determination?” Analysis of interview and observation data indicated that self-determination may occur within a contextual dialectic against oppressive voices for students who experience gains in competence within the SI setting, which may imply that guided reflexive journaling to engage in this dialogic could facilitate self-determination development for students in SI.



Supplemental Instruction

- Should focus on difficult courses, not students who experience difficulty (Martin & Arendale, 1992)
- Disparate outcomes in SI as a factor of student demographics (Rabito et al., 2015)
- SI may help students learn to be better learners (Ning and Downing, 2010)



Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

- Intrinsic motivation developed by fulfillment of needs
- Autonomy, competence, and relatedness
- Extrinsic rewards lead to sense of external locus of control



Case-Study Design

- Bounded system (Merriam, 1998)
- Six semi-structured interviews
- Selection criteria
 - *Participated regularly in SI*
 - *Demonstrated measurable changes in LOC*
 - *Demonstrated significant improvement in grades*
- *A priori* codes → Axial codes
 - *Internal/External Regulation*
 - *Autonomy*
 - *Competence*



Trustworthiness (Erlandson et al., 1993)

- Credibility – Prolonged Engagement
- Transferability – Purposeful Sampling
- Dependability – Audit Trail
- Confirmability – Reflexive Journaling, Peer Debriefing



RQ: How do college students in developmental education describe experiences of change in self-determination (autonomy, competence, relatedness) through a supplemental instruction?



Students shifted between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation throughout interviews.

- Mary: “and they were like basically like you didn’t make like great grades in high school...and then that’s what I was kinda ...like, I’m one of the stupid kids {bows head}...” (Mary, ll. 87-91)
- Mary: “I don’t think your past like making bad grades in high school or your SAT score like that doesn’t define you” (Mary, ll. 179-181).



Dichotomies of competence and incompetence

- John: “my parents were like so you’re not like as smart as all the other kids here and I was like um, guess not” (John, ll. 97-99).
- John: “I don’t believe I’m stupid but it’s just having that sort of made me feel like the university views me that way” (John, ll. 134-135).
- John: “I like {raises eyebrows} proving them wrong {smiles}” (John, l. 190).



Choice to be positive

- Sally: “Well I mean I’ve just, you know I’ve never been one to just sit around and mope and be sad about something like if you’re not moving forward what are you doing you know?” (Sally, ll. 159-160).
- Sally: “But um I mean overall I’m like totally grateful that, um like I have this opportunity to like be [here]” (Sallt, ll. 140-141).



Dialectic with oppressive voices

- Mary: Believed that the institution believed that she was “dumb” or “stupid”
- John: “I don’t believe I’m stupid but it’s just having that sort of made me feel like the university views me that way” (John, ll. 134-135).
- Karen: “[Even if they didn’t agree,] I think I had like, I mean {laughter} I think I had like a pretty great resume” (Karen, l. 297).



- Ning and Downing (2010) asserted that there may be non-content benefits to SI (learning competence, motivation).
- Deci and Ryan (2000) suggested that these types of outcomes must be understood as the method by which needs are satisfied.
- The present study suggests that changes in loci of motivation are incited by...
 - *Experiences of competence*
 - *Choices to be positive*
 - *Dialectic with perceived (or explicit) voices of oppression*



- SI intervention seems to promote non-content outcomes
- The sample of students who experienced these non-content outcomes follow consistent patterns
 - *They had experiences of competence in the course content*
 - *They developed a choice to view their experiences positively*
 - *They pushed against perceived or explicit voices of oppression toward intrinsic motivation*
- How can these patterns be facilitated for students?



- Do students who are prompted to compete with oppressive voices experience similar outcomes?
- Are experiences of competence required to effectively compete with oppressive voices?
- How do students who do not experience shifts in LOC react to oppressive voices?



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