

Ideas for SI Activities

Ingredients for Academic Success

In 1976, Benjamin Bloom, a famous researcher in educational learning at the University of Chicago, found several factors contributing to student success as indicated in the diagram below:

Cognitive Entry Skills 50%	
Instruction Quality 25%	Affective Characteristics 25%

Cognitive entry skills are students' abilities to do a subject and their previous knowledge of that subject. Instruction quality includes textbook, curriculum design, tutorial services, and teaching and learning styles. Affective characteristics include personality, self-concept, attitude toward a subject area, anxiety, study habits, and locus of control. The area of affective characteristics is a rich one for supplemental assistance since it involves student beliefs, practices, and behaviors. An SI leader can explore ways for students to discuss how they can take more control of their studying.

Locus of Control

In 1954, the psychologist J.B. Rotter defined the concept of locus of control as where you place responsibility for control over your life. There are two distinct types of locus of control:

Internal: Students with an internal locus of control believe they are in charge of what happens to them. They see a direct connection between their efforts and their grades. They are not afraid of change, and if they make a mistake they look for their misconceptions and how to change them for the future. They seek mastery of the subject and see it as something that is attainable through effort.

External: Students with an external locus of control believe others are more powerful and determine what happens to them. They see little connection between effort and grades. They tend to be afraid of change, using ineffective or limited strategies to study. When they make a mistake, they tend to blame others and play the role of a victim.

Ideas for SI Activities

- 1) Write two columns on the board, one labeled **Internal Locus** and the other **External Locus**. Have the class offer examples of student behavior they have seen or practiced that falls into either column.
- 2) Brainstorm specific behaviors that students have in their control and can practice in the classroom. (These could include such things as where to sit, what to bring, attendance, attention, and note taking.)

