Style Guide

For the SI Faculty Guide

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Preface

A style guide is an immensely useful tool to have around when creating a document or a series of documents. It makes it easy to uniformly format all of the documents in a series. It also addresses some of the common issues seen within documents to help authors avoid those mistakes.

This style guide is for the *Supplemental Instruction Faculty Guide*. However, the styles can be applied to any other document of a similar genre. I based my grammar choices on *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White.

Table of Contents

Design
Bold and Italics
Do not bold or italicize items within a document unless a part of a header. If you want to emphasize something within a document, either rephrase the sentence to focus on that item or, if it is large and significant enough, create a new section with a heading following the heading structure.

Chart and Table Format
Location
Put all data charts in an appendix so as to not interrupt the flow of the document. Integrate any tables into the main text, making sure to lead into them in the main text. Do not have tables stand alone on a separate page.

Orientation
In all data charts, horizontally center the titles and numbers inside the columns. Also, vertically center the titles. In all tables, center the text horizontally and vertically.

Color
If printing in grayscale, use grayscale colors.

Punctuation
Do not add end punctuation.

Chart Example
See Page Layout Samples for an example of a chart.

Table Example
See Page Layout Samples for an example of a table.

Color Use
Use maroon, white, and black on the cover page and grayscale everywhere else. For cost-saving purposes, the interior of the document will most likely be printed in grayscale. Therefore, it is

important to exclusively use grayscale on the interior pages because color would not print well in grayscale.

Headings

Use the following heading structure. Make sure to use them in order and consistently. A consistent heading structure makes it easier for readers to navigate documents. It is important to apply consistent style doing otherwise because it makes it difficult for readers to follow the document.

Title Heading: Georgia, 48 pt., left-aligned, single-spaced

First-Level Heading: Georgia, 20 pt., left-aligned, ragged right, single-spaced, italics

Second-Level Heading: Georgia, 14 pt., left-aligned, ragged right, single-spaced, bold

Third-Level Heading: Georgia, 12 pt., left-aligned, ragged right, single-spaced, bold, italics

Body Text: Georgia, 11 pt., left-aligned, ragged right, single-spaced

Subtext: Georgia, 8 pt., left-aligned, ragged right, single-spaced

Chart Heading: Georgia, 20 pt., centered, ragged right, single-spaced, italics

Also, add a space after the headings before beginning lists.

Hyperlinks

Manually remove the hyperlinks from all web addresses included in the document. Leaving in the hyperlinks changes the color and format of the text.

Lists

Use the standard bulleted list style and avoid stylized bullets. Stylized bullets are not professional. Also, make sure the formatting is consistent. Do not punctuate list items unless the items include multiple complete sentences:

- Line 1

- Line 2

- Line 3

If you do add punctuation, punctuate all the items in the list consistently:

- Use bulleted lists unless the order of what needs to be listed is important. If numbering is necessary, use the same spacing as the bulleted lists.

- Add six points of space after each item except for the last item to increase readability. Do not single-space the items since this many decrease the readability of the document.

- Do not indent paragraphs or sentences just before, immediately in the middle of, or after bulleted lists. This makes the document more readable. Refer to the Lists and Page Numbers sections for examples.

- Adjust the bullet position 0.25″ from the margin. Make the text indent 0.5″ from the margin.

Page Numbers

In order to create the circular design page numbers, take the following steps:

1. Insert page numbers on the right side of the page.

2. Make the page number Georgia, 11 pt.

3. Make the page number white.

4. Send the page number to the front using the order function.

5. Insert a small circle. Place it at the right side of the page on top of the page number. Make both the shape fill and outline black text 1.

6. Insert a slightly larger circle. Make both the shape fill and outline black text 1, lighter 25%.

7. Insert one last circle, slightly larger than the second one. Make both the shape fill and outline white, background 1, darker 50%.

8. Add a black line which extends from the bottom of the circles at a 45% angle to the left side of the page.

9. Group the circles and the line.

10. Make the footer from the bottom 0" and the header from the top 0.5". Make sure the circles do not get cut off at the bottom when printing.

This design ties into the cover page design and creates a sense of continuity within the document.

Paragraphs

Do not indent the first paragraph under a heading. Add a single space in between paragraphs.

Indent all paragraphs following the first paragraph. This adds additional interest to the document and helps the overall flow. (Notice the format of this page's paragraphs.)

Table of Contents Format

When creating a table of contents, only apply pre-created headings to the things you want to include. Manually format all other headings. Also, when updating the contents of the table of contents, verify that the font type and size is still correct.
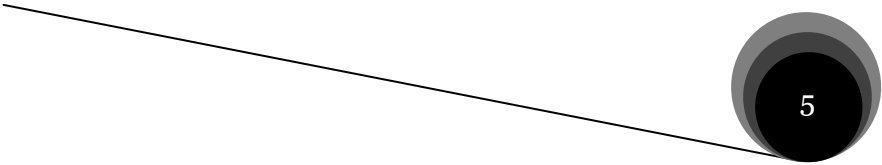
Page Layout Samples

The following three snapshots are samples of the formatting referred to in the *Style Guide*. Use these as examples of how to format the document:

Chart Headers

Table Format

	SI Leader	GA/TA
Characteristic	Model student	Content specialist
Status	Peer	Academic elite
Goal	Lead students to succeed	Teach subject matter
Mode	Group participation/ Collaborative learning	Passive learning in response to instructor queries
Orientation	Student-oriented	Professor-oriented
Instructional Duties	Leads group but leaves teaching to professor	Re-lectures or re-teaches group
Attitude	Patient with students and willing to help those having trouble	May be impatient with less attentive or gifted students

SI Leaders

- Model students who do not profess to know it all; if an SI Leader does not know the answer to a student's question, he/she will model effective research methods and/or the importance of utilizing the instructor's office hours
- Can relate to students on their level
- Primary goal is to teach others in the class how to be successful by integrating specific study skills with course content, thus promoting transferable skills
- Encourage and elicit group participation with collaborative learning techniques
- Focused on areas of concern from a student's perspective
- Patient and willing to try various strategies to help students understand course material
- Use direct collaborative learning exercises instead of lecturing while encouraging students to take responsibility for the process and application of course material

GAs or TAs

- Content specialists who have excelled in their fields
- Considered academic elite
- Primary goal is to teach the subject matter
- May not encourage active participatory learning
- Professor-oriented
- May be impatient with students who are less interested or academically gifted
- Re-lecture or re-teach classroom material

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Appendix

The following reports illustrate data analysis for targeted SI-supported classes. The group grade average of those who attended SI can be compared to the group average of those who did not attend.

SI Report: Spring 2009
Math Courses

	Overall		Participated in SI		Did Not Participate		
	%	Number of Students	%	Number of Students	%	Number of Students	% Difference*
Average ACT Scores							
Composite	21.98		21.52		22.16		-0.64
Math	20.54		19.98		20.76		-0.78
Reading	23.06		22.50		23.29		-0.79
Average UG Cumulative GPA (at end of SPR 2009)	2.57		2.73		2.51		0.22
Final Grade							
Pass	63.3%	138	66.7%	40	62.0%	98	4.6%
Fail	36.7%	80	33.3%	20	38.0%	60	-4.6%
Participated in SI	27.7%	61	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		220		61		159	

SI students earn higher course grades and withdraw less often than non-SI students. A slightly different view considers the percentage of successful completions (As, Bs, and Cs) of those who attended SI vs. the successful completions of those who did not attend. Likewise, it compares the percentage of successful completions with unsuccessful completions.

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SI and Academic Quality

Support of SI in no way suggests reducing the requirements of the course to make it easier for students to pass. SI attempts to help students figure out how to be successful in difficult courses. The SI Leader knows how to be successful because of his/her experience in the course and discipline. SI Leaders knows how to study, what material to focus on, and how to interpret instructor expectations.

Moreover, the SI Leader knows which successful strategies will facilitate all of these things. In turn, the SI Leader will pass on his/her "know how" to students in the class so they can be successful as well.

How is the Effectiveness Measured?

At the end of each semester, the Office of SI will compare the final course grades of students who attended SI to those who did not. For examples of these data reports, see the Appendix.

Typical Faculty Concerns

Why my course?

SI typically supports 100-level introductory, core curriculum, or "gatekeeper" courses, though some difficult upper-division courses have been granted support. SI is part of your class for several reasons, none of which have anything to do with your ability to teach. The primary reason is because this class is a historically difficult course or "killer course" wherein many students struggle and fail, producing a high DFW rate for the course. The focus of SI is the difficulty inherent within the course itself. Before supporting a killer course with SI, the SI Director first seeks departmental approval.

Why do students struggle?

There are a number of factors to consider, including the following:

- Some students have difficulty in certain courses because the subject was not taught, was taught differently, in high school
- For others, the depth and breadth of the course makes it difficult for students to organize; the material may be too conceptual if they are used to dealing with things on a more concrete level
- Still others may have difficulty with the class size, feeling anonymous and obscure with a new classroom format and structure
- Lastly, some students may have poor study skills; the rigors of college-level courses often catch students off-guard

How much work will it be for me to have SI support?

SI is completely maintained and coordinated by the SI Director. All we ask of faculty in SI-supported classes is that they provide the following:

- A copy of the class roster
- A few minutes at the beginning of class for the SI Leader to make weekly announcements

Style
Acronyms/Abbreviations

Write out the word in its first occurrence. Afterwards, use abbreviations. Make sure to be consistent when using abbreviations. To not do so makes it harder for the readers to follow the document. The following are some abbreviations and acronyms included in the document:

- UMKC: University of Missouri-Kansas City
- SI: use SI instead of Supplemental Instruction after the first mention
    - SI Director
    - SI Leaders
    - SI sessions
- GA or TA: use GA or TA after the first mention of Graduate Assistant and Teaching Assistant

The following is an example of how to use abbreviations:

> Supplemental Instruction (SI) is the brainchild of Dr. Deanna Martin from the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC). In 1973, Dr. Martin developed the SI Model in response to her university's concern regarding the high failure rate among minorities in medical school. Initial SI evaluation results were so impressive, the program quickly spread to UMKC's health and professional schools and, soon after that, throughout the entire university.

Grammar

Exclamations

Do not include exclamatory sentences. In particular, do not include exclamatory sentences when describing what SI Leaders cannot do or are not expected to do as it creates a negative impression on readers and comes across as hostile.

Parallel Structure

When listing items in a sentence, make sure the listed items are all parallel. The following is an example of good parallel structure:

> After class, make sure to take out the trash, finish your homework, and clean your room.

Tone

Make sure to keep a friendly but professional tone throughout the document. Avoid sounding negative or overly informal, especially when describing the limitations and restrictions of the program and SI Leader duties.

The following, taken from the *Supplemental Instruction Faculty Guide*, is a good example of a proper tone:

> SI Leaders typically do not answer questions you ask the class. The SI Leader is there to get a better sense of the areas emphasized during lectures so that he or she can develop more focused SI sessions.

This example demonstrates how the author can express the limitations of the program without appearing negative.

Logo and Contact Information Use

Placement

Use the MSU logo only on the cover page.

Size

Inclusion of Contact Information

Include the following at the beginning of the document after the Table of Contents and at the very end just before the Appendix:

SI Program
Missouri State University
Meyer Library 112
Phone: (417) 836-5006
MichaelFrizell@MissouriState.edu
http://si.missouristate.edu

Also, include the phone number, e-mail address, and web address at appropriate places within the document.

Contact Information

The document's author can be contacted for any more information:

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May 20, 2011