

# The Socratic Method

**L**earning specialists agree that students are more apt to comprehend difficult subject material if they talk amongst their friends and classmates about the course, explaining concepts in their own words and collaboratively solving problems. With this insight, SI Leaders use the Socratic Method during small-group study to engage students in active learning.

The Socratic Method is an interactive, as opposed to a didactic, group questioning technique which relies on the progression of seemingly innocent questions that ultimately lead students to a logical conclusion.

Taking a *teaching by asking* approach—instead of telling—

SI Leaders use the Socratic Method to help students learn to develop their own answers, and thus help students learn to think for themselves.

The Socratic Method begins with the SI Leader posing some general questions to highlight the students' prior knowledge. In developing a dialogue, the SI Leader feigns ignorance or skepticism as his/her questions to the group become more specific. The step-wise questioning process (starting at the bottom and building up) uses a cross-examination approach that encourages common inquiry from those within the group.

The SI Leaders maintain a conversational tone during SI sessions by redirecting and rephrasing questions and by offering hints; this keeps the

students actively engaged and provides constant feedback.

Use of the Socratic Method has other advantages, namely that it stimulates the students' thinking—drawing out ideas rather than pushing them around. As well, the questions from both the students and the SI Leader generate more questions and thus promote curiosity rather than stifle it. Following this process, the students learn by osmosis the beauty of collaborative effort.

The Socratic Method is beneficial to both teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it is a skill requiring practice and application. SI Leaders are introduced to this questioning technique during their initial training. They develop and sharpen their delivery of this craft during their SI sessions.

Angelo State University

SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION



## Important Dates:

- ✓ December 8—Last day of classes; SI sessions end
- ✓ December 11 to 15—Final SI Leader Portfolio Review & End-of-Term Review/Self-Assessment with SI Director



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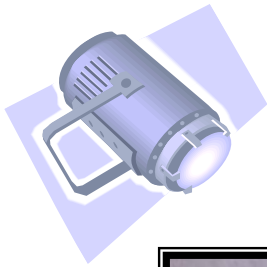
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# SI Leader Spotlight

Albert Fierro

BIO 2424: Human Physiology



Fall 2006 marks Albert Fierro's first semester as an SI Leader for BIO 2424: Human Physiology. Albert, however, has a solid history with SI. Last year (2005-2006) Albert regularly attended SI sessions as a student in both BIO 2423: Human Anatomy and BIO 2424: Human Physiology.

Having experienced the SI Program from this angle, Albert brings a unique and student-sensitive perspective to SI.

Albert's peer SI Leaders admire his integration of the text, lecture notes, and other resources to develop study guides and mock exams. They also feel he is most adept at redirecting questions to encourage group discussion and to help students learn to apply and transfer subject knowledge.

Albert is a first year nursing student, working on his Clinical Nurse Specialist degree. He plans to work in oncology.

## A Look Behind the Scenes

All SI Leaders must complete program orientation that consists of two full days of training, which always takes place before the start of a new term. The timing of this instruction ensures the SI Leaders are ready to begin work on the first day of classes. Once the term begins, SI Leaders must attend bi-weekly staff meetings as well as in-service training that addresses specific study skills and program issues. Following is a sample list of the SI Leaders' bi-weekly meeting topics:

- The Importance of the Course Syllabus
- Increasing Attendance in SI
- Building Rapport with Students
- Cooperative vs. Collaborative Learning
- Test-Taking Strategies
- Time Management
- The Socratic Method
- Rapport Training

## SI Session Schedule: Fall 2006

Bio 2424  
Human Physiology  
**Albert Fierro**  
albertfierro@angelo.edu

M 10—11 a.m. in CAV 211  
M 4—5 p.m. in CAV 119  
F 2—3 p.m. in CAV 019

BIO 1410  
Human Biology  
**Amy Bullock**  
abullock@angelo.edu

T 7—8 p.m. in CAV 023  
W 2:30—3:30 p.m. in CAV 023  
R 3—4 p.m. in CAV 023

BIO 2423  
Human Anatomy  
**Ben Gilbert**  
FAB759@angelo.edu

M 5—6 p.m. in CAV 125 (BIO LAB)  
T 2—3 p.m. in CAV 023  
W 1—2 p.m. in CAV 023  
R 4—5 p.m. in CAV 019  
F 10—11 a.m. in CAV 125 (BIO LAB)

BIO 2423  
Human Anatomy  
**Norbert Rios**  
nrios@angelo.edu

T 3—4:30 p.m. in CAV 123  
W 7:30—8:30 p.m. in CAV 125 (LAB)  
R 3—4:30 p.m. in CAV 123

MATH 1302  
College Algebra  
**Beatrice Flores**  
bflores@angelo.edu

M 5—6 p.m. in MCS 214  
T 4:30—5:30 p.m. in MCS 214  
W 6—7 p.m. in MCS 214  
R 2—3 p.m. in MCS 214