Notes from SI Conference Keynote Lecture

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Assumptions behind SI:

1. SI assumes all students CAN learn. It is not dependent on their SAT score.
2. Education is the increase in capability. It is hard work and requires delayed gratification.
3. An important key to success is high engagement.
4. Expertise is not what you know, it’s what you do with what you know.

The conservatory of knowledge is no longer on a college campus, it is increasingly in the Cloud. Higher education is becoming less of a “gatekeeper” and needs to become more of a “bridge-builder.”

SI is teaching students strategies for how to succeed in life.

Four Guiding Principles of SI:

1. We are not here to help people, we are here to help people help themselves. We tend to over-help, creating learned helplessness.
2. The ultimate purpose of SI is to build a growth mindset in our students. You can’t teach people to fish if they don’t believe they have the capacity (or the right) to learn how to fish. Growth mindset theory emphasizes the value of effort—the journey is the reward.
3. Appropriate use of performance feedback is key to effectively supporting students and Peer Educators. Feedback should focus on observable behavior, what’s wrong with it, strategies for improving. Not use judgment or blame. Above all “do no harm.”
4. We’ve only failed if we stop before we get to a good ending point. Resilience and perseverance are most important. Accept setbacks without viewing them as defeats.