Preparing the Knowledge Workforce of the Future: A Comprehensive Survey Study of Our Freshmen's Digital Skills, Social Media Use, and First-Year Experience

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Objective: To enhance our understanding of our first-year students' digital skill level, perception of the importance of digital skills, their proficiency in social media technologies, their social media use patterns, and their overall first-year experience in an effort to help them succeed in college.

Data Sample: 361 freshmen, 21.5% of the 1,683 2017 First-Year Student Cohort at DH, who were surveyed in 11/2017.

What Are Students' Self-Reflection of Their First-Year Experience at CSUDH?

A motivated cohort of 2017 DHFYE: Graduating from CSUDH is **very important for 90.4%** of them; estimated household income: **78.7% below $50,000** (43.8% less than $25,000); **79% first-generation** students; **77.8%** Hispanic or Latino, and **10.2%** Black or African American.

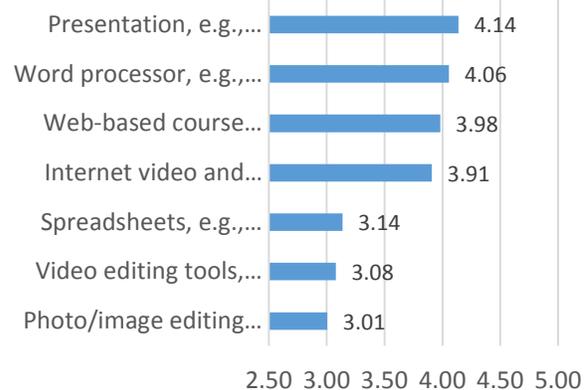| The 2017 FYEDH Cohort had an overwhelming, positive experience during the first 5 months at CSUDH	
Overall First-Year Experience -- "I feel so far my experience has been *great*. Throughout the time I've been at CSUDH I've learned where to find resources to help be successful in my educational career. For example, receiving help from peer coaches, attending workshops, and speaking to multiple advisors." [18 years old, male, Psychology major] -- "So far, my first year experience at CSUDH has been *really exciting*. It was overwhelming at first, but with help of peers and staff, I was able to keep up with everything. I needed help understanding statistics, so I went to tutoring at the Toro Learning Center. Going once a week helped me a lot. I had a better understanding of the concept." [18 years old, female, Liberal Studies Major]	**Wish List** • "CSUDH can improve their WiFi connection" • "Add more places to sit in LSU, add more affordable (diversity) of restaurants, make Toro gear affordable." • "Install more outlets to charge laptops/ devices throughout LSU." • "I would like to see classes have more in class tutors or SI's in math." • "Inform the students of what they can use for free on campus like the Toro Express."

What Digital Skills Do They Believe are Essential for Their College Success? How Do They Assess Their Digital Skills?

--"The digital skills that I think are essential for a student to succeed at college is being able to use **Word, Blackboard, and PowerPoint** because majority of the courses that are taken require for one to turn in essays and projects through Blackboard." [18 years old, female, English major]

--"**Word** is essential to do coursework, **Blackboard** is necessary to look at schedules, and **Excel** is good for future jobs." [17 years old, female, Psychology major]

--"I believe all the digital skills of using a **computer and internet** are essential to succeed as a lot of our work is completed online now and requires thorough research. I am a journalism student thus I need to be proficient in **social media and other technologies** to prepare me for my future career." [21 years old, female, Journalism major]


Figure. College Freshmen's Digital Skills (n=361)

Skill	Rating
Presentation, e.g.,…	4.14
Word processor, e.g.,…	4.06
Web-based course…	3.98
Internet video and…	3.91
Spreadsheets, e.g.,…	3.14
Video editing tools,…	3.08
Photo/image editing…	3.01

How are Student Using Social Media on Campus?
(**84%** Use **Snapchat, Instagram,** and **YouTube**; on average they have **3-4 Social Media Accounts**; **45%** had their first Smartphone in Middle School or Earlier Age)
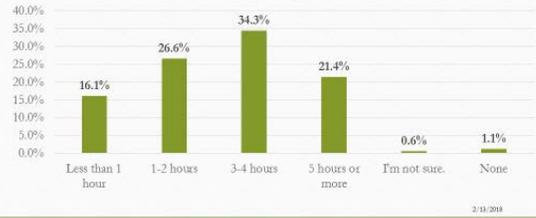
Worrisome?

In a typical day, 1 out 3 freshman use social media every 2-3 hours, and 1 out 5 students use social media every 1 hour

Figure 4.2. Frequency of Using Social Media
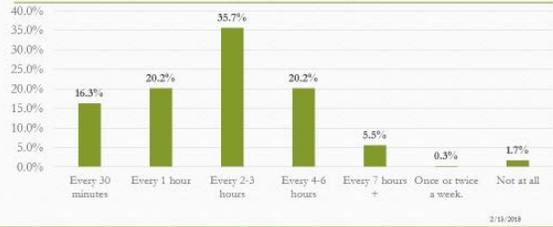
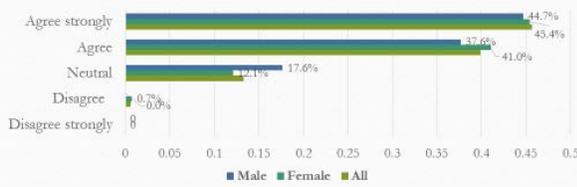In a typical day, 55% students spend 3 hours or more on social media

Figure 4.3. Time Spent on Social Media on a Daily Basis (n=361)

Encouraging!

85% of the freshmen are confident about their ability to search online and obtain information from the Web

Figure 4.5. Freshmen Having Ability to Search Online and Obtain Information (n=361)

61.5% of the first-year students believe that they have the technical skills to use social media technologies for learning

Figure 4.4. Students' Perceived Technical Skills with Social Media for Learning (n=361)
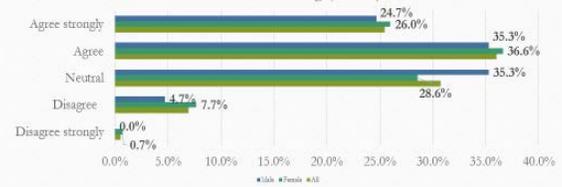
Does Social Media Use Helps Social Interaction and Academic Work at College?

| Mixed Feelings	But It's Good to Know:
--"**Yes**, social has helped my social interactions at college because I have found a lot of people that attend CSU Dominguez Hills on it and I can text them about homework or just to hangout and get more friends." [18 years old, female, Kinesiology major] --"I believe **it does** for example Instagram helps me communicate with my school and let me be aware of academic opportunities such as workshops, meetings, events, etc." [18 years old, female, Health Sciences major] --"**No**, because it is more of a distraction than anything else. I find myself spending an extra ten minutes on it when I pull it up." [18 years old, male, Pre-Physical Therapy]	 61.2% of the First-Year Students Believe that Social Media Enables Them to Collaborate Better with Peers Figure 4.6. Social Media Enabling Peer Collaboration
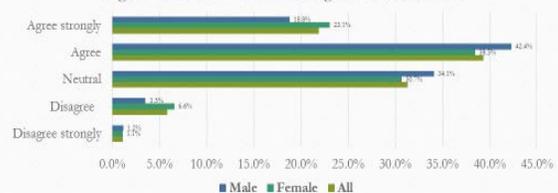
Take-Away Questions: What digital technology strategies should we implement to promote students' digital competence and to face the global challenges in higher education[1]? How can we promote students' productive use of social media? What are the institutional policies and guideline on social media use to engage students and strengthen their sense of community?

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[1] 2017 World Economic Forum Report, "Realizing Human Potential in the Fourth Industrial Revolution: An Agenda for Leaders to Shape the Future of Education, Gender and Work." (URL: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_EGW_Whitepaper.pdf)