



The American Freshman *National Norms for Fall 2007*

Habits of Mind, Parental Involvement & Diversity

Essential “Habits of Mind”

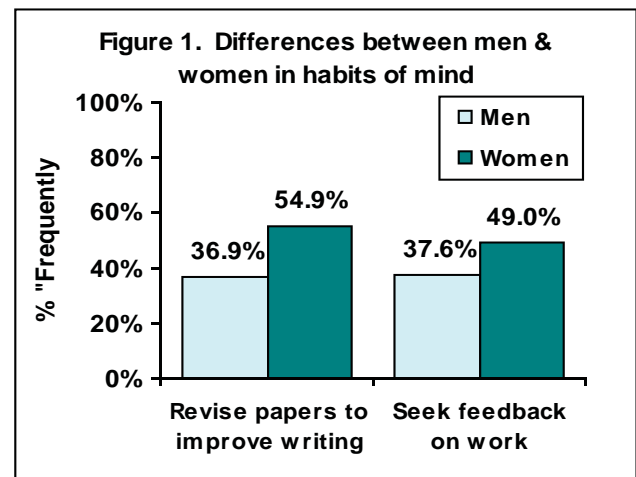
“Habits of mind” are learning behaviors that college faculty have identified as essential for success in coursework. These behaviors include supporting opinions with a logical argument, asking questions in class, seeking alternative solutions to a problem, and evaluating the quality and reliability of information. In 2007, the CIRP Freshman Survey introduced a set of items designed to capture the extent to which students engaged in these essential habits of mind during their senior year of high school (Table 1), with the intent of measuring student progress in college with our two follow-up surveys, the Your First College Year Survey and the College Senior Survey.

The two habits of mind in which the most students reported “frequently” engaging were supporting opinions with a logical

Table 1. “Habits of Mind”

How often in the past year did you...	% Frequently
Support your opinions with a logical argument	58.2
Ask questions in class	54.4
Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others	49.4
Revise your papers to improve your writing	46.8
Seek feedback on your academic work	43.9
Seek alternative solutions to a problem	41.6
Take a risk because you felt you had more to gain	37.8
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received	35.0
Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class	29.0
Look up scientific research articles and resources	21.2

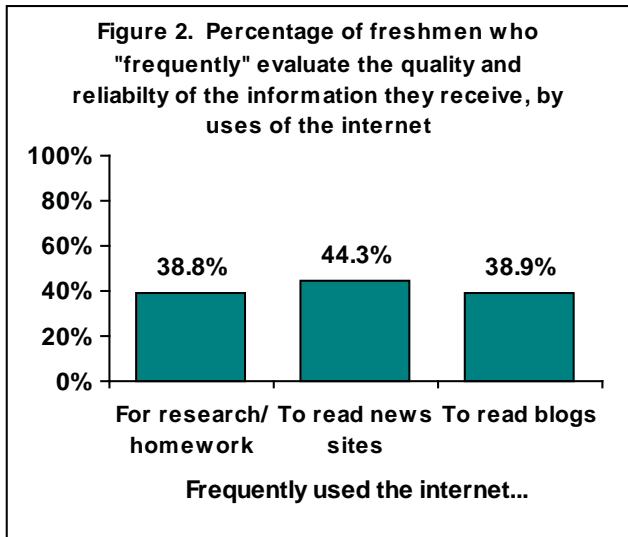
argument (58.2 percent frequently did this) and asking questions in class (54.4 percent frequently did so). The two habits in which the fewest students frequently engaged were looking up scientific research articles/resources and exploring topics on one’s own that were not required for class, which 21.2 and 29.0 percent of students reported frequently doing, respectively. Interestingly, men and women reported engaging in a few essential learning behaviors in high school with very different frequency (Figure 1). Specifically, far more women than men reported frequently revising papers to improve their writing (54.9 vs. 36.9 percent) and seeking feedback on their academic work (49.0 vs. 37.6 percent).



Overall, only 35.0 percent of the incoming freshman class indicated that they frequently evaluated the quality or reliability of the information that they received during their last year of high school. This figure is concerning, given that students often get their information from web sites that may not be peer reviewed or vetted for accuracy in any way. Indeed, more than three quarters of incoming freshmen indicated that they used the internet frequently for research or homework (75.9 percent),



more than four in ten frequently used the internet to read news sites (44.0 percent), and more than three in ten frequently used the internet to read blogs (34.2 percent). Strikingly, less than half of the students who frequently utilized the Internet in each of these ways also reported that they frequently evaluated the quality or reliability of information they received (Figure 2). Only 38.8 percent of students who frequently used the internet for research/homework or to read blogs and 44.3 percent of those who frequently used the web to read news sites reported that they frequently evaluated the reliability of information they received. Most students who frequently used the web (52 to 56 percent) indicated only “occasionally” doing this.



Parental Involvement

In recent years, some college faculty and administrators have reported a trend of parents becoming more and more involved in the college-related decisions of their children. In order to examine this phenomenon, a new set of questions was added to the 2007 CIRP Freshman Survey that asked students whether they felt that their parents were involved “too much,” the “right amount,” or “too little” in several college-related decisions (Table 2).

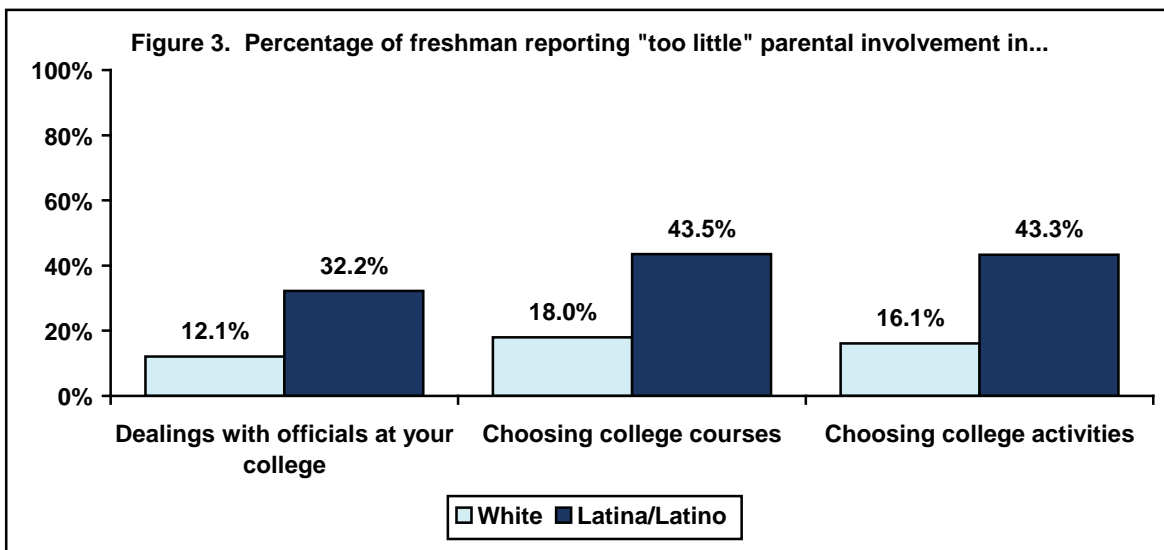
Table 2. Parental Involvement

How involved were your parents/legal guardians in your...	%	%	%
	Too Little	Right Amount	Too Much
Decision to go to college	5.7	84.0	10.3
Application(s) to college	15.1	74.2	10.7
Decision to go to <u>this</u> college	10.0	80.5	9.5
Dealings with officials at your college	16.7	77.5	5.8
Choosing college courses	24.0	72.5	3.5
Choosing college activities	22.5	73.7	3.8

Students of color were more likely than white students to indicate that their parents were involved too little in all areas. This difference was most pronounced for decisions made after college admission—fewer than 17 percent of White students felt that their parents were not involved enough in dealings with officials at their college, in choosing college courses and in choosing college activities, compared to 20.5 to 33.7 percent of Black students, 33.3 to 39.6 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 32.2 to 43.5 percent of Latino/a students. Generally, Latino/a students were the most likely to indicate that their parents were not involved enough in these post-matriculation areas. See Figure 3.

Social Networking Sites

Over the past few years, social networking web sites such as Facebook and MySpace have revolutionized the way that students communicate with one another. The 2007 Freshman Survey introduced a question about students’ use of social networking sites that explored how often students used such sites during their senior year of high school. Overall, the vast majority of freshmen (86.3 percent) reported spending at least some time on social networking sites each week, and 18.9 percent reported using these sites for six or more hours a week. About half of entering students (49.3 percent) report that they were typically on social networking sites for one to five hours a week. Compared to other activities, the time that students spent on social networking sites in high school was most comparable to the time they spent partying, participating in clubs or groups, and watching TV—14.8 to



25.8 percent of freshmen report that these activities took up six or more hours in a typical week. The time freshmen reported spending in “live” socializing dwarfed the amount spent socializing online, however—73.4 percent of students said that they spent six or more hours a week socializing with friends, which was almost four times as many who indicated spending this much time on social networking sites.

There is some evidence that students who spend more time on social networking sites do so at the expense of their academics. While those who spent more time on online social networks do not report spending less time on studying/homework, they are slightly more likely to report that they have had remedial work in high school and/or will need remedial work in college.

Diversity-related issues

Entering first-year students’ attitudes about diversity continue a trend of showing more understanding for other cultures, races and ethnicities. Over one-third of students, 36.7 percent, reported that helping to promote racial understanding is a personal goal of theirs; this figure is up 2.7 percentage points from 2006 and is the highest it has been since 1994. Students at Black colleges and universities were even more likely to indicate that promoting racial understanding is one of their goals; 64.0 percent of students at these schools indicated that promoting racial understanding is essential or very important to them. Similarly, over half (52.3 percent) of the entering freshmen class indicated having a goal of improving their understanding of other countries and cultures—this was up almost ten percentage points from 43.2 percent in 2002, when the question was first asked.

On some other diversity-related issues there were fairly large gender gaps, with more women than men showing support for legal marital status for same-sex couples, affirmative action, and education for undocumented immigrants. Specifically, many more first-year women than men indicated that they agree that same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status (70.3 vs. 55.3 percent), while more men than women indicated that they believe undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education (53.7 vs. 43.6 percent) and that affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished (53.2 vs. 43.3 percent). Among students at Black colleges, a similar pattern of gender gaps was shown, although the magnitude of the gaps was not always the same. However, both men and women at Black colleges and university showed different levels of support for each issue than students overall. Specifically, 53.8 percent of women and 40.9 percent of men at Black colleges agreed that same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status while 43.3 percent of men and 39.2 percent of women agreed that undocu-

mented immigrants should be denied access to public education, and 31.3 percent of men and 27.4 percent of women agreed that affirmative action should be abolished.

The CIRP Freshman Survey

The CIRP Freshman Survey has been conducted annually since 1966. The data in this CIRP trends report come from responses of over 13 million students at over 1,900 of the nation’s baccalaureate colleges and universities over the last forty years. Results of the CIRP Freshman Survey provide a comprehensive portrait of the changing character of entering students and American society at large. Information on the CIRP Freshman Survey, research and publications based on these data, and other research projects conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute can be found on the HERI website (www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/heri.html) or via email to heri@ucla.edu.

Additional reports for campuses can be requested by contacting the HERI Data Services at heridata@ucla.edu.

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CIRP is a national longitudinal study of the American higher education system. It is regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on college students. Established in 1966 at the American Council on Education, the CIRP is now the nation’s largest and oldest empirical study of higher education, involving data on some 1,900 institutions and over 13 million college students. The Higher Education Research Institute has administered the CIRP since 1973. The CIRP longitudinal program consists of the Freshman Survey, Your First College Year Survey, the College Senior Survey, and the triennial Faculty Survey.

Information on the CIRP Freshman Survey, research and publications based on these data, and other research projects conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute can be found on the HERI website at: www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri.

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