

StayConnected2UCSC Survey

Student Experiences with Online Platforms, Fall 2020

Introduction

The StayConnected2UCSC Survey #2 collected information about students' experiences with remote learning and their awareness of health services in Fall quarter 2020. This is the second of a series of brief surveys throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, aiming to understand student needs and circumstances so the campus can better support student learning and plan services related to student health and wellness and other needs.

This report covers the portion of the survey about student experiences with online platforms for remote learning and social interactions with their peers.¹

This survey was sponsored by the Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning (CITL), Online Education, Division of Student Affairs and Success, and Student Health Services. Institutional Research, Assessment, and Policy Studies (IRAPS) staff worked with these units to design the survey. IRAPS administered the online survey, analyzed the results, and prepared this report.

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¹ If you have any questions about this report or the survey, please contact IRAPS surveys@ucsc.edu.

Table 3. Other tools to connect on homework or class projects (write-ins)

Number of students	Undergraduates (N)	Grad Students (N)	Total (N)
Texting	43	5	48
Zoom	24	14	38
GroupMe	25	0	25
Emailing	13	2	15
iMessage/Apple Messages	14	0	14
LoopChat	12	0	12
Google Docs/Jamboard	3	5	8

Note: Other platforms (write-ins) show those more than 5 .

To connect socially with peers, about half of both undergraduates (47%) and graduate students (53%) used social media. Discord was also used by about half of undergraduates (47%) and one-quarter (24%) of graduate students. Slack was used by about one-third (31%) of graduate students. See Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Online platforms used to connect with peers socially

	Undergraduates	Grad Students	Total
	N = 2153	N = 224	N = 2377
Do not use any	22%	22%	22%
Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, TikTok)	47%	53%	47%
Discord	47%	24%	45%
Reddit	9%	3%	9%
Canvas Discussions	7%	5%	7%
Piazza	6%	6%	6%
Slack	2%	31%	5%
Google Hangouts/Chat	3%	7%	3%
Pronto	0%	0%	0%

Table 5. Other tools to connect with peers socially (write-ins)

Number of students	Undergraduates (N)	Grad Students (N)	Total (N)
Texting	25	7	32
Zoom	12	9	21
GroupMe	12	0	12
iMessage/Apple Messages	7	1	8
LoopChat	7	0	7

Note: Other platforms (write-ins) show those more than 5 .

Section 2. Helpfulness of online tools for connecting with other students

About two-thirds of undergraduates (64%) and graduate students (71%) indicated that these platforms and tools were *essential*, *very helpful*, or *helpful* for their learning experience. Over half indicated that these tools were *essential*, *very helpful*, or *helpful* for their social experience. See Table 6.

Table 6. Helpfulness of online platforms or tools for students' learning experience and social experience

		Undergraduates	Grad Students	Total
		N = 1573-1566	N = 166-168	N = 1732-1741
Learning experience	Essential/Very helpful/Helpful	64%	71%	65%
	Essential	10%	11%	10%
	Very Helpful	20%	23%	20%
	Helpful	33%	38%	34%
	Somewhat helpful	29%	24%	29%
	Not at all	7%	5%	7%
Social experience	Essential/Very helpful/Helpful	57%	64%	58%
	Essential	14%	16%	14%
	Very Helpful	15%	16%	15%
	Helpful	28%	31%	28%
	Somewhat helpful	31%	27%	31%
	Not at all	12%	9%	12%

Note: Results are shown for students used tools to connect with peers.

Most useful tools to connect with others

We asked students to name a single most useful tool for connecting with other UCSC students and coded their responses.

The single most useful tool for undergraduates to connect with others was Discord (37%), followed by Zoom (20%) used for class discussions, breakout rooms, TA sessions, chats, and lectures.

For graduate students, the most useful tool was Zoom used for class discussions (30%). Slack was the second most useful tool (23%). See Table 7 next page.

Table 7. Most useful online tools for connecting with other students, based on open-ended comments

	Undergraduates	Graduate Students	Total
	N = 1608	N = 166	N = 1774
<i>Nothing has been helpful or not sure what has been helpful</i>	9%	4%	9%
Discord (servers, chats, groups)	37%	8%	35%
Zoom for class discussions (including breakout rooms, TA sessions, chats, lectures)	20%	30%	21%
Social Media (including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, Tiktok)	15%	16%	16%
Canvas (messages, discussion)	5%	2%	5%
Piazza	3%	7%	4%
Emailing	2%	9%	3%
Slack	0%	23%	3%
Texting	1%	4%	2%
Group chats and discussion boards	1%	1%	1%
Classmates and friends	1%	1%	1%
Internet (hotspot, laptop, iPhone)	1%	2%	1%
Campus club or student organizations	1%	0%	1%
GroupMe	1%	0%	1%
Academic support services (ACE, MSI, office hours)	1%	1%	1%
Google Hangouts, Calendar, Chats, Drive or other products	1%	1%	1%
LoopChat	1%	0%	1%
Group projects	1%	1%	1%
Reddit	1%	0%	1%
Phonecalls	0%	1%	1%
AppleMessage/iMessage	0%	1%	0%
Other items (online videos, welcome week, doing research, planner, courier service, job)	2%	2%	2%

Note: 121 students mentioned two or more tools in their comments.

Section 3. Negative impacts of online tools

We asked students the question, "Did any of these tools have a negative impact on your experience at UCSC during remote teaching?"

Very few undergraduates (6%) and graduate students (15%) reporting a negative impact. See Table 8.

Table 8. Proportion of students experiencing negative impacts from online tools

Undergraduates	Grad Students	Total
N = 2018	N = 213	N = 2231
6%	15%	7%

Students who had negative experiences provided details about these experiences. These comments are available upon request.

Appendix: Survey Questions

6. Are you using any online platforms or tools to connect with your peers in your classes to work on homework or projects outside of class time? These tools may or may not be assigned by the instructor.

Select all that apply.

- Discord
- Reddit
- Google Hangouts/Chat
- Canvas Discussions
- Piazza
- Slack
- Pronto
- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, TikTok)
- Other, please specify: _____
- Do not use any

7. Are you using any online platforms or tools to connect socially with your peers in your classes? This question is not about tools assigned by the instructor but tools you may be using informally. Select all that apply.

- Discord
- Reddit
- Google Hangouts/Chat
- Canvas Discussions
- Piazza
- Slack
- Pronto
- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, TikTok)
- Other, please specify: _____
- Do not use any

8. How helpful were these platforms/tools for connecting you with other students in your classes to improve your...

	Not at all	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful	Essential
Learning experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What has been the single most useful tool in helping you connect with other UCSC students during remote teaching? _____

10. Did any of these tools have a negative impact on your experience at UCSC during remote teaching?

- No
- Yes

This Question is Conditionally Shown if: (10 = Yes)

10a. Please explain what kind of negative experience and which tool you used.

(End of Section)