

# Bridging the Technology Gap: Supplementing Digital Literacy of Incoming CofC Students

Mary Walters  
December 11, 2020

INDEX

SUMMARY..... 2

THE PROBLEM.....2

THE SOLUTION.....3

DEFINING LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ESSENTIAL PLATFORMS..... 4

CONCLUSION AND EXPECTED IMPACT.....5

## 1) SUMMARY

**Incoming students at the College of Charleston need supplemental instruction on digital literacy.** In this white paper, digital literacy refers to familiarity with digital technologies and ability to use them to create and enhance educational and rhetorical opportunities. In an increasingly digital age, incoming students at the College of Charleston require additional education on essential technologies in order to enhance their digital literacy and enable them to succeed at the College of Charleston. Educational modules designed to improve the digital literacy of incoming freshmen would help with several strategies in the 2020 Strategic Plan, including Student Experience and Success strategies 1 and 2 and Academic Distinction strategy 1.

## 2) THE PROBLEM

During their time at the College of Charleston, students are expected to use many different technologies. These include technologies used campus-wide, such as MyCharleston, OAKS/Brightspace, and DegreeWorks, among many others. Additionally, students are required to use various other programs and applications depending on their major and coursework.



**It doesn't matter how many resources the College provides for support and education if students don't know how to use them.**

When students come to the College as freshmen, they have different levels of digital literacy. Many are unfamiliar with the websites and software that they will be required to use. Incoming students have to scramble to learn new technologies while also trying to acclimate to other aspects of their new college lives. There are some materials available, but they could be

improved. By not giving students sufficient instruction on these platforms, the College is not setting incoming students up for success.

In the College’s Strategic Plan under the Student Experiences and Success section, the College says that their goal is to “ensure an effective support system that increases retention and graduation rates and enables students to learn and grow in every aspect of their College experience, preparing them to work and lead in a globally connected world.” Providing more support for digital literacy could help a lot – it doesn’t matter how many resources the College provides for support and education if students don’t know how to use them.

### 3) THE SOLUTION

In order to best equip incoming College of Charleston students to succeed and become the “engaged students and lifelong learners” (a target referenced in the Academic Excellence component of the 2020 Strategic Plan) we must ensure that they have the proper digital literacy foundation. This will make their transition into college easier, and will be reflected both in their academic success and their overall student experience.



### OAKS QUICKSHEET FOR STUDENTS

For additional OAKS tutorials, please visit [http://blogs.cofc.edu/sites/tutorials/oaks\\_tutorials/](http://blogs.cofc.edu/sites/tutorials/oaks_tutorials/)

<b>Login</b>	<b>Dropbox</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Log into <b>MyCharleston</b> (<a href="http://my.cofc.edu">my.cofc.edu</a>).</li> <li>2. Click on the <b>OAKS</b> icon.</li> <li>3. Locate your course from the <b>My Courses</b> list.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After entering your class click on <b>GRADES</b> from the upper navigation and choose <b>ASSIGNMENTS/DROPOBOX</b></li> <li>2. Click on the assignment you wish to submit. (<b>Note:</b> you cannot submit an assignment after the end date)</li> <li>3. Read any instructions listed then scroll to the <b>SUBMIT ASSIGNMENT</b> area.</li> <li>4. Click on <b>ADD A FILE</b>, select file location (<i>My Computer, My Locker, Group Locker</i>) then <b>UPLOAD</b> and locate the file(s) from your computer you wish to add then click <b>OPEN</b>.</li> <li>5. Click <b>ADD</b> to add the file, then <b>SUBMIT</b>.</li> <li>6. Click <b>DONE</b>.</li> </ol> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If you are successful you will receive an email to your <a href="mailto:a.cofc.edu">a.cofc.edu</a> address. If you do not, then please try again.</p>	
<b>Set up Notifications</b>	<b>Quizzes</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After you log into <b>OAKS</b> click on your name in the upper right corner.</li> <li>2. Choose <b>NOTIFICATIONS</b> (<i>You have two instant notifications options - SMS (text) and Email</i>).</li> <li>3. If you choose to receive text alerts, type in your cell number under <b>REGISTER YOUR MOBILE</b>.</li> <li>4. Enter the <b>COUNTRY, MOBILE CARRIER</b>, and <b>MOBILE NUMBER</b> then click <b>SAVE</b>.</li> <li>5. Scroll down under <b>INSTANT NOTIFICATIONS</b> and select the items you wish to receive alerts for.</li> </ol> <p><b>NOTE:</b> News, Dropbox, and Quizzes recommended.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After entering your class click on <b>GRADES</b> from the upper navigation and choose <b>QUIZZES</b>.</li> <li>2. Click on the quiz you wish to take. (<b>Note:</b> you cannot take a quiz after the due date)</li> <li>3. Read all the information on the page then click <b>START QUIZ</b>.</li> <li>4. Make sure to click <b>SAVE</b> after answering. This will prevent your answers from being lost in case of a computer or network crash.</li> <li>5. When finished click <b>SAVE ALL RESPONSES</b>.</li> <li>6. Now click <b>GO TO SUBMIT QUIZ</b>.</li> <li>7. Click <b>YES</b> at the prompt.</li> <li>8. Click <b>SUBMIT QUIZ</b>.</li> <li>9. Click <b>YES, SUBMIT QUIZ</b>.</li> </ol>	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After entering your class, click on <b>CONTENT</b> from the upper navigation.</li> <li>2. View course syllabus and other course content.</li> </ol>	<p><b>STARTING A NEW THREAD</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After entering your class click on <b>COMMUNICATION</b> from the upper navigation and choose <b>DISCUSSIONS</b>.</li> <li>2. Click on the discussion topic.</li> <li>3. To post an original idea click <b>START A NEW THREAD</b>.</li> <li>4. Type in your subject and text.</li> <li>5. To add a file, click <b>ADD ATTACHMENTS</b>.</li> <li>6. Click <b>POST</b>.</li> </ol> <p><b>REPLYING TO A THREAD</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. To reply to someone else’s post, click on the post.</li> <li>8. Click <b>REPLY TO THREAD</b>.</li> <li>9. Type in your subject and text.</li> <li>10. Click <b>POST</b>.</li> </ol>	
<b>Grades</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After entering your class, click on <b>GRADES</b> from the upper navigation and choose <b>GRADES</b>.</li> <li>2. Your grades will be listed for all assignments.</li> </ol>		

*Currently, students get a lot of information on digital technologies from information sheets and infographics like this one published by the College. Digital literacy modules would be a more consistent and reliable alternative.*

To ensure that incoming students have the digital literacy foundation they need to succeed at the College, we should create a series of virtual modules designed to educate incoming students on essential technologies and platforms. These modules would be structured similarly to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium classes that incoming freshmen are required to take.

Each module would focus on an

essential platform or application, and students would be given the opportunity to test out of any and all modules. There would be a placement test to determine which modules students can exempt.

Ideally, the modules would be required to be completed by all incoming freshmen/transfer students prior to the beginning of their first semester at the College. By making the modules due well before the semester begins, we can ensure that they would not conflict with move-in dates or coursework.

#### 4)DEFINING LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ESSENTIAL PLATFORMS

It is not enough to just create digital literacy modules – we must also ensure that each is thoughtfully and deliberately chosen, so that they will be helpful to incoming students. In order to create digital literacy modules that are helpful and relevant, we must select a number of essential platforms to create modules about, and we must define learning objectives for each module.

[CougarAlert LiveSafe App Download](#) - Video  
[CougarAlert LiveSafe Tutorials](#) - Video  
[MFA Set Up Instructions](#) - PDF  
[MFA Set Up Instructions](#) - Video  
[MFA Preferences](#) - PDF  
[MFA Frequently Asked Questions](#) - PDF  
[Tips for Securely Working and Learning Remotely](#) - PDF

[Microsoft OneDrive Set Up and Setting](#) - PDF  
[Microsoft OneDrive Quick Start Guide](#) - PDF  
Microsoft OneDrive Training Outline - PDF  
[Microsoft Teams Quick Start Guide](#) - PDF  
[Microsoft Teams Training Outline](#) - PDF  
[Microsoft Teams Introduction](#) - Video  
[Microsoft Yammer Quick Start Guide](#) - PDF  
[Microsoft Yammer Training Outline](#) - PDF  
[Zoom Getting Started with Meetings](#) - Video  
[Zoom Meetings for Education](#) - Video  
[Zoom In-Depth Meetings Training](#) - Video  
[Zoom Video Tutorials](#) - Video  
[Signing In to Zoom](#) - PDF  
[Installing Zoom](#) - Video  
[Reviewing Your Zoom Settings](#) - Video

*On the training.cofc.edu webpage, there are some links to instruction materials for technologies like CougarAlert and Zoom. But students might not think to look here. With the implementation of digital literacy modules, the college could ensure that all incoming students have access to this information.*

Although some technologies are used campus-wide, such as MyCharleston and OAKS, others, such as FileZilla, Adobe Illustrator, WordPress, and ChemDraw are specific to each program of study, and may not be considered “essential” for all students that attend the College.

To define essential platforms and learning objectives for the digital literacy modules, a committee should be created consisting of faculty and staff members from each department at the College. This committee will be tasked with determining which platforms are essential for student success, and the content of the accompanying modules. When the modules have been created, a trial group of students should be asked to evaluate the modules and assist the committee in their revisions.

As a starting point, I recommend modules for the following platforms:

- MyCharleston
- OAKS
- DegreeWorks
- Handshake

Any additional modules/platforms would be determined by the committee.

## 5) CONCLUSION AND EXPECTED IMPACT

Through the implementation of these digital literacy modules, incoming students will be more prepared to succeed at the College of Charleston.

They will be better equipped to navigate software and websites used campus-wide, as well as ones that will help them within their program of study. They will also be able to take this knowledge with them after they graduate, where it may help them in the workplace. The modules will help the college with Strategy 1 under Academic Distinction on the Strategic

Plan, which is “Establish an integrated, interdisciplinary, experiential liberal arts core that equips every student to succeed academically and professionally in a globally connected world.”

The modules will also help students understand how to locate and use digital resources that the college provides, such as Handshake, CougarConnect, and the library website, among others. By educating students on the digital resources available to them, the College can work toward strategies 1 (“enhance and provide easy, centralized access to academic support resources”) and 2 (“bolster quality of and access to physical, emotional, social and financial wellness services”) under the Student Experience and Success section of the Strategic Plan.