

THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

A LOOK AT PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

November, 2016





**WHY WE DID
THIS WORK**



**WE WANTED
TO EXPLORE
PEOPLE'S
ATTITUDES AND
KNOWLEDGE
OF THE SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND
STEM DISCIPLINES**

- ▶ **Are people as familiar with Social Science as Natural Science and Science in general; if not, where is the gap?**
- ▶ **What skill sets are perceived to be helpful for future personal and societal success? Which are associated with Social Science?**



SO WE FIELDDED RESEARCH

- ▶ 1000 adults 18+
- ▶ Representative US population, balanced among gender and age groups
- ▶ Fieldwork = 6/10/16-6/13/16
- ▶ We also dug into the social space via an in-depth analysis that mined relevant conversations
- ▶ And, we looked at the cultural context to provide clues to explain what we were learning

UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED

TERMS USED
THROUGHOUT THE
PRESENTATION

- ▶ **STEM = Math + Engineering + Computer Science/
Technology + Physics + Chemistry + Biology**
- ▶ **Natural Science = Physics + Chemistry + Biology**
- ▶ **Social Science = Psychology + Sociology
+ Economics + Anthropology + Political Science**
- ▶ **Liberal Arts = Music + Arts + History + English
+ Foreign Language**



WHAT WE LEARNED



SOCIAL SCIENCE IS NOT PART OF THE CULTURAL CONVERSATION

- ▶ **Social Science is not part of the cultural conversation; it has no 'heroes'**
- ▶ **Unprompted, 'Science' promotes more discussion about what it is and what it's purpose is**

SCIENCE IS FIRMLY ENTRENCHED IN OUR CULTURE WITH WELL-KNOWN AMBASSADORS

▶ Neil deGrasse Tyson has over 3M Facebook fans



▶ A Brief Story of Time continues to be as highly relevant today as it was when first published

A search of Stephen Hawking's name brings up over 19 Million Google search results



▶ 81% of people feel, "Today science is more interesting than it was 10 years ago"

Horizon Media, Finger on the Pulse, June 2016

Top 10 Prime-time TV Programs of 2015 — Regularly Scheduled

1. "Sunday Night Football," NBC 7.8 rating; 23,292,000 viewers

2. "The Big Bang Theory," CBS 7.1; 21,065,000

3. "NCIS," CBS 7.1; 20,913,000

4. "The Walking Dead," AMC 6.6 19,669,000

5. "Empire," Fox 6.0 17,747,000

6. "NFL Thursday Night Football," CBS 6.0; 17,665,000

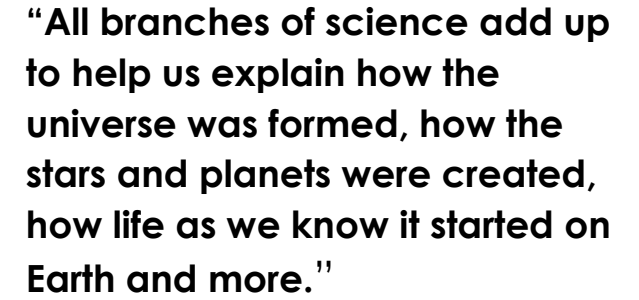
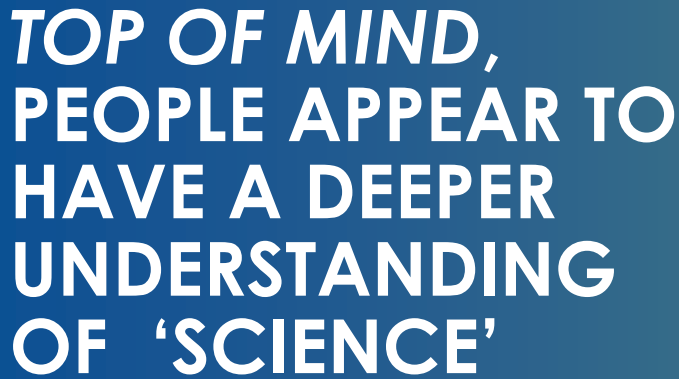
7. "NCIS: NEW ORLEANS," CBS 5.8; 17,316,000

8. "SUNDAY NIGHT NFL PRE-KICK," NBC 5.8; 17,084,000

9. "Blue Bloods," CBS 5.1; 14,974,000

10. "Dancing With the Stars," ABC 4.9; 14,555,000

**Science-themed shows top TV ratings.
The Big Bang Theory was the highest rated
scripted show on Prime Time.**



“Social sciences are important also, although they also are somewhat fuzzier than science is. “



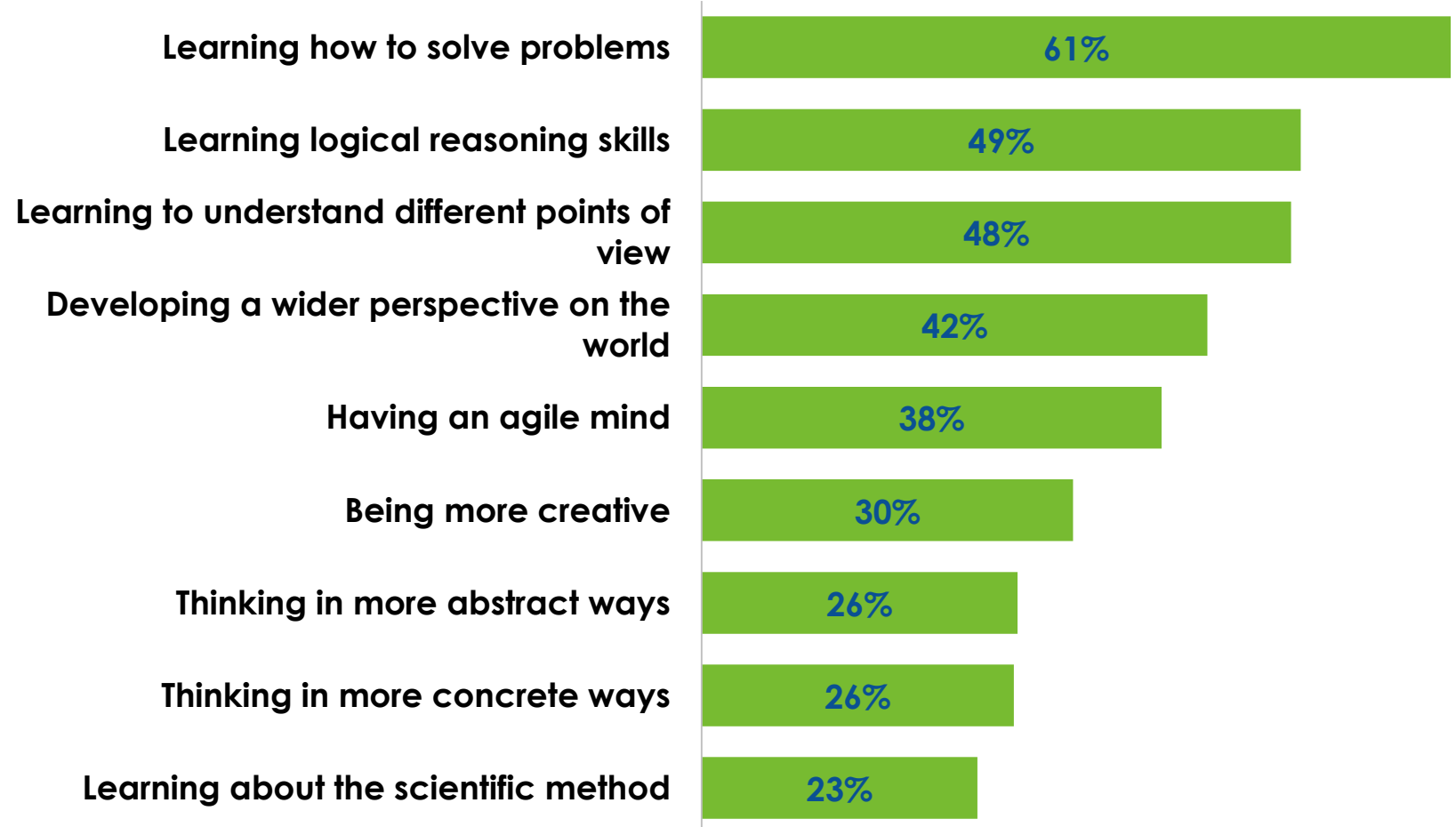
**‘SOCIAL SCIENCE’
IS ABOUT
DEVELOPING SKILLS
FOR THE GREATER
GOOD OF THE
SOCIETY;**

**STEM SKILLS LEAD
TO PERSONAL GAIN
AND DRIVE
INNOVATION**

- ▶ When asked *directly*, people do seem to understand that the Social Sciences are closely associated with helping a person understand different points of view and to develop a wider perspective on the world
- ▶ STEM disciplines can lead to well paying jobs and create breakthrough life-changing innovations that benefit society

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND HAVING A BROADER WORLD VIEW ARE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT SKILLS TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY

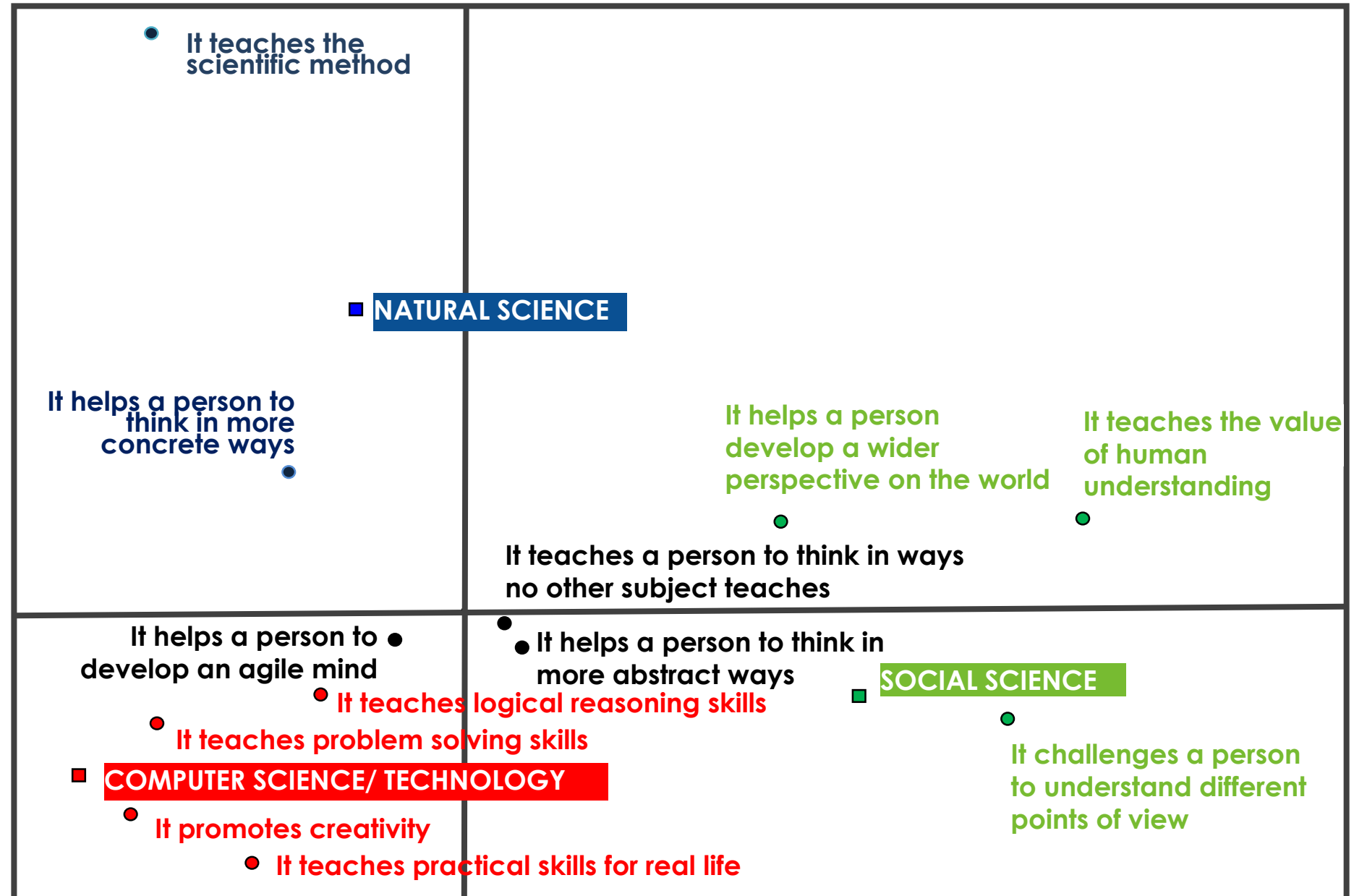
SKILLS TO HELP MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE TO SOCIETY (extremely important)



Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016: Each of the statements below describes a skill that a person might acquire as a result of education. How important do you believe each of the following statements are to helping people make a meaningful difference to society? When we say "meaningful" we mean helping to address issues that people face here or around the world.

REASONS WHY SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES ARE BELIEVED IMPORTANT FOR A PERSON'S FUTURE SUCCESS

AND THOSE
SKILLS TEND TO BE
ASSOCIATED
WITH THE SOCIAL
SCIENCES

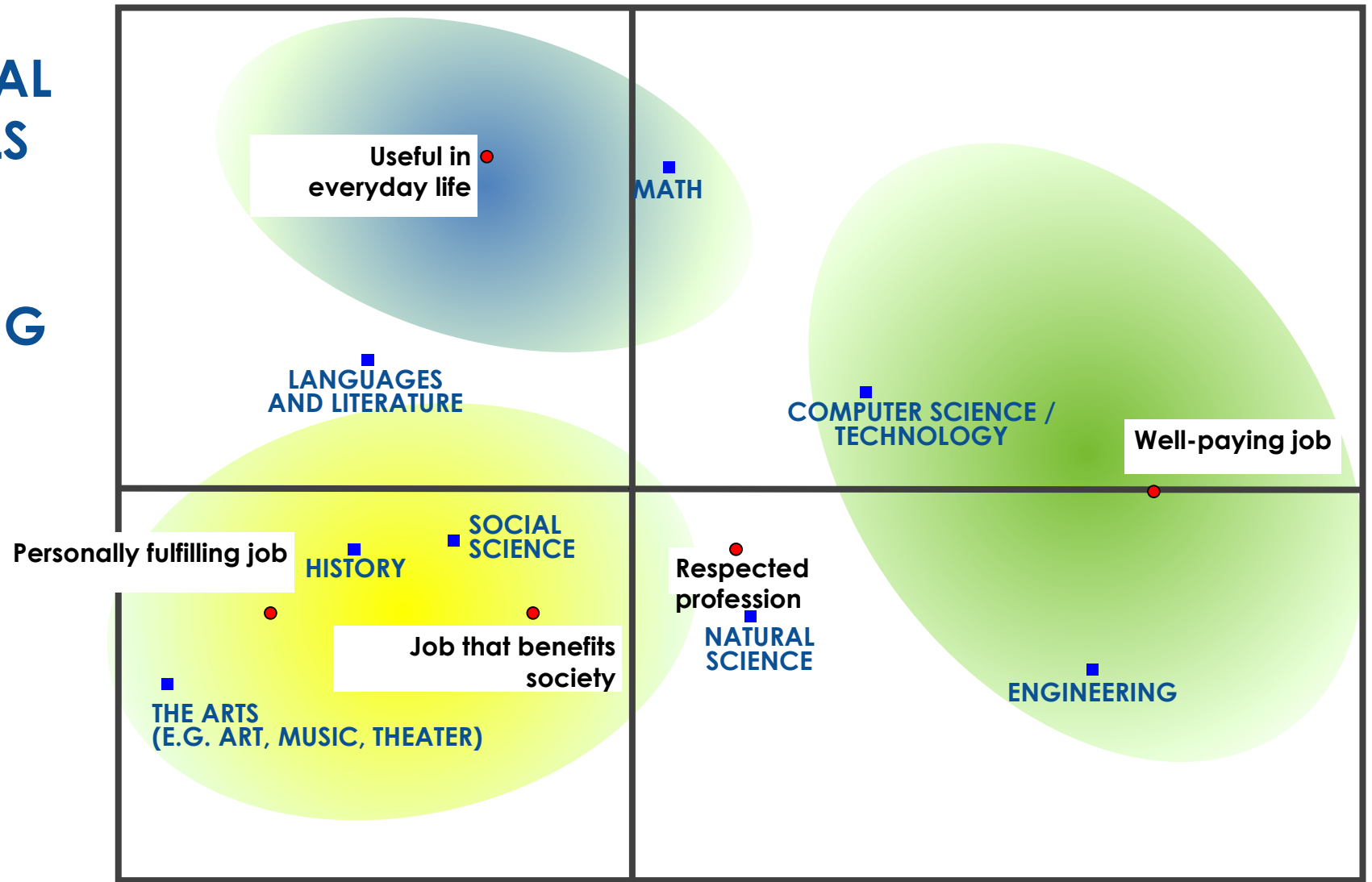


Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016:
Why do you believe Natural Science (e.g. biology, chemistry, physics), Social Science, Computer Science and Technology is important to a person's future success?

Note: All data points shown have a correlation of .50 or greater

HOWEVER THOSE SOCIAL
SCIENCE RELATED SKILLS
AREN'T NECESSARILY
ASSOCIATED WITH
HAVING A WELL-PAYING
JOB

SUBJECTS IMPORTANT TO STUDY TO HAVE SUCCESS IN THESE AREAS



Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016: Which of the following subjects do you believe are most important for a person to have studied to have success in each of the following ways? Select all that apply.

Note: All data points shown have a correlation of .50 or greater

**SOCIAL
SCIENCES CAN
BE
FINANCIALLY
LUCRATIVE...**

**BUT THIS
DOESN'T SEEM
TO BE
UNDERSTOOD**

RANK	JOB TITLE	MOST COMMON MAJOR	MID-CAREER PAY
1	Petroleum Engineers	STEM*	\$147,520
2	Vice President(VP), Government Affairs	Political Science (PolySci)	\$145,000
3	Architecture and Engineering Manager	STEM*	\$138,720
4	Natural Sciences Manager	STEM*	\$136,450
5	Computer and Information Systems Manager	STEM*	\$136,280
6	Physicist	STEM*	\$117,300
7	Government Affairs Director	Political Science (PolySci)	\$111,000
8	Analytics Manager	Economics	\$108,000
9	Senior Intelligence Analyst	Political Science (PolySci)	\$102,000
10	Strategy Manager	Economics	\$102,000
11	Research Director	Economics	\$100,000

*Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics.
Annual mean wage May 2014

Source: <http://www.payscale.com/college-salary-report/common-jobs-for-majors/social-sciences>

ECONOMICS IS THE SHORTEST ROUTE TO A HALF DECENT CAREER. Which is why a lot of these kids pick it.

–Reddit.com

“THERE IS A SHIFT IN WHAT DEGREES THEY GO FOR TOO - as others pointed out. NON STEM FIELDS ARE USELESS. ”

–Facebook.com

Behavioral Economics is life hacking on steroids.

–Twitter

ONE WORD OF WARNING. WHERE JOB PROSPECTS ARE CONCERNED, PSYCHOLOGY IS PRETTY USELESS IN BACHELOR LEVEL. However, if you manage to get a Ph.D in it, especially in counseling, it becomes very lucrative.

–TVTropes.com

Humanities or STEM? **STEM IS EASIER TO TRANSITION INTO NON-ACADEMIC PURSUITS.**

–Reddit.com

Source: Horizon Media Distillery Social Intelligence



**EDUCATION
APPEARS TO
INFLUENCE
PERCEIVED
IMPORTANCE OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

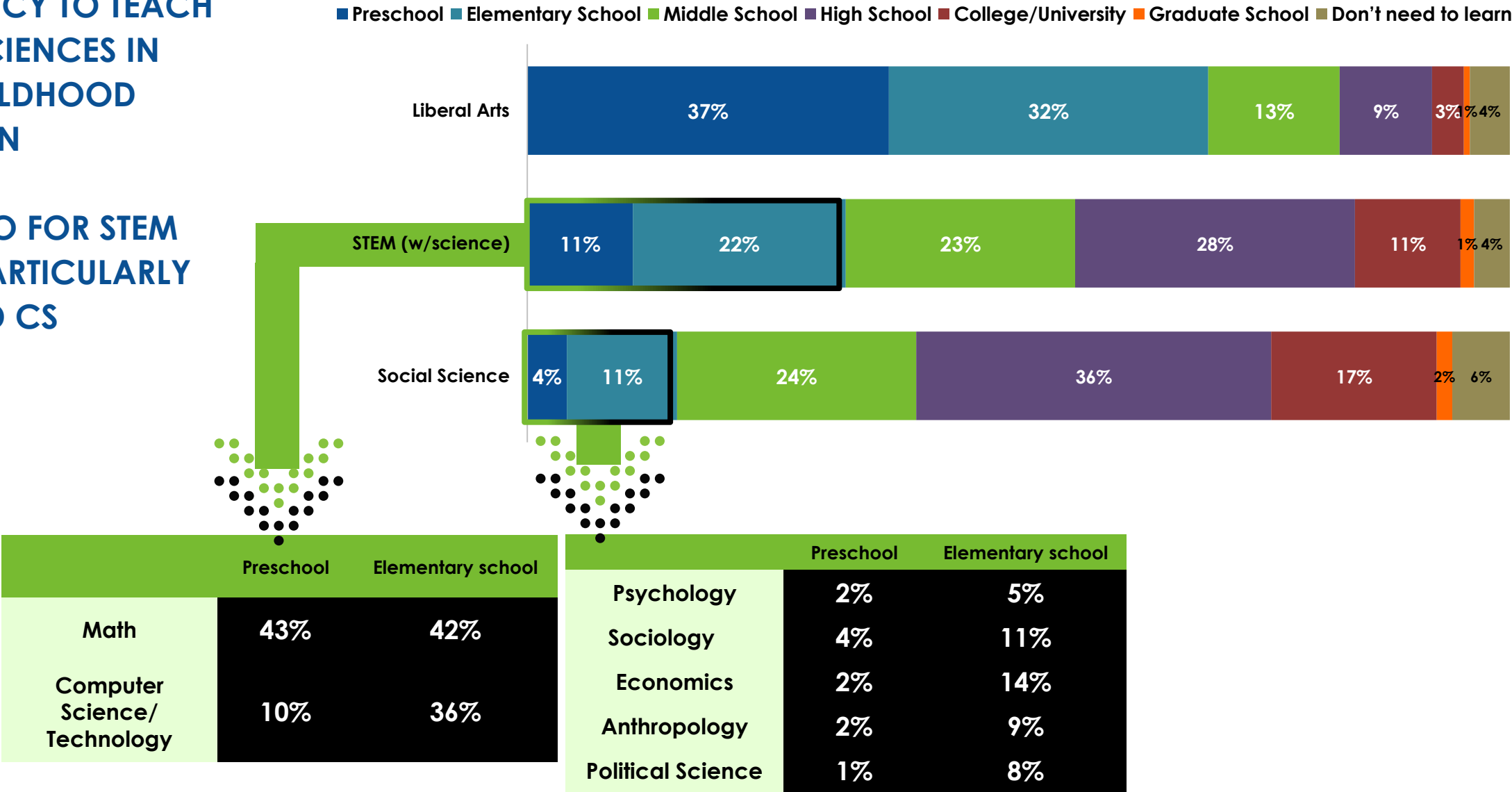
**BUT STEM TOPICS
ALREADY VIEWED
AS CRUCIAL,
STARTING WITH
PRE-K**

- ▶ On average, less exposure to Social Sciences topics during education is associated with weaker importance ratings. Conversely, educational exposure seems to be related to increased importance.
- ▶ People already seem to think STEM topics are important, beginning in Pre-K. Perhaps that's because there *appear* to be more direct job prospects in STEM-related fields.

AMONG THE BROADER
POPULATION, LESS OF
AN URGENCY TO TEACH
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION

BUT NOT SO FOR STEM
TOPICS, PARTICULARLY
MATH AND CS

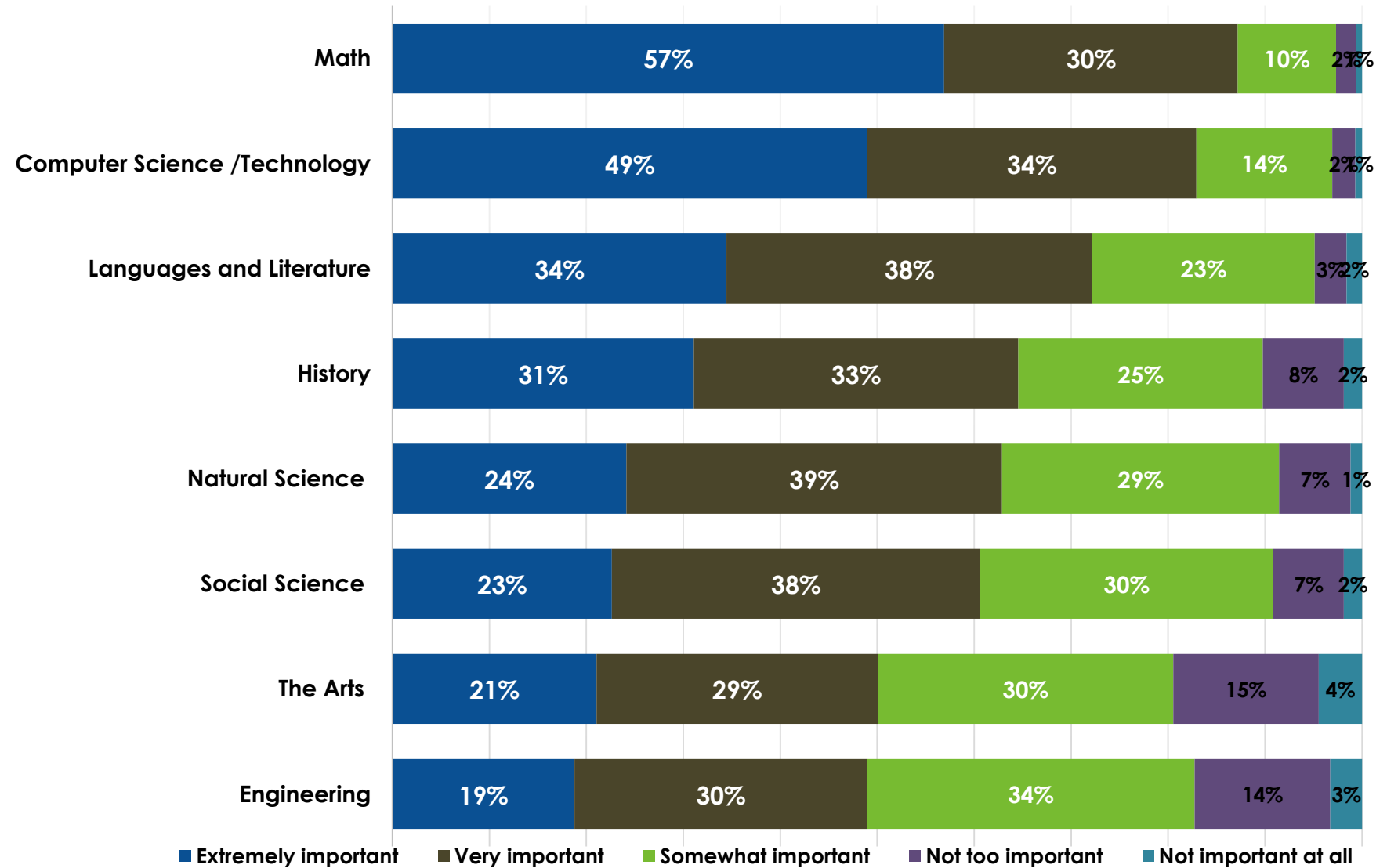
WHEN SUBJECTS SHOULD BE INTRODUCED, ADULTS 18+



Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016: At what point in a person's education do you believe each subject should be introduced?

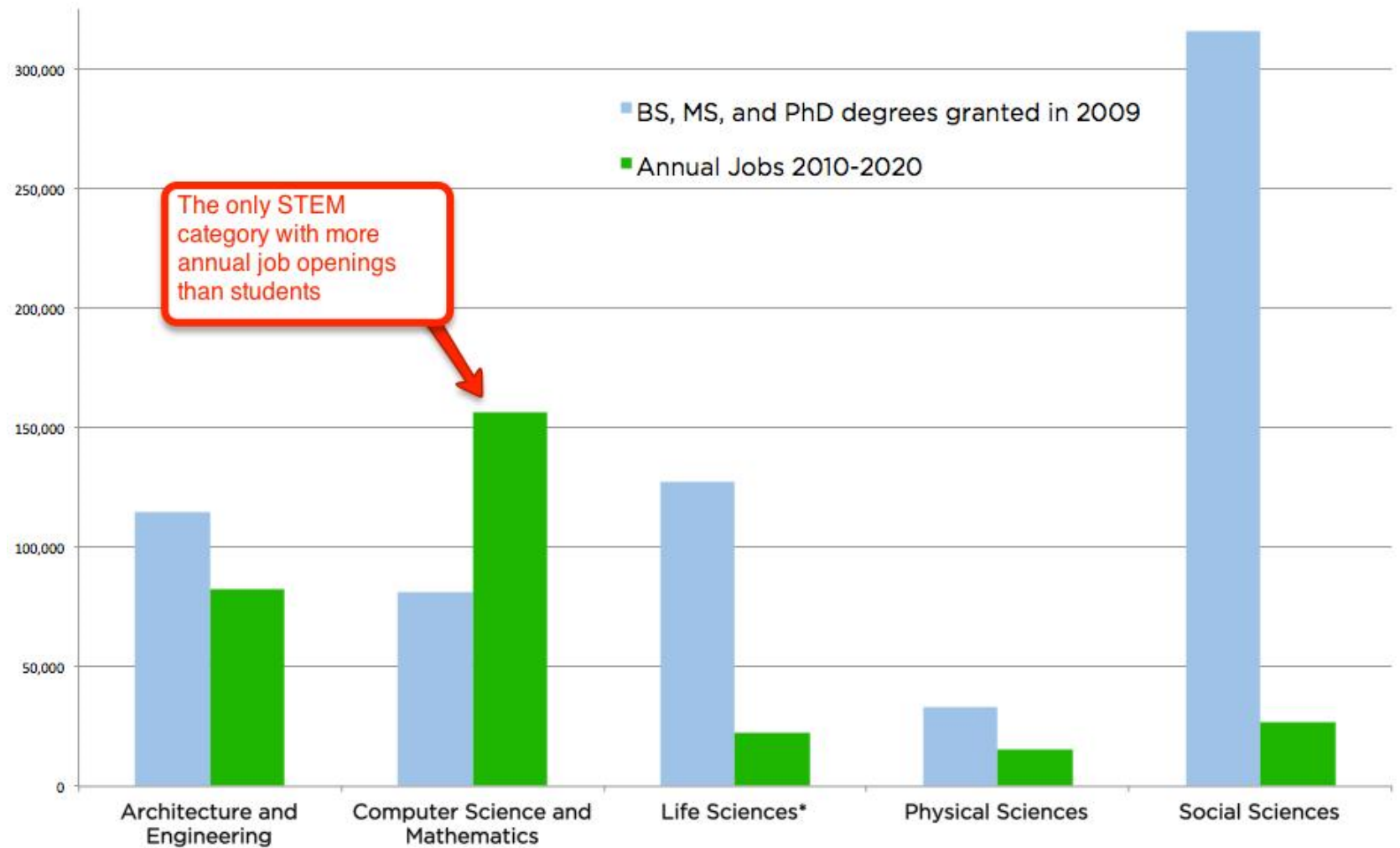
PERHAPS THIS IS
DUE TO THE
PERCEIVED
IMPORTANCE OF
MATH AND
COMPUTER
SCIENCE FOR
FUTURE SUCCESS

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING SUBJECT AREA FOR FUTURE SUCCESS



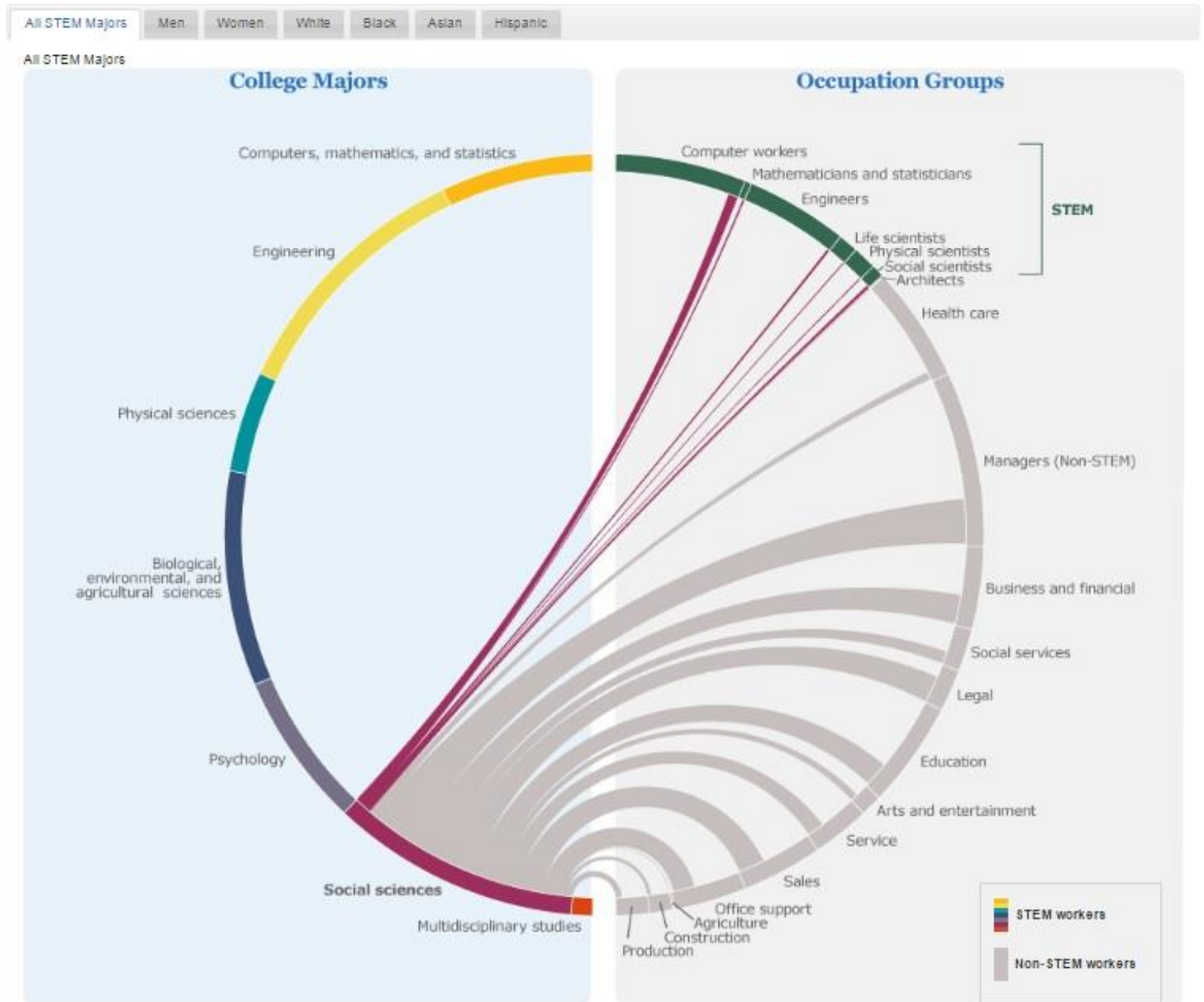
Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016: Now we're going to focus on a smaller set of topic areas that we've grouped together from the subjects we've been discussing. We want to understand how important you believe studying each of the following subject areas is to a person's future success.

**AND BECAUSE IT
APPEARS AS IF
THAT'S WHERE THE
JOBS ARE...**

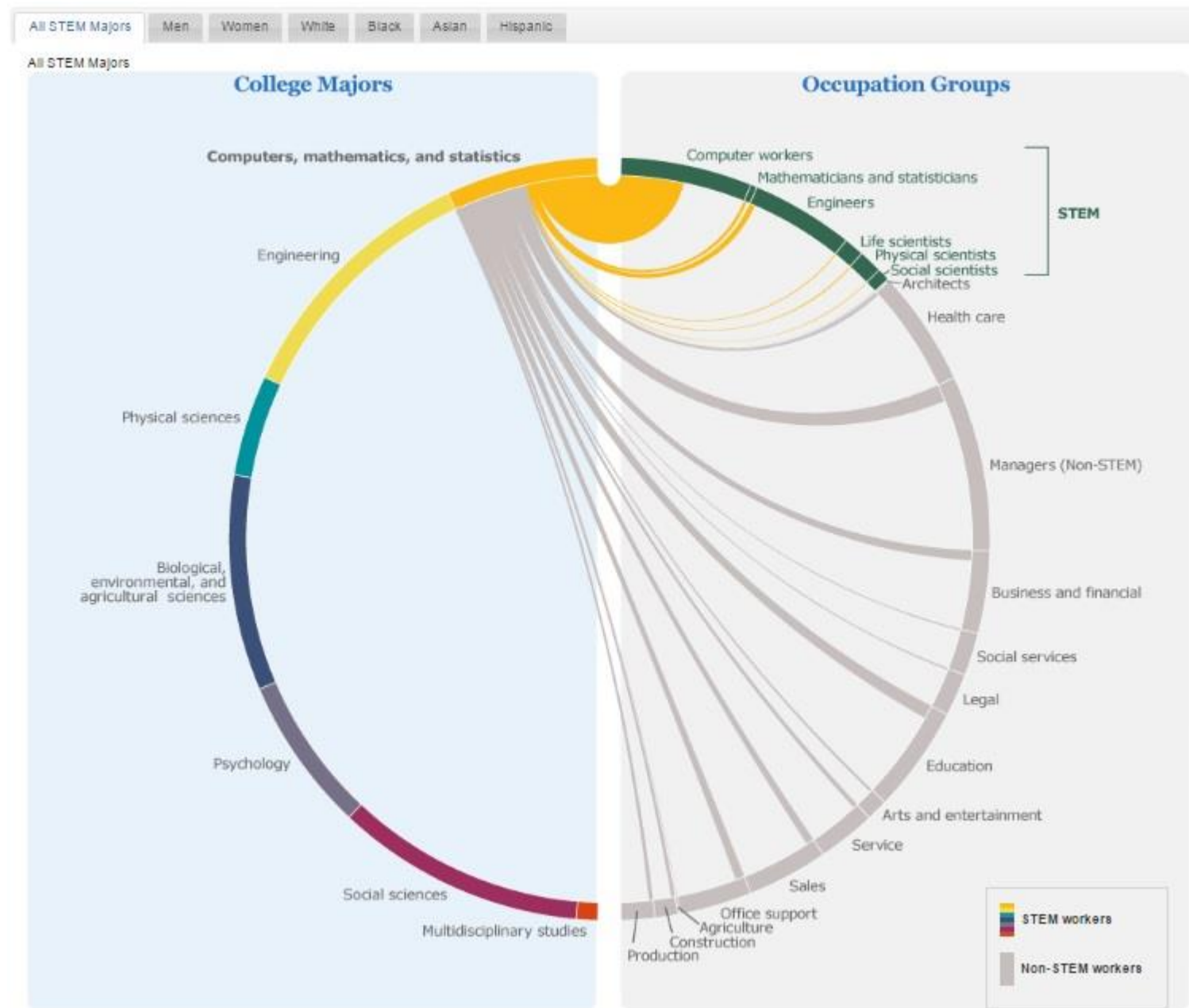


WHICH ISN'T NECESSARILY THE CASE

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT
BECAUSE SOCIAL
SCIENCE MAJORS
HAVE SO MANY
OPTIONS THAT THE
POTENTIAL CAREER
PATH IS LESS
STRAIGHTFORWARD...

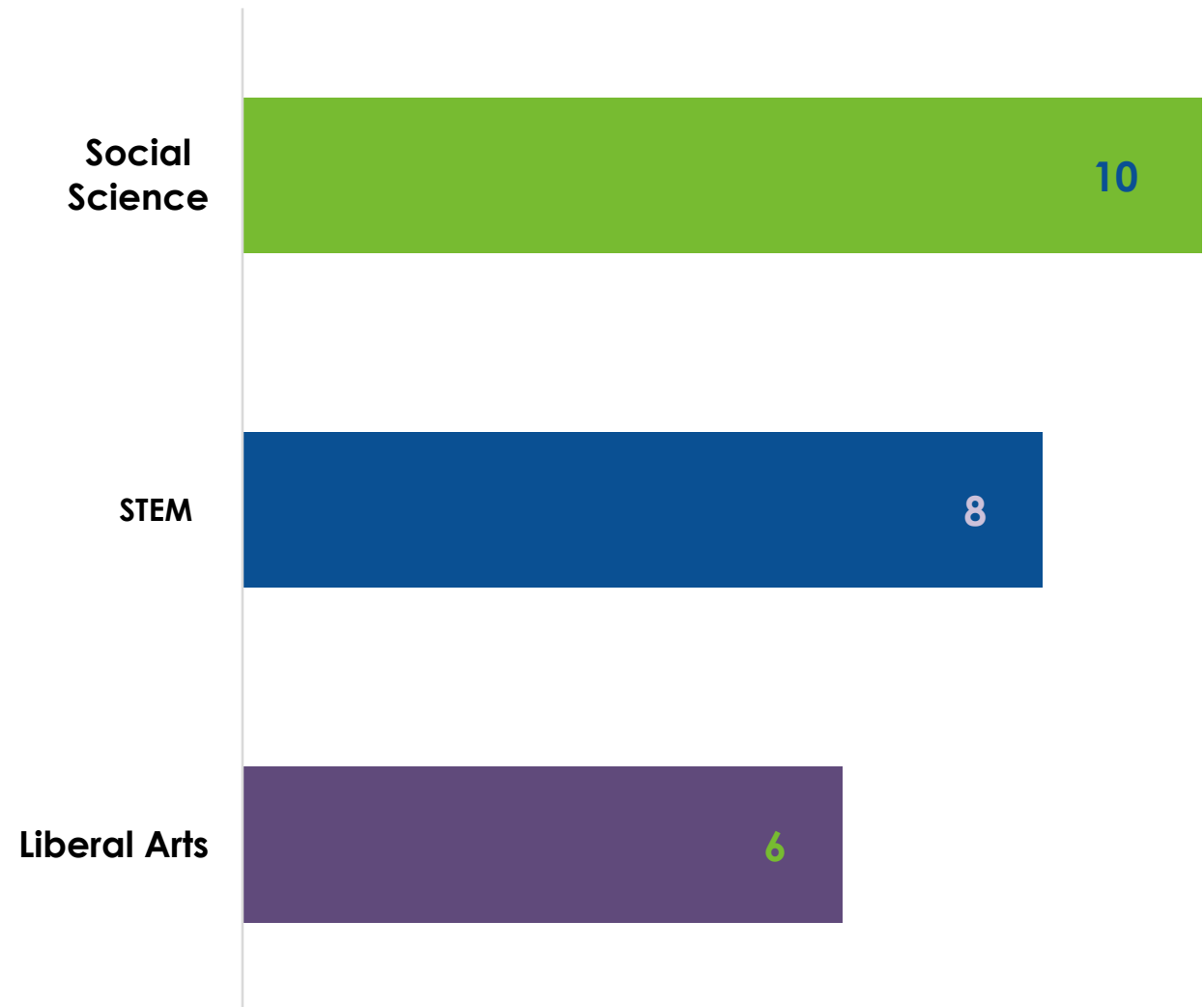


COMPARED TO COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATH?



**FURTHERMORE...
COMPARED TO STEM
AND LIBERAL ARTS
SUBJECTS, THOSE WITH
SOME LEVEL OF
EDUCATIONAL
EXPOSURE TO THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES
SHOW AN EVEN
GREATER BELIEF IN THEIR
EDUCATIONAL IMPORT**

**AVERAGE OF NET DIFFERENCE IN IMPORTANCE IF EXPOSED
TO THE SUBJECT AREA VS. NOT EXPOSED**



Source: Horizon Media Finger on the Pulse, June 2016: How important you think each of the following subjects are to a person's overall education? Which of the following areas of study have you ever been exposed to during your education?



A WAY FORWARD



THE SOCIAL SCIENCES NEED TO BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD, ESPECIALLY RELATING TO FUTURE CAREERS

Change the conversation about the potential careers available for those with social science degrees

- ▶ Greater awareness of specific careers available, e.g., law entertainment, business—outside of the social sciences
- ▶ Career conversations to include salary potential

Stronger connection to potential careers may help to encourage earlier and greater educational exposure

- ▶ Early educational exposure = greater affinity
- ▶ People with greater affinity will likely have enhanced value perceptions
- ▶ People with enhanced value perceptions are more likely to demand its safekeeping

Create a powerful and easy-to-digest definition

- ▶ A new name people can rally behind
- ▶ Clear, concrete, relevant to today
- ▶ Unifying across fields of study or perhaps creating more directly relevant groupings



THE SOCIAL SCIENCES NEED TO BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD, ESPECIALLY RELATING TO FUTURE CAREERS

Relatable messaging that appeals to dual goals

- ▶ Stories and examples from real life
- ▶ Balanced between “good for society” and “good for me”

Contemporary brand ambassadors to spread the word

- ▶ Across social science fields from economics to anthropology
- ▶ Include scientists who see the symbiotic relationships between STEM and SBS
- ▶ Leverage existing media and personalities Illuminating relevance of current events and culture



THANK YOU

