

Bridging the Physical Learning Commons with the Virtual

The current Learning Commons Website currently provides descriptive information about the physical space, upcoming student success workshops and the latest schedules on various tutoring services.

The Learning Commons Website can expand support to students by offering online self-help and services. To inform the further development of the Learning Commons, the Virtual Learning Commons Working Group within the Library engaged in a number of activities to solicit feedback from students and Learning Commons partners:

- Web Survey promoted on the Library's Website and the College Facebook message board. See Appendix I for details
- Open coffee and chat sessions in which we offered coffee and treats to students passing by and solicited their suggestions for an improved Learning Commons Website. There were two sessions, one held in the A Foyer and the other in the L Building corridor. See Appendix II for details.
- Interviews with Counsellors who teach Student Success Workshops in the Learning Commons
- Web Survey with peer tutors who offer subject and writing help in the Learning Commons

Two highlights stood out from the data collected from students: a lack of awareness among students about the website and a strong interest in online help for academic subjects, writing and research. In addition, conversations with counsellors suggest that the Learning Commons website can be a good tool to reach students who are not academically prepared but also unaware of where to find help.

Actions for Moving Forward

I. Promote the Website

58% of respondents have never visited the Learning Commons and among those, 94% chose "I didn't know it existed" as the reason.

II. Partner with academic departments and Counselling to develop online self -help

Quick handouts was selected as the most preferred format for online self-help with videos a close second. During our coffee and chat sessions with students, practices quizzes and videos were also cited as desirable by students.

A high number of respondents (51% of responses) chose Math and Statistics as an area where they would like to receive online self-help. Under the "Other" option for the same question, Geography and Sociology were most often submitted. Discussion is underway with a number of academic departments including Geography and Math/Stats to develop relevant self-help resources on the Learning Commons Website.

III. **Provide “get started” information on various study skills with referrals to in-person workshops**

Interviews with Tim Charters, Kaveh Farrokh and Fraser Archibald from Counselling identified the issue that students who attend Student Success Workshops are often motivated already and come academically prepared. To assist students who are less so and who may not be aware of the Student Success Workshops, Fraser and Kaveh will update their workshop handouts for posting on the Website. This will not only provide basic information on various learning skills but also promote Student Success Workshops to students in need of more in-person and in-depth help.

IV. **Explore feasibility of online writing help**

During the coffee and chat sessions, an online or email writing help service was requested multiple times by students. WriteAway is a provincial collaborative writing help service that includes participation by a number of our competitors, Douglas, Camosun and KPU . Megan Otton, Coordinator of the Writing Centre, and I will investigate the feasibility of joining the service. In the online Web survey, respondents expressed a strong interest in help with academic writing, and developing thesis statements. Work is in progress with Megan Otton to expand help in these areas to include online self help and drop-in workshops. Online help for ESL students especially practice exercises and grammar will also be explored.

V. **Develop online self-help on “ improving search results” and “finding scholarly articles”**

Respondents selected the above two areas as top choices for self-help related to research. Work is in progress to re-purpose existing pages on the Library’s website to respond to this feedback.

VI. **Focus on application use for computer help**

Only 39% of respondents was interested in online self-help with using computers. However, there was high interest in help with applications specifically Microsoft Office. Links to Lynda.com and other relevant resources will be the focus of development.

Overall, it has been another success term even with a delayed start and reduced hours for some of the subject tutoring due to funding uncertainties. Briefly:

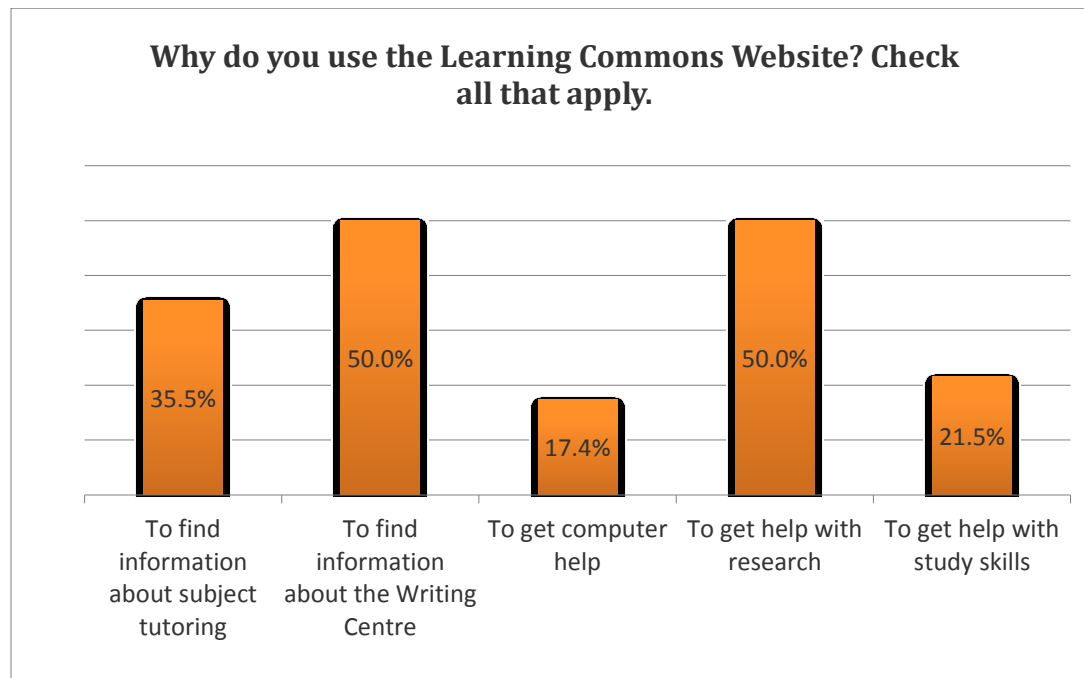
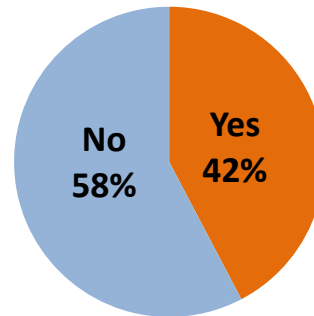
2088 student visits in Writing and Tutoring Centre
10+ workshops with 321 attendees Learning Commons Workshops offered by Counselling and Library
10,314 questions answered by Borrower and Reference Services

See attached Fall 2013 report

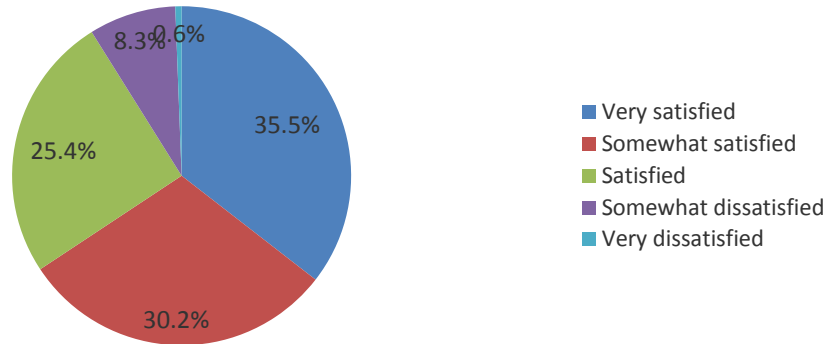
Learning Commons Website Survey: Summary of Results

Available from Jan. 6 to March 14, 2014, the survey was delivered via Survey Monkey and promoted on the Library's Website and the College's Facebook message board. It drew 428 respondents in total with a majority of the submissions completed in January.

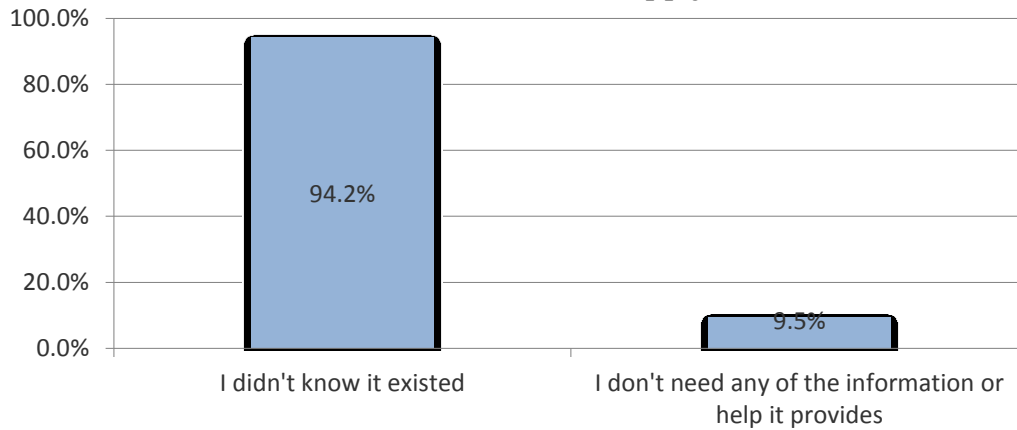
Have you ever visited the Learning Commons Website?



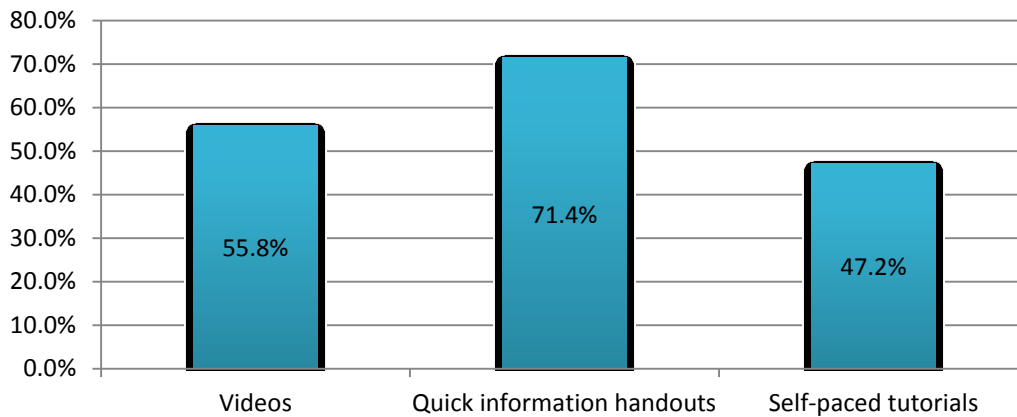
Rate your satisfaction with using the Learning Commons Website in providing the help or information you need.



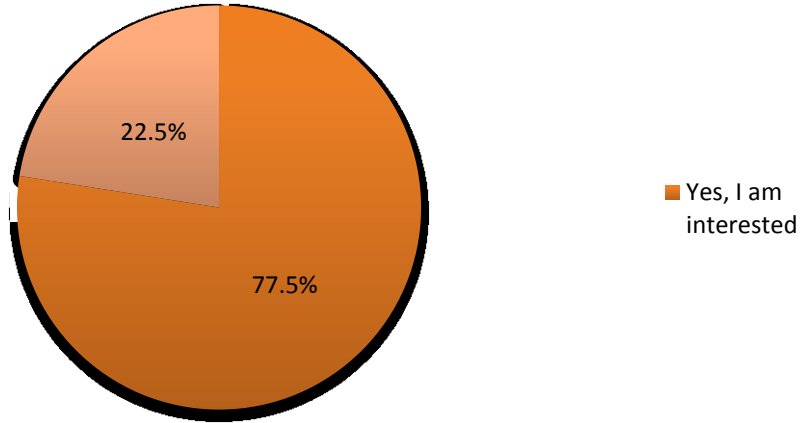
Why have you never used the Learning Commons Website? Check all that apply.



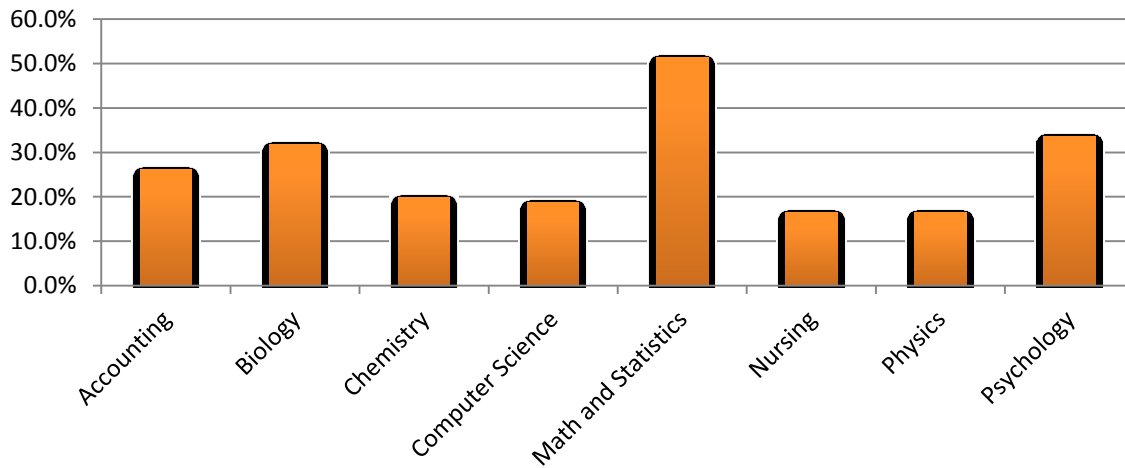
What types of materials do you prefer when you seek online self-help? Check all that apply.



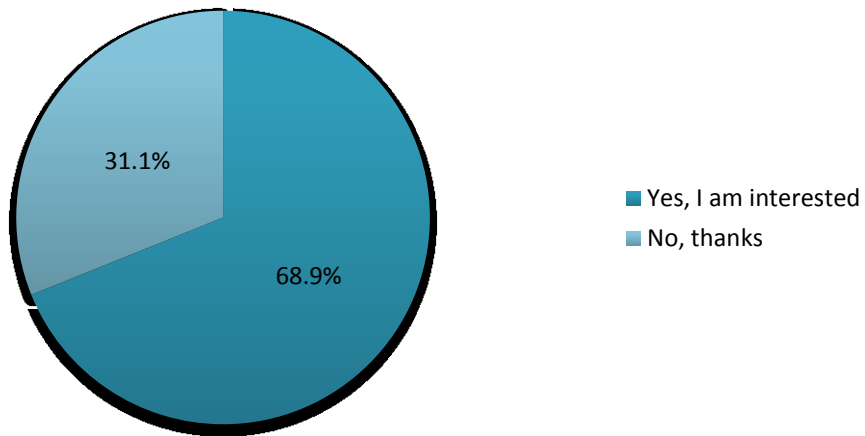
Thinking about assignments you have completed, are you interested in getting online self-help in specific subjects?



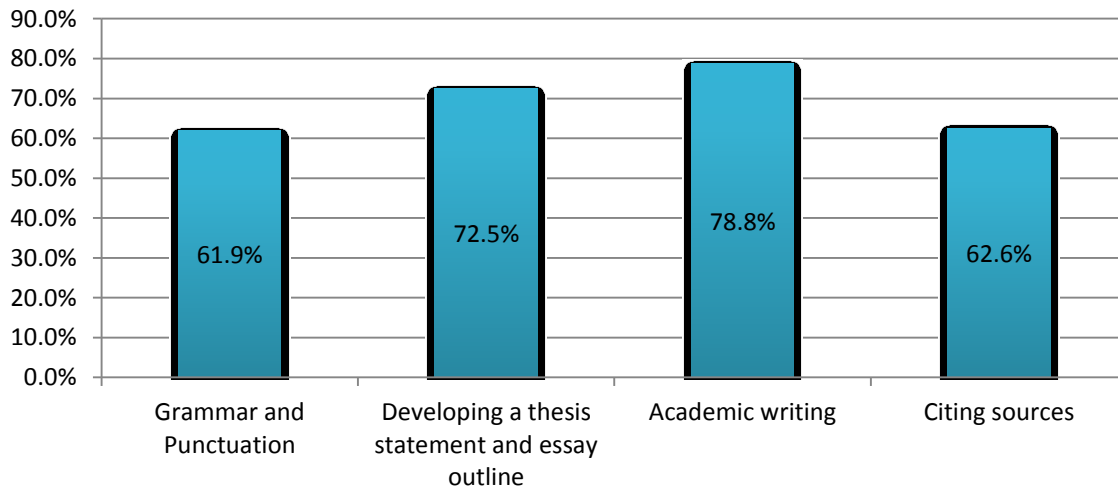
In which subjects would you like to get online self-help? Check all that apply.



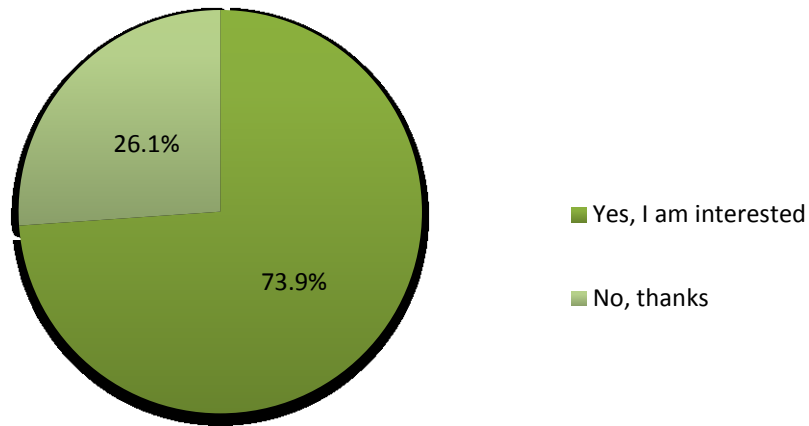
Thinking about assignments you have completed, are you interested in getting online self-help in writing



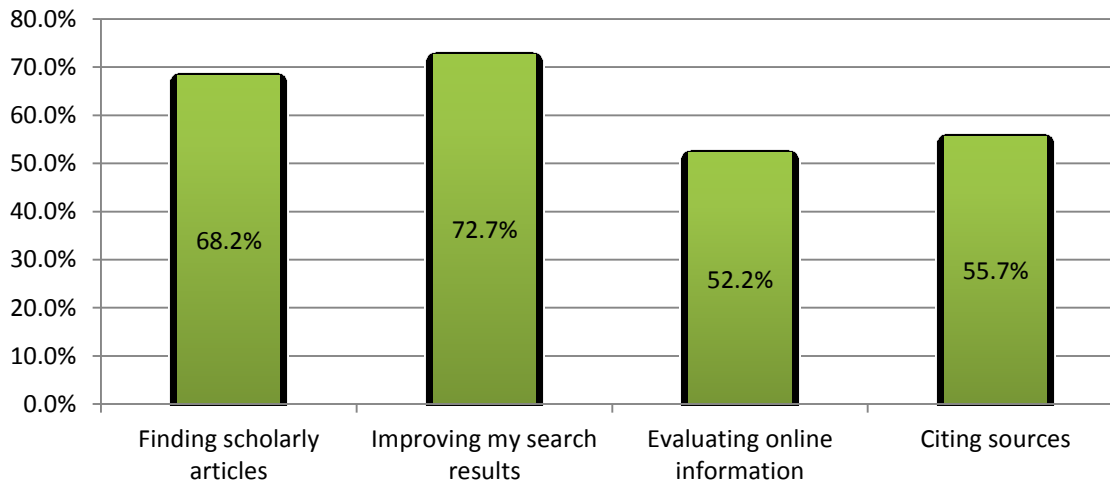
What topics related to writing would you like to get online self-help? Check all that apply.



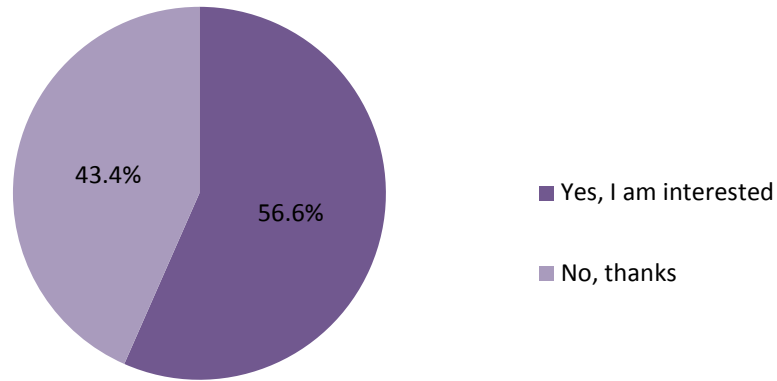
Thinking about assignments you have completed, are you interested in getting online self-help in research?



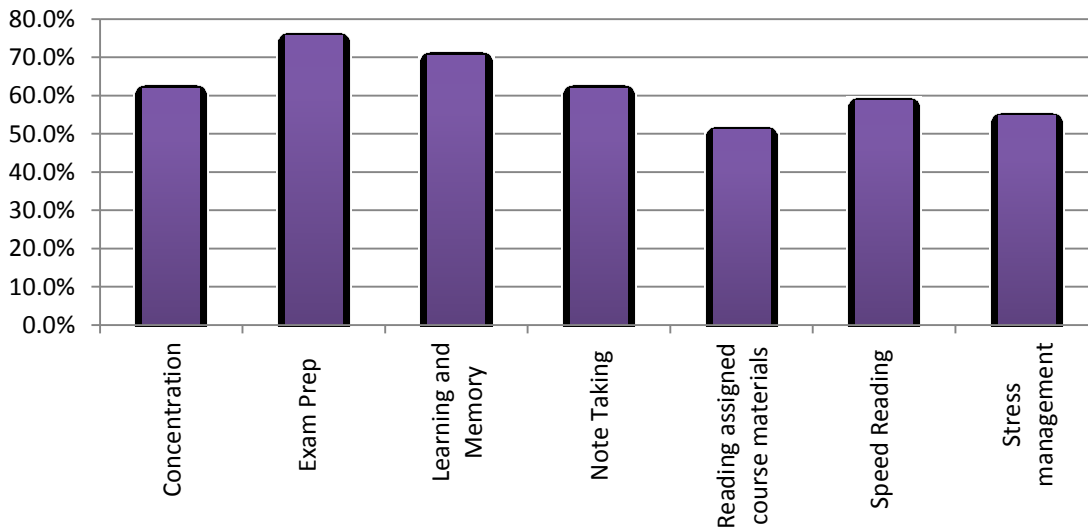
What topics related to research would you like to get online self-help? Check all that apply.



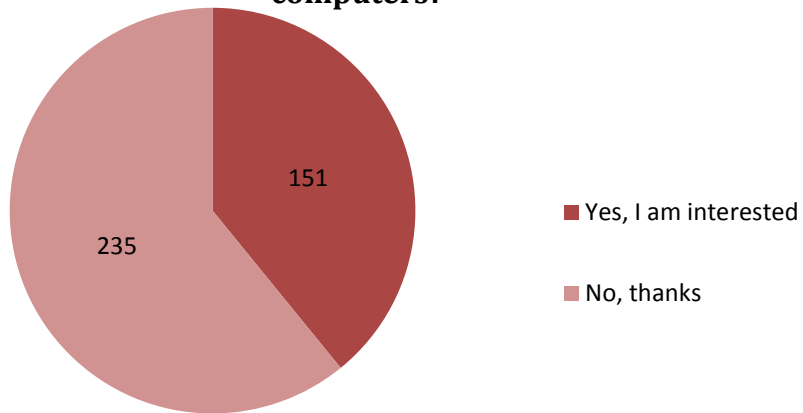
Thinking about assignments you have completed, are you interested in getting online self-help in learning skills such as time management?



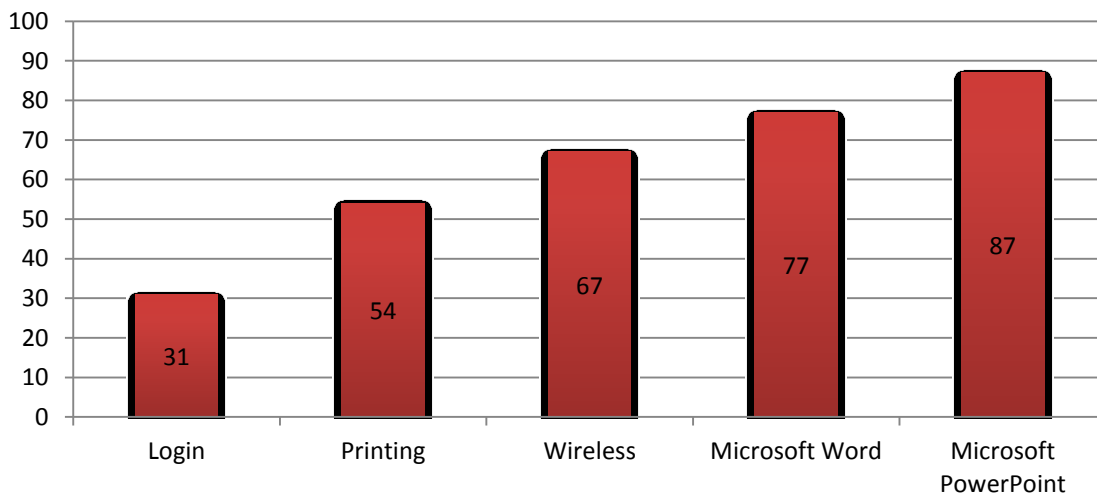
What topics related to learning skills would you like to get online self-help? Check all that apply.



Thinking about assignments you have completed, are you interested in getting online self-help with using computers?



What topics related to using computers would you like to get online self-help? Check all that apply.



Notes from Coffee and Chat Sessions

Writing Help	Subject Help	Learning Skills	Facilitative	Navigation and Functionalities	Citing Help	Research Help & Library
Provide templates/tips/checklists for essay writing	Accounting basics	Time Planner/Manager	Tutor schedules	Intuitive, easy layout for contact info	Citing help with samples	Q & A for finding info
Support for ESL	Subject Tutoring - online FAQ or Q&A	GPA calculator	Move the MAC to the L building	3 requests for mobile version of site	Video instruction, e.g. citing	Reserves for E-textbooks
Multiple requests for Online CHAT or Email writing help	Resource page for Biology 1190 and 1191 like Research Help Pages		Book a tutor online	Make the site mobile; Likes layout (Learning Commons Website); it works	Citing help Info about citation	Better business databases more reports – the ones we don't have
Common mistakes guide for ESL	Study Quizzes for Biology		Available times and schedule	Promotion about the Website	Install Zotero on computers or some sort of bib management tool	
2 requests for practice exercises in grammar and writing	Practice quizzes for subjects		Online appointment booking for tutors	Phone app for D2L and course registration		
Wholistic view of writing help from tutors; not proofread but review whole paper with comments	Online Tutorials for Physics and Math explaining common problems			Prefers in-person help - study groups and tutoring groups		
Common mistakes guide for ESL	Request for Economics tutors			Help at place of need, i.e. within D2L		
Structuring essays	Geography tutor			Further links to helpful websites		
Understanding thesis statements from topics	Companion sites for textbooks from publishers,			Schedule of tutors		
	Practice quizzes for subjects					
	Online Tutorials for Physics and Math explaining common problems					
	Pose question to forum for tutors					

