

**Quest for Online Success
Initial and End-of-Term Surveys
College Comparison Summary Report
Spring 2015**

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Introduction

In spring 2015, the following eight pilot colleges were engaged in a pilot implementation of Quest for Online Success (QOS) and therefore, the evaluation of QOS:

- Antelope Valley College
- Cabrillo College
- College of the Canyons
- Hartnell College
- MiraCosta College
- Monterey Peninsula College
- Rio Hondo College
- West Los Angeles College

To learn about students' experiences with QOS, online surveys were developed and administered at the time students engaged with the program and at the end of the semester. The former, called initial surveys, were intended to capture students' immediate impressions after going through each module. The latter, called end-of-term survey, was intended to learn more about how and when students engaged with QOS over the course of the term, and ask them to reflect on what impact they believe having access to QOS has had on their success in their online class.

In fall 2014, as part of its role as external evaluator of the Online Education Initiative (OEI), the RP Group evaluation team worked with the QOS coordinators to develop surveys that could be administered as soon as students finished each module. The thinking behind this approach was that, while the modules are numbered sequentially 1-5, students are not required to complete the modules in that order nor are they required to complete all five modules. As a result, five surveys were created, one for each of the following modules:

- SmarterMeasure, an assessment test that quantifies and identifies a student's levels of readiness to take an online or technology rich course
- Introduction to Online Learning (Level 2)
- Getting Tech Ready (Level 3)
- Becoming an Effective Online Learner (Level 4)
- Getting Started/Next Steps (Level 5)

At seven of the eight colleges, students were given the links to the appropriate survey at the conclusion of each module. These surveys were created by the evaluation team in SurveyMonkey and only the evaluators had access to the raw survey data. Respondents were asked to provide their student IDs in order to be able to match their survey responses to outcomes data, such as final grade in the course and overall GPA, but the survey data were kept completely confidential. After completing the survey, students were then directed back to their college's course management system to take the next module in the sequence until they completed level 5. Separate sets of the five surveys were created for each college customized with the courses being offered at that college as part of the OEI pilot.

The eighth college embedded their own versions of the initial surveys into its own course management system. The college then provided the evaluators with a data file from the five initial surveys after the end of the term, but the evaluators had no direct access to or control over the survey instrument or data for this college.

Also in fall 2014, the evaluation team and QOS coordinators developed an end-of-term survey that was designed to be sent to students approximately two weeks before the end of their course. This survey was also developed in SurveyMonkey and only the evaluators had access to the survey and its data. Again, customized versions of the survey were created for each college with the courses being offered at that college as part of the OEI pilot.

The evaluation team drafted an invitation asking students to take the end-of-term survey, which included the link to the survey. The readiness coordinators sent this invitation to the single point of contacts (SPOCs) at all eight colleges asking

them to send the invitation to all the students registered in the pilot courses. However, only seven of the eight SPOCs sent the survey link to the students, therefore, there are only results from the end-of-term survey for these seven colleges.

From January 16 to May 24, 2015, between 228 and 292 students completed the five initial surveys for Smarter Measure and the four learning modules. Between March 7 and June 18, 2015, 101 students combined from seven of the eight pilot colleges completed the end-of-term survey. This report begins by presenting the key findings from the initial surveys followed by those from the end-of-term survey.

Initial Surveys

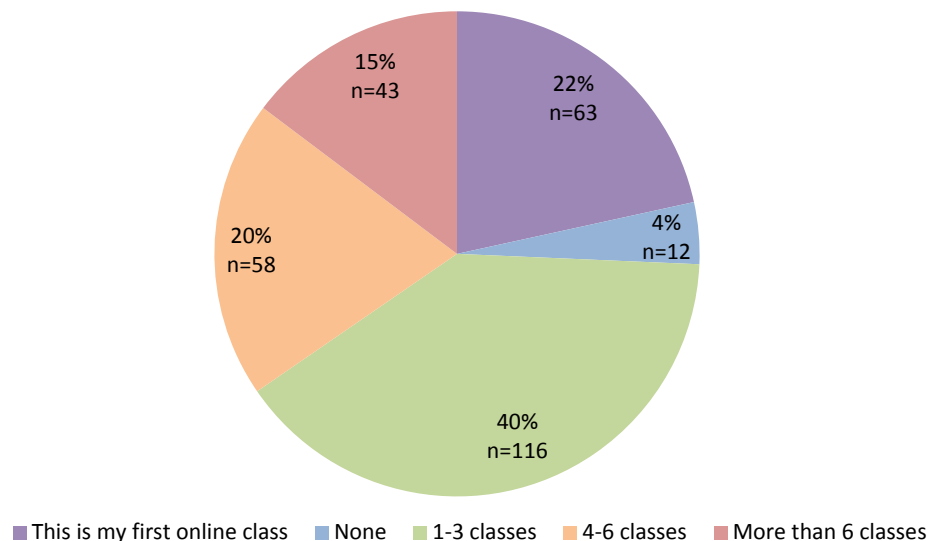
The largest numbers of students taking the initial surveys were from Antelope Valley College, followed by West Los Angeles College. Please refer to Table 1 below for the count of survey respondents for each level of the Quest for Online Success program from each college.

Table 1. Respondent Count by College and Quest for Online Success Level

College	Smarter Measure	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Antelope Valley College	94	105	95	88	99
Cabrillo College	33	27	15	16	17
College of the Canyons	8	12	12	12	12
Hartnell College	22	15	13	13	16
MiraCosta College	27	21	23	18	18
Monterey Peninsula College	29	24	19	17	19
Rio Hondo College	12	16	14	12	12
West Los Angeles College	67	60	58	52	50
Total Count of Respondents	292	280	249	228	243

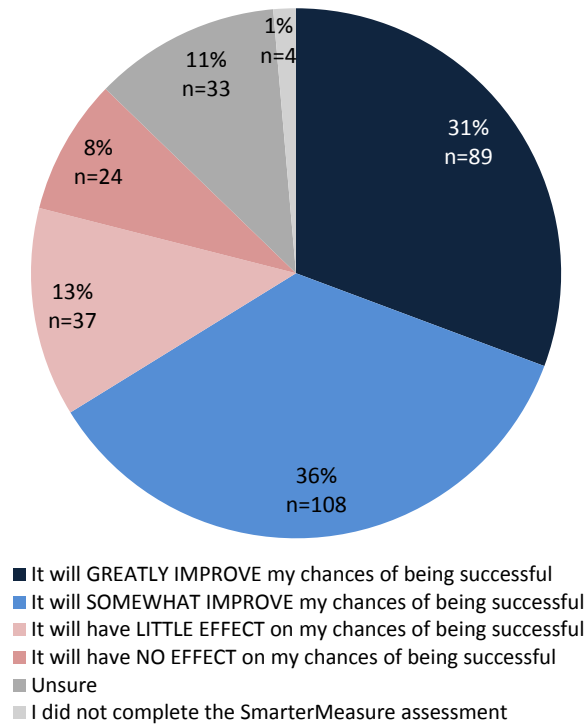
In order to gauge how much prior experience students have had with online courses, respondents were asked how many online courses they have successfully completed. One-quarter of respondents indicated that they had not successfully completed any online courses (4%) or that this was their first online class (22%), while 40% indicated that they had completed between one and three online classes, and the rest (35%) had completed four or more online classes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of online courses students successfully completed



Respondents were then asked to gauge the effect of the Smarter Measure assessment on their chances of being successful in their online classes. Two-thirds of respondents indicated that the Smarter Measure assessment would greatly (31%) or somewhat (36%) improve their chances of being successful (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Effect students think completing the SmarterMeasure diagnostic assessment will have on their success in their online class(es)

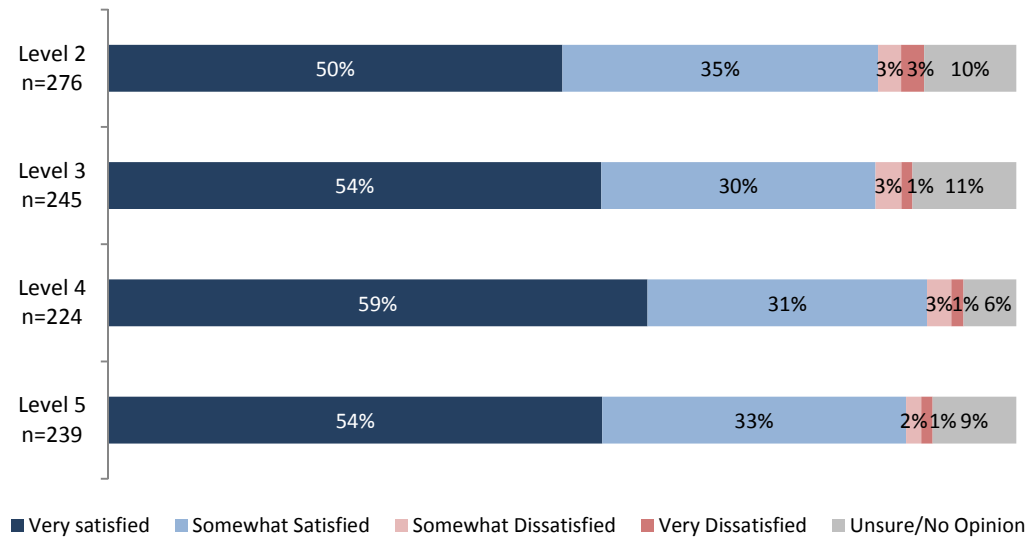


As described earlier, the five modules in Quest for Student Success are:

- SmarterMeasure
- Introduction to Online Learning (Level 2)
- Getting Tech Ready (Level 3)
- Becoming an Effective Online Learner (Level 4)
- Getting Started/Next Steps (Level 5)

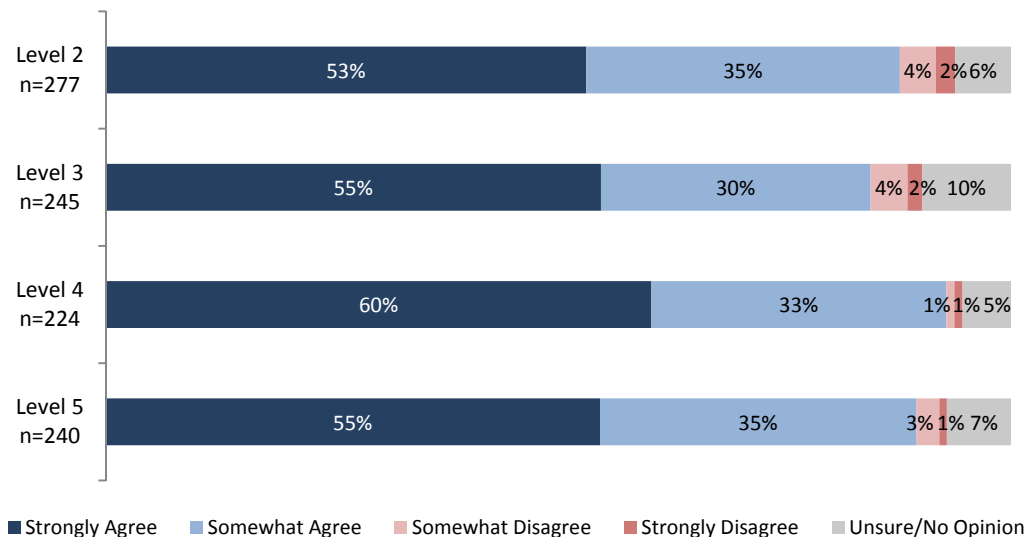
When combining the respondents who were very or somewhat satisfied, students were most satisfied overall with levels 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) and 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps) with 90% and 87% satisfaction, respectively (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Overall satisfaction by level of learning module



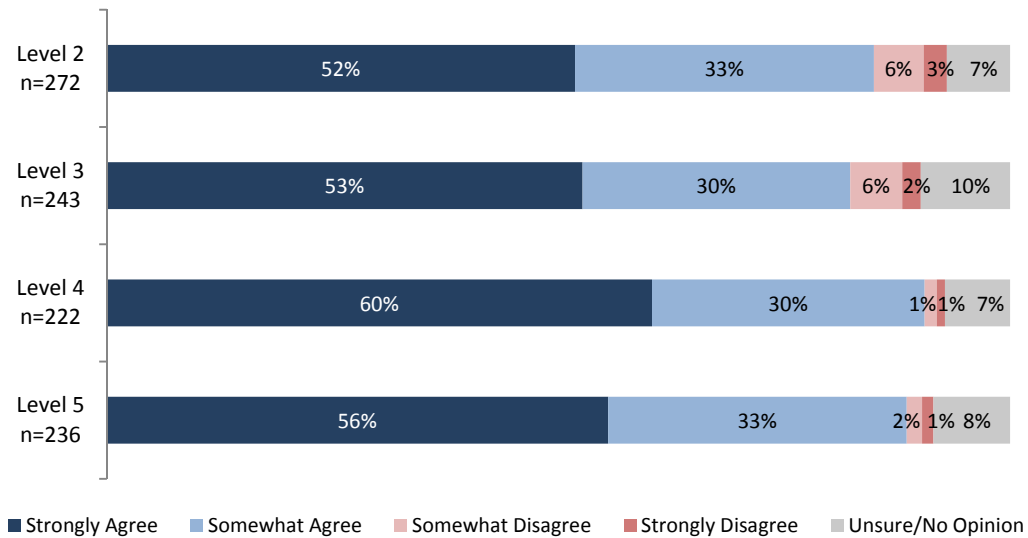
While a majority of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that each of the learning modules provided them with useful strategies and tools to help them succeed in their online classes, level 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) garnered the most positive responses, with 93% agreement (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Students' belief that each level has provided them with useful strategies and tools that will help them succeed in their online class



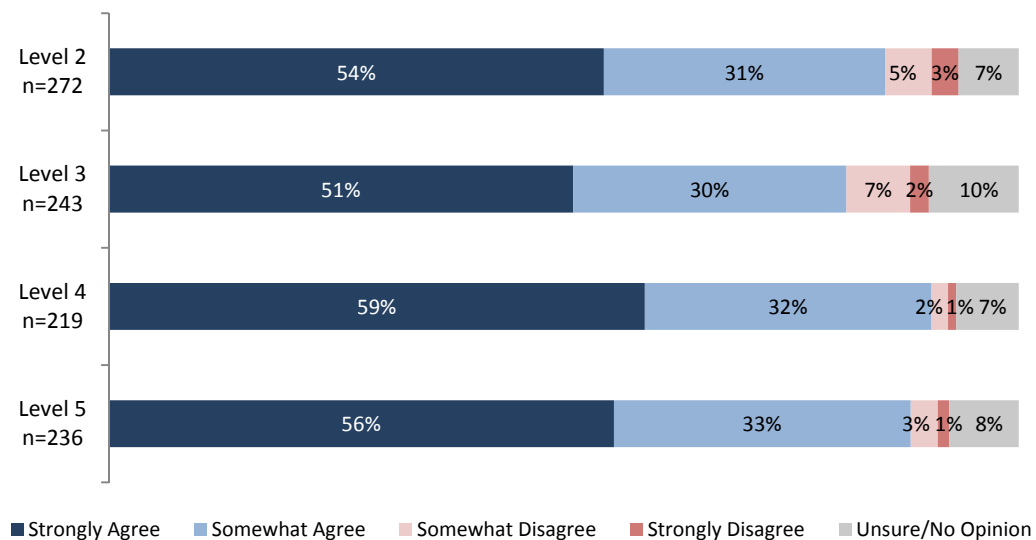
Level 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) came out on top again as having positively contributed to students' online learning experiences, followed by level 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps), with 90% and 89% agreeing, respectively (see Figure 5). Level 3 (Getting Tech Ready) had the largest proportion of respondents who disagreed or were unsure (18%).

Figure 5. Students' belief that each level has positively contributed to their online learning experience



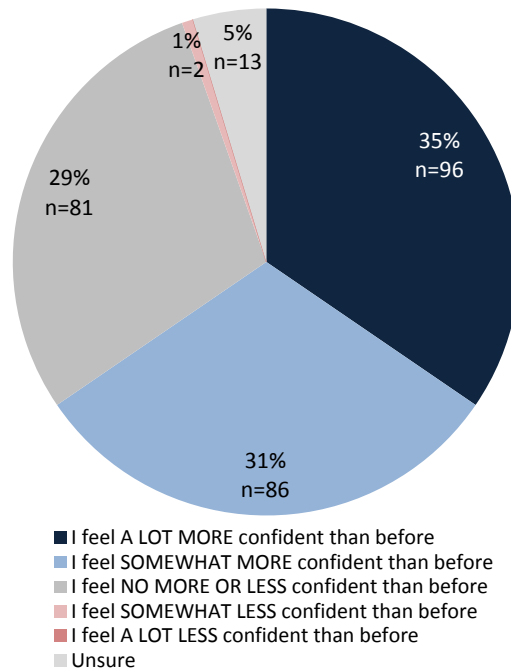
While a majority of respondents agreed that all four levels helped them feel more prepared to be successful in their online classes, levels 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) and 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps) were identified as being the most helpful, with 91% and 89% agreeing, respectively (see Figure 6). Level 3 (Getting Tech Ready) had the largest proportion of respondents who disagreed or were unsure (19%).

Figure 6. Students' belief that each level has helped them feel more prepared to be successful in their online class(es)



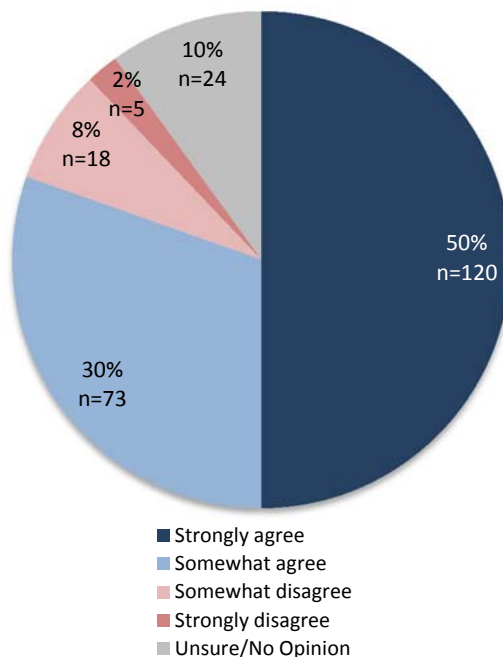
Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they felt a lot (35%) or somewhat (31%) more confident about successfully completing their online class than they did before learning about the seven myths of online classes. The remaining one-third of respondents felt no more or less confident (29%), unsure (5%), or somewhat less confident (1%)(see Figure 7).

Figure 7. The effect that understanding the 7 myths about online classes has on how confident students feel about successfully completing their current online course



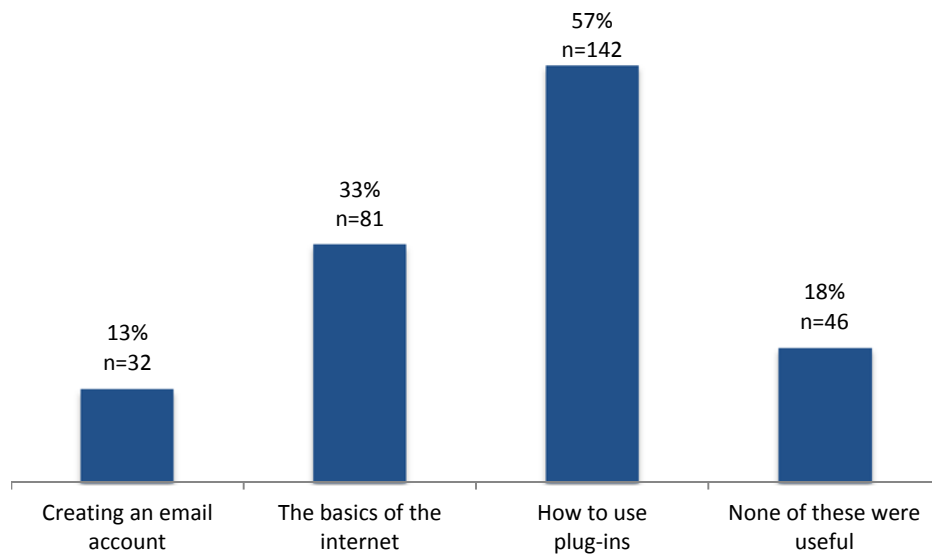
Half of the respondents strongly agreed, and 30% somewhat agreed, that the Getting Tech Ready module would help them improve their computer and online skills (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Students' belief that the Getting Tech Ready (Level 3) module will help improve their computer/online skills



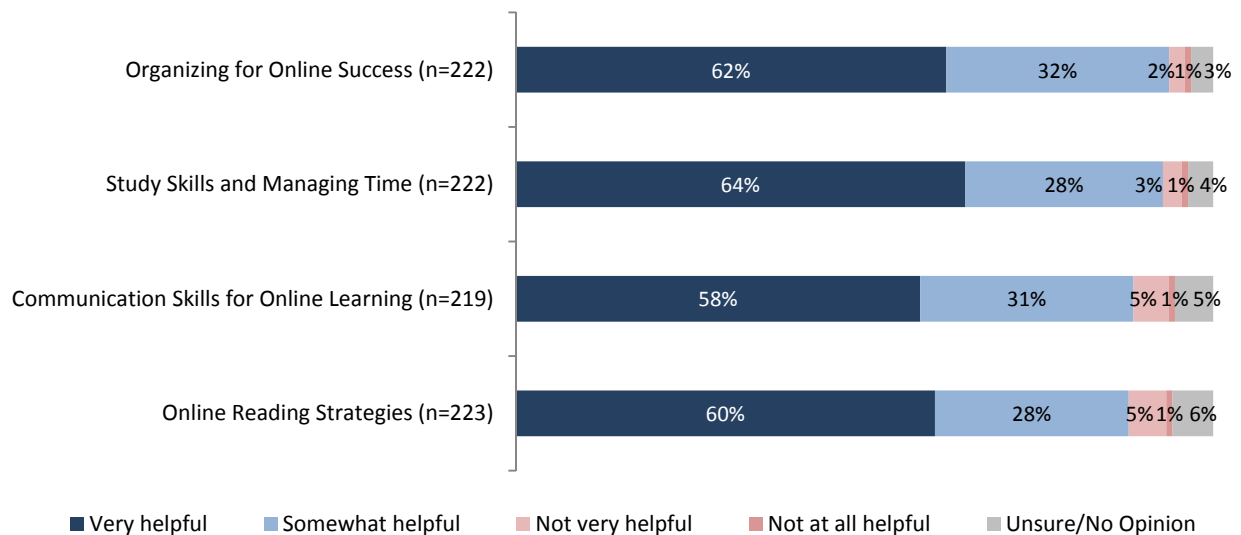
Over half of respondents (57%) indicated that the information on how to use plug-ins would help them the most with their current online classes, and one-third (33%) indicated that the information on the basics of the internet would help them most (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Students’ belief regarding which of the resources provided in the Getting Tech Ready (Level 3) module, will help them the most with their current online class(es)



The majority of respondents (88% - 94%) indicated that each of the four multimedia modules, “Online Reading Strategies,” “Study Skills and Managing Time,” “Organizing for Online Success,” and “Communication Skills for Online Learning,” would be very or somewhat helpful in helping them achieve success as online students (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Students’ belief regarding how helpful the four multimedia modules will be in helping them achieve success as an online student



Over half of respondents (58%) indicated that they found on-campus resources through the Getting Started module to help them successfully complete their current online course (see Figure 11). The most frequently identified resource was tutoring (see Table 2). However, it is important to note that 30% of respondents were unsure.

Figure 11. Whether students after completing the Getting Started (Level 5) module found any on-campus resources they will use to help them successfully complete their current online course

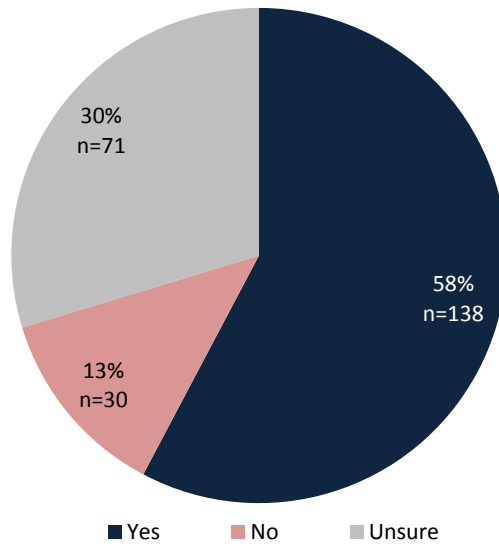


Table 2. List of resources identified by students

Category of Written Response	Count	Percent
Tutoring	33	24%
Learning Assistance Center	16	12%
Library	11	8%
Writing Center	10	7%
Academic Support/Counseling	6	4%
Transfer Center	5	4%
Helpdesk	5	4%
Financial Aid	3	2%
Admissions	2	1%
Computer lab	2	1%
Trio Program	2	1%
Business lab	1	1%
English Center	1	1%

Respondents most frequently identified the following as the most valuable (see Table 3):

- Identifying their strengths and weaknesses from the Smarter Measure assessment
- Learning about the myths of online classes in level 2 (Introduction to Online Learning)
- Learning how to use plug-ins in level 3 (Getting Tech Ready)
- Identified areas needing improvement and time management information in level 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner)
- List of resources provided in level 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps)

Table 3. What students found MOST valuable about each level

Category of Written Response	Smarter Measure	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Count of respondents	223	179	149	168	141
Nothing	4%	8%	9%	3%	6%
It is all valuable	1%	4%	4%	7%	10%
List of/Links to resources	1%		9%		66%
Identified my strengths/weaknesses	40%			22%	2%
Time management	1%	2%		21%	
Learning what to expect and how to succeed in an online class		21%		14%	4%
The results are very helpful	8%	1%		4%	
The information/helpful tips		8%	3%	1%	
I already knew some/most of the information		6%	3%		2%
The technology section	5%	1%		4%	
Identified my learning style	14%			7%	
Typing test	13%			7%	
Reading assessment	6%			5%	
Knowing how I compare to other students	3%			1%	
The graphs	1%			1%	
Learning about myself	1%			1%	
The myths section		47%			
It was short/ concise		3%			
The videos		3%			
Differences between online and in-person classes		3%			
Time consuming/ waste of my time		2%			
Learning about plug-ins			23%		
Troubleshooting technical difficulties			21%		
Basics of the internet			9%		
Everything was valuable			5%		
Information on email			3%		
Information on how an online class works			3%		
Easy to follow; not overwhelming			3%		
Getting tech ready			2%		
Study skills				10%	
Communication skills for online learning				4%	

When asked to identify what was the least valuable about each level, respondents most frequently indicated that everything was valuable, especially in level 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps) (see Table 4). Several popular responses include:

- Smarter Measure assessment took too long and/or that the questions were redundant
- Already knew some or most of the information in level 2 (Introduction to Online Learning)
- Email setup in level 3 (Getting Tech Ready) was not necessary, and
- Level 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) took too long

Table 4. What students found LEAST valuable about each level

Category of Written Response	Smarter Measure	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Count of respondents	201	168	142	148	131
Nothing/ Everything was valuable	41%	57%	44%	43%	76%
I already knew some/most of the information	7%	11%	13%	4%	11%
Takes too long; used up my time; redundant	16%	6%	4%	13%	
The technology section	6%		6%	3%	
The typing test	11%			7%	
Life factors	9%			2%	
The reading assessment	2%			7%	
Organizational skills	1%			3%	
All	1%			1%	
What kind of learner I am	2%				
The results summary	2%				
Some things seemed pretty obvious and tedious	2%				
I don't understand the point of this assessment	2%				
Some answer options were not the best for certain questions	2%				
The myths section		7%			
Online vs Classroom section		3%			
The "how does it work" section		3%			
This information is only good for students new to online courses		2%			
Introduction to online learning		2%			
The part about excuses		2%			
Email setup was not necessary			18%		
Obvious/ Common sense information			4%		
Basics of internet			2%		
Didn't go into detail; very basic			2%		
Online communication; Netiquette				4%	
How to access the course					5%

When asked how they would improve each level to benefit online learners the most, more than half of the respondents in every level indicated that they would not change anything. Some respondents suggested making the modules optional, or only for new online students. Additionally, a few respondents would like to see the modules, particularly the Smarter Measure assessment, shortened (see Table 5).

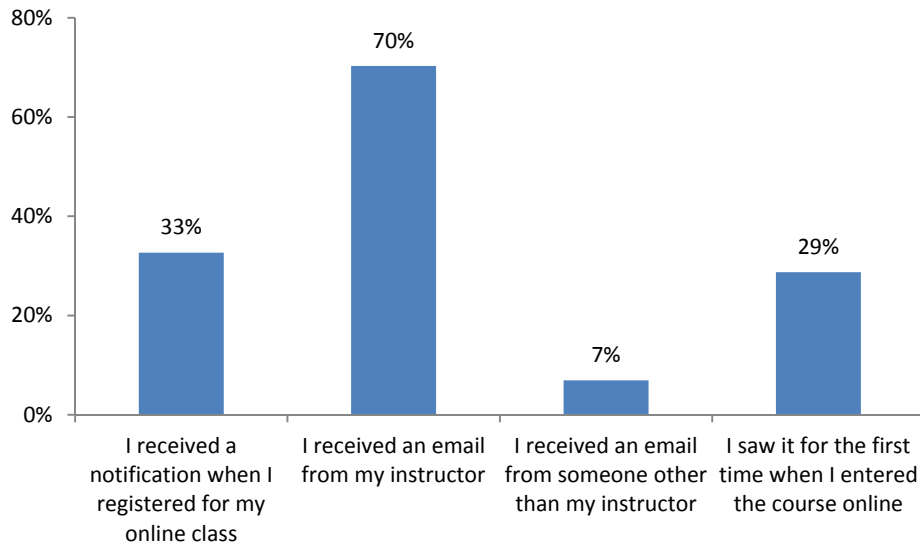
Table 5. Students' suggestions for improving each level

Category of Written Response	Smarter Measure	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Count of respondents	188	164	138	143	126
No suggestions/ No improvement needed	62%	58%	62%	62%	71%
Make it optional or only for new online students	4%	4%	6%		
It was long and redundant/ Make it shorter	17%			13%	
Delete the typing test	2%				
Make it easier to understand	2%				
Give suggestions on how to improve on the skills you lack	2%				
Make it more exciting/ interactive/ fun/ modern/ user friendly		8%			
Make it shorter		4%			
Talk more about online courses and what they entail		4%			
Give instructions for participating in discussion threads		2%			
Suggestions for how to succeed in online course, not for improving the module		2%			
Make some sections/ videos shorter			4%		
Give more information and examples			5%		
Address more complex problems that might happen for those who have been using this service for more than a semester			2%		
Add more resources					10%
Describe in more detail how to use Blackboard (video tutorial)					4%

End-of-Term Survey

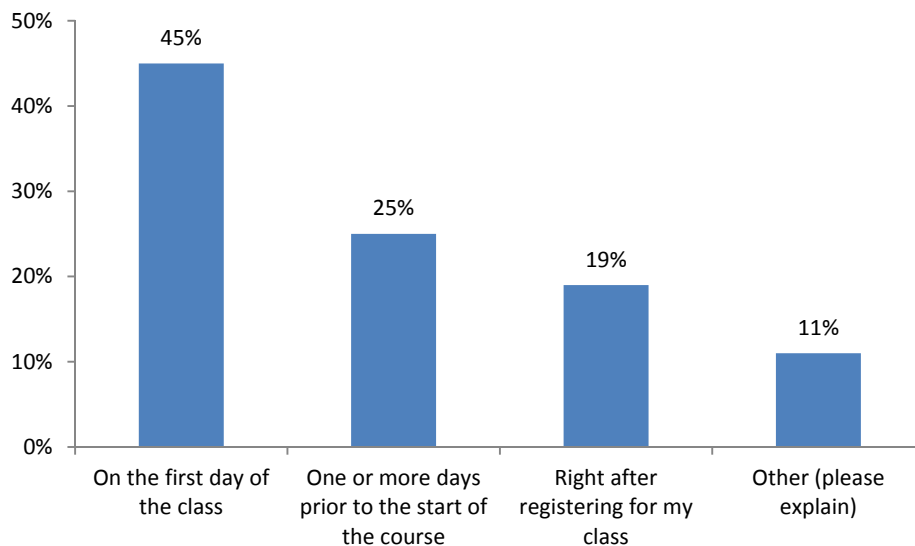
When asked how they learned about the program, 70% of respondents indicated that they received an email from their instructor, 33% received a notification when they registered for their online class, and 29% saw it for the first time when they entered their course online (see Figure 12). Please note this question employed a “check all that apply” format, hence the total number of responses is greater than 101.

Figure 12. How students learned about the Quest for Success



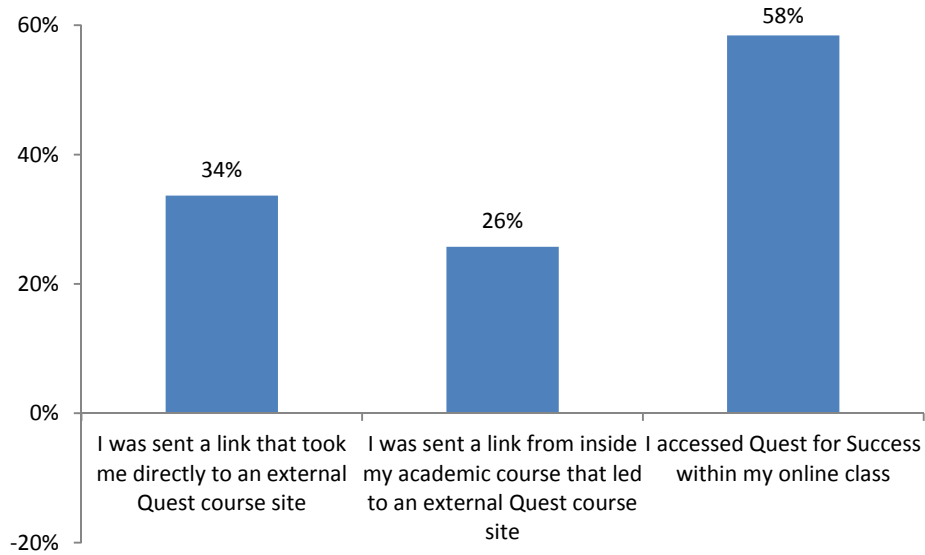
Almost half (45%) of respondents indicated that they received access to Quest for Success on the first day of class, 25% said that they received access one or more days prior to the start of the course, and 19% said they received access right after registering for their class. Eleven percent of respondents marked “other,” and of those five said that their instructor sent them an email containing a link to Quest for Success, three said that they received access at the end of the semester, and three could not remember (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. When students received access to Quest for Success



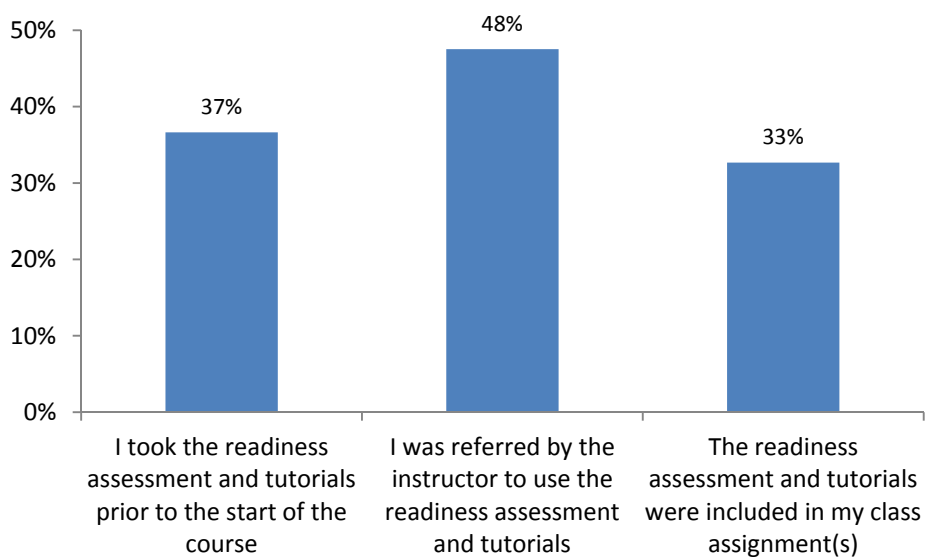
When asked how they accessed the Quest for Success program, 58% of respondents indicated that they accessed Quest for Success from within their online course, 34% indicated that they received a link from within their course that sent them to an external Quest course site, and 26% of respondents said that they received a link to an external Quest course site (see Figure 14). Please note this question employed a “check all that apply” format, hence the total number of responses is greater than 101.

Figure 14. How students accessed the Quest for Success program



Almost half (48%) of the respondents indicated that they were referred by their instructor to use the readiness assessment and tutorials, 37% said that they took the readiness assessment and tutorials prior to the start of their course, and 33% said that the Quest for Success materials were included in their class assignments (see Figure 15). Please note this question employed a “check all that apply” format, hence the total number of responses is greater than 101.

Figure 15. How and when students used Quest for Success



Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they chose to return to Quest for Success on their own at some time during the class. Thirteen of the 27 respondents provided explanations, and the reasons given were as follows:

- I used it to find resources
- To help with time management
- It helped me with study skills
- I couldn't finish it in one sitting
- My teacher required it before the end of the semester
- It helped me with my online class
- It was easy to use
- To make sure I did not miss anything
- It was valuable information to learn
- To view the tutorials

Of the 72 respondents who did not return to Quest for Success on their own, 28 provided explanations as to why not. The reasons given were as follows:

- I didn't need the help
- I forgot about it
- I was focused on my class
- It wasn't very helpful
- I was too busy
- It was a one-time thing
- I was not instructed to do so

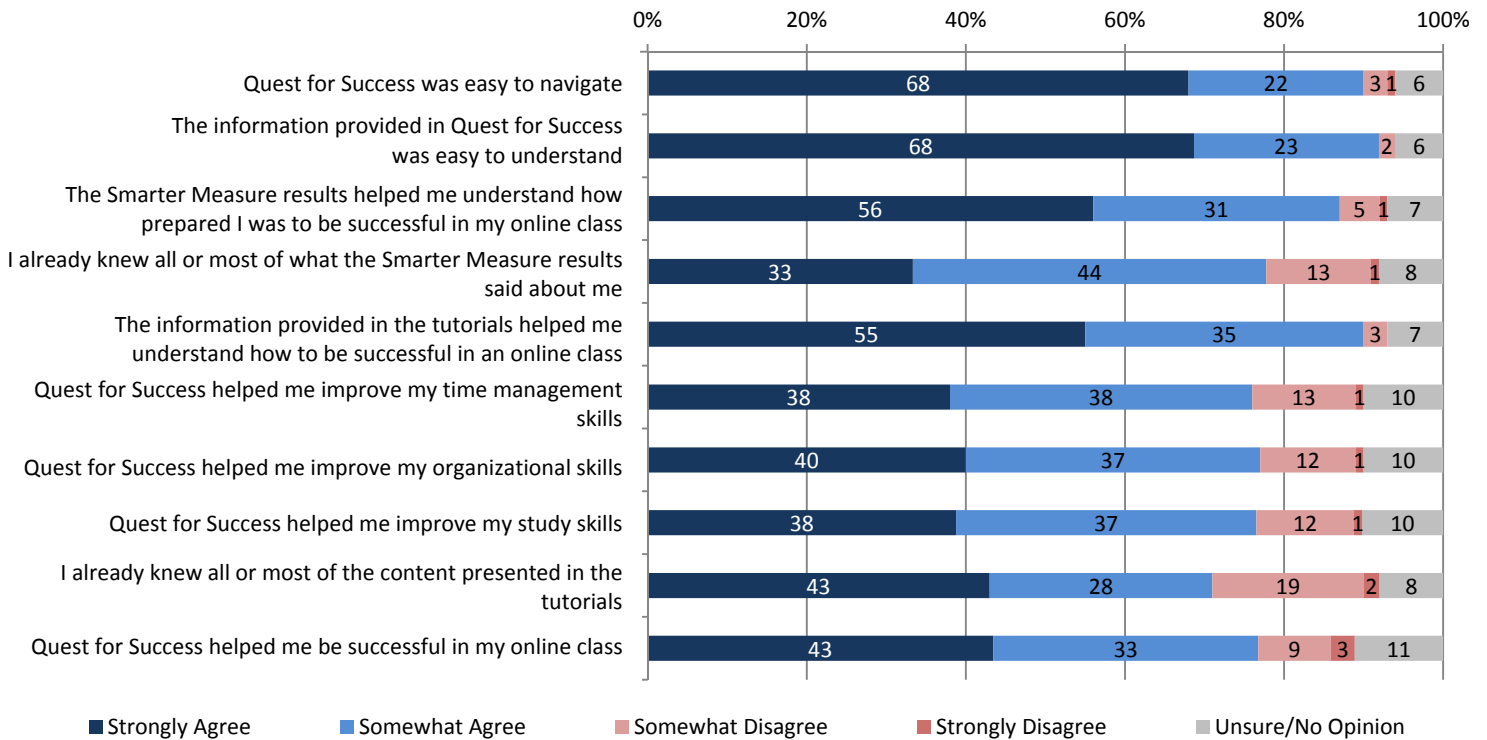
Two respondents did not indicate whether or not they returned to Quest for Success on their own at some time during the class.

Ninety-one percent of respondents agreed strongly or somewhat that the information provided in Quest for Success was easy to understand, and 90% said that Quest for Success was easy to navigate and that the information provided in the

tutorials helped them understand how to be successful in an online class. Eighty-seven percent agreed that the Smarter Measure results helped them understand how prepared they were to be successful in their online class.

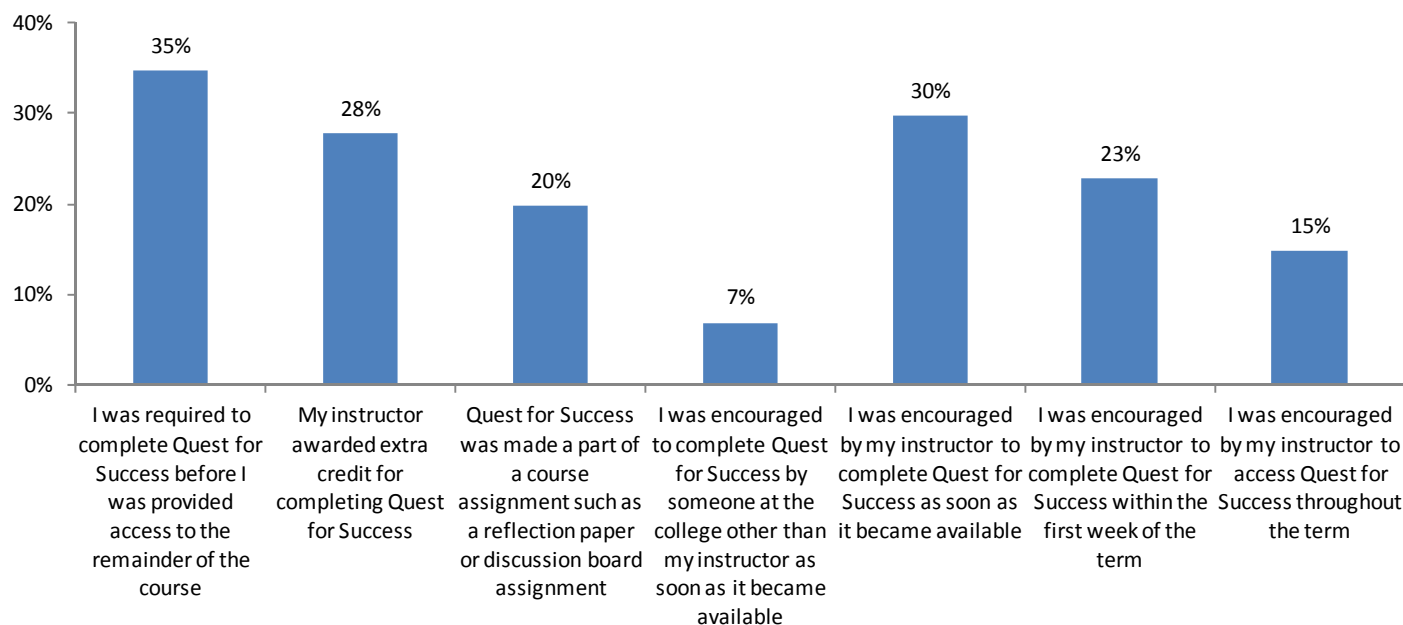
There was less agreement among respondents that Quest for Success helped them improve their organizational, time management, or study skills (77%, 76%, and 75%, respectively), or that Quest for Success helped them to be successful in their online class (76%). Respondents also expressed less agreement, and some disagreement, with the two statements, “I already knew all or most of the content presented in the tutorials,” and, “I already knew all or most of what the Smarter Measure results said about me,” which indicates that the Quest for Success program did introduce them to some new information (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Students’ agreement with statements about Quest for Success



Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated that they were required to complete Quest for Success before gaining access to the remainder of the course, 30% were encouraged by their instructor to complete Quest for Success as soon as it became available, 28% said that their instructor awarded extra credit for completing Quest for Success, 23% were encouraged by their instructor to complete Quest for Success within the first week of the term, 20% indicated that Quest for Success was made a part of a course assignment, 15% respondents were encouraged by their instructor to access Quest for Success throughout the term, and seven percent of respondents were encouraged by someone at the college other than their instructor to complete Quest for Success as soon as it became available (see Figure 17).

Figure 17. How students were encouraged to use Quest for Success



When asked what they liked the most or found the most useful about Quest for Success, 70 students provided a response. The most common response was that they liked that it identified their strengths and weaknesses (see Table 6).

Table 6. What students liked the most or found the most useful about Quest for Success

Category of Written Response	
<i>Count of respondents</i>	70
Identified my strengths/weaknesses	23%
The information/helpful tips	13%
Learning what to expect and how to succeed in an online class	13%
It is all valuable	10%
Time management	9%
It is easy to understand and navigate	9%
Not Sure/ No Comment/ Not Applicable	9%
It helped me with my course	6%

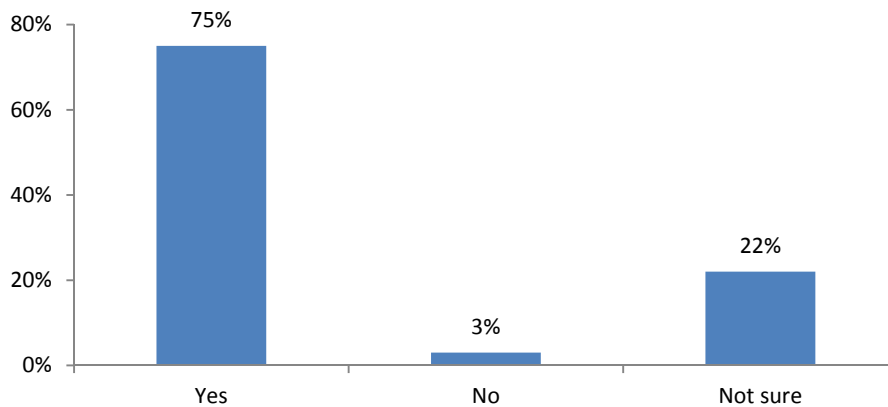
When asked what they liked the least or found the least useful about Quest for Success, 66 students responded. The most common response was that nothing was least valuable, or that everything was valuable (see Table 7).

Table 7. What students liked the least or found the least useful about Quest for Success

Category of Written Response	
<i>Count of respondents</i>	66
Nothing/ Everything was valuable	59%
Takes too long; used up my time; redundant	15%
I already knew some/most of the information	8%

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that they would recommend Quest for Success to other students taking online courses, 22% were not sure, and three said they would not recommend Quest for Success to other students. When asked to explain why they would recommend Quest for Success to other students, 47 of the 75 respondents gave reasons, which were all related to how helpful it is for students in order to be successful in online classes, especially for students who are new to college, new to online classes or who are less tech savvy than others. Two of the three respondents who indicated that they would not recommend Quest for Success to other students gave reasons for their decision. One said that most of their friends would not benefit from it, and the other said that, “I would tell them about it but wouldn't recommend it, unless I know they have time to spare” (see Figure 18).

Figure 18. Students who would recommend Quest for Success for other students taking online courses



When asked what suggestions they have for improving Quest for Success, 66 students responded. Most respondents said that it is good as-is, and several suggested making it shorter (see Table 8).

Table 8. Students' suggestions for improving Quest for Success

Category of Written Response	
<i>Count of respondents</i>	66
No improvement needed/ It is all valuable	61%
Make it shorter/ It's a waste of time	12%
Have an advanced section for the students who have taken courses online	6%
Information is too basic	5%

Summary of Key Findings

Initial Surveys

- Two-thirds of respondents indicated that completing the SmarterMeasure diagnostic assessment would greatly (31%) or somewhat (36%) improve their chances of being successful in their online course.
- Students were most satisfied overall with levels 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) and 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps).
- Respondents agreed most strongly that levels 4 (Becoming an Effective Online Learner) and 5 (Getting Started/Next Steps) provided them with useful strategies and tools to help them succeed in their online classes, positively contributed to their online learning experiences, and helped them feel more prepared to be successful in their online classes.
- Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they felt a lot (35%) or somewhat (31%) more confident about successfully completing their online class than they did before learning about the seven myths of online classes (Level 2).
- More than three-quarters of respondents strongly (50%) or somewhat (30%) agreed that the Getting Tech Ready module (Level 3) would help them improve their computer and online skills.
- More than half (57%) of respondents indicated that the information on how to use plug-ins, and 33% felt that the information on the basics of the internet would help them the most with their current online classes.
- All four multimedia modules, Organizing for Online Success, Study Skills and Managing Time, Communication Skills for Online Learning, and Online Reading Strategies, were identified by a majority of respondents as being helpful for their success as online students (Level 4).
- More than half (58%) of respondents indicated that they found on-campus resources through the Getting Started module (Level 5) to help them successfully complete their current online course; the most frequently identified resource was tutoring.
- Most valuable information, by level:
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses (Smarter Measure assessment)
 - Learning about the myths of online classes (level 2 - Introduction to Online Learning)
 - Troubleshooting technical difficulties (level 3 – Getting Tech Ready)
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses and time management information (level 4 - Becoming an Effective Online Learner)
 - List of resources provided (level 5 - Getting Started/Next Steps)
- Least valuable information, by level:
 - Takes too long (Smarter Measure assessment)
 - Already knew most of the information (level 2 - Introduction to Online Learning)
 - Email setup was not necessary (level 3 – Getting Tech Ready)
 - Takes too long (level 4 – Becoming an Effective Online Learner)
 - Everything was valuable (level 5 – Getting Started/Next Steps)
- Suggestions for improvement, by level:
 - More than half of the respondents in every level indicated that they would not change anything
 - Stop repeating questions or have fewer questions (Smarter Measure assessment)
 - Make it optional or only for new online students (level 3 – Getting Tech Ready)
 - Make it shorter (level 4 – Becoming an Effective Online Learner)
 - Add more resources (level 5 – Getting Started/Next Steps)

End-of-Term Survey

- More than two-thirds (70%) of respondents learned about Quest for Success by receiving an email from their instructor.
- Almost half of respondents (45%) received access to Quest for Success on the first day of class, although some received access prior to the start of class (25%) and/or right after registering for their class (19%).
- More than half of respondents (58%) accessed Quest for Success from within their online class, while others were sent a link that took them to an external Quest course site (34%).
- Regarding how and when Quest for Success was used, almost half (48%) of respondents were referred by their instructor to use the tutorials, while others (37%) took the readiness assessment and tutorials prior to the start of their course and/or had the tutorials included in their class assignments (33%).
- Twenty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they chose to return to Quest for Success on their own at some time during the class. Some examples of the reasons that were given include:
 - To find the resources that were provided
 - To help me improve my time management
 - It helped me with problems I had with my online classes
- Regarding how students were encouraged to use Quest for Success, 35% of respondents indicated that they were required to complete Quest for Success before gaining access to the remainder of the course, while many (30%) indicated that their instructor encouraged them to complete Quest for Success as soon as it became available and others (28%) said that their instructor awarded extra credit for completing Quest for Success.
- Seventy-five percent of respondents said that they would recommend Quest for Success to other students, particularly those who are new to college, new to taking online courses, or those who are less tech savvy than others.
- A majority of respondents agreed with the following eight statements (listed in order of strongest agreement):
 - The information provided in Quest for Success was easy to understand
 - Quest for Success was easy to navigate
 - The information provided in the tutorials helped me understand how to be successful in an online class
 - Smarter Measure results helped me understand how prepared I was to be successful in my online class
 - Quest for Success helped me improve my organizational skills
 - Quest for Success helped me improve my time management skills
 - Quest for Success helped me be successful in my online class
 - Quest for Success helped me improve my study skills
- Most valuable information:
 - Identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Least valuable information:
 - Nothing/Everything was valuable
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - Make it shorter
 - Have an advanced section for students who have taken courses online