



Learnspace UX Research Protocol

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Background Information

[Momentum](#) is a nonprofit organization that works with low income individuals living in the Calgary area. Momentum offers free adult education programs in the areas of money management and matched savings, entrepreneurship, and job preparation training in the trades and technology fields. Momentum has also recently started offering fee-for-service programs and has a long running fee-for-service train-the-trainer program.

Like many other learning organizations, Momentum had to quickly pivot to online learning during the Covid pandemic. This was a radical shift from the in-person format Momentum used for its programming since its inception in 1991. After much debate and analysis, Momentum signed a contract with Desire2Learn (D2L) in August 2020 and the first programs launched in the D2L Brightspace Learning Management System (LMS) in November 2020. Momentum renamed its instance of Brightspace to Learnspace (LS).

The next two and a half years was a whirlwind of activity including but not limited to:

- Developing an in-house team to lead the LMS work including hiring an instructional designer and LMS administrator.
- Setting up and configuring the LMS.
- Developing business rules and procedures to use the LMS.
- Creating style guides and digital templates.
- Developing curricula.
- Building courses in the LMS.
- Developing staff capacity and buy-in across the organisation to use the LMS.

Now the dust has settled and almost all of Momentum's programs use Learnspace. There is now capacity and a desire on the Curriculum and Learning (C&L) Team, who leads Learnspace work at Momentum, to get participant feedback about the system. As a team, we would like to know:

- How participants are experiencing the system including what they like and don't like about the system.
- What suggestions for improvements participants have about the system.
- How we can best support our participants to use the system and have an enjoyable experience.

Typically, LMS user experience (UX) data is gathered from questionnaires such as User Experience Questionnaire ([UEQ](#)), modular evaluation of key Components of User Experience ([meCUE](#)), and [AttrakDiff](#) (Alhejaili & Ibrahim, 2023). I am hesitant to use these questionnaires for two reasons. First, Momentum already requires its participants to fill out surveys both during and post program so the addition of another questionnaire to fill out may overburden both participants and program facilitators. Secondly, about half of Momentum's participants are English Language Learners (ELL) and they may struggle with the instructions to fill out the questionnaire and the vocabulary used within the questionnaires. Therefore, to gain user experience (UX) data from our participants, I recommend using a semi-structured interview design. A qualitative study will allow for participants to freely express their specific views about the LMS and allow the C&L Team to ask probing and follow up questions.

Research Questions

The objective of this research is to understand what is working for participants in terms of using Learnspace and what could be improved upon.

The research questions we are exploring are:

- How are participants experiencing using Learnspace?
- What parts of Learnspace do participants like/enjoy?
- What parts of Learnspace could be improved?
- How can we best support our participants to use Learnspace?

Participants

In a typical month at Momentum, there are about 150-200 active learners in LS. Hwang & Salvendy (2010) recommend using about 8-12 respondents for usability testing so for this protocol, we will recruit 8-10 participants to partake in a 30-60 minute semi-structured interview via video chat (i.e., Zoom, MS Teams). The use of video chat may make it easier to recruit participants because they will not need to travel to Momentum for the interview. In addition, we can record and transcribe the interviews easily. Lastly, I work remotely so I am unable to conduct interviews in-person.

We will offer participants a grocery gift card in exchange for their time and feedback. The offering of compensation is common practice when recruiting participants for research. Additionally, we work with low income participants and want to be respectful of their limited free time to engage with us.

Momentum has three program departments and a variety of program formats within each department. Ideally, we will recruit participants from each department, from a variety of program designs (i.e., mixed program length and formats), and speak to participants after they have settled into their program and have used the LMS at least three times.

After speaking with the C&L Manager, we have decided to not recruit participants from the train-the-trainer program or our fee-for-service coaching program as these learners do not fall under our typical low income participant demographic. For these programs, we will add a few questions to the course evaluation form to gain their feedback about using Learnspace.

Deciding on which program participants to recruit for the interviews will take some effort. There is a wide assortment of program formats, durations, start dates, and time spent in Learnspace. Table 1 captures this information and can be used by the C&L Team in Q1 2024 to help us decide which program participants to approach and when.

Table 1 - Program Design Elements to Support Research Decisions

Dept./ Program Acronym	Program Length	Frequency in LS	Program Format	Cohort in LS Now?	2024 Cohorts	When to Recruit Participants
FE – FG	12 months	1x/month	Hybrid, mostly online	Yes	April	3 months after entering program
FE – YFG	12 months	1-2x/month	Hybrid, mostly online	Yes	March	3 months after entering program
FE- SC	6 months	1-2x/month	Hybrid, mostly online	Yes	March	3 months after entering program
FE - OHHO	5 years	6x/year	Online	No	Rolling intake starting in January	6 months after entering program
ST - Trades (PPL, AHT, CAR)	25 weeks	Daily first 12 weeks of program.	In-person, occasionally online	Yes	PPL-January AHT- March CAR- May	3 months after entering program
ST - Tech (AWS)	20 weeks	Daily first 15 weeks of program.	Hybrid	Yes	None planned yet.	3 weeks after beginning program
ST - ITSS	20 weeks	1-2x/week	Hybrid	No	February May	3 weeks after beginning program
LED - BFS	1 week	3x/week	Online	Yes	Monthly	Immediately after program ends
LED - DYB	4 weeks	2x/week	Hybrid, mostly online	Yes	Monthly	Immediately after program ends
LED - SE	20 weeks	2x/week	Hybrid, mostly in- person	Yes	February	1 month after entering program
LED - PSE	24 weeks	2x/week	Online	No	January	1 month after entering program

Method

Recruiting participants

To recruit participants, we will first create a list of program facilitators to approach based on the information provided in Table 1. We will then ask program facilitators to send a research recruitment email from Learnspace to their participants. As mentioned previously, we will offer a \$40 grocery gift card to encourage participation in the research. Please see Appendix B for sample recruitment email.

Interview procedure

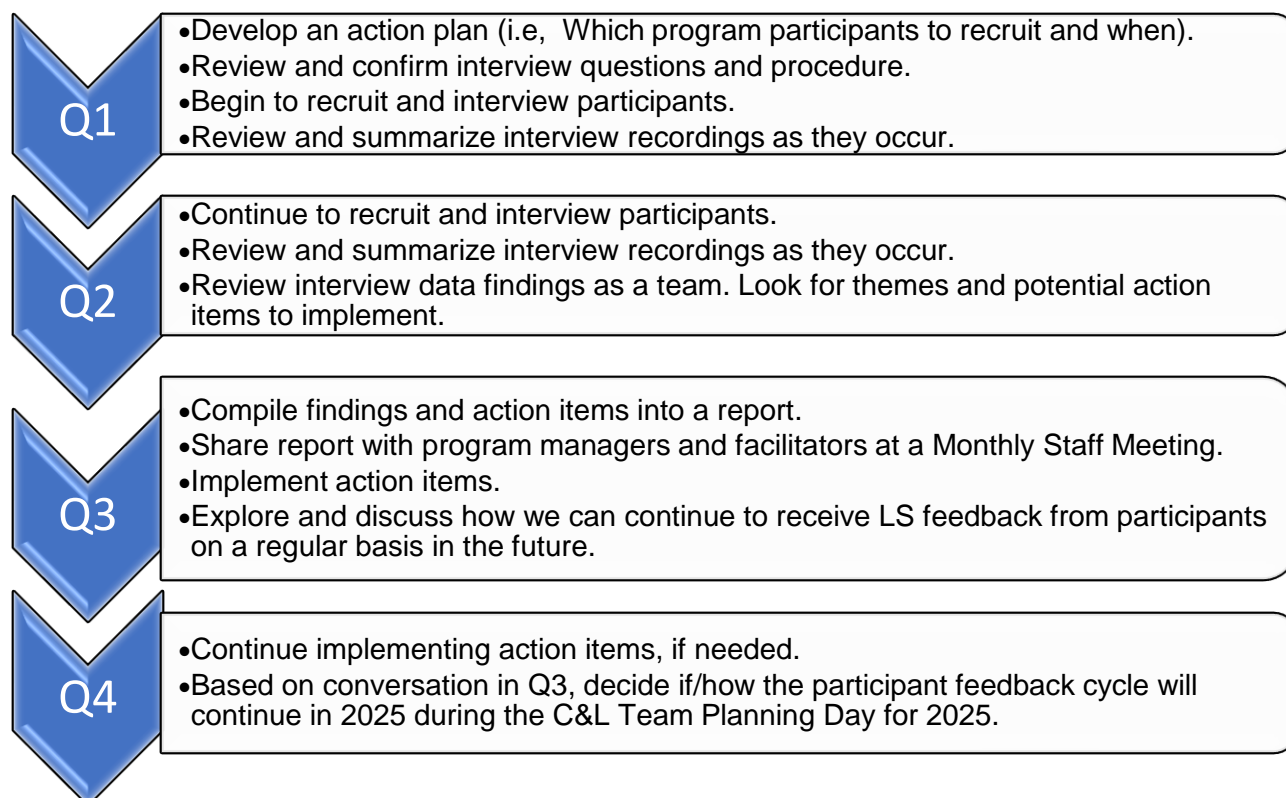
Please see Appendix A for the interview procedure and questions.

Analyzing the Data

We will work with Momentum's Research and Evaluation Specialist to help us analyze the data using thematic analysis. We will categorize participant feedback using themes such as:

- What to change and what to keep the same in Learnspace.
- What to add and remove from Learnspace.
- Positive and negative feedback about Learnspace.

Timeline



Appendixes

Appendix A - Learnspace UX/UI Interview Procedure and Questions

Participant's name:

Date:

Interviewer's name:

Procedure

- 1) Confirm meeting with the participant 24 hours beforehand via email. Include Zoom link in email.
- 2) Use the following script to begin the meeting:

Hi [Participant Name]! My name is [Name] and I am the [Role] at Momentum. Thank you for joining me. How are you doing today?

We are meeting today to get your feedback about Learnspace. Your feedback is very important to us and will help us understand what is working and not working in Learnspace, and how we can improve Learnspace for future participants.

Today's discussion should only take about 30-60, depending on how much you would like to share. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you only have to answer the questions you would like to answer.

Your responses that you share today will not be linked back to you and we will not use your name in any reports we write. So please feel free to provide your honest feedback about Learnspace.

I would like to record today's meeting so that I don't miss any of your feedback. Are you okay with us recording this meeting?

Before we get started, do you have any questions or concerns?

- 3) Turn on the recording and transcription tool in Zoom or MS Teams.
- 4) Use the interview questions below. Follow-up questions are okay but be mindful of the time. Keep in mind that we are looking for information about their experience using the Learnspace interface and not overall feedback about their program.
- 5) Share your screen and show the Learnspace interfaces when prompted using the Demo Student LS account. This will help the participant remember what the interface looks like.
- 6) Since the meeting is being recorded, note taking during the interview is not necessary. Actively listen to the participant instead of taking notes.
- 7) Thank the participant for their time. Inform them on how they can receive their gift card.
- 8) After the interview, write down your initial thoughts, ideas, or notes at the end of this document, if any.

Interview Questions

Introductory Questions

- What program(s) did you take/are you taking at Momentum?
- How often were you using Learnspace?
- Have you used a learning management system like Learnspace before? If so, when?

UX Questions

- What do you like about Learnspace?
- What is the hardest part about using Learnspace?
- What could be done to improve Learnspace?
- Are there any accessibility limitations or barriers with Learnspace? If so, what?
- Is there anything missing from Learnspace?
- Is there anything surprising about Learnspace?

UI Questions

- What was your experience logging into Learnspace for the first time and setting up your password? (Share screen and show login page and landing page)
- What was your experience navigating the site? Was it easy to find what you were looking for? (Share screen and show landing page and course home page)
- What was your experience accessing your course materials? (Share screen and show course home page and course materials)
- What was your experience submitting your work for evaluation? (Share screen and show assignment page)
- Did you use the resources in the Help section? If so, did you find them useful? (Share screen and show participant resource page under "Help")

Closing Questions

- Is there anything we haven't asked you that you think would be valuable for us to know?
- May we contact you if we have any further questions for this project?

Initial Post Interview Thoughts/Notes/Ideas

Appendix B – Recruitment Email Template

Subject line: Your Feedback about Learnspace Wanted!

Hi {FirstName},

Hope you're doing well! I'm Olivia from the Curriculum and Learning Team at Momentum, and we're looking for feedback on our learning management system "Learnspace".

We'd love to chat with you to hear your thoughts. It's a chance to share what's working, what's not, and any ideas you have about improving Learnspace. Your input will help us make things better for everyone.

The discussion will take around 30-60 minutes over a recorded Zoom video call. Your feedback will remain confidential. As a thanks for participating in the interview, you'll get a \$40 grocery gift card.

Interested? Please email us at learnspace.support@momentum.org to learn more.

Thanks a bunch for considering—your voice matters!

Best,
Olivia Tarasewicz
Educational Technology Coordinator
Momentum

References

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