**Remote Learning with BCIT’s Learning Hub:**

**Target Users, Tasks, and Resources**

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**The Learning Hub Platform for Remote Learning**

**Learning Management Systems**

Learning management systems (LMS) have made education more accessible and have provided the opportunity to learn online with a flexible delivery system (2). The suspension of in-person learning at educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in an expedited development and usage of online learning platforms as an alternative when this was the only option for the continuity of educational programs (8). There has also been the increased popularization of massive open online courses (MOOCs) and formal distance learning programs over the last several years (8). Platforms such as edX that was founded in 2012 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, is a well-known provider of MOOCs that affords learning opportunities to the masses through courses taught by their respective faculty and partnering institutions (6, 8). Coursera is another online learning platform that partners with colleges and universities worldwide to provide educational programs and has seen increased popularity with 92 million users in 2022, as students sought flexible options to obtain recognized credentials (4, 8). Universities and Colleges have also been developing a greater number of online learning programs due to the increased demand for online education, which has resulted in the improvement of access to education (8). The paradigm shift in methodologies for education delivery has helped to diminish the viewpoint that online learning is not an effective mode of learning compared with the traditional face-to-face instruction, where millions of learners worldwide have taken MOOCs and participated in distance learning programs (6, 8). This has allowed students to complete courses, professional certificates, diplomas, undergraduate, and graduate degrees through fully online programs (8). LMS has allowed for the provision of online education at post-secondary institutes, so that this alternative mode of delivery is available in addition to the traditional in-person programs. The goal has been to improve access to education for the demographic of learners who have shown an increase in demand for location independent program options.

**Target Users**

In the ever-changing job market with rapid technological developments, there are a greater number of career professionals seeking upskilling or a career change. In-person learning is not always tenable as people seek to gain skills while still working in their current professions and providing for their families. Therefore, there has been an increased demand for seeking credentials through online learning, and the development of learning platforms to facilitate this demand represents a great option for this group of learners, who otherwise would not have been able to pursue such opportunities. Other demographics of learners such as international students who have barriers to travelling or cannot afford the financial cost of relocating for educational purposes have also been able to benefit from these opportunities. As well, students who need to work and can only afford the time commitment of part-time studies have been able to benefit from this flexible format, along with students who seek to shorten the duration of their programs by being able to pursue online learning opportunities in addition to their other courses. Some students may also have additional learning needs and require accommodations to facilitate access and engagement in learning. The LMS technology allows for the provision of additional support that may not have been feasible in the classroom setting and has decreased the barriers to learning that this group of learners would otherwise have faced. Another factor that may be relevant across all the target users described may be the presence of physical limitations such as mobility issues or the presence of health conditions that may preclude individuals from attending in-person classes. Within these user demographics there are going to be students who have different levels of familiarity with using an online learning platform. For example, depending on the career professional’s area of employment they may or may not be adept at using technology as their primary interface for learning. Their previous educational experiences may have been through the more traditional in-person learning at a formal educational institute. A younger demographic of students may have a greater depth of experience in interacting with technology and may have a less steeper learning curve when navigating the LMS.

**The Learning Hub**

The Learning Hub is one type of LMS that is employed by the British Columbia Institute of Technology for their online courses and programs (1). It is provided by a company called Desire to Learn (D2L) using a software system called Brightspace (1). This is a popular LMS employed by many educational institutes and allows students to access learning materials, and to manage their course work online to support a flexible learning format (5). The Learning Hub supports course delivery that may be asynchronous where the student does not have to be online at a certain time for scheduled online classes, or synchronous where the student is required to attend live online classes. D2L promotes their platform by stating that it supports learners reaching their potential by providing the benefits of access, personalization, flexibility, efficiency, and it transforms the physical classroom into an online learning experience for students (5). Among the popular features of D2L are the content experience, discussion boards for student engagement, outcomes-based assessments, and the addition of videos to content to provide additional learning materials (5). The platform also has a mobile first design resulting in a responsive design that adapts to different screen sizes, so learners are not limited by what device they use for accessing content (5). In addition, D2L supports accessibility with assistive technology that involves meeting learners’ specific needs by implementing accommodations, such as using Read &Write literacy software (5).

**User Tasks in The Learning Hub**

There are several different user tasks that the learner needs to engage in to complete their course requirements using the Learning Hub. These include such user roles or tasks as submitting assignments, participating in discussions, completing quizzes or exams, checking class progress, accessing class lists, contacting fellow students, receiving notifications, and checking grades (1, 5). The Learning Hub streamlines these processes because it allows students to complete these tasks within the LMS. In the absence of the LMS students would have to submit assignments separately through email and complete an exam or quiz on a separate online exam proctoring platform. They would also need to contact classmates through another communication system such as personal email. Therefore, the Learning Hub provides the user with the necessary tools to successfully engage in online learning on one platform. To be able to successfully navigate the system, the user requires an adequate orientation through resources such as a user guide, or video tutorials that clearly explains how to use the Learning Hub effectively.

**Resources for The Learning Hub**

The BCIT Educational Technology Support page outlines the specific user tasks that may be undertaken in the Learning Hub under the Student Resources section and serves as the user guide to orient students (1). The student resources section also contains supplemental video tutorials that explains how to navigate the platform (1). There are also a multitude of other student reference guides that have been published online by the respective institutions that employ D2L for online course delivery. A user guide from the software provider is found in the documentation section of the D2L Brightspace Community page (3). It contains a detailed user guide for learners with sections for getting started, course orientation, interaction and engaging with peers, accessing and completing course activities, and reviewing evaluations and monitoring course progress (3). Learner video tutorials by D2L are also available under the documentation section through YouTube (3). Overall, there are many resources available to orient users to successfully navigating the Learning Hub.

The Learning Hub is an optimal choice for creating targeted learning materials because there are several different demographics of target users all with the same end goals to successfully engage in online learning by understanding how to use this platform effectively. However, learners will be functioning at differing aptitudes for using technology and with different baseline levels of education and may require assistive technology. Therefore, they will require user resources that facilitates the greatest understanding based on these factors and the specific tasks they are required to perform to be successful in completing course objectives. For some learners this may be via video tutorials, while other learners may prefer a step-by-step user guide with depictions of the user interface for key steps, or a combination of the two to supplement their understanding.

**References**

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