

Persona Design Challenge!

Citation: Lepeschkin-Noel, Yaklin, White, Knott
2018

Instructions

The basic rules are as follows:

1. To start the game, each player draws one card from each pile, 1 - 4 and places them on their persona board (1 minute)
2. Roll the die. The player with the highest number is the round facilitator.
3. Next, each player takes two minutes (timed by the round facilitator) to write a biography for their persona based on the information they've placed on their persona board.
4. The round facilitator rolls the die, and selects the corresponding challenge number. If a six is rolled, the round facilitator randomly draws a challenge from the pile.
5. The round facilitator reads the challenge. Each player then has five minutes to design a solution to the problem.
6. Each player has two minutes to share their solution.
7. The round facilitator selects the solution that most resonated with them (made them think, challenged their assumptions, or resonated with their educational philosophies) and gives the designer a token. This step is subjective and intended to facilitate conversation and sharing.
8. The person to the right of the current round facilitator becomes round facilitator for the next round.
9. The game ends when all scenarios have been designed. The player with the most tokens wins.

1

BIO

3

4

2



NAME: Susan

18

1

AGENCY: In-State

YEAR: First-year

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

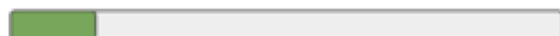
PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

BIO

"Even though you may not ever become the biggest fish in this pond, because there are so many huge fish, that doesn't matter. There are many opportunities, there's so many people that you can meet, different things you could see."

3

INFLUENCERS

PEERS

FAMILY

PROFESSORS

4

VALUES

- Career-relevant experience
- Opportunities to connect with professors
- Support and advice from family
- Connections with peers

PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by clubs and homework
- Struggling to maintain life balance and manage time
- Adapting to the college workload and pressures
- Gateway courses

2

WANTS

- More study skills/time management preparation
- To build meaningful relationships with professors and peers



NAME:
AGE:
RESIDENCY:
YEAR:

BIO

Susan is a first year student. She graduated as valedictorian of her high school, and always dreamed of working in marketing. Both of her parents graduated from MSU, and, combined with the high-quality reputation of the business school, attending MSU always “felt right.” In her first semester, Susan immediately joined four clubs related to her major, but dropped one of them to make more time for her coursework. While she enjoys her classes and appreciates the connections her professor has made to what it will be like to work in marketing, she feels overwhelmed by trying to balance the amount of extra-curricular, career-related opportunities she wants to participate in with her course load. She wants to ensure she is building relationships with her professors and excelling with her schoolwork while still making time for new friends and the co-curricular

EXPERIENCES THAT WILL HELP HER BUILD THE SKILLS SHE NEEDS TO SUCCEED.

“Even though you may not have become the biggest fish in this pond, because there are so many huge fish, that doesn't matter. There's so many opportunities, there's so many people that you can meet, different things you could see.”

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

INFLUENCERS

PEERS

FAMILY

PROFESSORS

VALUES

- Career-relevant experience
- Opportunities to connect with professors
- Support and advice from family
- Connections with peers

PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by clubs and schoolwork
- Struggling to maintain a school/life balance and manage time
- Adapting to the college workload and pressures
- Gateway courses

WANTS

- More study skills/time management preparation
- To build meaningful relationships with professors and peers

Challenge Cards

Challenge 1

The University is moving towards requiring all course materials to come from Open Educational Resources in five years. This means that courses will no longer require textbooks, but rather online books, articles, and other resources that are free or reduced cost.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Challenge 2

The University is changing the Learning Management System (LMS) to a new and very different system. All course content in the current LMS will be transferred to the new LMS for the coming Fall semester.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Challenge 3

Due to dropping enrollment, your university has decided to purchase an organization that completely creates and runs online courses. This will lead to an increase in revenue for your university, and a potentially lower tuition costs for the students. The faculty from the purchased organization will not be integrated into the campus community, and will essentially function as a separate entity. A committee has been formed to decide which organizations course offering will be utilized, in instances where there is overlap.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Challenge 4

Your University is famous for the program in which you are enrolled, and has just decided to separate from the accrediting body due to curriculum differences. The department will implement curriculum changes to the program in the next year, meaning they will deliberately depart from compliance with the accrediting body. When you graduate, it will be with a degree in a program that is well known and highly lauded but not accredited.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Challenge 5

Your university's IT department has begun to consolidate all IT employees into one centralized location. This means many departments and colleges will lose their dedicated technology support person. The trade-off is that the yearly costs to these departments will be significantly reduced, and the available software and log-in information will be streamlined and standardized.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Challenge 6

Your program is now going to be offered only in a hybrid format. All courses will have required face-to-face components and required online components, and you will be expected to participate in both.

Describe how you would interact with, question, advocate for or rebel against, this initiative, what form that would take, and why you (the persona), would react that way.

Solution notes

Student Personas Cards

Creating your cards

1. Print the personas below
2. Cut them out as illustrated in the persona map
3. Label the pieces as 1, 2, 3, 4

NOTE: These personas are copyright Michigan State University, 2018. They were created by Breana Yaklin and Caroline White, instructional designers.



NAME: Susan

18

1

AGENCY: In-State

YEAR: First-year

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

BIO

"Even though you may not ever become the biggest fish in this pond, because there are so many huge fish, that doesn't matter. There are many opportunities, there's so many people that you can meet, different things you could see."

3

INFLUENCERS

PEERS

FAMILY

PROFESSORS

4

VALUES

- Career-relevant experience
- Opportunities to connect with professors
- Support and advice from family
- Connections with peers

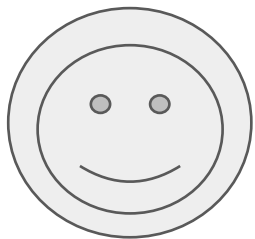
PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by clubs and homework
- Struggling to maintain life balance and manage time
- Adapting to the college workload and pressures
- Gateway courses

2

WANTS

- More study skills/time management preparation
- To build meaningful relationships with professors and peers



NAME: Susan
AGE: 18
RESIDENCY: In-State
YEAR: First-year

BIO

Susan is a first year student. She graduated as valedictorian of her high school, and always dreamed of working in marketing. Both of her parents graduated from MSU, and, combined with the high-quality reputation of the business school, attending MSU always “felt right.” In her first semester, Susan immediately joined four clubs related to her major, but dropped one of them to make more time for her coursework. While she enjoys her classes and appreciates the connections her professor has made to what it will be like to work in marketing, she feels overwhelmed by trying to balance the amount of extra-curricular, career-related opportunities she wants to participate in with her course load. She wants to ensure she is building relationships with her professors and excelling with her schoolwork while still making time for new friends and the co-curricular experiences that will help her build the skills she needs to succeed.

PRIORITY



PLANNING



MAJOR DECISION



“Even though you may not ever become the biggest fish in this pond, because there are so many huge fish, that doesn't matter. There's so many opportunities, there's so many people that you can meet, different things you could see.”

INFLUENCERS

PEERS

FAMILY

PROFESSORS

VALUES

- Career-relevant experience
- Opportunities to connect with professors
- Support and advice from family
- Connections with peers

PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by clubs and schoolwork
- Struggling to maintain a school/life balance and manage time
- Adapting to the college workload and pressures
- Gateway courses

WANTS

- More study skills/time management preparation
- To build meaningful relationships with professors and peers



NAME: Brandon

AGE: 18

RESIDENCY: In-State

YEAR: First-year

PRIORITY



PLANNING



MAJOR DECISION



BIO

Brandon is a first year student. In high school, he attended a science camp at MSU and found the campus welcoming and friendly. His college visit further reinforced this impression, and, although he isn't sure what exactly he wants his major to be, he thought the environment at MSU and the wealth of opportunities available to him would make the university a good fit. There are a few clubs and organizations he is interested in, but he hasn't joined any yet. He still feels overwhelmed by the different resources and systems of the university, and is trying to figure out how to navigate this new independence and manage his time. He plans to become more involved once he feels more comfortable. Campus still feels a bit lonely, and he hopes that joining some organizations will lead to more friendships.

"I kind of wish I had a better understanding of what I needed to do and also everything that is offered. I feel like, well I haven't really looked. I haven't really delved deep into it, but I wish it was more out there. I wish could just see it, like it was always in front of me. This is your thing. This is what you need to do. I just don't see it as much as I wish I did."

INFLUENCERS

ADVISORS

FAMILY

PEERS

VALUES

- Wealth of opportunities to explore career and major choices
- Connections with peers
- Exposure to potential career pathways

PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by learning how to navigate the physical and the structural systems of the university
- Trouble making friends
- Managing newfound independence

WANTS

- To build meaningful relationships with professors and peers
- More guidance and support in decision-making
- Opportunities to explore potential career pathways



NAME: Joseph

AGE: 19

RESIDENCY: In-State

YEAR: Second Year

PRIORITY



PLANNING



MAJOR DECISION



BIO

Joseph is a second year journalism student. His mother and brother also earned degrees from MSU, and he grew up wanting to be a Spartan and remain in the state. He is a member of the Honors College and has enjoyed the opportunity to switch out some of his general education courses for classes outside of his major. He works as a reporter for the State News and is a member of several clubs, which fills most of his time outside of classes. He appreciates the courses that allow him hands-on experience that he can apply for his work, and his older brother, who was also a journalism major, has given him advice on some of the best courses and professors to take to gain that experience. He wants a number of jobs and internships before he graduates, and feels pressure to gain as much experience in the field as possible.

“ I would say my classes are like my bottom priority and then it's like work, clubs, activities.”

INFLUENCERS

ADVISORS

FAMILY

VALUES

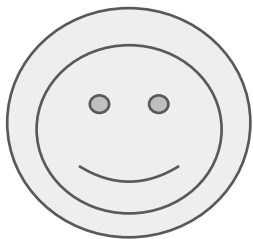
- Guidance from peers, specifically older siblings
- Courses with immediate knowledge application
- Support and advice from family

PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed by the pressure to gain career-relevant experience
- Internal pressure to succeed

WANTS

- Career-relevant experience



NAME: Elizabeth
AGE: 20
RESIDENCY: Out of State
YEAR: Second Year

PRIORITY



PLANNING



MAJOR DECISION



VALUES

- Guidance from peers
- Support from family
- Experiential learning
- Supportive Services

PAIN POINTS

- Anxious about doubting her major decision
- Scheduling courses around her work schedule
- Hasn't felt a sense of connection or community in some of her courses

BIO

Elizabeth is a second year student from Fort Wayne, Indiana. She was offered a scholarship from MSU that reduced the costs of attending to less than what she would pay for a university in-state. She was excited about the energy and the opportunities available to her at a Big 10 school, and decided in her first year to major in engineering. Although her parents are helping with her tuition, she is paying for other expenses on her own, and works at a restaurant off-campus to make ends meet. Although she only took 12 credits each semester for her first year, the workload and study time required for some of her classes left her feeling exhausted. She used the advice of a few older friends (also in engineering) to guide her as she planned out her schedule for this year. Even though she feels more confident in her ability to manage to workload, she hasn't enjoyed any of the classes related to her major, and is wondering whether she should switch. Her uncertainty has added stress, and she is thankful that she has built a strong relationship with her academic advisor to help her figure things out.

"I love my advisor. Every time I go in there anxious, she just makes me feel better like "You're on the right track. You're okay" talking to me about other stuff. Then, she doesn't just talk to me about school. She's talking about daily things. It makes me feel better."

INFLUENCERS

PEERS

ADVISORS

FAMILY

WANTS

- Room to fail and explore
- More engaging general education courses that allow her to explore



NAME: Anna

AGE: 21

RESIDENCY: In-State

YEAR: Third Year

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

BIO

Anna is a commuter and a transfer student. She completed 60 credits at LCC before transferring into the College of Engineering here. She came to MSU because it is a good state school and the location is convenient. Her plan was to complete prerequisite courses at LCC to cut down on costs, and transfer to MSU to complete her degree. She is frustrated because some of her transfer credit has not been accepted and she is now taking unnecessary courses. She has been working closely with her advisor to establish her schedule, but has experienced stress about getting into the right courses to graduate on time. She does not feel a strong tie to the MSU community and has trouble finding parking on campus. She has a part-time job at Dow Chemical and she likes to see the practical application of her coursework towards her job.

“When I actually started going here I had taken two semesters more of college classes because they delayed my admission. ‘Why are you counting pre-calculus when I’ve taken calc 2 and calc 3 now?’ If I go to graduate and then they’re like ‘No you don’t have this stuff,’ I’ll be really mad. They made it sound like everything was going to work out.”

INFLUENCERS

PROFESSORS

FAMILY

PEERS

ADVISORS

VALUES

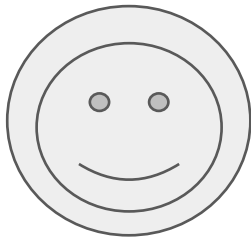
- Connections of topics to current events
- Wealth of opportunities

PAIN POINTS

- Scheduling, getting into classes to graduate on time
- Some transfer credit has not been accepted, taking unnecessary courses
- Parking and physically navigating campus

WANTS

- More diversity
- Clearer communication of available resources
- Knowledge application



NAME: Zahin

AGE: 20

RESIDENCY: International

YEAR: Third Year

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

BIO

Zahin is a third year international student who came to MSU for a high-quality program in Engineering and he was excited about the opportunities associated with a Big Ten school. He's also in the Honors College. He made a small change to his major selection to focus it more specifically, but for the most part has followed the focused path he came in with as a freshman. He has close connections with some of his professors, but also experiences stress with other professors related to language barriers and access to information. He really values the hands-on and experiential learning in his engineering courses this year. One thing that concerns him is MSU's ranking because that influences the application process for international students. He noticed that since he applied, MSU's engineering ranking fell slightly, meaning that students from his country cannot apply here.

"I'm taking a stats class right now and my teacher doesn't know english that well. It's hard for him to communicate ideas very well. It's hard to have a conversation with him too. Sometimes I feel like there's a language barrier and he's not really understanding what I'm asking or what I'm saying."

"When I was become a junior, we start to feeling we are engineers. Because of doing those design classes."

INFLUENCERS

PROFESSORS

FAMILY

PEERS

ADVISORS

VALUES

- Experiential learning
- Connections with professors
- School pride/sense of community
- Career related experience

PAIN POINTS

- Program ranking (international)
- Professor language barrier
- Professor access to information

WANTS

- Experiential learning



NAME: Penelope

AGE: 21

RESIDENCY: In-state

YEAR: Fourth Year

PRIORITY



PLANNING



MAJOR DECISION



VALUES

- Research
- Connections with professors, mentoring
- Career-relevant experience
- Personal Growth

BIO

Penelope is a fourth year student who knew her major coming in as a freshman and has remained on the same path. She had a strong sense of her identity and skills as a freshman and has grown in her sense of identity through her experiences here. She is an in-state student and came to MSU for a high quality program in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. She was also drawn to the friendly nature of campus. She made close connections with professors through research, and these professors were a large influence on her experience. She values her internship experience and is now very focused on her future career. She also participates in a food science club, but this sometimes contributes to stress around finding a steady work-life balance.

"I just recently had an internship with Land 'O Lakes this summer. They offered me another internship, but I'm actually [looking] for actual positions."
"There are so many different clubs that I'd like to do, but already am kind of booked. I'm not having enough time to do my basic schoolwork sometimes. Just slowing down and prioritizing what should be first."

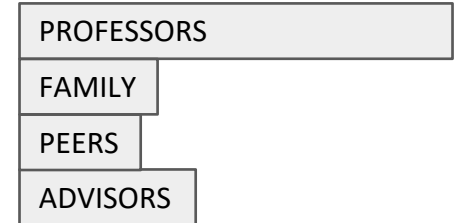
PAIN POINTS

- Overwhelmed, work life balance

WANTS

- More academic adjacent experience

INFLUENCERS





NAME: Phillip

AGE: 22

RESIDENCY: In-State

YEAR: Fourth Year

BIO

Phillip is a fourth year legacy student. His father came to MSU for his engineering degree, and he had planned on following the same path with computer engineering. He came to football and basketball games with his father in high school and loved the strong sense of community and school pride. During his second year he changed his major to Media and Information in ComArtSci after realizing he was unhappy in engineering. He experienced stress around coming to this decision, but is now more confident in his fourth year and has made strong connections with his Media and Information professors. In reflecting on his experiences and decision to switch, he noted how important it was to receive guidance from older students in helping him to navigate the hidden structures of the university. Phillip also has a job working with a video production unit on campus.

PRIORITY



Academic

Career

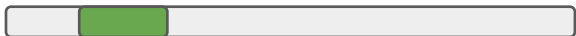
PLANNING



Independent

w/ Advisors

MAJOR DECISION



Confident

Undecided

“Then really, really was miserable for awhile, because I didn't like programming. I wasn't good at it. I was trying very hard and still not doing well, which I've never really experienced that in my life. Then I switched to journalism because I wanted to go around, travel and expose, I don't know, try to help people somehow through journalism.”

INFLUENCERS

PROFESSORS

FAMILY

PEERS

ADVISORS

VALUES

- Connections with professors
- Personal growth
- Experiential learning

PAIN POINTS

- Scheduling-- unnecessary courses
- Overwhelmed, mental health

WANTS

- Guidance in early years
- Guidance from older students navigating the hidden structures of the university (reflection)