Engaging Students with Research through a Design Mindset Approach

Toko Oshio, Assistant Professor, University of Michigan - Flint
toshio@umich.edu
Jeff Kupperman, Co-executive director, InGlobal Learning Design
jkupp@inglobal.org

Why User Personas and POV Statements?

When creating designs that are to be used by individual humans, though, success means meeting the needs and goals of those individuals.

Human centered design says that in order to do this well, we must start by designing for one person, a "primary user." To make this user specific and nuanced enough to drive design decisions, designers make "user personas" -- thumbnail composite sketches of people who would be using the design or affected by it in some way.

Crafting a Point-of-View (POV) Statement

A POV Statement helps you reach an empathetic starting point to beginning work on solving a problem with your chosen person in mind.

A point-of-view statement for a persona defines a challenge from that person's perspective, combining an empathetic description of your person with a key need s/he has, and an insight into the problem. It is, in short, a problem statement, but as defined through an attempt to empathically see the problem through that person's eyes.

POV = User + Need + Insight

User: be specific and use empathetic language
Need: identifies a need that is meaningful and includes feelings
Insight: incorporates your observations; often unexpected

POV statement example
User   *Karla, a busy and high achieving college student…*
Need …*needs a backpack that helps her feel organized and in control…*
Insight   …*because she leads a very hectic life with a lot of transitions and wants to feel more calm, peace, and mindfulness in her day.*

"Anatomy of a Persona" Copyright Menlo Innovations LLC (menloinnovations.com)

Your turn

You have been hired as a consultant by a software company that wants to develop new products to meet people's real but unmet needs. You are not being asked to come up with the product, but instead to come up with a concise formulation of the need, using personas that the company has already developed through their market research.

Please work in pairs.

1. Choose one persona from the cards provided.
2. Decide on one key challenge that person may have (you can fill in additional necessary information using your imagination).
3. Write a POV Statement for that person around that challenge, using the format below.

_____a _____.

    (name)   *(empathetic description of user)*

….needs_____.

                                  (a way to, or something that…)

….because_____.

                                  (insight about the user)