PEOI Professional Education, Testing and Certification International: Learner Persona

Applying The Merlijn Kouprie & Froukje Sleeswijk Visser Four Phases of Empathy

- **Discovery** (*entering the learner's world*) – What is his/her background? What experience does he/she have in the organization and/or field? What's unique about their specific reality?
  - Aasaiya is a 20 year old student of PEOI who currently lives in Pretoria and holds a seasonal position at The Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. Aasaiya wants to independently study biology between high school and college so he's prepared for university. He plans on taking the Medical College Admission Test next fall for application to Northern Ontario School of Medicine, because it's where his preferred professors teach. Aasaiya's experience in PEOI is having taken several courses the previous summer, so he knows how they are structured. Aasaiya enjoys using games on websites like WolframAlpha and Khan Academy. He says the games keep him engaged longer than a combination of lecture and worksheets. Aasaiya struggles with the concept of DNA and is looking forward to taking a course in biology at PEOI to refresh his memory.

- **Immersion** (*wandering around the learner's world and taking his/her point of reference*) – What is the learner's role in the organization? How does he/she fit into the effort of meeting organizational goals?
  - Aasaiya has always loved the subject of biology and knew he wanted a career in it someday. PEOI helped him realize that being a doctor was what he wanted to work towards. He now mentors students and trains other volunteers in his spare time. He is an asset and a resource to his peers in the program, and really thrives on problem-solving.
  - Aasaiya fits into the effort of meeting the organizational goal by maintaining the flow of graduates from the program. By helping them with their homework and quizzes he is a mentor for other students.

- **Connection** (*resonating with the learner*) – What is happening with the learner? What is his/her specific performance, knowledge, and skills gap? How is it impacting his/her daily performance?
  - Aasaiya is self-motivated to gain skills he needs to build a career in genomics. His specific knowledge gap is the structure of DNA and its workings since his high school science classes did not cover it to his satisfaction. Aasaiya hopes to learn the language to articulate his understanding of DNA components so he can be prepared for questions on the MCAT. The skills and knowledge he seeks are in the areas of genomics and stem cell research. Aasaiya sees the medical field as a world of possibilities. He knows that each day, powerful tools for medical technological advancements are being invented and the field of medicine is one full of job security. He knows that if he has access and the right guidance to use available online schooling and networking tools, he could change lives. Proper guidance on DNA basics and access to medical labs are the main obstacles to his goals.

- **Detachment** (*leaving the learner's world and designing with learner's perspective*) – What learning solution would respond to the learner's needs? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each learning solution? What are the potential consequences of each solution?
  - Aasaiya will benefit most from fast-paced, informal online training. Screencast classroom demos with group activities are the learning solutions that would best respond to Aasaiya's needs since he collaborates so well with others. Instructor guidance and peer feedback is critical to keeping it more open, structured, and relevant. Successful training methods thus far have included training with volunteers and online connections between students and subject matter experts from around the world.
  - The advantage of Aasaiya learning from screencast classroom training is that the educator is able to provide real life examples and activities that are relevant to him. The disadvantage of the learning solution is that hands on activities aren't an option with online course work.
  - The potential consequence of the solutions is that hands on learning activities and live demos. E-learning offers many benefits including ease of access, wide reach, cost-effectiveness, and personalization. The drawback of e-learning is that instantaneous help may not available every time the student might need it.

Works Cited

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