



Education Market Personas

Developed by Clarity Innovations

Fall 2020





At Clarity Innovations, we're taking this moment to look at education through the lens of "these unprecedented times" and ask questions, including:

- What does it mean to educate within virtual, online, and/or hybrid settings?
- What are educators looking for now, and what specific challenges do they face?
- How can technology best support teaching, leading, and learning?

These personas will help you explore the experiences and challenges of educating in the fall of 2020 and beyond. Use them to put yourself into the shoes of your staff, customers, users, or colleagues. We hope these perspectives will spark ideas and conversations about how we can all better support educators, schools, and districts through innovative approaches to designing and building the future of education.

Personas are fictional characters that edtech providers often employ to represent their typical users. At Clarity Innovations, we create personas as part of our design and discovery process to help flesh out educator and learner needs, behaviors, and goals. We believe personas are one of the key elements of the user experience design process; working with personas frequently uncovers aspects of a proposed product or service that may not have been defined until much later during development.



Natasha Westlund

Early Elementary Educator

Education

Master of Arts in Elementary and Early Childhood Education

Career Stage



Tech Fluency



“I’ve been in the classroom for fifteen years, but I feel like a first-year teacher all over again with this move to remote learning.”

Natasha has taken on the role of lead mentor teacher for her grade, providing professional support for her colleagues and modeling methods of online instruction. While she doesn’t claim to have it all figured out, Natasha is very reflective in her practice and her teammates benefit from her insight and constant willingness to improve.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Planning and delivering remote instruction that is hands-on, developmentally appropriate, both synchronous and asynchronous, and in whole and small groups
- Creating and maintaining a Bitmoji classroom (virtual learning hub with fun avatars) offering pre-reader learning supports and resources
- Acting as a mentor leader for her grade level team
- Collaborating with instructional coaches and specialists
- Coordinating student supports and services with special education teachers



Natasha Westlund
Early Elementary Educator

Sphere of Influence

Natasha regularly consults with her peers and principal, gives input and recommendations about math and literacy products, and helps her peers implement strategies for the school's multi-tier system of supports.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Delivering hands-on, developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a virtual environment
- Connecting with students and building a safe, welcoming classroom community while physically remote
- Ensuring that all of her students are ready and able to learn using technology
- Attending to the social-emotional well-being of her students through trauma-informed practices



INSPIRATIONS

- Blogs and publications from the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- Grade-level professional learning community
- Early childhood educator professional learning network via Twitter



NEEDS

- Safe distribution of hands-on learning materials and supplies plus technical support and at-home learning resources for students' families
- Pre-reader online tools with audio and visual support
- Collaborative time to plan with her grade-level team



CHALLENGES

- Facilitating hands-on learning experiences in a virtual environment
- Teaching students that have a wide range of support for at-home learning, different types of devices with varying user experiences, and inconsistent online connectivity
- Differentiating instruction for students at a range of different readiness levels



Russell Dibben

Middle School Math Educator

Education

Master of Arts in Teaching Mathematics

Career Stage

EARLY

LATE



Tech Fluency

LOW

HIGH



"I believe technology can enhance the ways we teach and learn like nothing before."

Russell is new to the classroom relative to his colleagues, but what he lacks in experience he makes up for in enthusiasm. He believes technology can enhance his teaching, and he desires to use non-conventional methods to teach math in a more hands-on, visual way. He's eager to share his ideas with a wider network of math teachers.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Planning and delivering instruction remotely, both synchronous and asynchronous, while onboarding learners to Google Classroom and other online tools
- Meeting 1:1 with students to assess their progress, including diagnostic assessments
- Collaborating with instructional support coaches and specialists on student learning progression plans
- Updating the prior instructor's old curriculum while loading it into his school's online learning management system



Russell Dibben

Middle School Math Educator

Sphere of Influence

Russell often collaborates with his grade-level peers on cross-curricular projects, gives his department chair recommendations about free and paid software, and co-chairs his school improvement committee.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Establishing a connection and rapport with students in a remote learning classroom
- Using technology to ensure that all students feel “seen” and supported as their math skills grow
- Helping students learn methods to advocate for their own needs when physically distanced



INSPIRATIONS

- His mentor teacher at school
- Facebook group of other graduates of his Master’s program
- Twitter for current math education and edtech info



NEEDS

- More support from his team on his students’ need for tech skills like computer navigation, typing, finding lessons and assignments in Google Classroom, etc.
- A consistent professional learning community of teachers delivering instruction remotely



CHALLENGES

- Building classroom community and trust in a remote environment
- Establishing fluency in students’ tech skills to allow them to easily interact with his exciting ideas for remote instruction
- Sharing his own ideas with other teachers, as well as learning from them himself



Traci Williams

Middle School Media Specialist

Education

Master of Science in Library and Information Studies

Career Stage

EARLY

LATE



Tech Fluency

LOW

HIGH



“Each day I hope to amplify and support educators to help them design innovative learning experiences for our kids.”

Last year Traci received a grant to add more titles from BIPOC voices to the school’s library and was featured in a blog on diversifying the collection. The post highlighted her efforts to create a more welcoming and student-centered space by genrefying to help students access engaging books more easily.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintaining and adapting check-out programs
- Acting as the instructional technology liaison for her school
- Curating resources and providing professional learning experiences for educators on integrating technology into instruction and media literacy
- Providing technology support for at-home learning
- Creating virtual makerspaces for students and teachers



Traci Williams

Middle School Media Specialist

Sphere of Influence

Traci frequently helps educators in her building enhance their instruction, coordinates her administrative support team, and contributes to instructional technology professional learning experiences for educators across the district.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Helping to support teachers with technology integration for daily teaching and learning
- Creating a diverse reading collection that is easily accessible for students and teachers
- Seeking out funding opportunities, such as grants, to support new programs and materials



INSPIRATIONS

- Twitter librarian professional learning and ISTE librarian networks
- Edtech chat community
- *We Need Diverse Books* movement



NEEDS

- More budget to purchase books and resources for the collection, since funds have been taken to support other programs
- Time, money, and flexibility for collaborating with teachers and her own professional learning



CHALLENGES

- Creating a safe, accessible check-out system for families
- Supporting families with wide-ranging tools for at-home learning
- Creating professional learning experiences that support all educators, across a wide range of tech comfort levels



“I got into education because I love kids’ energy and inquisitiveness. Remote and hybrid learning has been a challenge—I still get to interact with students, but it’s not the same.”

Marta worked closely with her faculty to develop and institute a teacher motivation initiative as a response to the “COVID-19 slump” many educators were facing. Marta has also coordinated with special education case managers on successful implementation of remote programming.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supporting her principal’s management of the day-to-day operations of her school
- Documenting school performance to demonstrate how the school meets federal and state guidelines
- Ensuring the safety of students and applying disciplinary measures when required
- Supporting the budget planning process for the building, certified and classified staff, and operations (transportation, food service, janitorial, etc.)
- Interacting with students, teachers, other administrators, and parents

Marta Vasquez

Assistant High School Principal

Education

Master of Science in Educational Administration, Bachelor of Science in Special Education

Career Stage



Tech Fluency





Marta Vasquez

Assistant High School Principal

Sphere of Influence

Marta collaborates closely with her principal, keeps educators informed of the latest research, helps coordinate family and community engagement through the school's parent teacher organization, and supports her team of counselors doing scheduling and registration each semester.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Designing and testing effective methods for tracking attendance in both virtual and hybrid settings
- Meeting with parents virtually to discuss student learning difficulties
- Evaluating wide-ranging data to determine areas where the master schedule can better support student success
- Developing, budgeting for, and implementing school safety procedures for reopening



INSPIRATIONS

- John Hattie's research in *Visible Learning*
- National Association of Special Education Teachers
- Articles in *EdWeek*



NEEDS

- Time for reflection and planning
- Support with handling all the competing requirements of her position



CHALLENGES

- Pushing the principal and central administrators to define school policies and guidelines during the pandemic
- Spending excessive time on Zoom with parents and school officials dealing with disciplinary actions and truancy during this remote/hybrid phase



Elijah Jones

Elementary School Principal

Education

Master of Arts in Teaching,
Master of Education in
Educational Leadership

Career Stage



Tech Fluency



“I am here to serve and support these children, first and foremost.”

As someone who lives in his school’s community, Elijah understands the needs of his student population and their families. He serves as an advocate for his neighborhood and often attends meetings with local organizations and government to secure resources and engage the community.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Shaping and implementing a shared school vision
- Creating and nurturing the school climate and instructional programming
- Managing people, data, and processes to produce a safe and effective learning environment
- Collaborating with staff, families, and the community
- Interacting within the wider political, social, legal, and cultural contexts of schooling



Elijah Jones

Elementary School Principal

Sphere of Influence

Elijah actively coaches his faculty and staff, has the ear of the district's assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, and is a key stakeholder on district-level technology decisions about equitable student access.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Helping to ensure families have devices, connectivity, and supplies for distance learning
- Supporting teachers so they can provide a quality education to a population of traditionally underserved children
- Bringing an increased focus on equity to the hiring process so that the staff represents the student population
- Getting school-provided meals to struggling families during the pandemic



INSPIRATIONS

- His state's principal network
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- *Learning Forward* from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future



NEEDS

- Better hardware for all students to attend school remotely and equitably
- New strategies to motivate and inspire teachers when they are not meeting in person as frequently



CHALLENGES

- Creating a plan to ensure the school thrives after his upcoming retirement
- Helping staff avoid burnout while providing a high-quality distance learning experience during this pandemic
- Keeping enrollment up to maintain funding



Shana Bell

District Instructional Technology Coach

Education

Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction,
Instructional Technology Certification

Career Stage

EARLY

LATE



Tech Fluency

LOW

HIGH



“I strive for tech equity, making sure educators and students have the tools and information they need to be successful.”

As a Google Certified Educator, Shana has been instrumental in helping her district’s 15 schools adopt and implement GSuite for Education and Google Classroom as the K-12 learning management system. Using district-wide data, Shana created a catalog of just-in-time, interactive professional learning experiences to help educators build their technology confidence and capacity for integrating technology into teaching and learning.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Designing and providing professional learning experiences for educators on integrating technology into instruction
- Co-creating learning experiences with teachers across the district
- Overseeing and supporting schools’ technology distribution programs
- Offering instructional technology support for at-home remote learning
- Creating district-level curriculum resources for media literacy and digital citizenship



Shana Bell

District Instructional Technology Coach

Sphere of Influence

Educators and administrators frequently seek out Shana's advice, while her peers in the curriculum department rely on her for guidance about technology choices. When not working in buildings, she is supporting district-level technology initiatives and creating professional learning opportunities for educators.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Supporting teachers with effective technology integration in their daily instruction
- Creating resources and materials to support students and families with at-home remote learning
- Promoting the importance of media literacy and digital citizenship across all grade levels



INSPIRATIONS

- ISTE Edtech coaches network
- Elena Aguilar's book *Coaching for Equity*
- Google Education's *Edu OnAir* webinars and digital events



NEEDS

- Time to plan and work with educators
- Support and funding to attend edtech conferences for professional growth



CHALLENGES

- Creating and supporting safe and accessible technology distribution programs for each school in the district
- Supporting at-home remote learning for students and families experiencing limited or intermittent connectivity
- Providing resources to support the spectrum of technology knowledge and comfort levels of educators across the district



Alex Marrero

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Education

Ed.D of Educational Leadership, Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, Administrator endorsement, ESL endorsement

Career Stage



Tech Fluency



“During this time, the way we teach and learn changes every day. Even with all of the pivots, there’s one constant—it’s always about the kids.”

Having recently completed his Ed.D of Educational Leadership, Alex is a trailblazer and featured speaker in School Superintendents Association (AASA) webinars. He is spearheading program development and evaluation for many district initiatives, including offering computer science and coding courses as a part of career and technical education in all secondary schools. Alex is also reinventing the district’s professional development catalog to provide more learning experiences focused on culturally responsive pedagogy and overseeing a new two-year mentorship and induction program for beginning teachers.



RESPONSIBILITIES

- Leading and managing all district-level instructional coaching staff
- Developing, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating instructional programs at all grade levels
- Maintaining and evaluating the district’s professional development catalog
- Overseeing beginning teacher mentorship and induction programs
- Leading district assessment programs



Alex Marrero

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

Sphere of Influence

Alex sets the priorities for his team of district-level instructional and technology coaches, counsels other superintendents in his AASA network, and leads decision-making for adopting district-wide curriculum and instructional programs.



TOP PRIORITIES

- Supporting the changing requirements of hybrid and remote learning programs
- Creating an easily accessible professional development catalog for educators with a focus on equity, technology integration, and innovative pedagogical practices
- Developing and supporting computer science as a part of career and technical education opportunities for students
- Seeking out additional funding, such as grants, to help develop and support innovative instructional programs



INSPIRATIONS

- Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Educational leaders in his AASA community of practice
- Innovative educators across his district



NEEDS

- Information and resources for research-based best practices in supporting and mentoring new and beginning educators
- Additional funding sources to help support developing and maintaining instructional programs focused on equity and innovation



CHALLENGES

- Meeting the varied and specific needs of educators across the district as they explore teaching and learning remotely
- Navigating how to equitably and effectively assess student learning based on required state mandates
- Obtaining funding to support the rapidly changing instructional needs of educators and students



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