

User Persona

A comprehensive, ethnographic view of a TRU student's needs for obtaining an undergraduate degree

Core Profile



Name: Alex Mensah

Age and gender: 24 / Male

Job: Physio Assistant

Income range: \$17-\$19/hour

Location: Kamloops, BC

Background

Short bio: TRU International student pursuing a degree in physiotherapy while working part-time as a physio assistant. Motivated by career goals and supporting family.

Lifestyle and values: Busy routine-driven lifestyle balancing school and part-time work; values financial stability, family support, and personal growth.

Professional context: Health-focused student building experience as a physio assistant toward a physiotherapy career.

Audience Insights

Goals:

- Short-term goals:
 - Time management
 - Earn enough income
- Long-term goals:
 - Graduate with a degree
 - Achieve financial independence
- Key drivers and priorities:
 - Clear path to career success
 - Financial stability

Barriers:

- Practical challenges:
 - Building consistent study routines
 - Accessing helpful TRU resources
- Emotional frustrations:
 - Stress from financial insecurity
 - Isolation, lack of social connection
- Obstacles to success:
 - Poor work-life balance
 - Burnout and declining motivation

CMNS 3700 (01) – Persona Project Biography

Alex Mensah is a 24-year-old international student from Nigeria studying Physiotherapy at Thompson Rivers University. He moved to Canada three years ago, intending to build a stable future through education while continuing his work as a musician. His decision to attend TRU was influenced by the opportunities and student support services available, though he remains aware that his perspective is limited to his own experience and that other institutions may offer different advantages.

Alex's interest in physiotherapy began after a sports injury forced him to stop participating in activities he once enjoyed. That experience led him to develop an interest in physiology and recovery, shaping his academic and career path. Over time, this interest grew into a commitment to understanding how the body functions and how individuals can recover from injury. His long-term goal is to work as a physiotherapist in Canada, possibly in a larger city such as Vancouver or Toronto, where there may be more opportunities in his field and access to a broader professional network.

As an international student, Alex manages several ongoing challenges. Financial pressure is a constant concern due to high tuition costs and limited working hours. His routine is structured and demanding: weekdays are filled with classes and evenings are spent completing assignments, while weekends are dedicated to part-time work. This schedule allows him to maintain a level of balance and stay on track academically, but it also limits his time for rest, personal activities, and consistent social interaction.

Despite these pressures, Alex remains focused on his goals. His family in Nigeria plays an important role in his motivation, as their expectations and support encourage him to continue working toward a better future. He values honesty, integrity, and helping others, and these

principles guide both his academic work and personal decisions. He also recognizes that maintaining discipline and consistency is necessary to manage both his academic responsibilities and financial obligations over time.

At times, the combination of academic demands, work responsibilities, and distance from home can lead to feelings of isolation. Alex recognizes the importance of maintaining social connections and makes an effort to stay engaged with friends through school and work. Even small interactions help reduce stress and provide a sense of stability within his routine, which can otherwise feel repetitive and demanding.

Alex also reflects critically on his experience as a student. He believes that universities can improve by offering clearer communication, more accessible support services, and a stronger understanding of the financial and academic pressures students face. In his view, a more empathetic approach from the administration could help students better manage their workload, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being.

Looking ahead, Alex aims to graduate with his degree, improve his study habits, and achieve financial independence. He understands that progress may be gradual and that challenges are part of the process. Rather than expecting immediate success, he focuses on consistent effort, personal growth, and steady improvement. His long-term vision includes building a stable career, maintaining meaningful relationships, and continuing to develop both professionally and personally.

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CMNS 3700 (01) Persona Project - Key User Insights

- Alex Mensah is motivated by career goals and family expectations, which help him stay focused despite challenges.
- Financial pressure strongly shapes his schedule, stress, and decisions.
- His routine is structured around school and work, limiting rest and social time.
- He values balance but struggles to maintain it consistently.
- Social connection supports his well-being but requires effort to sustain.
- He relies on discipline and consistency to manage responsibilities.
- He needs clearer, more accessible student support services.
- Stress is driven by both workload and financial insecurity.
- He focuses on steady progress rather than immediate results.
- He expects practical and empathetic support from the university.

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