

Terms: What do these all mean?

There can be some confusion about the exact meanings of these terms, so I try to keep it simple to allow greater interpretation and application to people's specific needs and uses.

User-Centered Design is putting the user at the center of the design work. It considers the unique needs and desires of the user and designs to satisfy those needs and desires. Uses **Empathy** as a way to understand the user's needs and desires. This term is often used in relation to Product Design, Service Design, and Innovation activities. Can and should be used in any other type of design work (like instructional design and learner experience design).

Empathy is viewing the world from the viewpoint of another person, in this case, the user. We gain **Empathy** by gathering information about our users (or our learners)—the humans we are designing for.

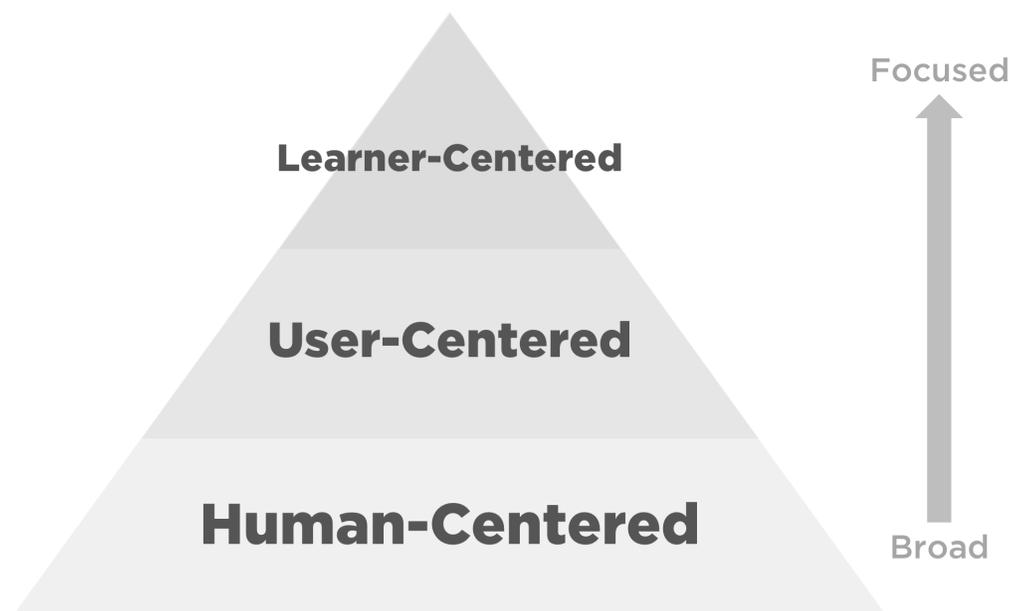
Learner-Centered Design takes a more focused view of the user based on the mutual goal of learning. The user wants to learn and we want to delivery learning. Here we name our user—the learner.

Human-Centered Design expands on the definition of the user considering them as a human beyond the narrow context of their interaction with a product. Respects that humans are both emotional and complex beings.

Technology-Centered Design or **Process-Centered Design** is where one designs to the technology or process without care given to the end user of the design. Instead, it forces the user to conform to the technology or process.

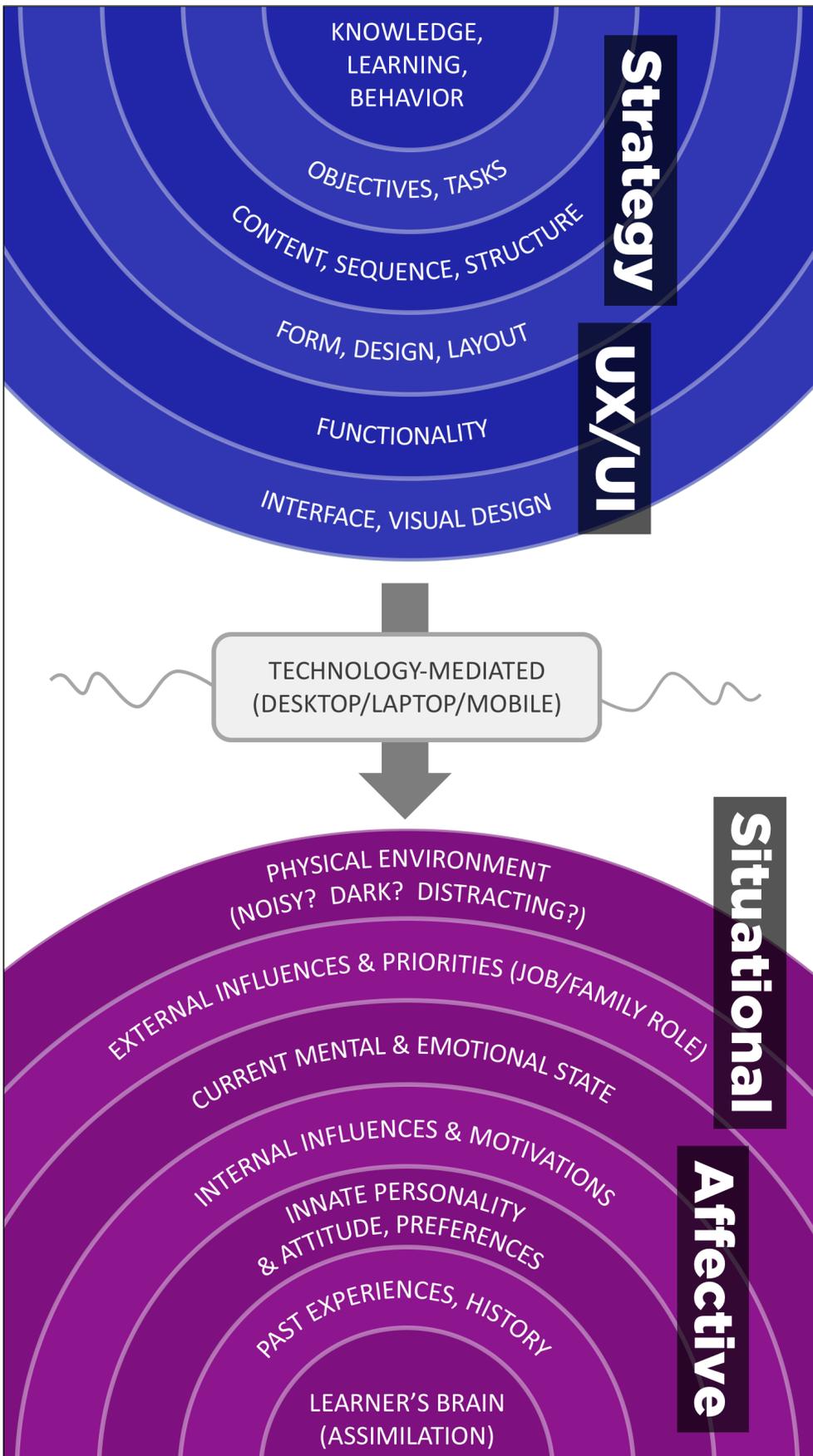
User Experience is the collection of the various interactions a user has with a product, technology, or process towards achieving one or many goals—the experience of the user. Usually captures and qualifies the ease and pleasure of achievement of the user's goal (overall usability).

User Interface the input devices or tools that a user uses to achieve their goals. The sequential use of these facilitates the user's experience.



Why does being Learner-Centered Matter?

There is a lot of information regarding the learner's situational context and affective context that can greatly impact the effectiveness of any learning activity or task we present to them. By better understanding our learner and their context, the more impactful the learning experience we design for them can be.



Personas

Personas usually start with ethnographic research; or are validated and updated by ethnographic research.

A **Persona** is a fictional, yet realistic, user archetype—a composite model you create from the data you’ve gathered by talking to real people—that represents a group of needs and behaviors.

Ethnographic Research is the study of humans within their cultural context. We want to understand how they behave and why. It is not gathering opinions.

We research to: Understand the true needs and priorities of your users; Understand the context in which your users interact with what you are designing; Replace assumptions with actual insight; Create a mental model of how the user sees the world; Create design targets (personas) to represent the needs of the user in all decision-making.

WHY USE PERSONAS?

Personas exist to represent the user in user-centered design.

Personas help to make sure you understand the user you are building for, and also to discover hidden opportunities for making a great design.

Personas act as a reference point for decision-making.

Personas are a tool for maintaining an empathetic mindset towards your users rather than designing something a certain way because someone on the team likes it.

WHAT GOES INTO A PERSONA?

Personas capture the most useful and inspiring aspects of your target user that is important for designers (and others) to keep in mind, specifically context and behavior patterns.

Typical Persona Ingredients

There are a number of ingredient “options” that could be part of a persona—pick the most important and realistic ones that you have accurate data for.

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| Photo - A real, relatable person that is representative of this archetype. | Name - A name that fits the demographic information and one your team can remember. |
| Demographics - Select a “usual” set of demographics that fit the role and behavior pattern. | Role - Select a role that closely matches that of one of the identified target user types. |
| Quote - Use an actual quote from a user interview that embodies a core belief or attitude that is essential to keep in mind to meet their needs. | Back Story - 2-3 brief sentences containing realistic background information for your persona. |
| Goals - Identify 3-4 key goals for that persona based on what you heard in your user research. | Motivations - Note reasons why this persona wants to achieve the previous goals. |
| Behaviors & Habits - Note the specific and habitual behaviors that constitute the pattern that defines the persona. Real life is imperfect and complicated—capture this. | Skills - This includes the level of technical expertise and experience this persona has as it relates to what is important for accomplishing the goals of this persona. |
| Environment - Note all aspects of the environment that will affect this persona’s interaction with your design. | Relationships - Note any relationships this persona has that will affect their interaction with your design. |
| Many more options - There are many other options, as well as, similar ones with different labels... | |

WAYS TO USE PERSONAS

Share it with your team

- Builds common language between team members and stakeholders when referring to a type of user.
- By sharing and the regular use of personas within designing sessions, meetings, and during decision-making, it deepens everyone's understanding of the end user.

Use it in scenarios

- If personas are your characters, then scenarios are your plots. Each scenario is the story of how a persona interacts with your design to meet one (or more) of their goals.
- This can be represented visually in a storyboard or textual in a short narrative text.
- Running a persona through a scenario helps you think through your design from the user's point of view.

BENEFITS OF PERSONAS

- Personas generate momentum towards increasing general user focus and awareness.
- The act of creating personas makes explicit our assumptions about the target audience. Personas also help to keep the assumptions and decision-making criteria explicit throughout a project.
- Makes communication about users derived from research more effective. Personas are a medium for communication.
- Personas focus attention on a specific target audience for a project; defines who is being designed for and who is not.

RISKS OF PERSONAS

- Exercise caution when reusing personas. Personas are designed for a particular effort/project. They may not always remain accurate across varying projects.
- Avoid over-extending the use of a certain persona. Recognize when it is time to retire a persona that is no longer representative of your user.
- These personas are not for marketing. Marketing focuses on buyer behavior and customers; these personas focus on end-users.
- Don't let personas replace other user-centered methods and other research collection efforts. These are meant to be part of a suite of methods, and should augment existing design processes and enhance user focus.

EXAMPLE PERSONAS



Company "Investigator"

Rosa Cho
Content Strategist, Freelance

Age: 34
Location: Seattle, WA

"I'm looking to join the right company that challenges me and allows me to grow and develop my skills."

About Rosa

Rosa does not believe in settling. She won't settle for a job with a company that isn't as innovative and cutting edge as she believes she deserves. She wants to get the most out of every professional experience, and before moving to a new position, Rosa investigates every angle of aligning herself with a company.

Behavioral Considerations

- + Expects the site experience to reflect the business's culture and values
- + Interested in career opportunities within the organization that fit her career goals
- + Thoroughly compares multiple companies with similar opportunities
- + Is interested in the unique benefits of working at a company, including cultural elements, mentoring programs, and continuing education policies
- + Needs to be confident the company has innovative products that will be interesting to work on
- + Needs to know company has reputable partners and customers

"I crave variety in the types of industries and goals of each content project I work on. I need to ensure I won't get bored."

Frustrations

- + Thinks that too many companies have career sections that just talk about open positions but not why she would actually want to work there
- + Would like to challenge herself and have a more stable job, but is comfortable as a freelancer and wouldn't stop for just any job

Goals

- + Needs to see reasons why a company is interesting: has it won awards, had intense growth, won big contracts?
- + Wants to figure out how to get in touch with someone at the company to explore opportunities further

Tasks

- + Learn about current customers and success stories
- + Read press releases about recent big contract wins and other accolades
- + Read about culture, benefits and perks, and the people that work there
- + View job openings and apply

Larry K.

The At-Risk Elder

Age: 72

Location:
Atlanta, Georgia

Occupation:
Retired, Contractor

Technical Comfort:
Low

Devices: iPhone,
PC/Desktop



"Being that my heart's not in the best shape, it makes sense to take some precautionary measures."

Back Story:

Larry, a grandfather, has coronary heart disease. When Larry is not spending time with his family, he enjoys physical activity, gardening and doing yard work. Despite this not being his doctor's first wishes, Larry refuses to part with his typical ways. He understands he's at risk for a heart attack; and in that event - he wants to be as prepared as possible to call for assistance. Additionally, his family would like to receive real-time updates on his heart health. Larry struggles with today's technology but feels confident in his ability to adopt one of the more simple interfaces on the market.

Goals:

- Continue to live typical, physical lifestyle
- Be prepared for worst-case scenario
- See grandchildren grow up
- Updating his family on his health and well-being is never a simple process.
- Feeling as though heart is ticking time bomb
- Technological learning curve is slow

Georgia D.

The Motivated Mom

Age: 51

Location:
Cincinnati, Ohio

Occupation:
Stay-at-home mom

Technical Comfort:
Mid/High

Devices: iPhone, iPad,
Mac/Desktop



"I want to live a long life with my family. I need to more closely monitor the condition of my heart to make this happen."

Back Story:

Georgia, a stay-at-home mother of 2, suffered an unexpected heart attack last year. Since then, she has been committed to keeping her heart disease in check. In addition to exercising and dieting, Georgia regularly takes and records her blood pressure and weight. She is always looking for ways to confront her heart disease; recently, she downloaded a sleep-monitoring app on her iPhone and plans to purchase a wearable lifestyle/fitness device in the near future. Georgia wants to see her children become parents, and knows this is only possible if she stays focused.

Goals:

- Be there for her children and future grandchildren
- To have a more mobile and active lifestyle
- To get the most out of her doctor visits
- Other monitoring devices are too complicated
- No transparency with her physical limits
- Potential of another heart attack.

Phillip J.

The Heart-Conscious Executive

Age: 31

Location:
Boston, Massachusetts

Occupation:
Marketing Executive

Technical Comfort:
High

Devices: iPhone, iPad,
Macbook



"I would like to know more about my heart health. If there was a way I could know I'm doing well, I'd sleep better at night."

Back Story:

Both Phillip's father and grandfather suffered from heart disease during their middle-age years. Knowing this, Phillip exercises everyday, eats a well-balanced diet, and closely monitors his health with multiple doctor appointments every year. He's been doing this since his early 20s - his friends and family label him a bit of a hypochondriac, but Phillip prefers the term, "health-obsessive." Phillip enjoys looking at his cardiac-related biometrics, and recently - his doctor recommended that he check out some new monitoring technologies.

Goals:

- Raise a happy and healthy family
- To have foresight into any potential heart disease in the future
- Enter 40s heart attack-free
- Trying to find motivation when working long hours
- Other monitoring devices are complex and cumbersome

Empathy Mapping

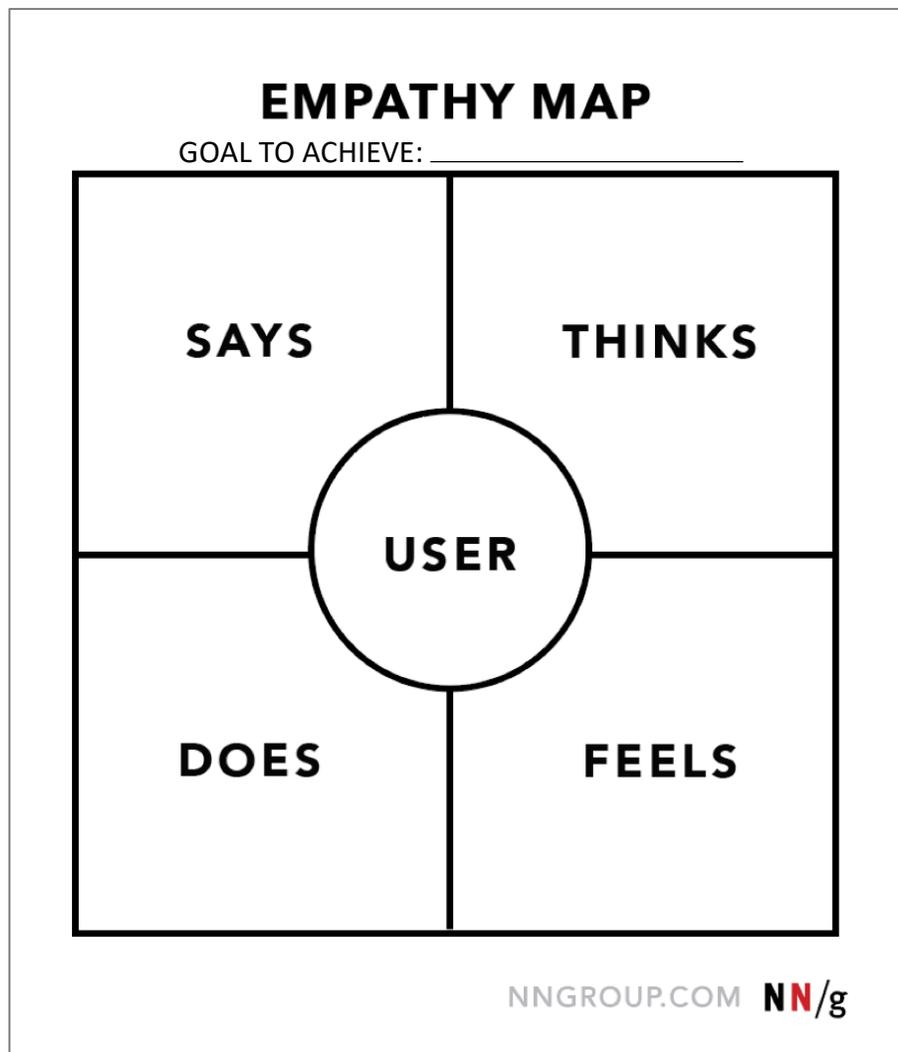
Empathy mapping is a way to articulate what we know (both tangible and intangible) about a user archetype (persona) during an experience. An empathy map captures what the user says, what they think, what they do, and what they feel.

It is often done collaboratively with others who have differing views of the end user, but can also be done solo. The activity of creating an empathy map can feel much like “role playing” imagining yourself in the shoes of your defined persona. Remember: an empathy map is a snapshot of your user within the context of achieving a goal; it is not sequential or chronological.

BENEFITS OF EMPATHY MAPPING

- Deepens your understanding of your user (learner) within the context of achieving a goal.
- Can help to align a team (or yourself) in the user’s point of view.

EXAMPLE EMPATHY MAPPING FORMAT



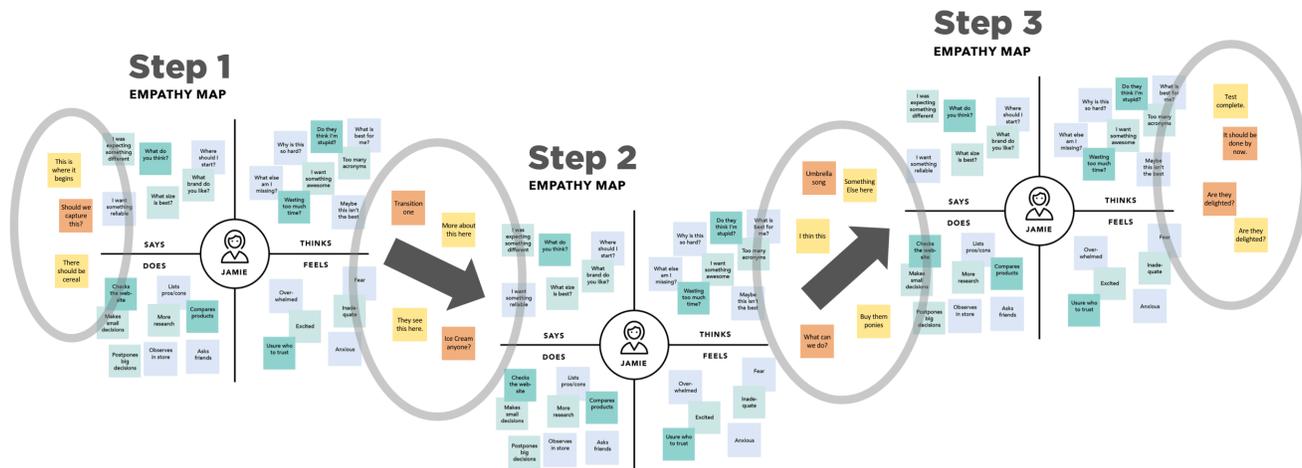
Journey Mapping

Journey mapping is a series of sequential actions of a user strung together to achieve a larger goal. In fact, it can be a series of empathy maps. The purpose of a journey map is to capture the sequential experience of the user (in contrast to an empathy map), so with this tool you are meant to collect all the “in between” areas describing how the user transitions from one step to the next. Make sure to capture what is working and what is not. Use this high-level view to gather insights and identify opportunities to make a better experience for them.

BENEFITS OF JOURNEY MAPPING

- Gives a broad view of the larger journey a user goes through, while still capturing the details.
- Can help to align a team (or yourself) in the user’s point of view.

EXAMPLE JOURNEY MAPPING FORMAT



Learner Testing

Learner testing is simply gathering learner feedback about something you are creating and should be seen as a propellant, moving your design work forward. It builds momentum throughout your process. Doing any type of testing can bring on anxiety, so we often hold off doing it until the end of the process. That’s too late.

Learner testing can be done one-on-one, in small groups (2-6), or in larger groups (7-15). Any more and it can get unmanageable. It can be a 5-minute conversation or could be an hour meeting; it depends on your design and needs. Learner testing ideally contains a short time to briefly share your design and conclude with a conversation about the design. Ask questions. Receive feedback.

4 SIMPLE QUESTIONS

1. **What do you like?** What was exciting? What did you value most? What resonated with you?
2. **What don't you like?** What would you change? What would make it better?
3. **What questions do you have?** What needs further investigation? What made you curious?
4. **What ideas does this inspire?** What surprised you? What would you try next?

Reflecting on being Learner-Centered

Let's take a moment to pause and consider everything you've just seen. Afterwards, answer the following questions:

*** What am I already doing that is Learner-Centered?**

*** What are some opportunities around me that can I apply a Learner-Centered Mindset to?**

What two actions will I do to help develop or apply this mindset when I return to my institution?
(try to have an easy one and another that might be a little more challenging)

What are three goals regarding being Learner-Centered that I want to achieve in 2019?

Who in my institution can I share this information with when I return?

Who in my institution can I rely on to support me in developing my mindset?

Who in my institution can I give support to in developing their mindset?