

# User Research & Personas

UI/UX Design Guide · Module 2 of 7 · CHERIEDU Dev Series

## 1. Why Research Before Designing?

The biggest mistake designers make is assuming they know what users want. Research reveals the truth: real users are often very different from how we imagine them. Build for real people, not imaginary ones.

## 2. User Research Methods

Method	When to Use	What You Learn
User Interviews	Early discovery	Motivations, pain points, mental models
Surveys	Scale research	Patterns across many users
Usability Testing	Testing a prototype	Where users get confused
Card Sorting	Navigation design	How users categorise information
Analytics Review	Existing product	Where users drop off or struggle

## 3. How to Conduct a User Interview

1. Define your goal: What do you need to learn?
2. Write 5–8 open-ended questions (avoid yes/no questions).
3. Recruit 5 participants from your target user group.
4. Ask questions, listen — do NOT suggest answers or defend your design.
5. Record key quotes and observations.
6. Look for patterns across all interviews.

## 4. Creating a User Persona

A persona is a fictional character representing a real user type, based on research.

Persona Field	Example for CHERI SMS
Name + Photo	Priya Sharma, 42, School Principal
Role	Manages a 1,200-student CBSE school in Hyderabad
Goals	Reduce admin work, have real-time data, keep parents happy
Pain Points	Too many manual reports, staff resistant to change, fear of data loss
Tech Comfort	Uses WhatsApp and Excel daily; scared of "new software"
Quote	"I need something my staff can learn in one day."

## 5. Affinity Mapping — Finding Patterns

- Write each research insight on a sticky note (physical or Miro/FigJam).
- Group similar notes together into themes.
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Name each theme (e.g. "Fear of data loss", "Need for simplicity").

- These themes become the design requirements for your product.

### EXERCISE

Interview 3 people who work in a school (teacher, admin, or parent). Ask them: "What is the most frustrating part of school paperwork?" Write a persona based on common patterns you find.

