

# Contextual Inquiry

# Reading Reflection

Discuss in groups

- How often have you watched others program, if at all? What contexts?
- Did you notice:
  - Surprising actions?
  - Times when you felt you knew exactly what the programmer was doing and why?
  - Moments of total confusion about what they were doing?



The core premise of Contextual Inquiry is very simple: go where the customer works, observe the customer as he or she works, and talk to the customer about the work. Do that, and you can't help but gain a better understanding of your customer.

**Contextual Design, Beyer and Holtzblatt**



You →


Yoda  
(your user/participant) ←

Highly recommend the expert-apprentice relationship model for contextual inquiry.  
Don't typically recommend offering piggyback rides as part of it.



# Video—look for...

- Details of participant's process that you notice but which they never express aloud
- Instances in which participant mentions something because of doing the task, or prompted by context
- Instances in which participant mentions prior times doing the task, lessons learned



# Grocery shopping habits of college students

## Contextual Inquiry by Annie Tao



0:07 / 7:08



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV6br-npgfw>



# As the apprentice you...

- ~~Ask abstract questions?~~
- Focus on the ongoing work





Context



# Context

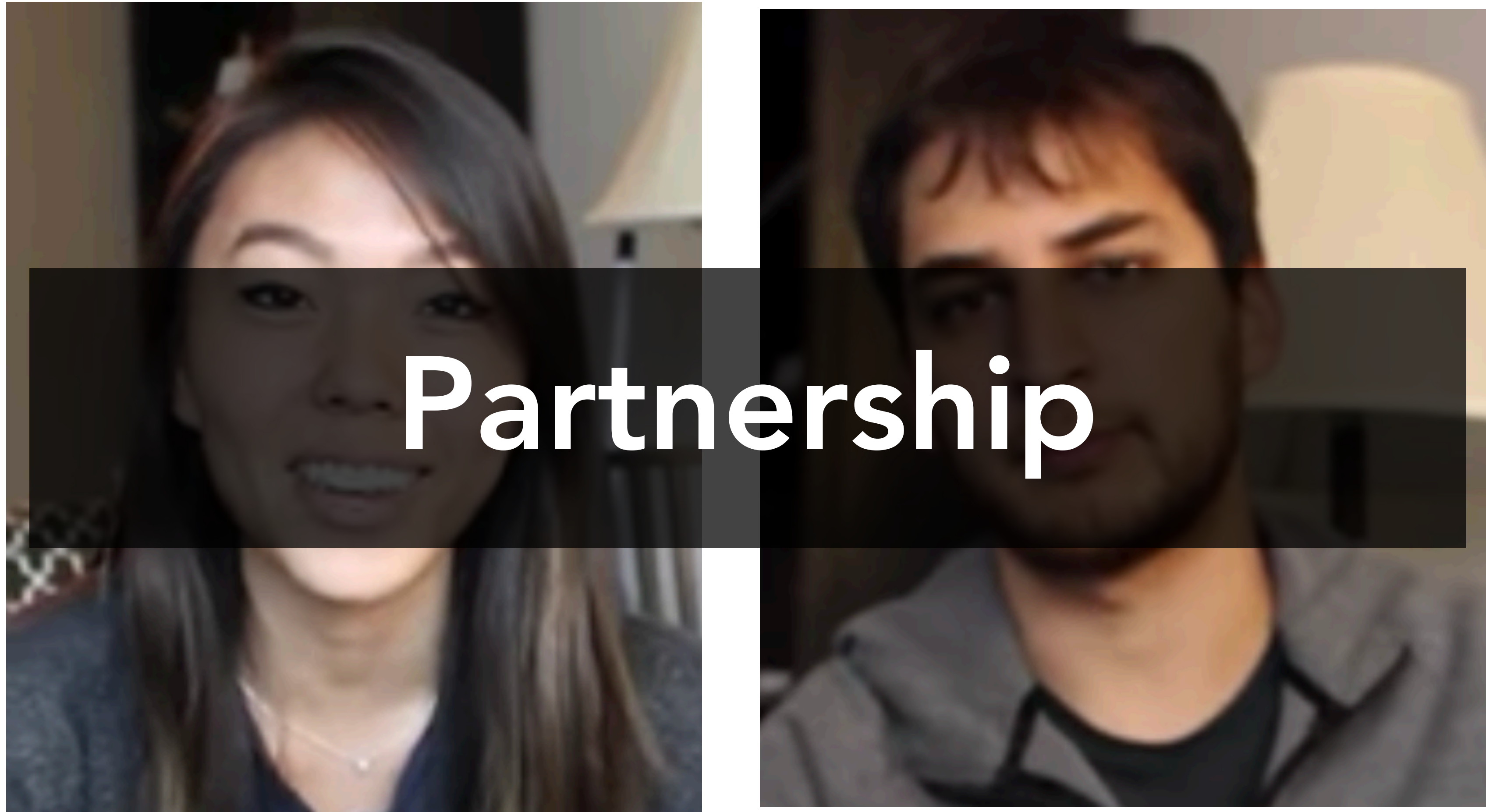
- During the design process, we thrive on detail, so we don't want the participant to give us summaries!

how was your day

fine

- We also want concrete stories/experiences, not generalizations

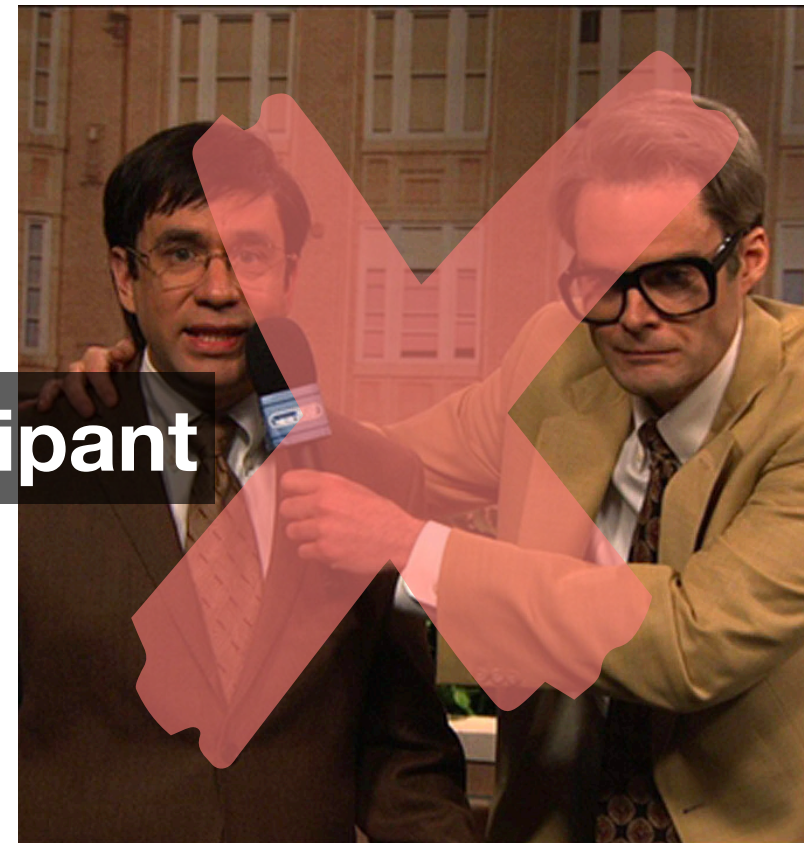
of what he is talking about. Words indicating the customer is generalizing are another signal. If the customer says, "generally," "we usually," "in our company," he is presenting an abstraction. Any statement in the present tense is usually an abstraction. "In our group we do . . ." introduces an abstraction; "that time we did . . ." introduces real experience.





**You**

**Participant**



**Interviewer/  
Interviewee**

**You**

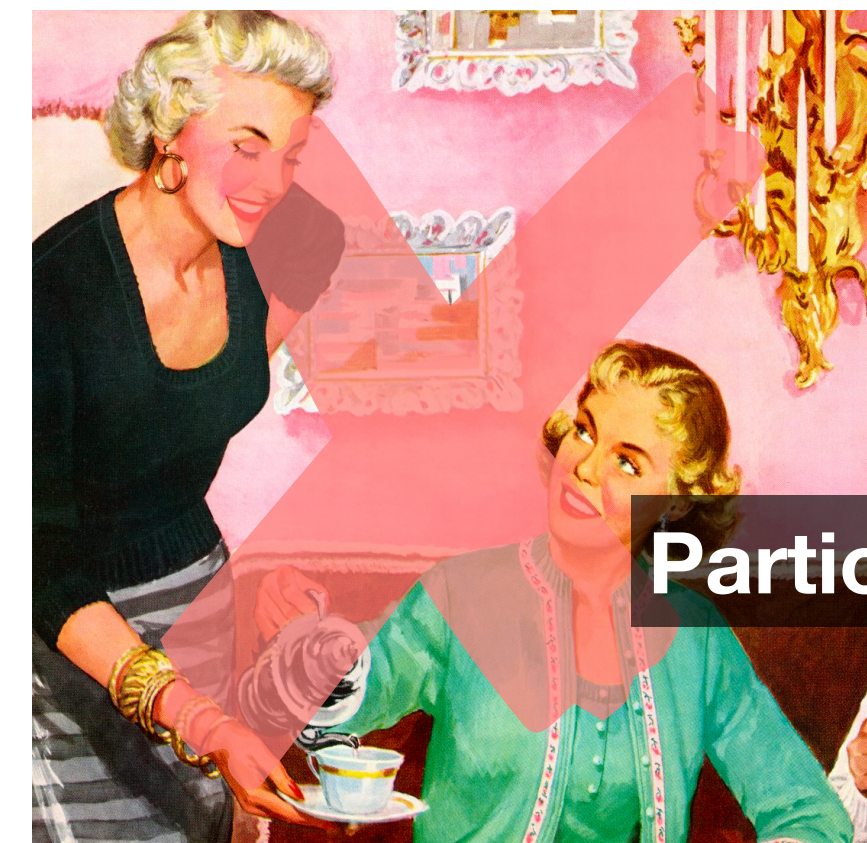
**Participant**



**Expert/  
Novice**

**You**

**Participant**



**Guest/  
Host**



You



Participant

But it's a little different...

Expert/  
Apprentice **-ish**

our goals are different from  
standard apprentice, so we  
want to direct the experience  
more. So we become partners  
in understanding Yoda's work.



Wants to learn how Yoda  
programs uses the force so he  
can use the force to save his  
friends/the galaxy.



Wants to learn how Yoda  
programs uses the force to make  
it easier for him and others to  
use the force in the future.





customer does their thing

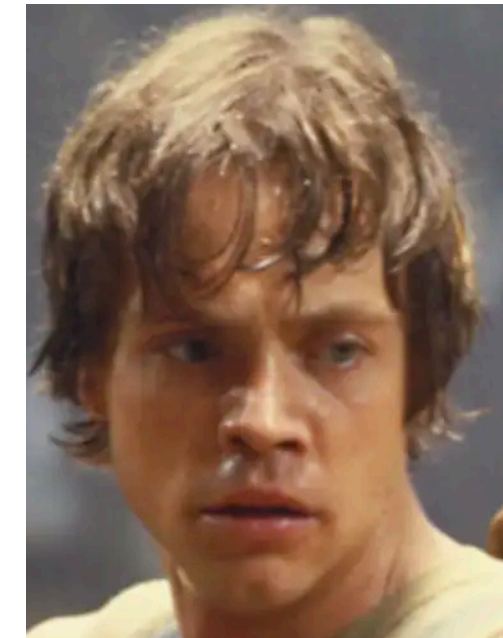
you notice something



## Are hand motions required to use the Force?

Asked 5 years, 7 months ago   Active 1 year, 4 months ago   Viewed 8k times

- ▲  
21  
▼
- ★  
2  
🕒
- In almost every canon (that is, visual) source, Force users typically wave a hand to invoke the Force to move or manipulate objects, people and thoughts. I get out-of-universe this is a visual cue that the Force is being used, but in-universe is it strictly necessary?
- (The only exception I can think of is when Luke is training on Dagobah and is balancing rocks while standing on one hand with Yoda on his foot. He doesn't appear to be waving his hand to move the rocks.)
- Is this addressed anywhere in-universe, even in Legends?



your question is  
answered or your  
confusion is resolved



▲  
15  
▼  
🕒

No, they're not necessary. But they act as a focusing aide and *may* be necessary for more difficult tasks. Notice that no hand gestures were needed when Luke levitated C3PO:





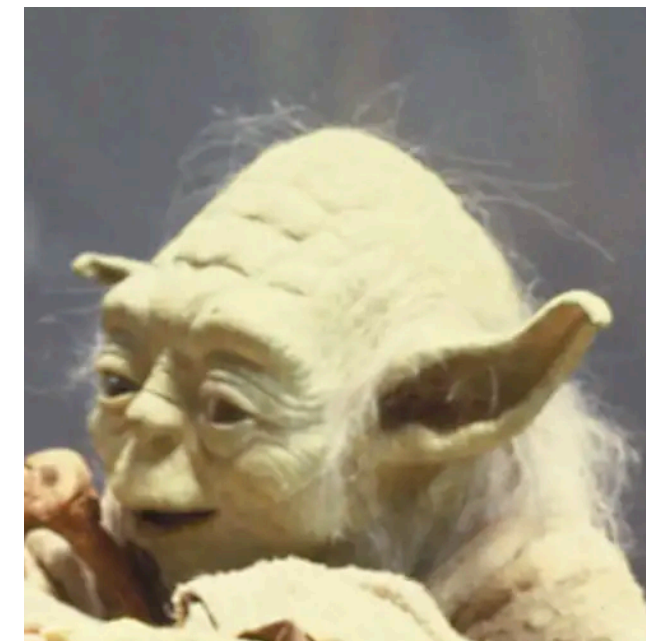
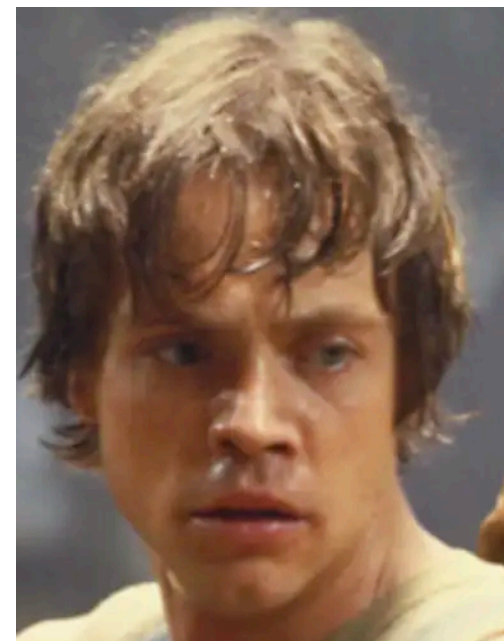
A person with a beard, wearing a grey blazer over a dark t-shirt, is sitting on a chair with a black and white geometric pattern. The background is slightly blurred, showing an indoor setting with warm lighting.

# Interpretation

more money than a different brand just  
because you said your parents used to

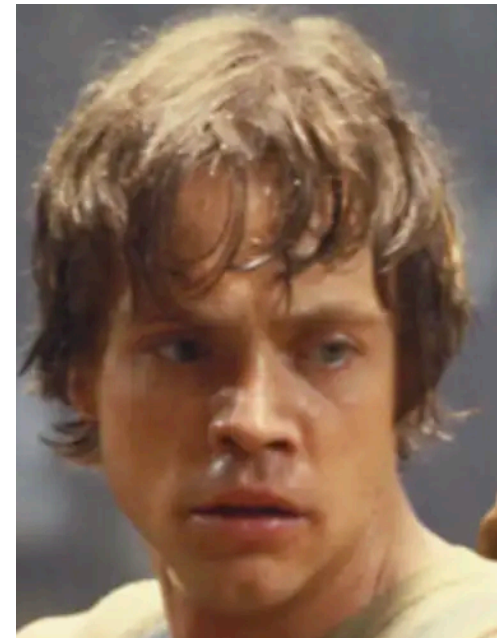


I saw you were doing the hand thing when you were frustrated with me. It's a communication device?



Huh?

I saw you were doing the hand thing when you were lifting big things but not small things. It makes your force stronger?



tion. Customers say “yes” by twinkling their eyes at you as they realize your words match their experience or by elaborating on

Yep, it helps me focus the force.





# Focus

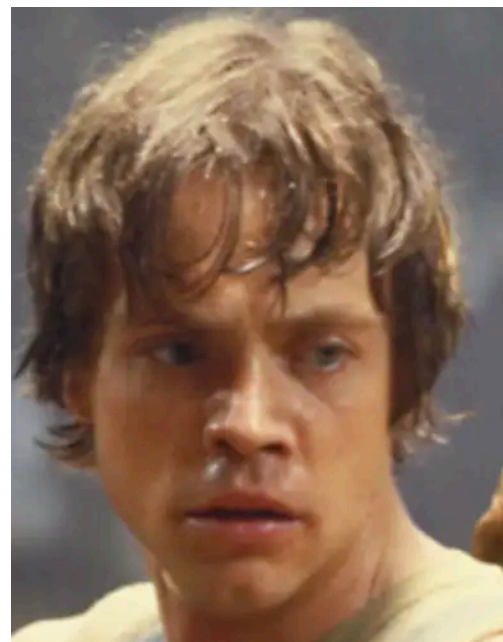
## Grocery shopping habits of college students

Narrowing focus to what's relevant to your research is good, but sometimes you need to expand focus....



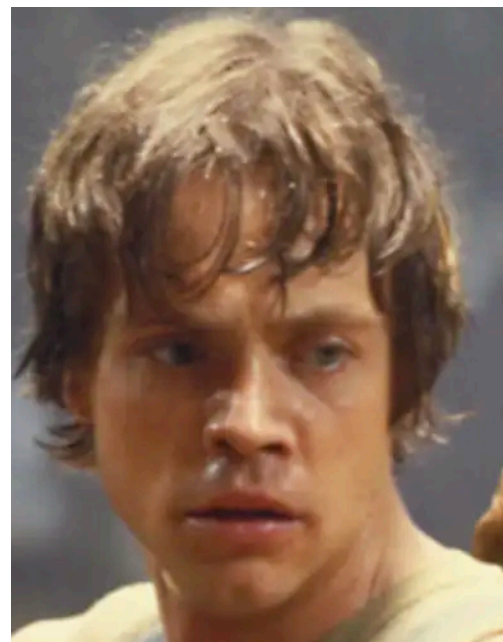
# Surprises

I see you just copied 60 lines of code and pasted them to a second place in the file. Can you tell me about that?



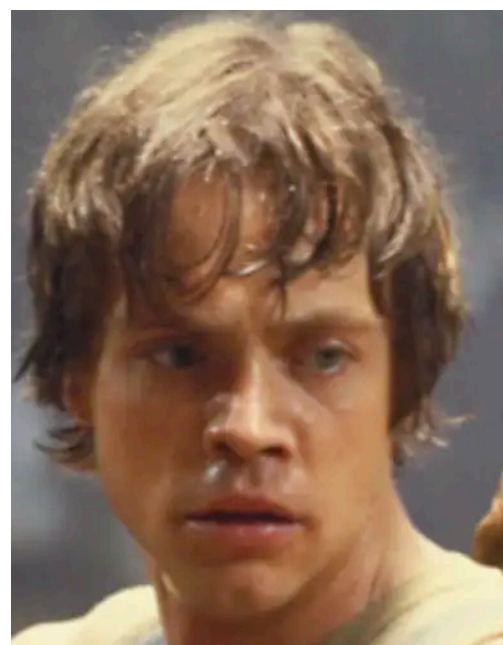
# Nods

**\*nods\*** yes, I have written a loop before myself and  
now understand you on a spiritual level



# What you don't know

ok, hang on, Kan fibrations??



One of the big reasons we talk to users during design is to avoid relying on our own assumptions. These triggers point to places in the conversation where we might have a **chance to throw out a couple assumptions.**

# Structure

- 2-3 hours overall
- Components
  - Introductory conventional interview
    - 10-15 minutes
  - Tell them the rules!!!
    - 30 seconds
  - CI
    - However long y'all can spare :)
  - Wrap-up
    - 15 minutes

# Assignment 2

- If you've already run your call, awesome! Take this time to do the post-call reflection or your writeup.
- If you haven't already run your call:
  - Can you use any of the lessons of contextual inquiry to enrich your plan for the call?
  - Finalize your plan for the call