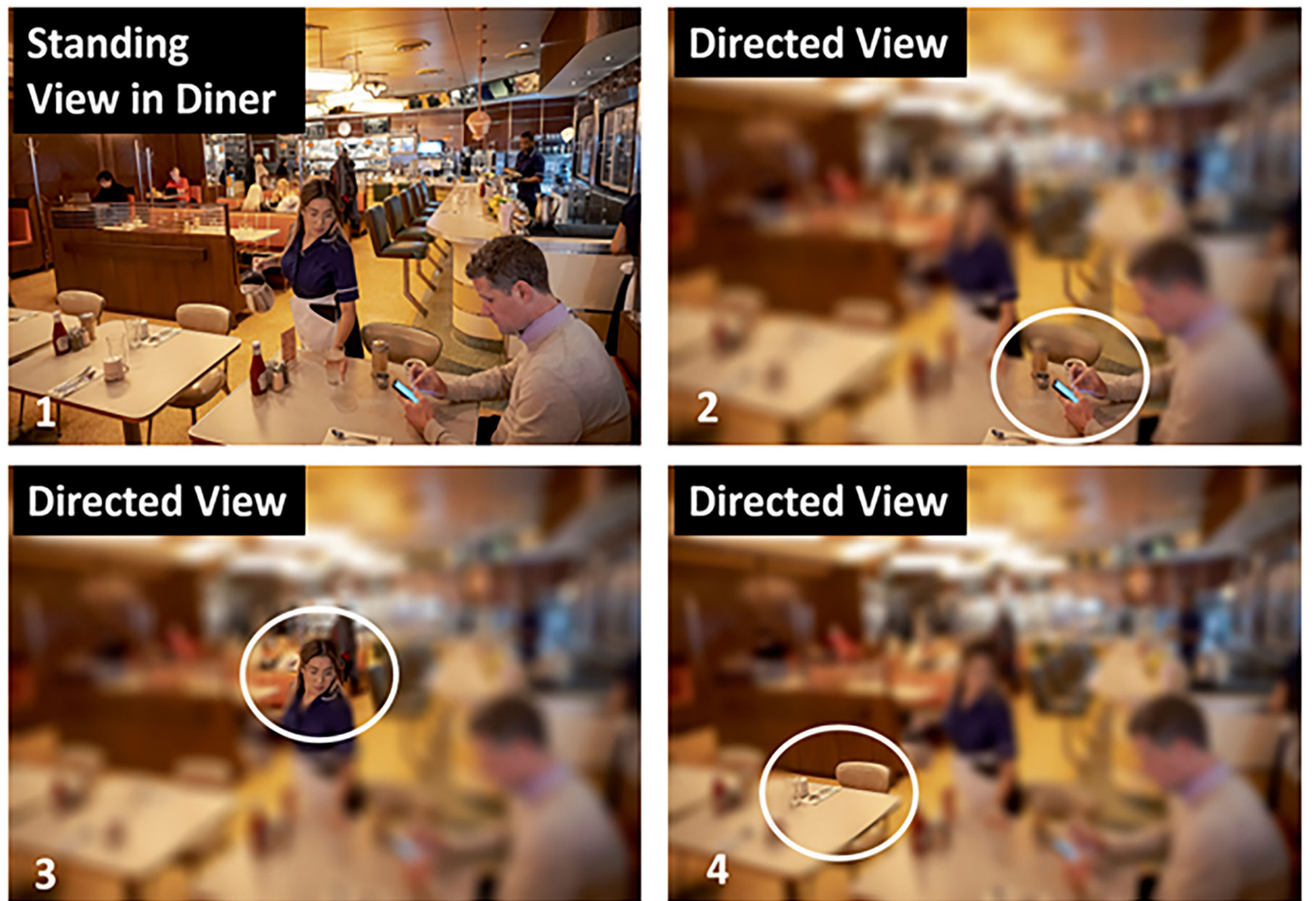


Observational research is one of the methods designers and design students employ to gain user empathy, understanding and insights into the problem or opportunity.

In the classroom, the time and opportunity for going out into the field for observational user research is very limited. It is not uncommon for students to carry out their research and return with only a superficial understanding of the opportunity. Can the quality of their research observations and insights be improved? I believe it can.

I have used the Insight Worksheet for over six years with students and have seen good improvements in the quality of their insights, their understanding of context, their collaboration within teams and in the quality of their final presentations.




Inattentional Blindness during observational research.



What search strategies are used to find 10 different things in clock on the right?

**Painful Loading**




**Observation:** Washing machine opening is low and user tended to bend over to load and unload - which strains lower back.

**Extension:** Low back pain is caused by injury or strain to a muscle or ligament. Common causes include improper lifting, lack of regular exercise, fracture, ruptured disk, or arthritis. Often, the only symptom is pain in the lower back.

**Design Implications:**

1. Raise washer to a more convenient height.
2. Angle washer to minimize bending.

**Design Ideas:**



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The Design Insight Worksheet.