**Research Methods in Psychology, Part One**

Viewing psychology as a science is necessary due to the human tendency to have biases, be over-confident, and see order where there is none. An example of this is **hindsight bias** where we give ourselves credit for knowing things we really didn’t—“I KNEW that was going to happen!” It’s important that we remain curious, ask questions and use critical thinking about behavior and mental processes. Just like other sciences, psychologists use **The Scientific Method.**

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Types of Research

1. **Description** (or descriptive methods)
2. *The Case Study* is a technique in which one individual or group is studied in depth in the hope of revealing universal principles. This can tell a compelling individual story, but sometimes does not apply or generalize to a larger population. Example: Studying someone with brain damage to see how it impairs the daily life of an individual.
3. *Naturalistic Observation* involves observing and recording behavior in naturally occurring situations without trying to manipulate and control the situation. It allows us to describe situations in depth, but does not explain situations or the causes of them. Example: Jane Goodall observing chimpanzees in their natural habitat in Africa, recording her findings.
4. *The Survey* looks at many cases in less depth. It’s a technique for ascertaining the self-reported attitudes or behaviors of a particular group, usually questioning a representative, random sample of the same group. Important things to consider:
5. Wording effects: subtle changes in the wording of questions can have a big effect
6. Random sampling: the best basis for generalizing is a **random sample** in which every person in the entire group has an equal chance of inclusion and fairly represents the populations you are researching. Researchers need to be careful to avoid a **sampling bias** in which he/she generalizes from the opinions of a few. Example: Two outspoken seniors complain about the senior hoodie, making teachers think it’s an unpopular design. However, it turns out that 80% of students are actually fine with the hoodie.