Prelude to Observational Data Collection Lecture

- Two major kinds of behavioral data
- Observational data collection procedures
- Data Collection Settings

Data collection methods

All data are collected using one of two major methods…

Behavioral Observation Data
- When data are obtained by human recording and/or coding of participants' behaviors
- Naturalistic Observation
- Undisguised Participant Observation
- Disguised Participant Observation

Self-Report Data (often called Survey Research)
- When data are obtained from participant's written or spoken responses to researcher's questions

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Behavioral Observation Data Collection

It is useful to discriminate among different types of observation …

Naturalistic Observation
- Participants don't know that they are being observed
  - requires "camouflage" or "distance"
  - researchers can be VERY creative & committed !!!!

Participant Observation (which has two types)
- Participants know "someone" is there – researcher is a participant in the situation

  - Undisguised
    - the "someone" is an observer who is in plain view
    - Maybe the participant knows they're collecting data…

  - Disguised
    - the observer looks like "someone who belongs there"

Behavioral Observation Data – which is naturalistic, undisguised & disguised participant

Answers on next page!!!

- **Researcher gets one of his student research assistants to make observations while sitting on the Dorm Lounge.**
- **Researcher videotapes students in their Dorm Lounge, using a hidden camera.**
- **Researcher walks into the Dorm Lounge one evening and says, "Just act normally, I want to observe you for my research."**
- **I ask one of the students what is their favorite television program.**
- **I stand in the corner of computer room recording what software students are using.**
- **I have a program running in the computer room that records which software students are using.**
- **One of my research assistants sits at a computer in the computer room, occasionally walking about surreptitiously recording who is using what software.**

Behavioral Observation Data – which is naturalistic, undisguised & disguised participant

- **Researcher gets one of his student research assistants to make observations while sitting on the Dorm Lounge.** — disguised
- **Researcher videotapes students in their Dorm Lounge, using a hidden camera.** — naturalistic
- **Researcher walks into the Dorm Lounge one evening and says, "Just act normally, I want to observe you for my research."** — undisguised
- **I ask one of the students what is their favorite television program.** — Psyche! This is self-report!
- **I stand in the corner of computer room recording what software students are using.** — undisguised
- **I have a program running in the computer room that records which software students are using.** — naturalistic
- **One of my research assistants sits at a computer in the computer room, occasionally walking about surreptitiously recording who is using what software.** — disguised

Data collection Settings

Same thing we discussed as an element of external validity…

Any time we collect data, we have to collect it somewhere – there are three general categories of settings

Field
- Usually defined as "where the participants naturally behave"
- Helps external validity, but can make control (internal validity) more difficult (RA and Manip possible with some creativity)

Laboratory
- Helps with control (internal validity) but can make external validity more difficult (remember ecological validity?)

Structured Setting
- A "natural appearing" setting that promotes "natural behavior" while increasing opportunity for "control"
- An attempt to blend the best attributes of Field and Laboratory settings !!!

Data collection Settings identify each as laboratory, field or structured…

Answers on next page!!!

- Study of turtle food preference conducted in Salt Creek.
- Study of turtle food preference conducted with turtles in 10 gallon tanks.
- Study of turtle food preference conducted in a 13,000 gallon "cement pond" with natural plants, soil, rocks, etc.
- Study of jury decision making conducted in 74 Burnett, having participants read a trial transcript.
- Study of jury decision making with mock juries conducted in the mock trial room at the Law College.
- Study of jury decision making conducted with real jurors at the Court Building.

Data collection Settings identify each as laboratory, field or structured…

- Study of turtle food preference conducted in Salt Creek. — field
- Study of turtle food preference conducted with turtles in 10 gallon tanks. — laboratory
- Study of turtle food preference conducted in a 13,000 gallon "cement pond" with natural plants, soil, rocks, etc. — structured
- Study of jury decision making conducted in 74 Burnett, having participants read a trial transcript. — laboratory
- Study of jury decision making with mock juries conducted in the mock trial room at the Law College. — structured
- Study of jury decision making conducted with real jurors at the Court Building. — field