Research Methods of Psychologists

Start This Now, In Class, and Finish it for Homework

There are 4 Methods of Experimenting that Psychologists mainly use:

- **Experiment**
  - This is basically what it sounds like, there are subjects brought in and there are always at least two groups
  - A control Group: normal conditions
  - A variable group: tested the same way as the control but the variable you want to test is changed to see the results

- **Survey**
  - This usually takes the form of a questionnaire or something of that nature
  - The idea is that by getting a large enough same size a general hypothesis can be generated and tested.

- **Case Study**
  - This is a very specific study of single individual or small group of individuals over a period of time to observe their habits, behavior, and pretty much anything else they do

- **Observation**
  - This is actually what you did last night
  - Going out into the world, and simply observing how people react to their environment without manipulating that environment in any way

You are now going to be given a different set of scenarios and you are going to have to choose which form of experiment would fit it best, and defend your answer. In general, your answers should be at least two sentences past the type of study.

**Example:** You want to know whether or not people on caffeine are more productive than those not on caffeine, what type of experiment would you use?

The Method to use is an **experiment**, and this is because you can control all the variables and problems that might occur. It also means that the only thing that changes would be the amount
of caffeine each person is given. An observation might be effective, but you would not be able to control the type of work being done and so the results would not be consistent.

**Your Turn**

1. You want to know whether or not more people bring laptops to coffee shops or McDonalds, and use them.
2. You want to know what a person’s mental state is like who has terminal cancer.
3. You want to find out if people are more or less happy over a the course of the past year of their lives.
4. You want to know if people are willing to follow orders from a higher authority even if it means inflicting pain on another person, this is the average person and not anyone in the military you wish to know about.
5. You are curious if fringe political groups are more or less the same, remember these are small groups that don’t go out in public often.
6. You want to find out what people, in general, think about psychology as a profession.
7. You want to find out if the American Public is stable mentally.
8. You want to know how often people interact with one another in an area, one with cell phone service and one without.
9. You wish to discover is some people are more sociable than others. Where might you go for this?
10. Is there any validity to the old saying, “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it.”