Descriptive Approaches to Studying Behavior

• *Naturalistic Observation:* Observation of behavior in a natural setting over an extended period of time, using a variety of methods. Primarily qualitative rather than quantitative. May be participant or nonparticipant.

• *Systematic Observation:* Observation of one or more specific behaviors in a well-defined setting. Primarily quantitative. Requires a coding system for precise measurement of the variables.

• *Case Study:* Observation and description of a single case, usually an individual.

• *Archival Research:* Use of existing records to study behavior. May include statistical records, survey archives, and written documents available to researchers. Analysis of written documents requires *content analysis* using a coding system.

• *Psychological Testing:* Use of psychological tests to study psychological traits such as intelligence or extraversion.

• *Survey Research:* Administer a survey instrument to a sample of individuals drawn from a population.