Exercise 2-3a: Examining the Consequences of Choosing a Sampling Procedure

Study 1
1. Simple random sampling. Though we aren’t told, there might be stratification to be sure that smaller colleges were adequately represented.
2. The strategy should provide a high level of confidence in the study.
3. The general issues related to alcohol attitudes and behavior could, and have been, studied with a variety of designs, but most often surveys as in the present study. Alternatives would include more purposive strategies aimed at key groups on campus such as fraternities and sororities.

Study 2
1. This study targeted a certain subgroup and obtained access to them through mechanisms that were common to the group. So we might call this an example of purposive non-probability sampling. The researchers probably hope that by including a relatively large number that their sample is more or less a modal representation of the population.
2. This strategy sampling does make one wonder about generalizability given the sample characteristics (non-urban, lower SES, female, African American). Some of these are listed in the abstract as being identifiers of the population (African-American, female), and some are not (non-urban, lower SES). This population may be of primary interest (that is, it might be the population for whom the results of the study may be strongest), but for this very reason results should not be interpreted to include inferences about youth in general, African American youth in general, or females in general.
3. Alternative strategies might include a greater sampling from schools in various geographic areas in which SES is more variable.

Study 3
1. The study used random cluster sampling, though the clusters are only vaguely described.
2. The strategy would produce high confidence, particularly once the details of how the clusters were selected are known.
3. This is an excellent strategy for assessing general population incidence. It may also be important to learn about the incidence within certain subpopulations, such as those who appear in emergency rooms or in the criminal justice system.