San Jose State University
School of Social Work
ScWk 240

Class Exercise #1:
Operational Definitions and Measurement Error

If your proposed study includes a quantitative portion, consider the dependent variable in your proposed study and consider the questions below.

Each person in your group will discuss their variable.

1) Provide a brief **conceptual definition** of the variable:

2) Among the **three ways to operationally define a variable** (self-report, observation, and available records), what do you think might be most appropriate for this variable and why?

3) Identify potential sources of **measurement error** in using the measurement identified in #2:

Class Exercise #2: Measurement Class Exercise

Directions: Take a moment to complete the questionnaire below. Then for each variable, identify if it is <u>categorical</u> or <u>continuous</u>, and then identify if it is <u>nominal</u>, <u>ordinal</u>, <u>interval</u>, or <u>ratio</u>.

1.   Sex (please check one):   Male   Female

2.   Age (in years)   _____ years

3.   What is your race/ethnicity? _____

4.   Are you in the Full-Time or Part-Time MSW program (please check one)?

        Full-Time
        Part-Time

5.   How many hours a week do you spend on your homework assignments?

        _____ hours

6.   How many homework assignments are you given in a typical week (please check one)?

        None
        1 or 2 assignments
        3 or 4 assignments
        5 or more assignments

7.   On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being low and 5 being high) how would you rate your stress level (please circle one)?

                    1   2   3   4   5
                  Low   High

For each variable, identify if it is <u>categorical</u> or <u>continuous</u>, and then identify if it is <u>nominal</u>, <u>ordinal</u>, <u>interval</u>, or <u>ratio</u>.

- Sex: • Age:

- Ethnicity: • Full-Time or Part-Time status:

- Number of hours per week on homework assignments: • Stress Level

- Number of homework assignments given in a typical week: