



**ScWk 242:  
Course Wrap-Up and Summary**

*Session 16 Slides*

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- **Importance of scientific inquiry in social work**
- **Strategies for measuring social work effectiveness**
- **Need to carefully analyze and critique research quality**
- **Importance of compassion and professional ethics**
- **Understanding the principles of the scientific method**
- **Recognizing flaws in unscientific and untested sources**
- **Reliability and Validity Concerns**
- **Realizing that all researchers faces challenges & choices**

## ***Major Research Issues***

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- **Quantitative, Qualitative, Single Subject, and Evaluation**
- **Types of Measures – Nominal, Ordinal, Interval, & Ratio**
- **Sampling Options and Challenges**
- **Research Designs, including Pre-, Quasi-, & Experimental**
- **Internal and External Validity**
- **Needs Assessment and Use of Logic Models**
- **Process and Outcome Program Evaluation**
- **Accountability and Politics in Research**

## ***Important Research Concepts***

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- **Variables are measures of a concept that take two or more values, such as male or female.**
- **The independent variable is the presumed cause, and the factor that precedes the effect in time.**
- **The dependent variable is the effect or outcome that is presumed to be impacted, and follows the cause in time.**
- **Intervening variables come between the independent and dependent variables.**
- **The null hypothesis states the negation of the relationship proposed in the research hypothesis.**

## ***Basic Terms***

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- **Researchers must always question the findings that are derived from research studies**
- **Questioning research findings will lead to more research activity (e.g., replication) aimed at finding the “truth”**

***Skeptical Curiosity***

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- **Share research honestly, by clearly explaining what you did and what you found in your study.**
- **Be especially honest when:**
  - **the research results are the opposite of what was expected (hypothesized)**
  - **the research results are not clear cut**

***Honesty and Integrity are Vital*** <sup>6</sup>

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- Research can only add knowledge to things that “exist” in the sense that they can be observed or measured
- Knowledge is neither certain nor absolute
  - What we think we “know” today can easily change tomorrow

***Nothing (almost?) is Forever***

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- **Knowledge and competence are essential social work tools**
- **There are many ways of knowing, one of which is the research method**
- **Research can be approached in different ways**
- **Research defines a preferred way of thinking and action**
- **Social workers engage in three research roles: consumer, contributing partner, and creator/disseminator**
- **All the best to you in the years ahead!!**

## ***Summary***