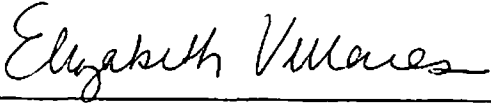




**College of Education
Department of Counselor Education
Announcement of Dissertation Defense**

Randi Schietz	Oct. 2, 2014	10:00 am	280	Education
Student Name	Date of Defense	Time	Room Number	Building
Elizabeth Villares, Ph.D. Dissertation Major Advisor	Signature			
Greg Brigman, Ph.D. Dissertation Committee member	Counselor Education Department		Education College	
Mary Lieberman, Ed.D. Dissertation Committee member	Educational Leadership and Research Methodology Department		Education College	
Paul Peluso, Ph.D. Department Chair				

Dissertation Title: The Effect of Participation in the “Girl Talk” Program on Easing the Transition to Middle School

ABSTRACT

This study measured the impact of a gender-specific school counseling curriculum, “Girl Talk” on: relational aggressive behaviors, pro-social behaviors, student connectedness, cohesiveness, and social self-efficacy. The “Girl Talk” program consists of five sessions and was delivered as part of a comprehensive school counseling program. Fifth grade girls in four elementary schools ($N=151$) from one large, Southeastern school district participated in the study. Girls at two elementary schools received the “Girl Talk” program (treatment group; $n=85$) and their peer counterparts (comparison group; $n=66$) at the two remaining schools received their regular school counseling program. A series analysis of variance and an analysis of covariance test, using an alpha level of .05, was conducted to determine if statistically significant differences existed between participants' posttest scores by group condition on the Peer Relations Questionnaire (Rigby & Slee, 1993), My Class Inventory–Short Form Revised (Sink & Spencer, 2005), the Peers and Friends subscales of the Hemingway Measure of Pre-Adolescent Connectedness (Karcher, 2005), and the Social self-efficacy subscale of the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (Muris, 2001). Statistically significant differences were found in the areas of relational aggressive behaviors, pro-social behaviors, student connectedness, cohesiveness, and social self-efficacy. Partial eta square effect sizes were reported for each measure. The results support the positive impact that school counselors can have when using a systemic, gender-specific classroom guidance curriculum for reducing relational aggression among pre-adolescent girls.