



**College of Education**  
**Announcement of Dissertation Defense**

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Date of Defense: <b>10/2/2014</b>	Time: <b>12:00 pm</b>	Room Number: <b>280</b>	Building: <b>Education</b>
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**Title:** The Effect of a Student Achievement Curriculum on Grade 9 Completion Rate and Student Engagement

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the difference in grade 9 completion rate and student engagement between grade 9 students in the treatment group who received the Student Success Sills (SSS) classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010) and grade 9 students in the comparison group who did not receive the SSS classroom program. The sample consisted of grade 9 students enrolled in Intensive Reading classes, a required course for all high school students in the state of Florida who are below reading proficiency. School A served as the treatment group ( $n=98$ ) and School B served as the comparison group ( $n=99$ ). Certified school counselors in the treatment group implemented five, 45 minute SSS lessons and three booster lessons after being trained in the manualized use of the program and other related study procedures. A quasi-experimental pretest posttest research design was employed to examine the impact of the SSS classroom program. The unit of analysis was individual grade 9 students. Grade 9 completion rate was measured by academic credits. Student engagement was measured by attendance rate and the Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) instrument. Statistical significance between the groups was determined by a series of ANOVA and ANCOVA analyses. Partial eta squared effect sizes are provided. Significant differences were found in grade 9 completion rate measured by academic credits between grade 9 students in the treatment and comparison groups. This study contributes to current school counseling research in the area of student achievement. The data supports the use of the SSS classroom program as an intervention for preventing student dropout, specifically among grade 9 students. The connection between grade 9 completion rate and positive student outcomes in academic achievement is present in the study. Moreover, the study exemplifies how school counselors implement evidenced-based interventions that positively impact student outcomes.