

THE IMPACT OF A SCHOOL COUNSELOR LED INTERVENTION ON  
GRADE 5 AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT SELF REGULATION, TEST  
ANXIETY AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

by

Clifford Henry Mack, Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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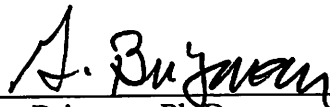
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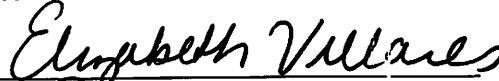
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This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the candidate's dissertation advisor, Dr. Greg Brigman, Department of Counselor Education, and has been approved by the members of his supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the College of Education and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

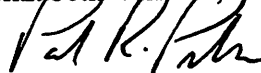
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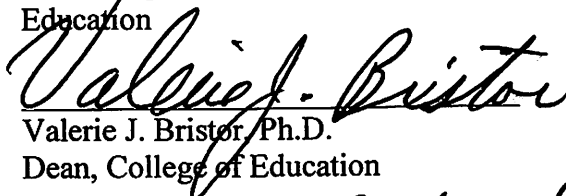
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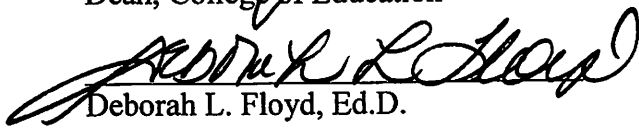
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## ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom intervention on grade 5 African American students' self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. This study analyzed pre-existing, non-identifiable student data collected by school counselors at 30 elementary schools in South Florida. A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to determine differences in self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance between the students who participated in the SSS classroom intervention compared to those students who did not participate. Statistically significant differences were found between groups in all three factors and support the use of SSS classroom school counseling intervention with grade 5 African American students. Effect size estimates were reported for each of the measures.

## DEDICATION

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Elementary African American school students are facing a developmental journey and trajectory in which they need to develop strategies and skills that will empower them to be self-regulated students, help them manage test anxiety, improve attendance and ultimately impact their life outcome (Beidel, Turner, & Taylor–Ferreira, 1999; Lapan, Kardash, & Turner, 2002; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Secondly, further research is needed to demonstrate school counselor accountability and affirm the impact of school counselors on student success which is associated with self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. Lastly, school counselors have a role in helping elementary school students master key developmental skills (Akos, 2002; Gallassi & Akos, 2004; Webb, L. & Brigman, G., 2006).

Grade 5 African American students are faced with a journey that requires them to manage and cope with significant challenges with transitioning from elementary to middle school. Contextual challenges associated with puberty (academically, physical, emotional and social) impact significant increase in stress; especially African Americans tend to show a gap in academic achievement when compared to White counterparts (Akos, 2002; Miranda, Webb, Brigman, & Peluso, 2007). Transitioning to middle school life is an educational mile marker that provides an environment and climate that presents obstacles and expectations – academically, mentally, physically and socially (Boller, 2008; Dembo & Eaton, 2000). Depending on how student’s manage and respond to these

obstacles and challenges (i.e. decision making skills, conduct and behavior) will impact the direction of the student's life. A byproduct of the obstacles and challenges that some students become enmeshed in is underachievement, which has been linked to student's inability to monitor, regulate or control their own behavior (de Bruin & van Gog, 2012). Possibly, one of the most important skills, factors and qualities that may impact ones direction and trajectory of life is the ability to self-regulate (Zimmerman, 2000).

Elementary school counselors are faced with a challenge to educate, equip and prepare their students for middle school. In order for this to occur, there must be a commitment and focus to promote and provide the opportunity for students to acquire skills and developmental assets (Akos, 2002; Barna & Brott, 2013; Pelco & Reed-Victor, 2007). There is a call for outcome and data based interventions that teach students skills and equips students with knowledge in how to overcome obstacles so that educational and personal goals may be obtained (Dembo & Eaton, 2000; Lapan et al., 2002; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012). School counselors are urged to adopt evidence based practices and interventions that improves students affect, cognition or behavior (Dimmitt, Carey, and Hatch, 2007). One program that addresses this need is the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010). The SSS program is a comprehensive, evidence based program that supports development of key skills tied to academic achievement by means of improving learning skills, attitudes, and classroom culture (Brigman & Campbell, 2003, Brigman, Webb, & Campbell, 2007; Webb, Brigman, & Campbell, 2005). Teaching these key skills focuses on fostering the development of self-regulation, social and cognitive skills. The current study intends to



evaluate the impact of the SSS program on self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance.

### **Statement of Significance / Problem and Solution**

The problem addressed in the current study is significant in three ways. First, grade 5 African American students are facing a developmental journey and trajectory in which they must develop strategies and skills that will empower them to be self-regulated students, help them manage test anxiety, improve attendance and ultimately impact their life outcome (Lapan et al., 2002; Pelco & Reed–Victor, 2007; Sink & MacDonald, 1998). Secondly, further research is needed to demonstrate school counselor accountability and affirm the impact of counselors on student success (academically, personally and socially). (ASCA 2012; Dimmitt, C., Carey, J.C, McGannon, W, & Henningson, I., 2005; Whiston, S.C, Wendi, L.T., Raharja, D., & Eder, K., 2011). Lastly, school counselors have a role in addressing the development of self-regulation skills, test anxiety management and improve attendance in elementary school students (Akos, 2002, Gallassi & Akos, 2004). While there has been at least one study tying the SSS program to increased student self-regulation, with grade 5 students in a small group setting (Lemberger & Clemons, 2012) there are currently no studies that have investigated the impact of the SSS program on self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance of African American elementary school students from a classroom perspective.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the current outcome study will be to evaluate the impact of a school counselor led intervention on grade 5 African American student's self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance.

Research Questions:

1. Is there an increase in self-regulation skills of grade 5 African American students after participating in the Student Success Skills classroom program?
2. Is there an improvement in test anxiety after grade 5 African American students participate in the Student Success Skills classroom program?
3. Is there an increase in school attendance of grade 5 African American students after participating in the Student Success Skills classroom program?

## **Hypothesis**

### **Null Hypothesis 1**

There will be no statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 1**

There will be a statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal

subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Null Hypothesis 2**

There will be no statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 2**

There will be a statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Null Hypothesis 3**

There will be no statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 3**

There will be a statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

## **Operational Definitions**

1. Executive Functioning – refers to one’s ability to operate and utilize the following skills (Barkley, 2001):
  - Action planning
  - Constraining responses
  - Strategy development
  - Flexibility and maintenance of behavior
  - Resistance to obstacles
2. Metacognition – refers to one’s ability to think about thinking. The control and monitoring of cognition (Efklides, 2008; Flavell, 1979).
3. School Attendance – refers to decreased absences, regular presence at school and missing no more than 5 days in school over the course of the academic year (Akos, P., Lambie, G., Milsom, A., & Gilbert, K., 2007; Barnet, Arroyo, Devoe, & Duggan, 2004).
4. Self-Control – refers to a synonym for self-regulation in that one is able to control ones impulses (Peterson, Martin, & Seligman, 2004).
5. Self-Regulation – refers to a student having the ability to regulate, control, or governs their thoughts, emotions, impulses and task performances (Vohs, K. & Baumeister, R. F., 2004).
6. Student Success Skills (SSS) – refers to counselor led program and curriculum that focuses on teaching the following concepts (Brigman & Webb, 2010).
  - Attitudes: Building healthy optimism and self-efficacy

- Cognitive and metacognitive skills: goal setting, progress monitoring and memory enhancing.
  - Community: Creating a caring, supportive and encouraging class environment.
  - Self-management skills: managing attention, motivation, anxiety and anger.
  - Social Skills: communication skills, social problem solving and listening skills.
7. Test Anxiety – refers to an extreme fear of performing poorly on examinations (Beidel et al., 1999). A set of phenomenological, physiological and behavior responses that accompany concern about possible negative consequences or failure in assessment situations (Zeidner, 2007).

### **Limitations**

Below are some possible limitations that may impact the findings:

- Limiting this study to archival data;
- Limiting the participants to a thirty public south Florida elementary schools;
- Limiting the participants to grade 5 African American students;
- Instruments may be subject to student self-report bias and
- Limiting the timeline of study to just one school year.

## **Study Design**

This study used archival data with non-identifying markers. This archival data from a federal sponsored randomized study (Webb, Brigman, Carey, & Villares, 2011), was thoroughly securitized, vetted and approved by two independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees, Florida Atlantic University and University of North Florida. This study included 4,321 grade 5 students, from two large diverse school districts. To bolster fidelity, Certified School Counselors received a one day curriculum training to learn how to effectively implement the SSS classroom intervention. Certified School Counselors implemented five SSS lessons spaced one week apart for five consecutive weeks during October through November and offered three booster sessions during the months of January, February and March. The data from this study was used to further examine the difference in grade 5 African American students ability to self-regulate, manage test anxiety and improve school attendance after participation in the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom intervention. Using archival data, the unit of analysis will be each anonymous student. The dependent variables will be measures of self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. The independent variable will be the SSS classroom program.

### **Dependent Variables**

- The Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, a student self-report instrument;
- The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, student self-report instrument;
- School Attendance, as reported by Palm Beach School District;

## **Independent Variables**

The Student Success Skills classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010), led by certified school counselors, will be the independent variable.

## **Summary**

The purpose of chapter I was to establish the structure of this study. Chapter II will present a research literature review highlighting the need, concern and the positive influence of self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. Chapter III will present the methodology used in the current study including research design, statistical analysis and psychometrics for each of the three instruments used. Results are presented in chapter IV, followed by chapter V, which includes a discussion of the results and findings with implications related to the impact of school counselor led intervention on self-regulation, test anxiety management and school attendance. Chapter V also provides recommendations for further research.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Presented in chapter I was the rationale and purpose for this study; to measure the impact and effect of a school counselor led classroom intervention, Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010) on grade 5 African American student's self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. The purpose of chapter II is to present a review of literature on the grade 5 African American experience, self-regulation; the impact and influence of self-regulation skill development; the connection of self-regulation, executive functioning, and metacognition; recent self – regulation studies, the relevance of test anxiety management; the need to improve attendance; and the role of a professional elementary school counselor. This chapter highlights the significance of self-regulation, test anxiety, school attendance and concludes with a focus on highlighting the impact and influence of professional school counselors providing the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom program, (Brigman & Webb, 2010) which has been shown to show a positive effect on student's ability to develop self-regulatory skills, manage test anxiety and improve school attendance.

### **Elementary African American Student Experience**

African American students face a precarious situation (academically and socially). Young African American students from a school context face lower test scores and higher rates of placement in special education programs and not underrepresented in gifted programs compared to their white counterparts (Henfield, M., Washington, A., &



Byrd, J., 2014; Whiting, 2006). Secondly, young African American female and male students specifically are faced with a contextual situation in which they outnumber disciplinary referrals, reports, and suspensions compared to their respective Caucasian counterparts (Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Bryan, J., Day-Vines, N., Griffin, D., & Moore-Thomas, C., 2012). These two examples of poor academic performance and negative social and behavioral outcomes are documented as connected to lack of role models, low productivity, dysfunction, hopelessness, lack of self-regulation and metacognition (Bailey & Paisley, 2004; Lemberger & Clemens, 2012; Whiting, 2006).

Struggling learners operate with a mindset and belief system that they are unable and ill-equipped to succeed in school, convinced that school and academics guarantee failure and humiliation (Margolis & McCabe, 2006; Pajares, 2003). Contextually, this mindset and view of self from an African American sociocultural, sociohistorical perspective and context is connected to low metacognition, poor academic achievement, self-fulfilling prophecy, and learned helplessness that ultimately impacts and leads to a low self-worth and well-being based on negative messages (Margolis & McCabe, 2006). Particularly for African American students, they face negative messages connected to risks, obstacles and social pressures that exist in the African American community, experience, and journey (Franklin, 2004; Nicholas et al., 2008).

The context and educational experience of Elementary African American students can be improved when a school counselor provides support for African American students based on culturally component concepts connected to data driven practices (Lemberger & Clemens, 2012; Miranda et al., 2007; Moore-Thomas & Day-Vines, 2010). The intent and drive of this study is to make a case that African American grade 5

students skill development in the areas of self-regulation, test anxiety management, and attendance can improve based on the SSS intervention.

### **Self-Regulation Defined**

Self – regulation refers to a person’s ability to control one’s responses and is an active participant in constructing and establishing goals. Most commonly, self-regulation is used to manage one’s thought processes, motivation, behavior, emotional states, impulses, responses, and task management (Forgas, J.P., Baumeister, R.E. & Tice, D.M. 2009; Pintrich, 2003; Vohs, K. D & Baumeister, R. F, 2004). Vohs and Baumeister (2004) highlighted the notion that self-regulation and self-control can be used interchangeably based on the belief that self-regulation refers to the exercise of control over oneself, especially with regard to bringing the self into line with desired cultural expectations and standards. This section includes definitions on self-regulation, a theoretical foundation of self-regulation, and the need for self-regulation skills from a school context.

### **Self-Regulation’s Significance**

Self–regulation is a comprehensive term that structures an individual’s ability to motivate, direct, and reflect on specific thoughts and behaviors (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012). In addition, self-regulation includes two essential cognitive actions; metacognition and executive functioning. Metacognition is known as an individual’s ability to deliberate about one’s own beliefs (Lemberger and Clemens, 2012). In concert with metacognition, executive functioning is a series of components: working memory, inhibitory control, attention shifting or flexibility (Miyake et al., 2000).

An example of this can be found in (Martel et al., 2007) a study which concluded that “reactive control, resiliency, and executive functioning contribute to academic and social competence and the internalization and externalization of problem behavior in adolescence.” (p. 561). This notion by Martel et al. (2007), lends credence to the self-regulation literature and the perspective of self-regulation as a technique or tool to be utilized. Based on a review of self-regulation literature, self-regulation can be viewed from a perspective as having a set of specific skills. Skills when used and implanted effectively in one’s life can aid one governing and controlling themselves in a healthy and productive manner (Dembo & Eaton, 2000; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012). Savitz-Romer & Bouffard presented self-regulation from a skill set perspective by stating that:

Self-regulation is the ability to manage ones thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the service of attaining goals. Self-regulation encompasses many specific skills, including but not limited to, the ability to focus attention, plan, delay gratification, solve complex problems, self-reflect, and regulate feelings and social interactions in challenging situations” (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012, p. 145).

Essentially, these developmental skills will aid in students’ ability to plan and manage time as elementary students and subsequently benefit them in their transition to middle school and high school as they will need to cope with academic, personal and social matters (Akos, 2002; Farrington, C.A. et al., 2012; Galassi & Akos, 2004).

Berger (2011) viewed self-regulation as the ability to modify our emotions and actions to social situations. In those social situations, utilizing skills and tools like paying attention, controlling reflexive actions, and delaying gratification. From Berger (2011)

standpoint, self-regulation aids in one navigating in the social world, academic life, and every aspect of life. He further points out that one's inability to develop self-regulatory skills gives way to impulsive and unregulated behavior and this inability to regulate will have negative impact on the individual, people and community. Forgas et al. (2009) highlight that to be self-regulated means a specific change in thinking, behavior and placing oneself in alignment with rules, norms, goals, ideals and standards. This definition of self-regulation links well with and Vohs and Baumeister, definition in that people regulate their "thoughts, emotions, impulses or appetites and task performance" (2004 p. 2). Both definitions highlight the impact of self-regulation in one's life should influence the thoughts life and the by product is conduct and decorum.

The aforementioned definitions of self-regulation point to the essential foundation of how an individual's processes their current situation and conduct themselves in a manner that is aligned with pro social and healthy beliefs, behavior and social standards. In the next section, the focus will be on the theoretical foundation of self-regulation. The intent is to establish a foundation for why self-regulation is a critical and valuable concept to be discussed, researched and placed into practice with students. Based on research and documented interventions, self-regulation points to evidence of showing success and supporting students' academic, behavioral success in student individual life as well as in the school climate and culture (Lizarraga, Ugarte, Cardelle-Elawar, Iriarte, & Baquedano, 2003; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Perels, Gurtler, & Schmitz, 2005).

### **Self-Regulation - Theory**

The term self-regulation has its roots connected to work adapted from behaviorist theory that proposed that individuals govern rewards and punishments themselves and the

byproduct of this governing is management of behavior and control over self (Peterson et al., 2004). Research on the topic of delayed gratification by Mischel and Ebbesen (1970) is considered to be significant and vital to the narrative of self-regulation. The research on delayed gratification by Mischel and Ebbesen's marshmallow research, which presented the benefits of children exercising discipline. The children in this study when given the option, selected either an immediate and small reward compared to those who selected the option to delay and receive a larger reward. This exercise and experiment offered the option of children to be self-disciplined and avoid the temptation by selecting the most immediate reward. Understanding the impact of this study fits perfectly into the theme of self-regulation; denying oneself (delayed gratification) highlights the foundation and theoretical notion of self-regulation. The impact of this research and others on the topic of delayed gratification linked that the participants who delayed gratification had better self-regulatory skills and performed better academically (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012).

Bandura (1991), theorized that self-regulation “encompassing the self-efficacy mechanism, which plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency by its strong impact on thought, affect, motivation, and action” (p. 248). Bandura's social cognitive theory of self-regulation proposed that there are three foundational principles (self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reaction). These concepts provide the framework for one to practice skills such as self-monitoring, standard setting, evaluative judgment, self-appraisal, and affective self-reaction.

Zimmerman and Schunk (1989), established a model of self-regulation based on a social cognitive perspective that emphasizes three phases: forethought, performance and

volitional control, and self-reflective processes. The forethought concept points to a person's ability to think before an act is committed and set the stage for action. The forethought phase as described by Zimmerman and Schunk (1989) has two vital components: goal setting and strategic planning. Goal setting refers to a person establishing a desired outcome for the desired task. Strategic planning refers to a person's ability to establish an appropriate method of intervention to accomplish the desired task. The second phase of self-regulation process is the performance or volitional control which focuses on how a person is able to conduct and govern his own ability to self-control and self-observe during a specific task or assignment. The third phase of the self-regulation process is a person's ability to self-reflect by operating under two filters-- self-judgment and self-evaluation. The concept of self-judgment can be defined as evaluating ones performance and measuring the influence on the outcome. The second component of this self-reflection phase is the person's ability to self-evaluate by comparing and contrasting information based on the goal and actual outcome of task. The self-regulation system has cyclical patterns that can enable and clarify a student's ability to be successful in the school environment and establish a sense of satisfaction when a task is accomplished as well create skills for success.

The theory of self-regulation is founded and based on research that has rapid development and is noted as being of practical significance and importance (Forgas et al., 2009). According to (Baumeister, R.F. Heatherton & Tice, 1994; Baumeister, Leith, Muraven, & Bratslavsky, 2002), research on the topic of self-regulation is abundant and covers a diversity of domains, exhibits its significance in research, data and practical application. Delayed gratification, practice of virtues and values are examples of self-

regulations practical applications. These ideas based on the aforementioned literature and research all point to a common themes that self-regulation is a concept that focuses on how an individual is able to develop a mindset and skills that aid in living a governed life (i.e. self-control, self-regulated).

### **Self-Regulation - The Need**

Students today are faced and flooded with a myriad of mediums that offer a wide arrange of distractions, high risk factors and life issues (i.e. peer relationships, social networking, drugs, alcohol, sexual activity, family and school struggles – academic, personal and social) that influence young people between the ages of 10 -14 everyday; these life issues present a profound need for self-regulation (Duckworth, 2011; Vohs, K.D. & Baumeister, R.F., 2004). Youth during this age group struggle with the ability to be governed and in control of emotions, behavior and conduct (Akos, 2005, Holcomb–McCoy, 2007). Akos (2005) noted that this stage of early adolescents can be categorized as “storm and stress”, and youth in this stage may partake in risk taking behaviors (e.g. drugs, alcohol, smoking and sex). The notion of storm and stress can be characterized by an interchange and intersection of youth dealing with a propensity to act on risky behavior and having to cope with hormonal and physical maturation (Rudolph, Lambert, Clark, & Kurlakowsky, 2001). Arnett (1999), highlighted three areas on why adolescents struggle during this period of life span development. The first is the area of parental conflict. Adolescents have a tendency to be rebellious and challenge authority and youth compared to the other areas of development (childhood and adults), conflict with parents is high during the adolescent stage of development. Secondly, disruption of mood is associated youth in the area of being able to manage ones emotions.

Adolescents are viewed as having volatile extremes. Lastly, risky behavior can be categorized as adolescents having high rates of impulsivity, uncontrolled, and unregulated behavior.

Pelco and Reed-Victor (2007), specifically pointed to the notion that Elementary school student's ability to self-regulate varies significantly across individuals from poorly to well developed and that children who experience severe problems regulating emotions, attention and behavior struggle most with adapting to expectations placed on them at school. An essential conflict and crossroads youth face during this period of development is the "challenge for early adolescents during this coming of age transition is the actual complex interaction between internal changes (i.e. self-exploration and intellectual expansion) and interaction with new and changing environments" (Akos, 2005, p. 96).

The early adolescent stage of development is pivotal because it's marked by common biological, psychological and social challenges (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Lord, S.E., Eccles, J.S., & McCarthy, K.A., 1994). These challenges combined with the youth's ability (or lack off) to manage and regulate these challenges will impact and influence the trajectory of early adolescent development toward healthy or unhealthy adjustment (Peterson & Hamburg, 1986). Dembo and Eaton (2000), align with this notion in that early adolescence offers opportunities to select a path toward productive and fulfilling lives. The ability for adolescents to face this challenge hinges on the influence of poor self-regulation skills. The development of poor self-regulation skills is defined by impulsive and unregulated behavior that affects the individual person as well as relationship with friends and associates (Vohs, K. D & Baumeister, R. F. 2004). Arnett, (1999); Martel et al. (2007), point to the notion that risky behavior can be categorized by



the following; personal and social problems, like addictive substances (alcohol and drugs) and risky behaviors (gang affiliations, gambling and uncontrolled spending habits).

In addition to the need for self-regulation from the perspective of maturation and stage development trajectory, the need for self-regulation is also exhibited in the academic environment. A major cause of underachievement is the inability of students to control / regulate their own behavior (de Bruin & van Gog, 2012). According to (Dembo & Eaton, 2000), research points to examining how students become willing and able to take on the responsibility for controlling or self-regulating their academic success and student learning self-regulatory skills can lead to greater academic success.

### **Relationship of Self-Regulation, Executive Functioning and Metacognition**

As stated previously, self-regulation is a term that encompasses an individual's ability to motivate, direct and reflect (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012). The connection of self -regulation and executive functioning are linked in the literature and has exhibited positive outcomes and constructs (Barkley, 2001; Hofmann, Schmeichel & Baddeley, 2012; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Martel et al., 2007). According to Barkley (2001), executive functioning is a concept that envelopes specific mechanisms. The specific mechanisms Barkley highlights are for an individual to have actions plans, inhibiting responses, strategy development and usage, flexible sequences of actions, maintenance of behavioral set, and resistance to interference. This notion connects well with the Hofmann et al. (2012) theory, these authors articulate that executive functions includes: working memory operation, behavioral inhibition and task switching. These concepts link with self-regulatory mechanisms. One example of this is working memory operations, which can be fleshed out by one's active representation of

self-regulatory goals and standards. Another example of the linkage is behavioral inhibitions, which can be fleshed out by one's active inhibition of impulses and mindless habits. Martel et al. (2007), conducted a study of 498 high risk boys and girls ranging from preschool to adolescence. In this study, these researchers used a multivariate, multilevel model method to measure how executive function contributed to academic competence and resiliency and predicted social competence. The 498 participants for this study were from a high risk population (e.g. familial alcoholism and low socioeconomic status). This study reported that executive functioning was one of contributing factors to student academic and social competence and internalizing and externalizing problem behavior in adolescence. The above-mentioned research and literature validate and support the notion that executive function and metacognition are components of self-regulation.

From another perspective, the connection self-regulation and executive functioning is in the area of adolescent development and coping skills. There is increasing documentation that presents stress as a negative influence on brain development and its connection to psychological issues and how adolescents develop coping skills (Berger, 2011; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012). Self-regulation and executive functioning are linked in the literature and offer constructs that will serve students well by aiding them in the development of skills in the areas of retaining knowledge, expressing, interacting, and facing challenges well in school environment (Berger 2011; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012). This study will measure the impact of SSS (Brigman & Webb, 2010) on a student's self-regulatory ability.

An additional concept that connects to self-regulation is metacognition.

Metacognition is defined as cognition of cognition that serves two purposes for the purpose of monitoring and controlling cognition (Flavell, 1979). From a metacognitive perspective, a student is able to be aware of the outcome of the monitoring process. The monitoring process will yield the “ability for one to be mindful of their feelings of knowing, feelings of confidence feeling of satisfaction, awareness of not understanding and being aware of the beliefs about their own cognition” (Efklides, 2008, p. 278). Lemberger & Clemons, (2012) noted that metacognition and executive function are operative factors of self-regulation that contribute to academic and constructive school conduct. Furthermore Efklides, highlighted that metacognition offers students specific skills for success. “Metacognitive skills connect to the deliberate use of strategies in order to control cognition” (Efklides, 2008 p. 280). Theoretically, skill development is composed of strategies that include orientation, regulation, monitoring, and evaluation of cognitive process, executive planning and task processing (Veenman & Elshout, 1999).

The relationship self-regulation, executive functioning and metacognition offer philosophical foundations and specific skills that contribute to student success. Students cognitive skills can be enhanced by grasping key strategic learning skills (Downing, Kwong, Chan, Lam & Dowling, 2009). Downing et al. (2009); Fox and Riconscente, (2008), emphasize that specific strategies taught enable student’s to gain skills in the area of monitoring cognitive processes, develop strategies for thinking, comprehend and remembering enables student’s to make a valuable investment in their academic, personal and social success. It’s the belief by this researcher that the SSS Classroom program

(Brigman & Webb, 2010) will teach student's concepts and skills that will benefits grade 5 African American students.

### **Impact and Influence of Self-Regulation Skill Development**

The previous section was dedicated to providing a clear and concise definition, theory and the need for self-regulation. This section will focus on presenting the impact and influence of self-regulation skill development in the life of adolescents (i.e. community and individual). The literature points to the notion that self-regulation implementation in an adolescent's life is characterized by one acquiring and honing the skill of regulating, governing and –controlling self.

### **Impact of Poor Self-Regulation**

To add perspective of self-regulation, the inability to regulate must be discussed. When discussing self-regulation, the impact of non-regulatory practices must be brought to the light. Berger 2011, believed that “poor self-regulation implies impulsive and unregulated behavior and might have significant cost for persons and their surroundings” (p. 4). The lack of self-regulation development and the inability to regulate ones thoughts, feelings and emotions finds credence with Vohs and Baumeister (2004), they proposed that:

Emotional problems generally involve the failure to avoid or to recover from unwanted feelings. Many health problems stem from failure to exercise or to eat healthy food when they are available. Underachievement in work and school may stem from a lack of regulation to make oneself study. Procrastination which leads to increased stress and inferior performance quality stems from a failure to keep

ones work moving on a proper schedule...thus a broad range of bad outcomes can be linked to self-regulatory factors. (p. 3)

Additionally, poor regulation is defined as a tendency to be impatient and act without thinking, impulsive, easily irritated, and frustrated and thus the higher level of poor regulation may produce a byproduct of a person becoming more vulnerable to the impact of life stress (Lejuez, et al., 2010; Wills & Bantum, 2012). Likewise, consistent discoveries report that good self-regulation counteracted adolescent substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and poor regulation (Wills, Resko, Ainette, & Mendoza, 2004; Wills & Stoolmiller, 2002). Zimmerman (2000) suggested that a dysfunction of self-regulation exists and is due to ineffective forethought and performance control implementation. Zimmerman, articulated two thoughts that contribute to the case on what prohibits self-regulation implementation. The first is a lack of social learning experiences. The home and community environment must teach, model or reward self-regulatory practice. The second dysfunctional component is apathy and disinterest. In order for one to self-regulate, one must deem characteristics (anticipation, concentration, effort and careful self-reflection) of self-regulation to be essential and significant in life, otherwise, there is no motivation to self-regulate.

Savitz-Romer and Bouffard (2012), suggested that on the healthy side of discussing self-regulation can be categorized and attributed to self-regulation skill development. This author highlighted the need for students to develop skills in the following areas: focus and maintain attention, delay gratification, plan and overcome obstacles, reflect and use metacognitive skills. The impact and desired outcome of learning and honing self-regulatory skills benefits planning for the future, better time

management of tasks, and helps one to anticipate and cope with life's barriers, obstacles and stressors. Practically speaking, students when able to learn these skills are better staged for classroom success, preparing for middle school, high school, college and equipped to handle life hardships and struggles that are linked to adolescent development.

### **Self-Regulations Impact – Classroom Community**

From a macro level view of self-regulation, the practice and implementation of self-regulation skills has benefits in the youth themselves and in the classroom community. Forgas et al. (2009), view of self-regulation highlights the impact of self-regulation not only on one's individual but also on how that one individual's ability to regulate (or lack thereof) impacts the classroom culture community. One's ability to self-regulate requires an essential skills that binds school community culture – student, teachers and administration. The impact of a student's ability to self-regulate will have impact on the classroom, school culture and the home. Berger (2011) reported that there is much evidence that supports the notion that self-regulation can influence negative emotional reactivity in one's ability to cope within their peer groups. Dembo and Eaton (2000), would agree and conveyed that when students are taught and learn skills of how to interact and relate with one another can affect a student's academic, social, and career success.

### **Self-Regulation Impact – Individual**

From a micro level, focusing on the student / individual, the practice and implantation of self-regulation skills has an impact and effect on a person's ability to goal set, develop self- worth, self-reflect, and complete homework. Pintrich (2000), proposed that self-regulation in an academic setting will equip the student to set goals, monitor,

regulate, control their cognition, motivation, behavior and adhere to their goals and environmental expectations. Setting goals is a fundamental component of self-regulation for which Schunk (1990) articulated that Self-observation, self-judgment and self-reaction has a reciprocal relationship with goal setting and self-efficacy. The ability to self-observe allows an individual to give attention to behaviors which informs and motivates self. Self-judgment requires one to evaluate and measure goals and the performance of meeting those stated goals. Self-reaction permits one to celebrate accomplishments for progress made. The argument for students to have self-regulatory skills has influence on how one is able to manage one's conduct and behavior in the academic context as well as in the professional context. Ramdass and Zimmerman (2011), connected the ability to develop self-regulatory skills in the areas of academic environment and professional success but also specifically connected skill development to the importance of homework and its successful completion. Ramdass and Zimmerman reported that self-regulation is tied to homework in the area of three domains (motivational, cognitive and metacognitive). Student that are able to develop self-regulation are able to manage their time, goal set, be resilient and monitor performance influence homework behavior and learning.

### **Self-Regulation - Skill Development**

Self-Regulation has been defined and it refers to a person ability to govern and execute control over responses for the purpose of pursuing goals, adhering to standards (i.e. ideals, morality, social norms, performance goals, and expectations (Peterson et al., 2004). The ability for one to put the aforementioned into practice requires skill development; one must be equipped with tools and techniques for one to be successful.

The desired outcome for self-regulatory skill development is for one to be able to manage difficult emotions (frustration and anger) and to be able to pay attention, make appropriate and thoughtful decisions and overcome obstacles (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012).

Schunk (1990), proposed that a byproduct of self-regulation skill development is self-efficacy. Schunk suggested that there are three subcategories of self-regulation that play a vital role in one being able to improve skills, to attain goals, and to set challenging goals. Those three subcategories articulated by Schunk, suggest an individual first practice self- observation. Self- observation calls for intentional focus on one's behaviors which will inform and motivate. The end goal is to monitor and gauge goal attainment. Secondly, self-judgment calls for one to compare and contrast performance with goals. The end goal is to improve performance and project what exertion will be needed to improve. Lastly, self-reaction; self-reaction provides one an opportunity to appraise ones progress as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. The end goal will be to gauge satisfaction. These three sub categories under the heading of self-regulation foster a student's ability to have the ability to manage task, and note noticeable progress. The end product of this fostering results in a student's ability to build self- regulatory skills as well as self- efficacy.

Savitz-Romer and Bouffoard (2012), focused on four particular self-regulatory skills that enable one to govern and control self. The big idea and major focus is that self-regulation is a mechanism (tool) that allows individuals to move from pontification and hoping for certain outcomes to taking specific actions. The implication in daily life is that an adolescents will be able to govern and master their own behaviors and ultimately



their own academic, personal, social and career success. The tool and techniques suggested and recommended specifically speak to skills that adolescents can use as they develop skills that will aid in students developing a college going mindset. Those skills, techniques and mechanisms referring to one having the ability to focus and maintaining attention; delaying gratification; planning and overcoming obstacles; reflecting and using metacognition skills; forethought, performance control and self-reflection.

These ideas proposed by (Schunk, 1990; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; Zimmerman, 2000) point to specific skills and techniques that when implemented; students are able to be regulated and governed in the midst of stressful situation, hardships, roadblocks and life's difficult situations. Students that develop the aforementioned skills will be set on a trajectory from an adolescent stage that will have a lasting impact in success (Baumeister et al., 2002).

### **Review of Self-Regulation Studies**

The previous section was dedicated to presenting a case for the effect, impact and influence of self-regulation skill development from an individual as well as a school community perspective. This section will focus on presenting studies that have focused on research that has been conducted and exhibited results with significant outcomes. These studies contribute to the dialog and narrative of the role and function that self-regulation has had in the lives of children and adolescents.

Lemberger and Clemons (2012) added to the dialog of examining self-regulation by utilizing a small group intervention on 53 inner city African American 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The purpose of their study was to “examine how the small groups counseling component of

the Student Success Skills program might affect the development of executive functioning, metacognition, and connectedness.” (p. 452). These authors sought to measure the impact and changes in metacognition and executive functioning, which are components of self-regulation. The results of the study pointed to significant and positive influence in the development by utilizing the SSS small group program. According to the authors, teachers observed and reported that students improved in the area of executive functioning and metacognitive skills (Lemberger and Clemons, 2012). Lemberger, Selig, Bowers, and Rodgers (2015) studied executive functioning using the SSS curriculum in the Hispanic community classroom setting and documented its effectiveness as an educational supplement – further validating the SSS classroom intervention on self-regulation. Both (Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Lemberger et al., 2015) studies contribute to the narrative of self-regulation, executive functioning, and metacognition by demonstrating that when students obtain instruction via a small group setting and the classroom provides students with an opportunity to gain skills, this will aid them in being successful academically and behaviorally via the SSS curriculum.

The studies referenced in this chapter on self-regulation (executive functioning and metacognition) highlight the purpose and benefit of educators (School Counselors and Teachers) teaching self-regulation techniques. Students when taught these concepts; may benefit from the implementation of those specific skills and ultimately lead to academic and personal success. In reviewing these studies on self-regulation, it is evident that these aspects are relevant, practical and vital. The above research provides a rationale for using the SSS classroom program in studying its role in measuring self-regulation (executive functioning and metacognition). The next portion of this chapter will present a

case for managing test anxiety and school attendance which have been reported and documented as providing additional components and tools in a student's ability to self-regulate, exercise metacognitive skills and obtain student success.

### **Test Anxiety Management**

Test anxiety refers to a how a student perceives and understands a test, assessment and experience. The term test anxiety is defined as, "illness, unease, and heightened levels of stress all attributed to the administration of examinations" (Mulvenon, Stegman & Ritter, 2005, p. 37). Based on the current academic performance climate focused on assessment, the mandate of state required assessments connected to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Common Core and tests tied to curriculum in the classroom, the need for test anxiety management is vital and critical to student achievement and success (Beidel et al., 1999; Mulvenon et al., 2005).

The context and concern for students that deal with test anxiety according to the literature deal with situations in which students know the answers to the test but the degree of anxiety inhibits students from using their knowledge (Sargiolzaei, Fayazi - Bordbar, Samari, and Shakiba, 2003). This notion connects to (Cheek, Bradley, Reynolds, & Coy, 2002), in that students face extreme stress (physiologically and or psychologically) and rush to finish a testing session to alleviate the unpleasant situation. (Beidel, et al., 1999), reported that 34% to 41% of third to sixth graders have been affected by some sort of test anxiety.

Research focused on test anxiety management and applicable interventions (Cheek et al., 2002; Beidel, et al., 1999; Duchesne, Vitaro, Larose, & Tremblay, 2008;

Mehdinezhad & Baman, 2015; Mulvenon et al., 2005) are vital to student's success and their ability to perform well on classroom assessments, state and national assessments.

The documentation and need for test anxiety management connects to the American School Counselor Associations stance in that, "providing students with tools and strategies that build both emotional skills and healthy physical habits when preparing for a test can help them overcome test anxiety and the associated symptoms, while improving their ability to prepare for and perform on critical testing" (ASCA, 2004). Students having the ability and skill sets to manage their test anxiety will aid in them being successful, academically and emotionally.

### **Test Anxiety Intervention**

Based on the expectations for students to achieve higher test scores, the opportunity for school counselors to make a difference is clear. School counselors have a chance to identify and target a significant need by providing a data driven intervention. Reducing test anxiety provides an opportunity to produce data on how School counselors can make a difference. A school counselor can provide a critical and vital role in providing interventions that will alleviate test anxiety. According to Cheek et al. (2002) study, supports the notion that test anxiety interventions improve the school community culture and climate based on students feeling connected, not isolated and stigmatized. These findings connect with Mehdinezhad & Bamari (2015) study which pointed to the notion that when test anxiety management techniques are implemented can reduce test anxiety based on the development of problem solving skills. This particular skill set empowers and equips students to implement coping strategies that enable them to overcome personal, academic, and social matters. The byproduct of such implementation

reduces stress, anxiety and other psychological dilemmas. To combat these types of problems, Zeidner (2007) proposed a five component treatment plan: educational presentation, training in relaxation, coping imagery, time management / work schemes, and rehearsal / strengthening of coping skills. The aforementioned tools, techniques and concepts connect with Student Success Skills - Classroom Program (Brigman et al., 2007), in which students are afforded and provided the opportunity to develop skills, gain techniques, develop a toolbox and enhance their ability to manage their test anxiety (Carey, Brigman, Webb, Villares, & Harrington, 2014). School counselors can position themselves to provide leadership over school initiatives that foster management and build a calm climate as well as conduct classroom guidance activities that foster a mindset change and provide techniques that address test anxiety management (Cheek et al., 2002). The next portion of this chapter will present a case for improving school attendance and decreasing absences which has been reported as providing an additional layer in a student's ability to find success in school.

### **Significance of School Attendance**

School attendance plays a critical and vital role in student's success. Research portrays the notion that school attendance has a direct and significant correlation to student academic success, especially poignant for student of color (i.e. African American) (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Bernak, Williams, & Chung, 2014). School attendance provides a critical ingredient in student success based on the research that points to students who are able to experience a couple of key components tied to research. First, students who attend school regularly are successful based on healthy student interaction and positive school climate (Clark, 2003). Secondly, students are engaged with academic

development, opportunities to develop social skills and able to nurture skills related to resilience, problem solving and goal development (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; White & Kelly, 2010).

Based on the aforementioned research and mindset related to student academic success, students who are not at school miss out on vital learning opportunities. The alternative context and consequence for students who do not attend school regularly is exposure and connection to low academic performance, low test scores, and poor disciplinary records. School counselors can play a vital role and “make a significant impact in students having school attendance, academic performance and critical element in the school success formula” (White & Kelly, 2010, p. 233) by providing data driven intervention like SSS Classroom Program (Brigman & Webb, 2010). This type of intervention according to research has been able to provide students with tools that enable them to self-regulate, manage test anxiety and construct a healthy classroom culture that would make a positive impact on school attendance (Clark, 2003; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Miranda et al., 2007; Villares, Lemberger, Brigman, & Peluso, 2011).

### **Elementary School Counselors’ Role**

Elementary school counselors are charged and challenged to design and deliver culturally component comprehensive school counseling services (i.e. African American students) that aid in the promotion of student achievement in the areas of academic, career, and personal / social development (ASCA, 2012; Moore – Thomas & Day Vines, 2010). Based on a review of the literature, the role of elementary school counselor utilizing the American School Counselor Association (2012) *ASCA National Model* and

American School Counselor Association (2014) *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career Readiness for Every Student* as the philosophical foundation is encouraged to view their role as one that aids students in developing skills that will benefit their development (Akos, 2002; Lapan et al., 2002). As developmental advocate (Galassi & Akos, 2004), the school counselor can function as a champion in supporting students in developing self-management skills (Sink & MacDonald, 1998). School counselors are in a prime position to provide leadership and support to parents, teachers, and administrators to help African American elementary school students successfully navigate this period of development and transition (ASCA, 2012; Bailey & Bradbury-Bailey, 2010; Webb et al., 2005).

An example of an area in which school counselors can help elementary school students develop skills is in the area of self-regulation. Lemberger & Clemons, 2012, studied and observed that students benefited from learning self-regulation skills, which are necessary for school and life success. Lapan et al. (2002) stated that school counselors play a critical and vital role in nurturing the development of self-regulation and the usage of those skills. The benefit of teaching self-regulatory skills like planning ahead, managing time, evaluating decisions, reflecting on decisions provide students with skills and tools that will profit them in the present and future – elementary, middle, high school, college and career (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012).

School counselors have a skill set and knowledge base that allow them to serve as advocates for student's development (psychologically and socially). The role can be exhibited via classroom guidance presentations and activities. ASCA 2012, states that a school counseling curriculum can be presented in an instructional format for the purpose

of helping students “develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills” (p. 83). Classroom guidance activities ideally allow school counselors to interact and build relationships with students. This type of involvement and participation in the classroom can positively impact development in the area specific skill development and classroom culture. The byproduct of such activities may also permit follow up by the school counselors(s) via group activities and individual sessions. A program that has been developed, investigated, researched and has exhibited significant gains in academic and pro-social success is the Student Success Skills (SSS) – Classroom Guidance Program (Brigman and Webb, 2010). The next section will be dedicated to discussing the SSS Classroom program.

### **Theoretical Rationale for the Usage of Student Success Skills**

The American School Counselor Association – National Model has established a standard which calls for school counselors to evaluate how students are different as a byproduct of the school counseling program, and they challenge school counselors to exhibit the impact of the program of behavior and conduct (ASCA, 2012). The literature on self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance has produced reviews on what impacts student learning.

Boekaerts & Corno (2005) research, called for future research to target how students can generate self-regulation strategies that will aid in the pursuit of their goals and appropriately respond to the environment and culture. The Student Success Skills – Classroom Program, (Brigman and Webb, 2010; Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Villares, Frain, Brigman, Webb, & Peluso, 2012) is categorized by a series of theoretical teachings that address skills that support students ability to self-regulate and students’ connection to



school. The SSS Classroom program is constructed to teach academic, personal and interpersonal skills by focusing on a set of skills that include cognitive and metacognitive skills, social skills, and self-management skills (Brigman et al., 2007).

Lemberger & Clemons, 2012 investigated the effect of the SSS - Small Group Program (Brigman, Campbell, & Webb, 2010) on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade African American students and their self-regulation and school connection. Lemberger et al. (2015) investigated the effect on SSS – Classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010) on Hispanic middle school students and their executive functioning. Both studies measured that the small group and classroom guidance interventions influenced the development of self-reported self-regulation and executive functioning (Lemberger & Clemons, 2012). For the purpose of this study, this researcher will utilize the SSS – Classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010). The SSS program has been shown to positively affect student achievement and student behavior (Villares et al., 2012; Villares et al., 2011) in general. To date, a study has not yet been conducted from the perspective of measuring the impact of SSS on grade 5 African American student's ability to self-regulate, improve test anxiety, and school attendance. The National Panel for Evidence-Based School Counseling strongly recommended that future research using SSS expand its outcome measures to include variables related to other key skill areas, namely, social and self-management skills (Carey, Dimmitt, Hatch, Lapan, & Whiston, 2008). The current study will seek to measure the effects of the SSS classroom program on grade 5 African American students self-regulation (executive functioning and metacognition) skills, test anxiety management and school attendance improvement.

## **Goal of Study**

Student's ability to self-regulate, manage test anxiety, and improve school attendance impacts the student's success (academic, personal and social) in school and is a concern and problem that is worthy of attention and investigation. Especially for grade 5 African American students, these students are faced with a developmental journey that requires a set of skills that will assist in providing them with a trajectory and path for success. Recent literary research report a need for students to implement strategies and aid in skill set development (cognitive, social and self-management). The desired outcome of this study is to measure the impact and the need for development of healthy skills, techniques and habits that equip them to manage an academic environment and culture that may be ungoverned and lacks control.

The goal of this study is to investigate and measure the impact of the SSS Classroom program as a solution to the problem. The SSS classroom program is a comprehensive, evidence-based, counselor-led program that supports the development of these key skills. At present, there is a lack of outcome research tying school counselors to improved self-regulation skill development, test anxiety management, and attendance improvement of grade 5 African American elementary school students. Further research is needed to demonstrate accountability and the positive impact that school counselors have in schools. The current study will seek to measure the impact of the school counselor led SSS classroom program on the self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance on grade 5 African American students.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study used archival data with non-identifying markers. This archival data from a federal sponsored randomized study (Webb et al., 2011), was thoroughly securitized, vetted and approved by two independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committees, Florida Atlantic University and University of North Florida. This study included 4,321 grade 5 students, from two large diverse school districts. To bolster fidelity, Certified School Counselors received a one day curriculum training to learn how to effectively implement the SSS classroom intervention. Certified School Counselors implemented five SSS lessons spaced one week apart for five consecutive weeks during October through November and offered three booster sessions during the months of January, February and March. The data from this study was used to further examine the difference in grade 5 African American students ability to self-regulate, manage test anxiety and improve school attendance after participation in the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom intervention. Using archival data, the unit of analysis was each anonymous student. The dependent variables were self-regulation, test anxiety and attendance. The independent variable was SSS classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010).

## Sample Description

Table 1

*Summary table of total population demographics*

Ethnicity	Enrollment <i>n</i> = 2175	Percentage 100%
Unidentified	99	4.6%
Female	1034	47.5%
Male	1042	47.9 %
Asian	58	2.7%
African American	564	25.9%
Hispanic	681	31.3%
Indian	11	.5%
Multiracial	57	2.6%
White	705	32.4%

*Note:* Figures represents population from Palm Beach County, Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 2

*Total population SES, SPED and ELL*

	Population	Percentage of Population
SES	<i>n</i> = 1254	57.7%
SPED	<i>n</i> = 303	13.9 %
ELL	<i>n</i> = 572	26.3%

*Note:* SES is defined as Social Economic Status, student is receiving subsidized lunch and is considered low-income. SPED is defined as Special Education, student is receiving special education services. ELL is defined as English Language Learners, student is an English Language Learner. Figures represents population from Palm Beach County, Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 3

*Treatment and Control Group Demographics*

	Treatment <i>n</i> = 1128		Control <i>n</i> = 1047	
Female:	530	47.0 %	504	48.1%
Male:	515	45.7 %	527	50.3%
Unidentified	83	7.4 %	16	1.5 %
Asian	24	2.1%	34	3.2%
African American	294	26.1%	270	25.8%
Hispanic	383	34.0%	298	28.5
Indian	5	0.4%	6	0.6%
Multiracial	29	2.6%	28	2.7%
White	310	27.5%	395	37.7%

*Note.* *n* = number of Grade 5 students enrolled in treatment (15) and control (15) schools. Figures represents population from Palm Beach County, Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 4

*Treatment and Control Group Demographics*

	Treatment Population	Treatment Percentage of Population	Control Population	Control Percentage of Population
SES	<i>n</i> = 698	61.9%	<i>n</i> = 556	53.1%
SPED	<i>n</i> = 158	14.0%	<i>n</i> = 145	13.8%
ELL	<i>n</i> = 331	29.3%	<i>n</i> = 241	23.0%

*Note.* SES is defined as Social Economic Status, student is receiving subsidized lunch and is considered low-income. SPED is defined as Special Education, student is receiving special education services. ELL is defined as English Language Learners, student is an English Language Learner. Figures represents population from Palm Beach County, Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 5

*Total population of African American students (30 Schools)*

	Population	Percentage of Population
Female	282	50
Male	282	50
SES	464	82%
SPED	95	16.8%
ELL	154	27.3%

*Note.*  $n$  = number African American grade 5 students in treatment and control groups. Total population,  $n$  = 564. SES is defined as Social Economic Status, student is receiving subsidized lunch and is considered low-income. SPED is defined as Special Education, student is receiving special education services. ELL is defined as English Language Learners, student is an English Language Learner. Figures represents population from P Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 6

*African American students, treatment (15 schools) and control (15 schools)*

	Treatment Population $n = 294$ Total	Treatment Percentage of Population	Control Population $N = 270$ Total	Control Percentage of Population
Female	152	51.7%	130	48.1%
Male	142	48.3%	140	51.9%
SES	252	85%	212	78.5%
SPED	52	17.7%	43	15.9%
ELL	83	28.2%	71	26.3%

*Note.*  $n$  = number of African American students according to the treatment and control group populations. SES is defined as Social Economic Status, student is receiving subsidized lunch and is considered low-income. SPED is defined as Special Education, student is receiving special education services. ELL is defined as English Language Learners, student is an English Language Learner. Figures represents population from Palm Beach County, Florida. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Utilizing archival data of student grade 5 African American students from Palm Beach County, Florida was represented in this study. The target population were students in general education, special education (SPED) and English Language Learners (ELL) grade 5 classrooms (average of 10 – 11 age). Grade 5 students and certified school

counselors from public elementary schools in Palm Beach County, Florida participated in this study.

An appropriate sample size a priori power - G power computer program was utilized and indicated a minimum total sample size of 74 participants (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, A., 2009):

- Alpha level of .05
- Power level of .80
- Effect size of .50

### **Study Design**

This study evaluated the impact of the SSS classroom program on grade 5 African American Self-Regulation (SESSS, Self-Regulation of Arousal Scale), Test Anxiety (Test Anxiety of MSLQ), and School Attendance. This study aimed to provide a link between school counselor led intervention and improved self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to compare posttest mean differences on the three dependent variables (grade 5 African American self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance). Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to compare post mean scores for any of the three dependent variables if a significant difference between groups is found on pre-test scores. An effect size was calculated in order to determine if an observed difference of the SSS classroom program (Brigman and Webb, 2010) on grade 5 African American self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance is not only statically significant but also important and meaningful (Cohen, 1988; Sink, & Mvududu, 2010).

Three dependent variables were used in this study, the Self- Regulation of Arousal Scale of SESSS (Carey et al, 2014); the second Test Anxiety of MSLQ (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990); and School Attendance, as reported by school district data.

The independent variable in this study was the Student Success Skills (SSS) classroom (Brigman and Webb, 2010) program.

### **Dependent Variables**

The following dependent variables were included in the study:

- The Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, a student self-report instrument;
- The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, student self-report instrument; and
- School Attendance, as reported by Palm Beach School District;

### **Independent Variables**

The Student Success Skills classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010), led by certified school counselors, was the independent variable.

### **Description of Instrumentation**

#### **Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale:**

This 33 question instrument was designed to measure a student's frequency of engagement in school success skills (Carey et al, 2014). Students will be asked to select



how often they have engaged in a list of items, “in the last two weeks.” Possible responses will include:

- I didn’t do this at all
- I did this once
- I did this two times
- I did this three or more times.

The SESSS assessment is targeted for use with students in grades 3 -12 (Carey et al., 2014). This assessment has an overall reliability alpha coefficient range of .34 - .36; scores were distributed normally with an mean of 65.83 and a standard deviation of 15.44 (Carey et al., 2014)

**Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale:**

The Test Anxiety subscale was used to measure students’ test anxiety. The scale has four items that reflect test anxiety (e.g., “I am so nervous during a test that I cannot remember facts that I have learned.”) and has a coefficient alpha reliability of .75. Scores on the scale have been demonstrated to be related to students’ performance on quizzes and tests and to overall class grades (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

**School Attendance:**

District level data provided by a school district project coordinator. Reported at the end of grade 4, grade 5, and grade 6.

## **Research Questions**

1. Is there an increase in self-regulation skills of grade 5 African American students after participating in the Student Success Skills classroom program?
2. Is there an improvement in test anxiety after grade 5 African American students participate in the Student Success Skills classroom program?
3. Is there an increase in school attendance of grade 5 African American students after participating in the Student Success Skills classroom program?

## **Hypotheses**

### **Null Hypothesis 1**

There will be no statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills survey Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 1**

There will be a statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills survey Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Null Hypothesis 2**

There will be no statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, between

grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 2**

There will be a statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Null Hypothesis 3**

There will be no statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 3**

There will be a statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

## **Data Analysis**

Using archival data, this study evaluated the impact of the SSS classroom program on grade 5 African American students, self-regulation (SESSS, self-regulation of Arousal scale), test anxiety (Test Anxiety of MSLQ), and school attendance. This study aimed to provide a link between school counselor led intervention and improved self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) will be conducted to compare mean differences across two or more levels

of independent variable (SSS) on the dependent variable (grade 5 African American student's self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance). Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) used to compare post mean scores for any of the three dependent variables if a significant difference between groups is found on pre-test scores. An effect size was calculated in order to determine if an observed difference of the SSS classroom program (Brigman and Webb, 2010) on grade 5 African American student's self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance is not only statically significant but also important and meaningful (Cohen, 1988; Sink & Mvududu, 2010).

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a description of the research design, participants, intervention, description of instrumentation and data analysis used in this study. This chapter also provided details related to the dependent, independent variables, hypothesizes, and research questions. Chapter IV will present the results of this data analysis and chapter V will discuss the study findings and researchers conclusions.

## IV. RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the descriptive means and the tests of hypothesis using a Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) to determine differences between the treatment and control groups' self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. A Bonferroni correction was used to protect Type I Errors an alpha level of .05 was set when testing each hypothesis. A partial eta squared effect size is reported for each outcome. Adhering to the recommendation of (Sink & Mvududu, 2010), interpretation of statistical significance was measured within the bounds of previous related research, design of study, levels for the partial eta squared (small, medium and large) and the impact of data.

### **Descriptive Data**

Prior to the main analysis, all the variables of interest were examined using the SPSS 23 program for accuracy of data entry, missing values, the normality of distributions, and outliers. The sample included 564 grade 5 African American male and female students. Table 5 displays treatment and comparison group means, standard deviations, and change schools for the dependent variables by treatment condition.

Table 7

*Treatment and comparison group means, standard deviations, and change scores for self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance by condition*

Measure	Condition ( <i>n</i> )	Pretest <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Posttest 2 <i>M (SD)</i>	Gain Score +/-
SRA	T (281)	7.804 (2.7257)	7.959 (2.7780)	7.362 (2.9017)	- 0.442
	C (247)	7.895 (2.5783)	8.020 (2.8204)	8.049 (2.7842)	+ 0.154
TA	T (284)	9.655 (4.4309)	9.373 (4.8194)	8.709 (4.1466)	- 0.866
	C (259)	9.575 (4.3657)	9.724 (4.6972)	9.478 (4.7076)	- 0.097
Attendance	T (282)	.0317 (.0627)	.0300 (.03119)	.01622 (.02441)	-0.0155
	C (253)	.0302 (.0377)	.0299 (.0366)	.0479 (.1447)	-0.0175

*Note.* *n* = number; *M* = Mean; *SD* = standard deviation. T= Treatment group; C = Control group; +/- = mean change score; SRA = Self-Regulation of Arousal of Student Engagement in School Success Skills survey; TA = Test Anxiety subscale of the Motivational Learning Strategies Questionnaire Scale. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

### **Test of Hypotheses**

The dependent measures studied were self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance. In the following section the researcher will present the results from the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) tests. In addition, decisions on the null hypotheses that were determined, using an alpha level of .05, will be presented along with the partial eta squared effect size estimates for each measure.

### **Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS), Self-Regulation of Arousal Subscale.**

To examine the hypothesis that grade 5 African American students receiving the SSS classroom intervention would signal less self-regulation as compared to grade 5 African American students who did not received the SSS classroom intervention MANCOVA tests were conducted. The participant's pretest score for the SESSS, Self-Regulation Arousal Subscale instrument was used as the covariate to control for differences between students' perceptions of self-regulation prior to the intervention. Results from the MANCOVA revealed statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups (Wilks'  $\lambda = .979$ ,  $F [1, 430] = 4.159$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .021$ , small ES).

Follow up univariate tests showed there was no statistically significant difference between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for Self-Regulation Subscale of the SESSS at posttest 1 ( $F [1, 430] = .027$ ,  $p = .869$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .000$ , no ES); however, there was a statistically significant difference between the grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for self-regulation at posttest 2 ( $F [1, 430] = 7.293$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .017$ , small ES). Table 6 and Table 7 presents the findings of the post hoc univariate tests for Self-Regulation at posttest 1 and posttest 2 respectively.

Table 8

Summary of univariate analysis for self-regulation at posttest 1 by condition

Source of Variance	Df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	.172	.172	.027
Within groups	430	2721.027	6.328	
Total	433	31020.000		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest one data was obtained two weeks after intervention. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 9

Summary of univariate analysis for self-regulation at posttest 2 by condition

Source of Variance	df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	50.872	50.872	7.293*
Within groups	430	2999.296	6.975	
Total	433	29023.000		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest two data was obtained thirty days after intervention. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

The results were used to test the following hypothesis HO<sub>1</sub>: There will be a statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by SESSS Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not. Based on the above findings, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis because a statistically significant difference was found in Posttest 2 between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups. As noted in Table 7 the F test for Self-Regulation at posttest 2 for groups were significant ( $F [1, 430] = 7.293, p = .007, \eta_p^2 = .017$ , small ES)



### **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety Subscale.**

The MSLQ Test Anxiety subscale reflects student's confidence in their ability to manage test anxiety activities. To examine the hypothesis that grade 5 African American student's ability to manage test anxiety would signal less as compared to grade 5 African American students who did not received the SSS classroom intervention MANCOVA tests were conducted. The participant's pretest score for test anxiety was used as the covariate to control for differences between students' perceived level of test anxiety prior to the intervention. Results from the MANCOVA revealed statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups (Wilks'  $\lambda = .988$ ,  $F [1, 430] = 2.72$ ,  $p = .068$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .012$ , small ES).

Follow up univariate tests showed there was no statistically significant difference between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for Test Anxiety at posttest 1 ( $F [1, 437] = .566$ ,  $p = .452$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .001$ , no ES); however, there was a statistically significant difference between the grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for test anxiety at posttest 2 ( $F [1, 437] = 5.330$ ,  $p = .021$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .021$ , small ES). Table 8 and Table 9 presents the findings of the post hoc univariate tests for test anxiety at posttest 1 and posttest 2 respectively.

Table 10

Summary of univariate analysis for test anxiety at posttest 1 by condition

Source of Variance	df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	8.040	.8.040	.566
Within groups	437	6210.332	14.211	
Total	440	47854.000		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest one data obtained at two weeks after intervention. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 11

Summary of univariate analysis for test anxiety at posttest 2 by condition

Source of Variance	df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	83.269	83.269	.5.330*
Within groups	437	6827.529	15.624	
Total	440	44321.000		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest two data was obtained thirty weeks after intervention. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

The results were used to test the following hypothesis HO<sub>2</sub>: There will be a statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by MSLQ Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not. Based on the above findings, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis because a statistically significant difference was found in Posttest 2 between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups. As noted in Table 9 the F test for test anxiety at posttest 2 for groups were significant (posttest 2 ( $F [1, 437] = 5.330, p = .021, \eta_p^2 = .021$ , small ES).

## School Attendance

To examine the hypothesis that grade 5 African American students school attendance (absent rate) would signal less absences as compared to grade 5 African American students who did not received the SSS classroom intervention MANCOVA tests were conducted. The participant's pretest score for attendance was used as the covariate to control for differences between students' attendance prior to the intervention. Results from the MANCOVA revealed statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups (Wilks'  $\lambda = .979$ ,  $F [1, 430] = 5.41$ ,  $p = .005$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .021$ , small ES).

Follow up univariate tests showed there was no statistically significant difference between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for School attendance at posttest 1 ( $F [1, 430] = .068$ ,  $p = .794$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .000$ , no ES); however, there was a statistically significant difference between the grade 5 African American students in the treatment and control groups for school attendance at posttest 2 ( $F [1, 430] = 10.254$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .019$ , small ES). Table 10 and Table 11 presents the findings of the post hoc univariate tests for test anxiety at posttest 1 and posttest 2 respectively.

Table 12

Summary of univariate analysis for school attendance at posttest 1 by condition

Source of Variance	df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	6.396E-5	.6396E-5	.068
Within groups	521	.490	.001	
Total	524	1.048		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest one data was obtained at the end of grade 5. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

Table 13

Summary of univariate analysis for school attendance at posttest 2 by condition

Source of Variance	df	SS	Mean Square	F
Between groups	1	.070	.070	10.254*
Within groups	521	3.541	.007	
Total	524	4.025		

Note. df = degrees of freedom. SS = Sum of Squares. F = F distribution. \*  $p < .05$ . Posttest two data was obtained at the end of grade 6. Data furnished by (Webb et al., 2011).

The results were used to test the following hypothesis HO<sub>3</sub>: There will be a statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not. Based on the above findings, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis because a statistically significant difference was found in Posttest 2 between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups. As noted in Table 11 the F test for School Attendance at posttest 2 for groups were significant (posttest 2 ( $F [1, 430] = 10.254, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .019$ , small ES).

## **Summary of Hypotheses**

A series of MANCOVA analysis was used to determine statistically significant differences between students who received the SSS classroom intervention (Brigman & Webb, 2010) and the African American students who did not receive the intervention. The alpha level was set at .05. Decisions about the three null and alternative hypotheses are provided.

### **Null Hypothesis 1**

HO<sub>1</sub>: There will be no statistically significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by SESSS, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in self-regulation as measured by SESSS, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale posttest scores between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected

### **Alternative Hypothesis 1**

Alternative 1: There will be statistical significant difference in self-regulation, as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills survey Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in self-regulation as measured by Student Engagement in School Success Skills survey Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale

posttest scores between grade African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### **Null Hypothesis 2**

HO<sub>2</sub>: There will be no statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by MSLQ Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in Test Anxiety as measured by MSLQ Test Anxiety subscale posttest scores between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 2**

Alternative 2: There will be a statistically significant difference in test anxiety, as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) Test Anxiety subscale, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in test anxiety as measured by Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) Test Anxiety subscale, posttest scores between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### **Null Hypothesis 3**

HO<sub>3</sub>: There will be no statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in school attendance as measured by school district data posttest scores between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Alternative Hypothesis 3**

Alternative 3: There will be a statistically significant difference in school attendance, as measured by school district data, between grade 5 African American students who participated in the SSS classroom program and those who did not.

There was statistical significant difference in school attendance as measured by school district data posttest scores between grade 5 African American students in the treatment and comparison groups; therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected.

### **Summary**

This chapter included a summary of the statistical analyses used to examine the research questions and above referenced hypotheses. Descriptive statistics for the instruments, summaries of pertinent findings resulting from the MANCOVA tests, and calculated effect size estimates for each of the measures were provided. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the data found in the study, the link to professional school counseling literature, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

## V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of chapter V is to present the findings reported in chapter IV and discuss the conclusions of this study. First, the outcomes of this study and significant findings will be presented. Secondly, linkage to current school counseling literature will be reviewed. Next, the methodological implications of this study will follow, then implications for future research and practice. In conclusion, limitations of this study will be presented.

### **Outcomes of Study**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate if the evidenced-based school counseling SSS classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010) had statistically significant differences on grade 5 African American students self-regulation, test anxiety, and school attendance between, those who received the SSS intervention and grade 5 African American participants and those who did not receive the SSS intervention. Grade 5 African American student's self-regulation was measured by Student Engagement School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale. Test anxiety was measured by the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale. School attendance was reported by district level data, provided by a school district project coordinator. This study contributes to current research in the school



counseling field based on four rationales. The study provides: (a) support for SSS as a school counselor-led interventions to support students self-regulation skill development, (b) evidence of the impact of decreasing test anxiety as part of a comprehensive school counseling intervention, (c) demonstrates the positive impact school counselors have on student's positive school attendances rates and subsequently lowering students absence rates, (d) highlights the vital role school counselors provide in targeting and addressing elementary African American students need to develop skills and techniques for academic and social success. Building skills will enable these students to combat contextual and sociocultural obstacles so that they are equipped to be victors and not victims.

This study was designed based on use of archival data with non-identifying markers. This archival data is from a federal sponsored randomized study (Webb et al., 2011), this particular study examined the grade 5 African American population ( $n = 564$ , 25.9%), treatment school ( $n = 294$ , 26.1%), control school ( $n = 270$ , 25.8%). This population came from 30 Palm Beach County Schools (15 treatment schools and 15 control schools).

Results of this archival study investigated and examined data from the following instruments: (a) Student Engagement in School Success Skills (SESSS) survey, Self-Regulation of Arousal subscale (Carey et al., 2014), (b) Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), Test Anxiety subscale (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), and (c) School Attendance data reported by a school district project coordinator. Statistically significant differences were found in self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance between participants in the treatment groups and in the control groups.

## **Hypothesis 1**

Hypothesis 1 stated that significant differences in self-regulation would be found between grade 5 African American students in the treatment group who received the Student Success Skills classroom program and their peers who did not. The hypothesis was validated by the results. Significance was found in the Posttest 3 which was offered 30 weeks from Posttest 1. Using the standard  $\eta_p^2$ , a small effect size (.017) was found for the SSS classroom impact on grade 5 African American student's self-regulation (Sink & Mvududu, 2010). These findings support a rationale for school counselors to use the SSS intervention to positively impact self-regulation skill development.

Research specifically connecting to the SSS program as an intervention to improve self-regulation skills development with African American and other minority groups has been established (Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Lemberger et al., 2015, Miranda et al., 2007). The need to have a data driven intervention to address African American students is based on the literatures report of negative messages connected to risks, obstacles and social pressures exist (Franklin, 2004; Nicholas et al., 2008). With this understanding, there is a significant need for elementary African American students to grasp self-regulatory skills to manage their daily activities, life circumstances, obstacles and as they transition to middle school (Akos, 2005; Pelco & Reed-Victor, 2007). These skills equip and empower students academically and socially to be successful in the short term and in the long term (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012).

## **Hypothesis 2**

Hypothesis 2 stated that significant differences in test anxiety would be found between grade 5 African American students in the treatment group who received the SSS

classroom program and their peers who did not. The hypothesis was validated by the results. Significance was found in the Posttest 3 which was offered 30 weeks from Posttest 1. Using the standard  $\eta_p^2$ , a small effect size (.021) was found for the SSS classroom impact on grade 5 African American student's test anxiety (Sink & Mvududu, 2010). These findings support a rationale for school counselors to use the SSS intervention to decrease test anxiety.

Research focused on test anxiety management and applicable interventions are vital to student's success and their ability to perform well on assessments, manage their emotions and thinking (Cheek et al., 2002; Beidel et al., 1999; Duchesne et al., 2008; Mehdinezhad & Baman, 2015; Mulvenon et al., 2005). The data from this study aligns with literature that supports that SSS Classroom is an intervention well suited to aid in decreasing students test anxiety (Carey et al., 2008).

### **Hypothesis 3**

Hypothesis 3 stated that significant differences in school attendance would be found between grade 5 African American students in the treatment group who received the Student Success Skills classroom program and their peers who did not. The hypothesis was validated by the results. Significance was found in the Posttest 2 which was offered 2 weeks from Posttest 1. Using the standard  $\eta_p^2$ , a small effect size (.019) was found for the SSS classroom impact on grade 5 African American student's school attendance (Sink & Mvududu, 2010). These findings support a rationale for school counselors to use the SSS intervention to increase school attendance and decrease absences.

Research endorses a narrative that school attendance has a direct and significant correlation to student academic success, especially minority students (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Bernak, et al., 2014). Students who attend school learn new skills, concepts and are able to develop, student who do not attend school miss out on learning and opportunities to glean from concepts and experiences. School attendance is vital to student success based on two factors - first, students who attend school have access and are exposed to the healthy interactions and benefit from those interactions (Clark, 2003). Secondly, they have the opportunity to learn and gain new knowledge based on their presence in school (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; White & Kelly, 2010).

### **Linkage of Results to School Counseling Literature**

The ability for African American elementary students to self-regulate, manage test anxiety and attend school with high levels of consistency hinges in part on students having a skill set and toolbox that enables to be successful. Elementary African American students having a skill set that equips them with tools to be victors and not victims within their academic, social and cultural context is vital to their success in the short and long term (Henfield et al., 2014; Lemberger et al., 2015; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; Whiting, 2006).

In 2014, American School Counselor Association published the *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career Readiness for Every Student* establishing the standards, structure and expectations for school counselors. This document defines the knowledge, skills and attitudes students must possess to achieve academic success and social/emotional development. The data and gains extrapolated from this study address and allow students to glean specific mindsets standards and

behaviors standards (ASCA, 2014) that will enable students to be successful. The school counselor providing a data driven intervention, SSS Classroom (Villares et al., 2011) is in prime position to provide data for how students are different based on a comprehensive school counseling program and intervention. As it relates to this study, the data obtained highlights the notion that SSS Classroom does align with the *ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career Readiness for Every Student* and can be used to teach these skills.

This study contributes to the school counseling literature based on three significant factors. First, connects and builds on (Lemberger & Clemons, 2012; Lemberger et al., 2015; Miranda et al., 2007) studies of African American student's experience with the SSS classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010). Secondly, this study successfully connects SSS Classroom program (Brigman and Webb, 2010) impact on elementary African American students by investigating the three components of this study (a) self-regulation, (b) text anxiety (c) school attendance and finding statistical gains and improvement. Thirdly, school counselors are in a position to advocate for grade 5 student preparation with skills learned via the SSS classroom program for successful transition to middle school grades (ACT 2008; Akos, 2002; Barna & Brott, 2013; Pelco & Reed-Victor, 2007). These factors and skills have been supported by literature as indicators that lead to students' academic and social / emotional success (Ramdass & Zimmerman, 2011; Cheek et al., 2002; Clark, 2003).

### **Methodological Implications**

This study used the analysis of pre-existing data, archival data with non-identifying markers. The data that was collected by school counselors as part of normal

educational practice (Webb et al., 2011) and did not interrupt the normal functioning of school schedules (Dimmitt et al., 2007). This study followed a structured methodological process that included random selection of participants and random assignment to the treatment and control groups. Statistical significance and effect sizes are reported in this study, indicating the SSS classroom intervention is an effective school counseling intervention that equips with skills and techniques that scaffold student success.

### **Implications for Future Research and Practice**

Statistically significant findings from this study suggest the SSS classroom guidance intervention is an effective intervention for (a) improving self-regulatory skills, (b) lowering test anxiety, and (c) increasing school attendance and lowering absences. Students in the treatment group received the SSS classroom intervention self-reported improvement in self-regulation and test anxiety and according to attendance data, student's absence rate was lower compared to the students who did not participate in the intervention (control group). Additionally, school counselors are in a position to consult and collaborate with teachers who serve a high population of African American students. Training teachers on reiterating SSS concepts throughout their classroom lessons and classroom management techniques, both are hallmarks of the SSS Classroom training manual.

Future research on this topic should include the use of another component of the SSS curriculum by including the parent component, Parent Success Skills (Brigman & Peluso, 2012) with African American students. Additionally, further research should assess the impact and significance of services that students from low sociocultural economic status (SES) and exceptional student education (ESE) receive from school and

community, if any. Future studies should also include qualitative feedback from the students and glean understanding of the specific skills students practiced to be successful - academically, socially and emotionally.

### **Limitations**

The current study includes several limitations. Limited this study to archival data. The participants are from thirty public south Florida elementary schools in the same school district. All participants in this study are grade 5 African American students. Participants utilized self-report instruments. The timeline of study was segmented to one school year. Lastly, data regarding school, community resources and services that may be available to participants was not collected.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Results of this dissertation study supported the belief that grade 5 African American students who received the SSS classroom intervention (Brigman & Webb, 2010) would mark significant differences between those who received the SSS intervention and those who did not receive the intervention. Gains were discovered in these areas of (self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance) for grade 5 African American students who received the SSS intervention compared to grade 5 African American students who did not receive the intervention. The gains documented in this study reflect improvement over time. This notation reflects the importance time needed for the concepts to be learned by students and applied to their respective academic, personal and social life. This will be a valuable concept for students, parents, school counselors, teachers and school administrators to reasonably expect implementation of

SSS concepts over time and not immediate. This study contributes to the evidence based outcome research literature by providing quantitative data that supports the vital need of school counselors conducting an intervention that teaches skills that addresses self-regulation, test anxiety and school attendance for African American students.



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