Student Success Skills: An Evidence-Based School Counseling Program Grounded in Humanistic Theory

ELIZABETH VILLARES
MATTHEW LEMBERGER
GREG BRIGMAN
LINDA WEBB

The Student Success Skills program is an evidence-based, counselor-led intervention founded on a variety of humanistic principles. Five studies and a recent meta-analysis provide evidence that integrating human potential practices into the school by teaching students foundational learning skills strengthens the link between school counseling interventions and student achievement.

The interventions that school counselors provide must, by their very nature, aim to maximize the human and social potential for each individual involved in a given school community. This assertion is supported by a 2005 Delphi study that ranked the most prominent research questions in the field of school counseling and placed interventions designed to improve student achievement as the top issue facing the field (Dimmitt, Carey, McGannon, & Henningson, 2005). This Delphi study coincides with numerous calls from the literature that challenge school counselors to demonstrate the impact that their programs have on students' academic and behavioral outcomes (Brott, 2006; Lapan, 2005; Paisley & Hayes, 2003; Sink, Akos, Turnbull, & Mvududu, 2008; Sink & Stroh, 2003). More than an end in itself, the achievement-support behaviors of school counselors must be done in such a way to empower the student and community alike, therefore embodying the spirit of humanism. The Student Success Skills (SSS) program is a clear example of a school counseling intervention that supports student academic achievement (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brig-

---

Elizabeth Villares, Department of Counselor Education, Florida Atlantic University, Jupiter; Matthew Lemberger, Department of Individual, Family and Community Education, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Greg Brigman, Department of Counselor Education, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton; Linda Webb, Department of Counselor Education, Florida Atlantic University, Davie. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Greg Brigman, Department of Counselor Education, Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431 (e-mail: gbrigman@fau.edu).

© 2011 by the American Counseling Association. All rights reserved.

man, Webb, & Campbell, 2007; Campbell & Brigman, 2005; Webb, Brigman, & Campbell, 2005) and includes intervention strategies specifically designed to maximize the human potential of young learners. As such, the use of SSS intervention can serve to support the efficacy of school counseling services and lend support to the pertinence of humanistic theory as each fosters student development and achievement.

The SSS program is a structured school counseling curriculum and training scheme that equips practitioners with relevant and useful activities designed to support achievement and related school behaviors in students Grades 4 through 12. This program, therefore, stands on a philosophic conviction that each student possesses a given potential to achieve, and yet such potential is too often mitigated by myriad factors such as social circumstance, personal misappropriation of skill, or simple happenstance. In this way, SSS coincides with humanistic theory, particularly humanistic applications to education and school counseling (Lemberger, 2010; Patterson, 1973), in that the activities and encouragement of the intervening counselor can maximize the innate capacity of the student to achieve, create personal and social meaning, and become a contributing member of society.

If the profession of school counseling is to remain relevant to education systems and students, intervention programs such as SSS must be shown to be efficacious and personally meaningful to the individuals served. To this end, this article describes the relevance of SSS to students and schools, details how this relevance is associated with humanistic principles, and describes the impact of this approach on student achievement and related school behaviors. The SSS program's allegiance to humanism, therefore, should further lend support to an already robust body of literature related to humanistic counseling interventions (Elliott, 2002). Moreover, SSS demonstrates the humanistic agency of young people to achieve when afforded appropriate skills and opportunity.

STRUCTURE OF THE SSS PROGRAM

Foundational Structure of the SSS Program

The SSS program is based on the findings of a series of large reviews of educational research that identified foundational skill sets and attitudes that separate successful and academically competent students from those who struggle and fail (Hattie, Biggs, & Purdie, 1996; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1994; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). These five research reviews found the following foundational skills sets and attitudes to be critical to student success: (a) cognitive and metacognitive skills such as goal setting, progress monitoring, and memory skills; (b) social skills such as interpersonal skills, social problem solving, listening, and teamwork skills; (c) self-management skills such as managing attention, motivation, anxiety,

and anger; and (d) attitudes such as healthy optimism and self-efficacy. The conclusions drawn from these five reviews were based on research on successful youth, resiliency research, and related findings that focused on what students need in order to learn.

To broaden the comprehensiveness of the SSS approach, Brigman and Peluso (2009) developed a parent component, the Parent Success Skills, designed to help parents understand and support the development of these essential skills. Four 90-minute workshops provide parents with the understanding of the key concepts of SSS and the tools to encourage the development of the cognitive, social, and self-management skills that their children are learning in class. When the students in the classroom, along with the parents and the teachers, all pull in the same direction, the conditions for growth increase. Parents and teachers are also engaged to support students' goal setting and progress monitoring. They are taught how to use the language of healthy optimism to encourage the positive striving of the students. The result is that an entire community of students, parents, and teachers are all working together to foster the development of each student's potential. This is holism at the systems level.

The SSS approach is aimed at increasing the sense of agency and individual capacity of the student as a learner and a meaning-making entity within the school environment. SSS draws support from empirical and conceptual literature commensurate with the spirit of humanism. In terms of learning and education, SSS is built on research on how students learn (Wang et al., 1994), on educational interventions that have the greatest impact on learning (Hattie et al., 1996), and on instructional practices that have the strongest impact on learning (Marzano et al., 2001). Related to the psychology of engaging in a school environment, SSS is built on a research base deriving from student resilience (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989), and healthy optimism (Seligman, 1991). Each of these psychological skills is contextualized, and therefore made whole, with ecological factors such as empathy, attending, listening, encouragement, and social problem-solving skills. Finally, SSS encourages students to pursue wellness goals and behaviors such as nutrition, exercise, social support, and rest, which all have an impact on energy and mood.

Curricular Structure

The SSS program has two program components: a classroom program (Brigman & Webb, 2010) for all students and a small group counseling program (Brigman & Webb, 2007) for students needing additional support following the classroom program. The school counselor presents the initial five SSS classroom lessons, each spaced 1 week apart, early in the school year to set the students up for success. The five SSS lessons teach students skills, strategies, and attitudes that help students reach their potential academically and socially. Classroom teachers then cue students to use the strategies when

appropriate to master their general curriculum throughout the entire school year. Three booster classroom lessons occur once per month following the completion of the original five lessons, usually in January, February, and March. Therefore, the idea is to introduce early in the year these essential skills and then embed them into the day-to-day life of the class.

After the first five SSS classroom lessons are presented, students who may need additional support are invited to participate in an eight-session small group version of the SSS program. Each group session supports students in honing the SSS skills, strategies, and attitudes introduced in the classroom program. In addition, the SSS group component includes a social problem-solving and peer-coaching model that is used during each session. The peer-coaching model teaches students how to give encouraging and corrective feedback to one another after a role-play situation in which students practice new healthy responses to typical social problems. The same three sets of essential skills (i.e., cognitive, social, and self-management) that are taught in the five classroom lessons are practiced each week.

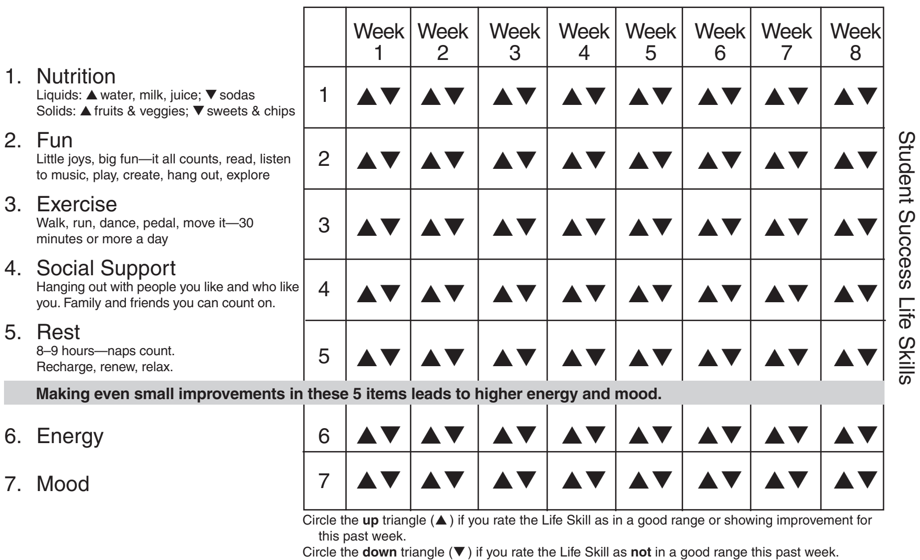
Most interventions developed to improve academic achievement target one specific area such as math or reading. SSS is more holistic and targets foundational learning skills and attitudes that are needed for success in all subjects. This is a strength-building approach rather than a deficit reduction approach. These skills and attitudes help low-performing students improve their math and reading scores. These same skills are also stressed as essential for advanced students in science, technology, engineering, and math programs. In addition to having a strong impact on math and reading test scores (Villares, Frain, Brigman, Webb, & Peluso, 2010), the skills and attitudes taught in the SSS program are also associated with the best interventions in areas other than academics, such as violence prevention (Committee for Children, 2010), drug abuse prevention (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2004), character education (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2010), career education (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2004), teen pregnancy prevention (McWhirter et al., 2004), and school dropout prevention (National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, 2009).

The underlying premise is that all students must have a core set of learning, social, and self-management skills and that these skills can be taught. If students can learn and practice these skills in a caring, supportive, and encouraging environment where mistakes are part of the process and even small improvements are recognized, their confidence in their abilities will increase. Once students become more confident, they are willing to put forth more effort to master learning any new information or skill including the curriculum. This leads directly to improved academic and social outcomes. The SSS skills, strategies, and attitudes are organized around five areas: (a) goal setting, progress monitoring, and success sharing; (b) creating a caring, supportive, and encouraging class environment; (c) memory; (d) managing anxiety to perform at one's peak, even under pressure; and (e) healthy optimism.

SSS AND HUMANISTIC THEORY

Several key principles of humanistic theory are central to the SSS approach. One of the key principles of the SSS program is that everyone has the ability to be successful. This aligns with the humanistic principle that Cain (2001) called having a positive view of the individual as self-actualizing. Maslow (1970) and Rogers (1951) emphasized that people try to make the most of their potential, which they called self-actualization. The SSS program provides tools to support this striving by helping students develop new strategies and skills that can help them reach their goals. For example, instilling hope in the individual that they can set goals, develop plans, and make progress toward those goals is one of the anchors of the SSS program. Each week students have the opportunity to set goals using two different tools: Looking Good/Feeling Good Life Skills Scale (see Figure 1) and Seven Keys to Course Mastery (see Figure 2).

Students who doubt their ability often avoid setting goals out of fear of failure and thus bypass opportunities to develop their true potential. The SSS approach stresses to the student, "don't doubt your ability, doubt your strategy and if what you are doing is not working, try something different" (Brigman & Webb, 2010, p. 23). To support each student's success in reaching his or her goals, the school counselor teaches the SSS strategies.



		Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
1. Nutrition Liquids: ▲ water, milk, juice; ▼ sodas Solids: ▲ fruits & veggies; ▼ sweets & chips	1	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
2. Fun Little joys, big fun—it all counts, read, listen to music, play, create, hang out, explore	2	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
3. Exercise Walk, run, dance, pedal, move it—30 minutes or more a day	3	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
4. Social Support Hanging out with people you like and who like you. Family and friends you can count on.	4	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
5. Rest 8–9 hours—naps count. Recharge, renew, relax.	5	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
Making even small improvements in these 5 items leads to higher energy and mood.									
6. Energy	6	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
7. Mood	7	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼

Student Success Life Skills

Circle the **up** triangle (▲) if you rate the Life Skill as in a good range or showing improvement for this past week.
Circle the **down** triangle (▼) if you rate the Life Skill as **not** in a good range this past week.

FIGURE 1

The Looking Good/Feeling Good Life Skills Scale

From *Student Success Skills: Classroom Manual* (p. 27), by G. Brigman and L. Webb, 2010, Boca Raton, FL: Atlantic Education Consultants. Copyright 2010 by Atlantic Education Consultants. Reprinted with permission.

Student Success Skills

Seven keys to mastering any course:

1. I am good at picking out the most important things to study for a test.
2. I am good at boosting my memory by: organizing the most important facts into an outline or concept map, putting each important fact on a note card, and reviewing the note cards at least six times before the test.
3. I am good at handling pressure when I take a test. I use breathing, picturing a positive scene, and positive self-talk to help me manage my anxiety and boost my confidence.
4. I am good at knowing when assignments are due and always turn my work in on time.
5. I have at least one dependable study buddy in each class that I can call if I have a question.
6. I get along well with others when we work together in pairs or small groups in class.
7. I am good at managing my anger. I know my anger triggers and know healthy ways to handle things when I get angry.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
1	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
2	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
3	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
4	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
5	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
6	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼
7	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼	▲▼

Circle the **up** triangle (▲) if you rate the Life Skill as in a good range or showing improvement for this past week.
Circle the **down** triangle (▼) if you rate the Life Skill as **not** in a good range this past week.

FIGURE 2

The Seven Keys to Course Mastery

From *Student Success Skills: Classroom Manual* (p. 66), by G. Brigman and L. Webb, 2010, Boca Raton, FL: Atlantic Education Consultants. Copyright 2010 by Atlantic Education Consultants. Reprinted with permission.

Along with the SSS strategies, the counselor encourages students to share with one another their own strategies that have been successful in helping them reach goals. This approach to teaching that emphasizes peer sharing of successful strategies validates students by expressing faith in their abilities and is one example of how SSS uses the humanistic notion of making schools more people-responsive and relating to human beings in more growth-producing ways (Bohart, 2003). As a result, each student learns new strategies that lead to success in the areas of wellness, academics, social relations, and self-management. Over time, students come to realize they have more control over their own growth and success than they may have previously thought. This process leads to greater confidence, increased effort, and ultimately greater success in reaching their goals—in other words, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989).

Cain (2001) stressed the belief that people have the freedom, right, and ability to choose their goals and how to achieve them. A key premise of SSS is that to increase a sense of self-efficacy, students need the opportunity to learn to set realistic goals, they need to have viable strategies, and they need to learn to look for even small improvements. It is only when students see that their own actions lead to intentional improvements in areas

they choose that they can believe in their ability to improve and seek their potential. This goal-setting process reflects what Urban (1983) referred to as one of the key emphases of humanistic theory: the capacity for change inherent in the individual.

Each week, students select their own goal and write a plan to help them reach their goal. Next, they share their goal and plan with a partner. The following week, students share with a partner their progress on their goal and success strategies used if they were successful. If not successful, they use the pair-sharing time to brainstorm adjustments to their strategy or choose a new strategy that is more likely to lead to success next time. These goal-setting and goal-reporting activities tie directly to the humanistic principles that (a) creativity is a powerful force, (b) holistic approaches are more powerful than reductionistic ones, and (c) a sense of purpose is the primary influence on human behavior (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964; Raskin, Rogers, & Witty, 2008).

Embedded into the weekly goal setting is practice with listening, empathy, and healthy optimistic thinking. The goal sharing is another opportunity for students to practice an important skill embedded in the SSS approach: listening with eyes, ears, and heart. Students are taught to listen using good attending skills (eyes), summarizing of key points heard (ears), and empathic responding (heart). This empathy training practice, embedded into the goal-reporting and goal-setting activities, occurs twice each week for 5 weeks as the school counselor presents the SSS lessons, then continues with the classroom teacher throughout the school year.

The importance of empathy in enhancing learning and growth is also central to SSS. This focus on empathy relates to the humanistic belief that one must pay more attention to an individual's way of seeing the world. From the beginning, students are introduced to the concept of listening with eyes, ears, and heart as a way to develop attending, listening, and empathy skills. These skills are cued and practiced several times in every classroom and group session. Additionally, SSS includes stories that emphasize the importance of thinking about how others are feeling and the altruistic feelings that come from recognizing need and helping. Students also learn to think about how others are feeling through the use of a structured storytelling model. The model includes cues to prompt them to think about how characters in a story are feeling at the beginning, middle, and end of the story as well as what contributed to those feelings. Students can use this model to retell stories they have heard or to tell stories about their own experiences, such as a time they helped someone and expected nothing in return or a time someone helped them. The focus on empathy and the storytelling model are prime examples of how SSS uses a humanistic emphasis to enhance academic learning.

The humanistic emphasis on the capacity for change and the self-regulatory nature of human activity is evident in the SSS program (Urban, 1983). SSS teaches anxiety-coping strategies that can be used when a student is begin-

ning to be overwhelmed with fear and therefore unable to perform to his or her potential. Each student is taught how to relax and use breathing in addition to a special type of imagery. The imagery involves the student developing a clear image of self in a place where she or he can feel calm and confident, safe and protected, and strong and capable. Then, each student is taught to use a sequence of breathe, picture, and focus. For example, when the student notices becoming overly anxious, he or she starts slow, deep breathing while momentarily picturing him- or herself in a "calm place" to help shift the emotional state from panic to control, then the student can once again focus on the task at hand and perform to the utmost of her or his ability.

The SSS program helps each student remove conditions that thwart self-actualization, such as negative beliefs and expectations. Beck, Rush, Shaw, and Emery (1979) noted that depressed people embrace a negative construction of themselves and life experiences and believed that these constructions were distortions of reality. Similarly, Maslow (1968) believed that a neurotic person not only was emotionally sick but also was cognitively wrong. The SSS program includes a cognitive training component designed to help the student avoid some of these cognitive traps. For dealing with negative self-talk, students are taught cognitive reframing and a few emotional escape hatch phrases such as "That's not like me to (fill in whatever they just did that was not helpful and could cause them to doubt their ability). I'm usually more (fill in what would be more helpful in this situation)" (Brigman & Webb, 2010, p. 176). By arming students with strategies and skills associated with youth who are successful, counselors can teach students to see themselves not as passive victims of their environments but as active agents with intrinsic motivation, a desire to excel, and the creativity to keep trying new strategies and not doubt their ability.

Stories and activities are used each week to remind students of the importance of not doubting their ability. Students are encouraged to reframe their thoughts, and if what they are doing is not working, to simply try a new strategy. Each week, students learn more new strategies and hear about and report successes they and their peers have had. It is this whole-class atmosphere of working toward improvement and not doubting their ability but trying new strategies that helps to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and leads to continued progress toward their potential. The SSS emphasis on healthy optimism, which we translate into not doubting one's ability but changing one's strategy when not being successful, reflects Rogers's (1951) optimistic view of humans and his respect for and belief in people's capacity and ability.

Some of Rogers's (1951) keys to helping people involved creating a facilitative climate, helping people explore feelings, and moving toward goals that the person selected. These are mirrored in SSS. Students are taught how to develop a caring, supportive, and encouraging classroom climate that supports their efforts to reach their self-selected goals, as well as fun-

damental skills and strategies associated with successful performance in academics, in relationships, and in self-regulation.

In summary, humanistic theory is infused into the SSS program, and both support the holistic view of students. Each SSS activity engages the cognitive, social, and self-management skills of the student, especially as each skill is applied in a caring, supportive, and encouraging classroom environment. Just as Maslow (1968) called for a more comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to human problems, the SSS model focuses on an integrated holistic cognitive, behavioral, and affective approach to equip students for success. SSS not only seeks to engage the individual student on multiple levels but also teaches each student to provide support, to encourage, and to notice even small improvements in their classmates.

This approach mirrors humanistic-inspired recommendations offered by Maslow (1968) when he asserted that exposure to essential skills will, in turn, change systems (in this case schools) that will recycle back to the individual in the form of human growth and development. Similarly, the design of the SSS program places counselors in a position to provide the types of exposure to students that will change schooling systems and individual students alike. In particular, SSS uses individualist constructs associated with humanistic philosophy such as free will, holism, intentional personal growth (Buhler, 1971; Hansen, 2006), and social constructs such as social justice and human diversity (Lemberger, 2010; Scholl, 2008), each designed to work together toward learning and achievement successes.

EMPIRICAL SUPPORT FOR SSS

The SSS program is as widely used as it is successful in maximizing student potential. Approximately 9,000 school counselors and teachers across the United States and in 13 other countries have shared the SSS model with their students. More than one million students have used the SSS model to help them develop the key cognitive, social, and self-management skills they need to succeed. The SSS program aligns with the American School Counselor Association (2005) National Model as well as character education, drug-free schools, dropout prevention, and career education goals.

Results from five studies of the SSS program involving 1,279 students in Grades 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9; 50 school counselors; and 39 schools consistently found significant increases in math and reading on standardized achievement tests for students receiving the SSS program (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brigman et al., 2007; Campbell & Brigman, 2005; León, Villares, Brigman, Webb, & Peluso, 2010; Webb et al., 2005). The SSS model is designed to help students become more academically successful by improving specific cognitive, social, and self-management skills, considered to be foundational to the development of academic and social competence.

National Panel for Evidence-Based School Counseling

The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy has developed guidelines (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) to help educators make decisions regarding identification and selection of interventions and programs that have evidence of rigorous research to support their effectiveness. The research supporting the effectiveness of SSS reflects these guidelines. In addition, an outcome research protocol developed by the National Panel for Evidence-Based School Counseling in conjunction with the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research was used to evaluate the extent to which the SSS research provides evidence of intervention effectiveness and can be replicated (Carey, Dimmitt, Hatch, Lapan, & Whiston, 2008). The SSS program was evaluated by the National Panel and was found to have strong evidence of effectiveness in three areas: measurement, implementation fidelity, and ecological validity. The National Panel also reported SSS as having promising evidence of effectiveness in three areas: comparison group, statistical analysis of outcome variables, and replication.

Effect Size Findings for Five SSS Studies

The overall effect size calculated from the five studies on the SSS program (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brigman et al., 2007; Campbell & Brigman, 2005; León et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2005) was .41 for math and .17 for reading (Villares, Frain, et al., 2010). To put this in perspective, a review by Hill, Bloom, Black, and Lipsey (2008) of dozens of meta-analyses that evaluated the impact of a wide range of educational interventions and programs on reading and math standardized test scores for students in Grades K–12 found overall average effect sizes of .23, .27, and .24 for elementary, middle, and high school students, respectively. Payton et al. (2008) found a similar average effect size of .28 when they examined 29 studies focused on improving academic achievement. By comparison, the frequently cited randomized class reduction study by Krueger (1999) found an effect size of .15 to .25. Lower effect sizes between .09 and .15 were found in meta-analyses of comprehensive school reform models (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002), and effect sizes ranging from .06 to .13 for reading and .09 to .17 for math were found for out-of-school programs (Lauer et al., 2004). Vernez and Zimmer (2007) concluded, after reviewing the aforementioned studies, that

> relative to the experience gained so far with education interventions designed to increase student achievement, the interpretation of their effect sizes should be interpreted differently than suggested by Cohen (1988) for the social sciences. More generally: .25 might be considered a large effect, .15 a medium effect and .05 to .10 a small effect. (p. 2)

Therefore, if one uses Vernez and Zimmer's rubric to interpret effect sizes, the SSS program has a medium effect for reading (.17) and a large effect for math (.41).

Practical Significance of Effect Size Findings

Hill et al. (2008) provided a practical way to interpret effect sizes. They looked at achievement test score gains by grade level for students in Grades K–12 using a national sample of seven widely used standardized tests in reading and five tests in math. The average annual gain for students between fourth and fifth grade was .40 in reading and .56 in math. For students between seventh and eighth grade, the average annual gain was .26 for reading and .32 for math. For students between 10th and 11th grade, the average annual gain was .19 for reading and .14 for math. Next, Hill et al. measured the impact of a hypothetical intervention with an effect size of .10 on these average annual test score gains. An intervention with a .10 effect size would be comparable with one fourth of an additional year of learning for fourth graders and one half of an additional year of learning for 10th graders. In math, the .10 intervention would be comparable with one fifth of an additional year of learning for fourth graders and two thirds or an additional year of learning for 10th graders.

If one uses Hill et al.'s (2008) metric, the average SSS effect size of .41 in math would be comparable with four fifths of an additional year of learning for fourth graders and more than 2 years of additional learning for 10th graders. In reading, the average SSS effect size of .17 would be comparable with between one third and one half of an additional year of learning for fourth graders and almost one year of additional learning for 10th graders.

While we cannot say that these findings directly support humanism, we can make an argument that they lend tentative support for the position that humanistic principles, when applied to a structured school counseling program such as SSS, appear to contribute to student achievement. Deductively, it follows that achievement is an appropriate outcome in schools, and, thus, it might be further inferred that programs such as SSS support humanistic tenets such as maximizing one's potential, existing in a holistic manner that is connected and capable within social environments, and having freedom to use new skills related to schooling successes.

SUMMARY

The SSS approach is built on extensive research related to helping students learn and includes humanistic psychology characteristics such as a positive view of the individual as self-actualizing; the importance of empathy in enhancing learning and growth; the belief that people have the freedom, right, and responsibility to choose their own goals and how to achieve them; and the belief in the dignity of every human being (Cain, 2001). Improved student math and reading scores on state-mandated standardized tests have been documented in five well-designed SSS research studies (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brigman et al., 2007; Campbell & Brigman, 2005; León et al., 2010; Webb et al., 2005), three action research studies (Luck &

Webb, 2009; Villares, Brigman, Webb, & Ragsdale, 2010; Webb, Brigman, Villares, & Shook, 2010), and one meta-analysis (Villares, Frain, et al., 2010). School counselors teaching students key foundational learning skills, and teachers coaching and cuing students to use these strategies, will result in embedding the SSS skills and attitudes into the general curriculum, which in turn will lead to improved student performance by integrating human potential practices into the school.

REFERENCES

American School Counselor Association. (2005). *The ASCA National Model: A framework for school counseling programs* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Ansbacher, H. L., & Ansbacher, R. R. (Eds.). (1964). *The individual psychology of Alfred Adler*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist, 14,* 175–184.

Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Bohart, A. (2003). Person-centered psychotherapy. In A. S. Gurman & S. B. Messer (Eds.), *Essential psychotherapies: Theory and practice* (2nd ed., pp. 107–148). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Report No. 59). Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk. Retrieved from http://www.csos.jhu.edu/CRESPAR/TechReports/Report59.pdf

Brigman, G., & Campbell, C. (2003). Helping students improve academic achievement and school success behavior. *Professional School Counseling, 7,* 91–98.

Brigman, G., & Peluso, P. (2009). *Parent success skills*. Boca Raton, FL: Atlantic Education Consultants.

Brigman, G., & Webb, L. (2007). Student Success Skills: Impacting achievement through large and small group work. *Journal of Group Dynamics: Theory, Practice and Research, 11,* 283–292.

Brigman, G., & Webb, L. (2010). *Student Success Skills: Classroom manual* (3rd ed.). Boca Raton, FL: Atlantic Education Consultants.

Brigman, G., Webb, L., & Campbell, C. (2007). Building skills for school success: Improving academic and social competence. *Professional School Counseling, 10,* 279–288.

Brott, P. (2006). Counselor education accountability: Training the effective professional school counselor. *Professional School Counseling, 10,* 179–188.

Buhler, C. (1971). Basic theoretical concepts of humanistic psychology. *American Psychologist, 26,* 378–386. doi:10.1037/h0032049

Cain, D. J. (2001). Defining characteristics, history, and evolution of humanistic psychotherapies. In D. J. Cain & J. Seeman (Eds.), *Humanistic psychotherapies: Handbook of research and practice* (pp. 3–54). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Campbell, C., & Brigman, G. (2005). Closing the achievement gap: A structured approach to group counseling. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work, 30,* 67–82.

Carey, J. C., Dimmitt, C., Hatch, T., Lapan, R., & Whiston, S. (2008). Report of the National Panel for Evidence-Based School Counseling: Outcome research coding protocol and evaluation of Student Success Skills and Second Step. *Professional School Counseling, 11,* 197–206.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2010). *What is SEL.* Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/basics/other.php

Committee for Children. (2010). *Second Step violence prevention curriculum*. Retrieved from http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/ssp/overview/

Dimmitt, C., Carey, J. C., McGannon, W., & Henningson, I. (2005). Identifying a school counseling research agenda: A Delphi study. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 44,* 214–228.

Elliott, R. (2002). The effectiveness of humanist therapies: A meta-analysis. In D. J. Cain & J. Seeman (Eds.), *Humanistic psychotherapies: Handbook of research and practice* (pp. 57–81). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hansen, J. T. (2006). Humanism as ideological rebellion: Deconstructing the dualisms of contemporary mental health culture. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 45,* 3–16.

Hattie, J., Biggs, J., & Purdie, N. (1996). Effects of learning skills interventions on student learning: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 66,* 99–130.

Hill, C., Bloom, H., Black, A., & Lipsey, M. (2008). Empirical benchmarks for interpreting effect sizes in research. *Child Development Perspectives, 2*, 172–177. doi:10.1111/j.1750-8606.2008.00061.x

Krueger, A. B. (1999). Experimental estimates of education production functions. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 114,* 497–532.

Lapan, R. T. (2005). An editor's top ten wish list. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* ii–iv.

Lauer, P. A., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, H. S., Apthorp, D., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. (2004). *The effectiveness of out-of-school-time strategies in assisting low-achieving students in reading and mathematics: A research synthesis*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. Retrieved from http://www.mcrel.org/topics/products/151/

Lemberger, M. E. (2010). Advocating for student within environment (ASE): A humanistic theory for school counseling. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 49*, 131–146.

León, A., Villares, E., Brigman, G., Webb, L., & Peluso, P. (2010). *Closing the achievement gap of Hispanic students: A school counseling response*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Luck, L., & Webb, L. (2009). School counselor action research: A case example. *Professional School Counseling, 12,* 408–412.

Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being*. New York, NY: Van Nostrand.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Masten, A. S., & Coatsworth, J. D. (1998). The development of competence in favorable and unfavorable environments: Lessons from research on successful children. *American Psychologist, 53,* 205–220.

McWhirter, J. J., McWhirter, B. T., McWhirter, E. H., & McWhirter, R. J. (2004). *At-risk youth: A comprehensive response for counselors, teachers, psychologists, and human service professionals* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole–Thomson Learning.

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. (2009). *The leading edge.* Retrieved from http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ndpcdefault.htm

Paisley, P. O., & Hayes, R. L. (2003). School counseling in the academic domain: Transformations in preparation and practice. *Professional School Counseling*, *6*, 198–204.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2004). *A framework for 21st century learning.* Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/

Patterson, C. H. (1973). *Humanistic education.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Payton, J., Weissberg, R., Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., Schellinger, K., & Pachan, M. (2008). *The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews*. Retrieved from http://www.casel.org/downloads/PackardES.pdf

Raskin, N. J., Rogers, C. R., & Witty, M. C. (2008). Client-centered therapy. In R. J. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current psychotherapies* (8th ed., pp. 141–186). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications, and theory*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Scholl, M. B. (2008). Preparing manuscripts with central and salient humanistic content. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 47,* 3–8.

Seligman, M. E. P. (1991). *Learned optimism*. New York, NY: Knopf.
Sink, C. A., Akos, P. A., Turnbull, R. J., & Mvududu, N. (2008). An investigation of comprehensive school counseling programs in Washington state middle schools. *Professional School Counseling, 12,* 43–53.
Sink, C. A., & Stroh, H. R. (2003). Raising achievement test scores of early elementary school students through comprehensive school counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling, 6,* 350–364.
Urban, H. B. (1983). Phenomenological–humanistic approaches. In M. Hersen, A. E. Kazdin, & A. S. Bellack (Eds.), *The clinical psychology handbook* (pp. 155–175). New York, NY: Pergamon Press.
U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *Identifying and implementing educational practices supported by rigorous evidence: A user friendly guide.* Washington, DC: Author.
Vernez, G., & Zimmer, R. (2007). *Interpreting the effects of Title 1 supplemental educational services*. Retrieved from http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/choice/implementation/achievementanalysis-sizes.doc
Villares, E., Brigman, G., Webb, L., & Ragsdale, C. (2010). *Improving school counseling programs through collaborative partnerships, accountability, and action research.* Manuscript submitted for publication.
Villares, E., Frain, M., Brigman, G., Webb, L., & Peluso, P. (2010). *The impact of Student Success Skills on standardized tests: A meta-analysis.* Manuscript submitted for publication.
Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1994). What helps students learn? *Educational Leadership, 51,* 74–79.
Webb, L., Brigman, G., & Campbell, C. (2005). Linking school counselors and student success: A replication of the Student Success Skills approach targeting the academic and social competence of students. *Professional School Counseling, 8,* 407–413.
Webb, L., Brigman, G., Villares, E., & Shook, J. (2010). *Counselor educator–school counselor collaboration: Trends, initiatives, and process*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
Zins, J., Weissberg, R., Wang, M., & Walberg, H. (2004). *Building academic success on school social and emotional learning*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.