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University Students' Perceptions of the Effects of Having Been Weight-Teased by Basic Education Teachers

Rebecca A. Gallagher
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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ONLY COVER PAGES AND ABSTRACT ARE AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF HAVING BEEN
WEIGHT-TEASED BY BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Rebecca A. Gallagher

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Professional Studies in Education

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Rebecca A. Gallagher

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

3/26/2014

Signature on File

Kelli R. Paquette, Ed.D.
Professor of Education, Advisor

3/26/2014

Signature on File

Frank Corbett, Jr., Ed.D.
Professor of Education

3/26/2014

Signature on File

DeAnna M. Laverick, D.Ed.
Associate Professor of Education

3/26/2014

Signature on File

Becky Knickelbein, Ed.D.
Associate Professor of Special Education &
Clinical Services

ACCEPTED

Signature on File

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.

Dean

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: University Students' Perceptions of the Effects of Having Been Weight-Teased by Basic Education Teachers

Author: Rebecca A. Gallagher

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kelli R. Paquette

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Frank Corbett, Jr.
Dr. DeAnna M. Laverick
Dr. Becky Knickelbein

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which university students report having been weight-teased by basic education teachers and how that has affected their social, physical, and academic well-being in the university. Bandura's (1999) theory of triadic reciprocal causation served as a framework for developing this research.

An explanatory mixed methods approach was used to examine university students' perceptions. The data collection consisted of a 22-question survey, which was electronically administered to 6,000 university students in the quantitative phase, followed by interviews that were conducted with four university students in the qualitative phase.

The results from the quantitative portion of the study indicated that 23% of university students recalled having been weight-teased by basic education teachers during their youth. Among those university students who recalled having been weight-teased by basic education teachers, 96% indicated that they were bothered by the teasing. A moderate positive correlation was found between weight-teasing frequency and weight-teasing effect. University students who recalled more frequent weight-teasing by basic education teachers indicated that they were bothered to a greater degree by the teasing than those university students who reported less frequent weight-teasing by basic education teachers.

The results from the qualitative portion of the study provided anecdotal data regarding the experiences of four university students who recalled having been weight-teased by basic

education teachers during their youth. The university students who recalled having been weight-teased by basic education teachers during their youth described a variety of social, physical, and academic problems they encountered in the university. Three of the four university students who recalled having been weight-teased by basic education teachers during their youth described occasions when they used of the coping strategy of avoidance to avoid future experiences of weight-teasing and stigmatization. Some of the university students who recalled having been weight-teased by basic education teachers also indicated that past weight-teasing experiences may have affected their relationships with others in the university, and may have affected their levels of physical activity, eating habits, and academic performance in the university.