Candidate: Thomas Ratkos
For the degree of: Doctor of Philosophy
Department: Psychology

Title: Frequency and Nature of Elementary School Teacher-Student Interactions

Committee: Dr. Jessica Frieder, Chair
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Time/Place: Wednesday, May 3, 2017
12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
2734 Wood Hall

Schools are a social environment. Students are learning how to interact with others, both peers and adults outside their immediate family. The classroom teacher is an important part of not only academic instruction, but socialization. Teachers and students form a relationship, the quality of which is both important and varied. Students are an active part of that relationship; their behavior changes the way their teachers perceive and act toward them. Past studies have shown that teacher-student relationships are correlated with academic success, student behavior problems, disciplinary consequences such as suspension and expulsion, and school dropout. This study examined student-teacher interactions by videoing classrooms and identifying the nature of student-to-teacher interaction and teacher-to-
student interaction. A classroom teacher was given a teacher-student relationship scale to identify students who have a close relationship with their teacher and those whose relationships indicated conflict. Each individual interaction between close and conflict students and their teacher were categorized, and those interactions were examined for patterns to tell us more about the nature and frequency of teacher-student interactions.