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Classroom Support and Students' Subjective Well-Being: A Mixed-Methods Investigation

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Classroom Support and Students' Subjective Well-Being:
A Mixed-Methods Investigation

by

Emily J. Wingate

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist
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ABSTRACT

In line with the positive psychology movement and the dual factor model of mental health, professionals are increasingly compelled to consider not only mechanisms through which mental distress can be alleviated, but also pathways through which students' wellness can be fostered. While research in this area has primarily focused on positive indicators of adults' and adolescents' mental health, there is a need to address those factors that contribute to the wellness of elementary-aged youth. Participants in the current study included 179 fourth and fifth grade students from an elementary school located in a southeastern state. For this secondary analysis, a mixed methods approach with an explanatory design was adopted to investigate both the quantitative relationship between school social support variables (i.e., Teacher-Student Relations, Teacher Support, Classmate Support) and students' subjective well-being (SWB; i.e., happiness), as well as qualitative responses of students and teachers regarding displays of support and care in the classroom. Results provide support for the existence of a relationship between Classmate and Teacher Support and elementary students' subjective well-being, with student perceptions of Instrumental and Emotional Classmate Support and Teacher Emotional Support as unique contributors to student subjective well-being. Qualitative results supplement quantitative findings by highlighting the salience of forms of Instrumental and Emotional Support in discussions of both Teacher and Classmate Support and care. These findings add to the current knowledge base on how building supportive relationships may be incorporated in prevention efforts aimed at fostering a positive school climate and enhancing students' complete mental health.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

There has been a recent shift in thinking in regard to the conceptualization of mental health. Namely, as the positive psychology movement has gained traction, professionals have begun to acknowledge positive indicators of well-being, in addition to indicators of mental distress (i.e., psychopathology). Guided by research indicating the positive outcomes associated with Complete Mental Health (i.e., both the presence of well-being and absence of distress), and models addressing avenues through which individuals may attain this optimal health status, professionals are compelled to consider ways in which Complete Mental Health can be fostered.

In part because of the positive psychology movement, strides have been made in understanding predictors of positive indicators of adults' and adolescents' mental health. However, there is considerably less research investigating the pathways through which younger children achieve wellness, particularly as it pertains to school-related social support. While research has indicated that younger students typically experience greater levels of life satisfaction and feelings of connectedness to school compared to adolescents (Blum, 2005), that does not lessen the need to examine factors related to well-being in elementary school age children. This focus is particularly important as it relates to building a positive, protective foundation upon which students' development is grounded.

Baker (1999) found that among poor African American students in an urban elementary school, positive classroom environments, characterized by perceptions of care and support from

teachers, were associated with students' satisfaction with school as early as third grade. Thus, it is important to examine school-related interpersonal relationships as early as elementary school in order to develop an understanding of how schools can facilitate feelings of relatedness and prevent early school dissatisfaction. Although students' satisfaction with school has been found to decrease over time (Blum, 2005), prompting researchers to focus efforts on adolescents' school experiences, early school satisfaction may facilitate positive feelings towards school that extend into adolescence. Conversely, negative early school experiences may create an unstable foundation from which later efforts to promote feelings of connectedness towards school will have to be largely reparative rather than facilitative. Klem and Connell (2004) reported that approximately 40 to 60 percent of high school students are chronically disengaged from school. While efforts aimed at ensuring that the educational environment of adolescents properly fits their developmental needs (Eccles & Roeser, 2009) are inarguably necessary and important, early preventative efforts are also crucial to serve as a springboard for later school satisfaction and engagement.

Accordingly, the current study is a secondary, mixed methods analysis of data gathered from a larger, longitudinal intervention study conducted by Hearon (2017) and McCullough (in progress). The purposes of the larger study included the empirical examination of the efficacy of a classwide multitarget positive psychology intervention (universal, elementary school adaption on the Well-Being Promotion Program; Suldo, 2016) on increasing elementary-aged students' happiness, relationships with the teacher and peers in the classroom, and engagement in the classroom.

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between classroom support variables (i.e., Teacher Support, Classmate Support, Teacher-Student Relations) and students' subjective well-being. Further, the current study explored which aspects of Teacher Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), Classmate Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), and Teacher-Student Relations (i.e., Instrumental Help, Relationship Satisfaction) were most highly related to students' subjective well-being, as well as what behaviors students and teachers report as supportive and caring.

The term *subjective well-being* (SWB) was coined by Ed Diener as the scientific term for happiness and is a key outcome variable within positive psychology. SWB is comprised of individuals' cognitive judgements surrounding their satisfaction with life as well as their report of the frequency with which they experience both positive and negative emotions. Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations were selected as key variables for the current study based on previous research highlighting the contribution of interpersonal relations in enhancing individuals' SWB. By investigating relational variables as they occur in the school setting, particularly as they relate to the supportive practices of teachers and peers, professional development and school climate interventions may be better informed and based in research.

Overview of Methodology

The current study contains both quantitative and qualitative components. While quantitative data and methods are generally used to measure phenomenon using statistical procedures, qualitative data are typically collected with the goal of obtaining a detailed description or fuller understanding of phenomenon occurring at a specific time and within a

specific context. In the current study, quantitative survey data gathered by Hearon (2017) and McCullough (in progress) were analyzed to investigate relationships between the classroom support variables and students' reported SWB. In order to gain a more complete understanding of the relationship under investigation, qualitative data collected from students and teachers were analyzed to supplement, and further explain, quantitative findings. Weekly teacher reports of how teachers perceived themselves as demonstrating care to students, as well as weekly student reports of how their teachers and classmates showed support and kindness were collected over the course of the Well-Being Promotion Program. Findings from the current study include the frequency with which students and teachers reported behaviors associated with different dimensions of support, as well as other themes that emerged in the data. Further, the extent to which teachers' reports of showing care were similar to students' perceptions of support were assessed, and qualitative similarities and differences in responses were noted. Therefore, the quantitative portion of the study aimed to identify aspects of classroom support most highly related to students' SWB, while the qualitative portion of the study served to supplement these findings by identifying the aspects of classroom support most frequently recalled by students and teachers, and how well teacher reports of caring behavior aligned with how students tended to perceive care.

Definition of Key Terms

Teacher-student relations. In the literature, "teacher-student relationships" is often an umbrella term that encompasses many aspects of interactions that occur (either actually or as perceived by one of the two parties) between children and their teacher(s). Broadly, this term includes youth perceptions of teacher support as well as teacher perceptions of the relationship. In the current study, youth perceptions of social support conveyed by teachers is conceptualized

as “Teacher Support” (defined in next paragraph; Malecki et al., 2000), whereas “teacher-student relations” is used to discuss teachers’ perceptions of the quality of the relationships they have with individual students (Ang, 2005). Important dimensions of teacher-student relations include *Instrumental Help*, *Relationship Satisfaction*, and *Conflict* indicators (Ang, 2005). Instrumental Help is defined as the extent to which teachers believe a student would be willing to seek out their support and advice. Relationship Satisfaction is defined as the teacher’s perception of how positive his or her relationship is with a student. Lastly, Conflict is defined as the extent to which a teacher perceives his or her relationship with a student as unpleasant.

Teacher support. Another feature of teacher-student relationships is the presence or perception of social support from teachers to their students. In the current study, Teacher Support is defined as students’ perceptions of general or specific behaviors (i.e., *Emotional*, *Instrumental*, *Informational*, *Appraisal*) their teachers perform that serve to maximize their functioning. Emotional Support includes perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care (e.g., you are important to me). Instrumental Support involves the offering of one’s time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist a student in need. Informational Support involves the perceived delivery of advice or guidance aimed at providing a solution to a problem. Appraisal Support is characterized by the perceived provision of evaluative feedback including suggestions for improvement.

Classmate support. Although a strong conceptual framework has not been established in the research, healthy peer relationships can be broadly conceptualized as those relationships that are high in closeness and support, while low in aggression and conflict (Brown & Larson, 2009). Social support from classmates is one indicator of positive peer relations. In the current study, this form of support is defined as students’ perceptions of general or specific support behaviors

(i.e., *Emotional, Instrumental, Informational, Appraisal*) from children in their class (Malecki, Demaray, Elliot, & Nolten, 2000).

Care. While Emotional Support encompasses communications of care, care has been conceptualized more specifically in the literature as including five dimensions: “modeling, democratic communication styles, expectations for behavior, rule setting, and nurturance” (Wentzel, 1997, p. 412). In the current study, specific expressions of care, as communicated by students and teachers, were considered as they related not only to emotionally supportive behaviors broadly, but also to more specific care behaviors. Although acknowledged to be separate constructs, “support” and “care” are sometimes used interchangeably in the current study, as students were asked to discuss how their teachers and classmates communicated support, care, and helpful behaviors in the larger study.

Subjective well-being. Subjective well-being (SWB) is conceptualized as the scientific term for happiness. This construct is characterized by high *Global Life Satisfaction* and the ratio of levels of *Positive Affect* relative to *Negative Affect*. Life satisfaction is one’s cognitive appraisal of his or her life as a whole (Diener, 1994), or with regard to specific domains of life such as school, family, self, living environment, and friends (Huebner, 1994). Positive and Negative Affect are the frequency with which one experiences positive (e.g., liveliness, cheerfulness) and negative emotions (e.g., sadness, misery).

Research Questions

The current study aimed to answer the following questions:

Quantitative component

1. To what extent, if any, are student- and teacher- reported classroom support variables (i.e., Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations) related to students' subjective well-being (SWB)?
2. Which individual dimensions of student- and teacher- reported Teacher Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), Classmate Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), and Teacher-Student Relations (i.e., Instrumental Help, Relationship Satisfaction) are most highly related to students' SWB?

Qualitative component

3. How do students report their teachers and classmates convey support/care?
4. How do teachers report showing support/care to their students?
5. To what extent are teachers' reports of showing support/care similar to students' perceptions of support/care?

Contributions to the Literature

Much of the literature surrounding school-related social support and its relationship to students' well-being has focused on the adolescent years. While research implies that the adolescent years are a time when students become increasingly disconnected and dissatisfied with their schooling experiences (Blum, 2005), it is still important to understand the association between these two constructs in the context of an elementary population. In fact, understanding what forms of Teacher and Classmate Support are most highly correlated with elementary-aged students' subjective well-being may increase the chances that students ultimately have access to

supportive behaviors that matter in school from an early age, and potentially decrease the chances they will form lasting negative opinions about classmates and teachers.

Importance of Study for Informing Tier 1 Supports and Services

With an understanding of factors related to students' SWB, as well as students' accounts of specific teacher and classmate behaviors that convey support, school professionals will be able to tailor primary prevention efforts, or those instructional practices of general educators, to facilitate a school climate in which positive student-student and teacher-student relations are encouraged and valued. Although results from the current study are not sufficient in the way of making causal claims, findings may be considered in the content and focus of staff trainings. Namely, school psychologists may convey to teachers the role they play in facilitating positive classroom relationships, as well as express specific ways in which teachers can convey care to their students and promote supportive interactions among classmates. In other words, results from the current study may be considered to inform prevention efforts aimed at enhancing students' Complete Mental Health.

Delimitations

Results from the current study are based on archival data and as such, the current researcher was limited to the variables investigated and data collection methods utilized in the original study. Some variables that would have been interesting to examine- such as amount of conflict in interpersonal relations and support from other sources at school (e.g., administrators) are not in the dataset. Similarly, the current study is confined to data from fourth and fifth grade students- and their classroom teachers- in one elementary school in a southeastern state. As such, findings may not generalize to non-suburban settings with younger or older children.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historically, mental health has been understood as the absence of mental illness. However, focusing only on the absence of psychological distress does not provide for a complete understanding of a person's overall wellness. With an understanding of factors that promote well-being, preventative action may be taken to protect against psychological distress and impairment. In other words, taking action to increase youth's happiness has implications for promoting resilience as well as supporting positive development and optimal functioning. Past literature has investigated various factors thought to enhance well-being. This chapter provides an overview of that literature, particularly as it relates to social support in schools. Specifically, this chapter includes a rationale for promoting well-being in schools; the components of subjective well-being (SWB) and associated outcomes; an overview of theories that provide a framework for linking social support to well-being; the relationship between a positive school climate, students' connectedness to school, and well-being; and the significance of classroom relationships in fostering well-being.

Promotion of Mental Health in Schools

A long-standing debate in the field of education surrounds the issue of whether or not schools should provide students with services outside the realm of academics. However, framing the issue dichotomously serves to ignore the potentially facilitative role of student health in students' schooling experience. Namely, the promotion of emotional well-being has been found to correlate with educationally-relevant constructs including increased engagement (Lewis,

Huebner, Malone, & Valois, 2011) and academic performance (Gilman & Heubner, 2006; Suldo, Shaffer, & Riley, 2008). Associations tend to be strongest between global life satisfaction (an element of SWB) and engagement in the classroom (i.e., on-task behavior, compliance, belief that school is valuable). In this sense, academic engagement is thought of as an academic enabler (Suldo, 2016). Thus, school efforts aimed at promoting factors related to students' SWB are likely to facilitate student engagement and- ultimately- academic success. As suggested by small but significant and positive correlations between life satisfaction and academic performance (Lyons & Huebner, 2015; Suldo et al., 2011), enhanced engagement in school may potentially lead to greater academic success.

In addition to the possibility of increasing students' academic success, the promotion of well-being in schools may serve to protect against mental health problems, thereby enhancing students' life outcomes in a variety of domains. Consistent with the ambitions of positive psychology, a dual-factor model of mental health pays mind to both negative and positive indicators of emotional wellness. Namely, in a dual factor model, levels of SWB and psychopathology are paired to create four categories of mental health.

Suldo and Shaffer (2008) found support for the existence of a dual-factor model such that 57% of 349 middle school students were identified as possessing Complete Mental Health (i.e., low psychopathology and average to high SWB), 13% were identified as Vulnerable (i.e., low psychopathology and low SWB), 13% were Symptomatic but Content (i.e., high psychopathology and average to high SWB), and 17% were Troubled (i.e., high psychopathology and low SWB). Mean scores relating to the academic performance, physical health, and social functioning of students differed significantly across groups. Students with Complete Mental Health displayed a variety of positive life outcomes including strong academic performance

(better reading skills; school attendance; academic self-concepts and goals), physical health, and social functioning (social support, including less social problems), compared to their Vulnerable peers who had similarly low levels of psychopathology but who also had low SWB. Further, students with high psychopathology fared better on indices of social functioning and physical health when they also possessed high SWB (i.e., Symptomatic but Content) compared to peers with low SWB (i.e., Troubled). Results of the study lend support to the importance of average to high SWB as a necessary component for optimal mental health during adolescence, and indicate the relevance of social relationship variables to youth mental health status. Additionally, these findings suggest that SWB may serve a protective function for youth with psychopathology (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). In this regard, school systems are in a unique position to facilitate developmentally sensitive environments in which fostering students' Complete Mental Health is a priority. Such efforts are essential to cultivating optimal functioning in youth.

Intervention efforts may be particularly successful in elementary settings where students can be targeted early, and genetic predispositions for mental illness might be altered through a process called epigenetics (Waddington, 1968). Researchers in the area of epigenetics are interested in situations in which one's genetic code does not directly lead to the individual's phenotypic expression (i.e., observable characteristics; Jablonka & Lamb, 2002). Of relevance to the current study, the idea behind this process is that environmental conditions have the ability to shape the manner in which one's genes are expressed.

Findings from Suldo and Shaffer (2008) provide evidence for the utility of enhancing students' SWB, both in the presence and absence of psychopathology, for protecting against negative outcomes. Greenspoon and Saklofske (2001) found preliminary evidence for the validity of the dual-factor model in an elementary-aged population in western Canada. Results

suggested that creating environments for youth that work to decrease neuroticism and increase students' internal locus of control have implications for building resiliency. The goal of such an intervention would be to shift youth from the Troubled group (i.e., low SWB, high psychopathology) to a Complete Mental Health status (i.e., high SWB, low psychopathology). Of relevance to the current study, Greenspoon and Saklofske (2001) also suggested that the improvement of social relations may help protect against life stressors and promote resilience. Such relationship-focused intervention may be most effective for Vulnerable youth, in that building social capital may prevent psychopathology and facilitate opportunities for enhanced wellbeing.

Taken together, the growing number of investigations of the dual-factor model in youth lend support for the need to recognize both positive and negative indicators of health in tandem, to inform prevention and intervention efforts in schools. Further, previous research on students with Complete Mental Health indicates a potentially reciprocal relationship between Complete Mental Health and supportive relationships. Namely, students in this category appear to perceive greater levels of classroom support (Antaramian, Huebner, Hills, & Valois, 2010; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008), while school-related support simultaneously seems to maintain students' Complete Mental Health status (Kelly, Hills, Huebner, & McQuillin, 2012). Antaramian et al. (2010) discovered this relationship through an investigation of 764 seventh and eighth grade students' levels of SWB; levels of psychopathology; and other environmental variables including measures of family support, peer support, and teacher-student relationships. A MANOVA was used to determine whether ratings of parental support, peer support, and teacher-student relationships differed significantly among mental health groups (i.e., Complete Mental Health, Vulnerable, Symptomatic but Content, Troubled). Results indicated a significant relationship

between mental health and environmental support. Univariate analyses revealed that mental health status significantly impacted all three support variables. Of relevance to the current study, students with Complete Mental Health reported the highest quality teacher-student relationships and highest quality peer relationships, with Symptomatic but Content adolescents reporting the second highest quality relationships. Within the dual factor model, these students are the two groups with the highest levels of SWB. For both support types, students identified as Vulnerable or Troubled reported significantly lower quality relationships. Effect sizes for these differences were moderate to large. Such findings suggest that efforts aimed at enhancing school-related relationships may be critical to bolstering and maintaining SWB, and ultimately, students' overall mental health.

Components of Well-Being and Associated Outcomes

In the research literature, SWB has been conceptualized as the scientific term for happiness. While “happiness” is subject to many different interpretations, SWB refers to the “global experience of positive reactions to one’s life” (Diener, 1994). This higher-order construct can be broken down into three correlated, yet separate components including affective and cognitive judgements. Namely, SWB is thought to be comprised of cognitive appraisals of one’s life as a whole (i.e., one has a good life), as well as a ratio of (ideally high) level of positive affect to (ideally low) level of negative affect (Diener, 1994). The combination of these units appears to not only predict positive development, but also serves as a factor that enhances and maintains optimal functioning (Park, 2004). Of note, cognitive appraisals of one’s satisfaction with life (termed “life satisfaction”) can be measured in terms of global judgements of one’s life as a whole, as an average of ratings of satisfaction in the domains of life most salient to youth

(e.g., family, friends, school, living environment, and self), or as a unique domain (e.g., satisfaction with school; Huebner & Gilman, 2002).

High life satisfaction has been found to correlate negatively with depression, anxiety, social stress, neuroticism, loneliness (Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Huebner, 1991a), and violent problem behaviors in adolescents (Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2001) including teacher ratings of school discipline problems (McKnight, Huebner, & Suldo, 2002). Meanwhile, it has been found to correlate positively with physical health (Frisch, 2000), an internal locus of control, self-esteem, extraversion (Huebner, 1991a), positive attitudes towards teachers, interpersonal functioning (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Gilman & Huebner, 2006), and social interest (Gilman, 2001). Although composite measures of SWB are typically comprised of the three aforementioned components (life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect), life satisfaction is sometimes examined in isolation due to findings that indicate it is able to transcend beyond evaluations of the current moment (Diener & Diener, 1996), influence behavior change (Lewinsohn, Redner, & Seeley, 1991), and remain relatively free of social desirability bias (Diener, 1994). Cafasso (1998) found that adolescents classified as resilient (i.e., scored high on measure of stress and at least one measure of competence, and did not score low on any measures of competence) reported higher levels of life satisfaction and more positive affect than non-resilient adolescents. Similarly, Suldo and Huebner (2004) found that youth with high life satisfaction displayed fewer externalizing problems in adolescence, after the occurrence of stressful life events, than youth with low life satisfaction. Findings from McKnight et al. (2002) indicate that youth life satisfaction may serve a mediating function between stressful life events and internalizing behaviors. Taken together, these findings suggest that life satisfaction and positive affect may function as both mediators and moderators in the relationship between

stressors and the development of psychological and behavioral problems. As such, it is important to consider what factors contribute to the development of these constructs that appear highly relevant to resilience.

Park (2004) suggested that high-quality interactions with significant others, along with supportive parenting, engagement in challenging tasks, and the experience of positive events may contribute to the development of positive life satisfaction. Of relevance to the current study, school-related social support variables have been identified as significant contributors to adolescents' global life satisfaction, suggesting that the extent to which students feel supported in school impacts not only their satisfaction with their schooling experience, but judgements about their lives overall (Siddall, Huebner, & Jiang, 2013).

Guiding Frameworks for Linking Social Support and Mental Health

One goal of the current study was to examine the extent to which students' perceptions of support from their teachers and classmates were linked to their well-being. As a rationale for the examination of students' perceptions of social support in school, the following section details various theories that underpin the literature on the role social relationships play in the human experience. An understanding of attachment theory, broaden-and-build theory, self-determination theory, developmental ecological perspective, as well as social psychological perspective provide a framework from which to consider the nature of social support.

Attachment theory. Bowlby (1988) asserted that humans are in their happiest states when they are able to explore the world from a secure base established by attachment figures in their lives. Bowlby's (1988) theory is grounded in the belief that the environment in which a child lives plays a critical role in his or her development (Berkman & Glass, 2000). As early as 1969, Bowlby contended that secure attachment provides an "external ring of psychological

protection” that fosters stability in a child’s life (Bowlby, 1969). In a process that simulates an upward spiral, Bowlby suggested that secure attachments formed at the beginning of a child’s life provide the child with a sense of security that allows him or her to seek out and build additional supportive relationships. In essence, according to Bowlby, environments that encourage secure relationships with other people facilitate the formation of self-esteem and promote a sense of security, both of which are critical for successful development (Berkman & Glass, 2000). Of relevance to this study, attachment theory provides a basis from which to think about social bonds as health-promoting. Specifically, Bowlby provides a rationale for fostering school environments in which secure attachments between adults and students are intentionally facilitated early-on, as a way of promoting stability and future positive relationships. Through this lens, it is theorized that students are happiest when able to explore the world, knowing they have secure attachments with students and teachers in their lives.

Broaden-and-build theory. The upward spiral of social security that is proposed in Bowlby’s (1988) attachment theory is similar to the main premise of Fredrickson’s (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. Fredrickson (2001) postulates that the experience of positive emotions (e.g., joy, interest, pride), can set in motion an expansion of individuals’ thought-action repertoires, allowing them to build lasting resources that will then facilitate the experience of future positive emotions. In other words, the experience of positive emotions has the ability to broaden the scope of possibilities people consider and act upon, fostering creativity and problem-solving, and resulting in the accumulation of personal resources that will aid the individual throughout development. One such personal resource includes social support, such that positive emotions are thought to serve as a springboard for the creation of secure, trusting relationships. These relationships then naturally cultivate opportunities for further positive

emotions, and the upward spiral continues. The central component of the broaden-and-build theory is that individuals may draw from this developed bank of long-term resources in the face of adversity to increase resilience and provide for a more meaningful life. In line with the current study, perhaps by considering relational elements children view as supportive, and incorporating these in practice, schools can intentionally help students build this bank of enduring personal resources (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). Notably, this theory primarily frames positive social relationships as an outcome- rather than predictor- of high subjective well-being (in particular, of high positive affect).

Self-determination theory. Similar to Bowlby's proposal that human beings are driven by a need to form interpersonal bonds, self-determination theory is based on the argument that humans need autonomy, competence, and relatedness in order to experience ongoing personal growth, integrity, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Thus, individual traits or contexts that support these psychological needs naturally promote well-being, whereas traits and contexts that do not provide a stage for the fulfillment of these needs are associated with poorer outcomes, including lower levels of well-being. The current study examined students' need for relatedness (i.e., feeling that one is close to significant others in one's life) in the school context, and the extent to which support in this context was associated with students' well-being.

Results of prior studies have indicated that individuals who feel meaningfully integrated in the social networks in their lives experience better mental and physical health outcomes (Myers, 1992). Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, and Ryan (2000) used hierarchical linear models to examine the extent to which daily variations in satisfaction of the three basic needs predicted daily fluctuations in reported well-being, while controlling for individual differences, among a sample of 76 students (ages 17 – 68, with 86% being below the age of 26). Results indicated that

relatedness not only predicted well-being on a daily basis, but also that engaging in meaningful conversations, and feeling appreciated and understood by those conversation partners were the aspects of social activity mostly strongly linked to an individual's sense of relatedness (Reis et al., 2000). Findings from Reis et al. (2000) serve as support for the self-determination theory and add to the knowledge base on how different environments can contribute to the fulfillment of basic psychological needs (e.g., relatedness) and enhance overall well-being. This theory provided a foundation for the current study in which relatedness-constructs were investigated in the school context as they related to students' well-being.

Developmental ecological perspective. One purpose of the current study was to inform practice. Of relevance, considering development through a developmental ecological perspective involves recognizing that children do not simply develop within contexts, but rather that they interact with and are impacted by those environments throughout their development. In other words, according to this perspective, the manner in which a child develops is the result of inseparable interactions between the child, caregivers, and environmental factors. Put simply, throughout development, children encounter a variety of different stimuli that can serve to either enhance or hinder developmentally-relevant competencies (Anderson & Mohr, 2003). As such, it is critical that the environmental contexts in which children develop are set up in a manner that reflects cognition of the child's developmental stage, in order to enhance, as opposed to hinder, the child's development. According to Anderson and Mohr (2003), environments characterized by caring and supportive interpersonal relationships with recognizable norms, values, and goals are considered functional communities. Serving as a functional community may be critical to schools fulfilling their purpose of enhancing students' developmental capabilities. One such avenue through which to achieve this goal would be to facilitate caring and supportive

relationships in schools. To do so, one necessary prerequisite is an understanding of those behaviors considered by students to be supportive.

Social psychological perspective: Schools as communities. Consistent with self-determination theory and a developmental ecological perspective, it is assumed that individuals have basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and that fulfillment or frustration of these needs may be experienced in the various settings with which an individual interacts (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1996). Taking a social psychological perspective, fulfillment of personal needs and goals are considered based on the extent to which connection to a group facilitates mutual fulfillment of needs and shared goals (Solomon et al., 1996). In this sense, students' needs are met when they are provided the opportunity to "participate actively in a cohesive, caring group with shared purpose; i.e. a community" (Solomon et al., 1996, p. 241). Although there is no one, agreed upon definition for a functional community, broadly, the concept of *a sense of community* has been used to describe the psychological underpinning of a social setting that serves to satisfy needs for belonging and meaning (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Rovai, 2002). In contrast, when community needs are not realized, feelings of alienation or "normlessness" may occur (Durkheim, 1951). Further evidence has indicated that, within the educational setting, students may form subgroups with values in direct opposition to educational values when their needs for belonging and identification are not met (Fordham, 1988; Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1991). Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, and Schaps (1995) suggested that the creation of school communities that foster feelings of acceptance and care may prevent such feelings of alienation or desire to rebel, particularly for disadvantaged youth who may not receive warmth and support through other social forces in their lives. It is also theorized that feelings of connection and support in

school may provide disadvantaged youth with an increased sense of motivation (Solomon, Battistich, & Hom, 1996). Thus, facilitating a sense of community, in which students feel accepted, supported, and valued, may have implications for stimulating and maintaining feelings of identification with- and acceptance of- the community's goals and values (Battistich et al., 1995).

Battistich and Hom (1997) investigated the relationship between elementary school students' sense of school as a community and the prevalence of problem behaviors among 1,434 fifth (62%) and sixth (38%) grade students from six school districts across the United States. The extent to which students perceived their schools to be communities was assessed through a 38-item scale containing two subscales. One subscale contained 28-items designed to assess caring and supportive interpersonal relationships (e.g., "students in my class work together to solve problems). The other 10-item subscale measured student autonomy and influence (e.g., "in my class, the teacher and students decide together what the rules will be"). Students indicated all responses on a scale from 1 ("disagree a lot" or "never") to 5 ("agree a lot" or "always"). The frequency with which students participated in delinquent behavior within the past year was also assessed through individual questions targeting ten separate behaviors (e.g., skipping school). These responses fell on a scale from 1 ("never") to 5 ("10 or more times"). Lastly, students indicated the level of victimization they experienced at school by responding to six questions on the same five-point scale. After controlling for gender, ethnicity, grade level, poverty level, student differences in sense of community, and other school-level characteristics, Battistich and Hom (1997) found that higher ratings of sense of school community were significantly correlated with less drug use and delinquent behavior. However, the lack of variability between schools prevented the researchers from estimating school-level effects for victimization. These findings

suggest that schools which function as communities based in caring and supportive interpersonal relationships may play a role in enhancing students' resiliency (Battistich & Hom, 1997).

In addition to investigating the relationship between a sense of community and problem behaviors, Battistich et al. (1995) also assessed the extent to which student- and school-level sense of community were associated with academic attitudes and motives; social and personal attitudes, motives, and behavior; and cognitive/academic performance. Results indicated a moderate correlation between teacher and student perceptions of school community ($r = .64$, adjusted to $r = .55$, after controlling for poverty level of school). Within schools, a sense of community was associated with eleven of the twelve measures of academic attitudes and motives. Effects were moderate to large for enjoyment of class (ES = .48), liking for school (ES = .47), and task orientation toward learning (ES = .38). In terms of academic performance, the relationship was small and generally nonsignificant, while students' sense of community was significantly associated with all measures of social and personal attitudes, motives, and behaviors, other than democratic values. While most effect sizes were small, concern for others had a moderate effect (ES = .30). Similar to results within schools, students' average sense of community within a school (i.e., school community) was also found to be related to mean scores of the majority of academic attitudes and motives measures between-schools. Effect sizes were greatest for students' trust in and respect for teachers (ES = .77), liking for school (ES = .67), intrinsic motivation (ES = .60), and enjoyment of class (ES = .59). School community had a positive effect on an aggregate score of reading comprehension, but was otherwise not significantly associated with mean scores of achievement. Lastly, school community was significantly associated with school-level social and personal attitudes, motives, and behavior, such that conflict resolution skill, intrinsic prosocial motivation, and altruistic behavior all had

large effects ($ESs > .75$), while sense of efficacy and acceptance of outgroups had moderate effects ($ESs = .40-.50$). Overall, with the exception of academic performance, this study provided support for the relationship between both individual students' sense of school community, as well as school-wide sense of community, and a range of attitudinal, motivational, and behavioral outcome variables in academic, social, and personal domains.

Although the approach to assessing a sense of community in schools varies considerably across studies, an emphasis on caring, supportive, and purposeful social environments serves as a common thread that may explain the consistency in the reported effects of participation in these environments (Solomon et al., 1996). With an understanding of the positive outcomes associated with schools that function as communities (e.g., enhanced academic interest and achievement; fewer dropouts, cases of absenteeism, and misbehavior; and greater teacher morale and satisfaction; Bryk & Driscoll, 1988), it is critical to consider how schools may go about establishing a sense of community.

Of relevance to the current study, Solomon et al. (1996) investigated how this sense of community may be brought about at the classroom level in elementary schools. Specifically, the researchers examined the extent to which certain teaching practices and classroom activities were related to students' beliefs that their classrooms functioned as communities. They defined sense of classroom community as the extent to which students collectively perceived their classroom as one characterized by mutually supportive relationships and that all members' ideas were considered meaningful and valuable. Classroom observations were conducted to measure teacher behaviors, classroom practices, and student behavior, and a questionnaire was used to measure students' sense of their classroom as a community. In a sample derived from the same dataset as Battistich and Hom (1997), Solomon et al. (2006) analyzed observational and questionnaire data

from 232 classrooms (grades 3-5 in four districts; 4-6 in two). Questionnaires measuring students' sense of community (e.g., "students in my class are willing to go out of their way to help someone," "my class is like a family," "in my class, the teacher and students together plan what we will do") were administered to 5,143 students. Class-level data were analyzed based on a hypothesized path model including teacher practices (i.e., warmth and supportiveness, extrinsic control, elicitation of student thinking and expression of ideas, emphasis on prosocial values, encouragement of cooperation), student behaviors (i.e., engagement, positive behavior, influence), and outcome (i.e., sense of community). Results revealed links between teacher practices and student behaviors in the classroom, the latter of which were associated with students' sense of their classroom as a community (Solomon et al., 1996). Teacher practices of warmth and supportiveness, and encouragement of cooperation were found to be mostly highly related to student behaviors. Findings suggested that cooperative interaction was a key avenue through which students expressed meaningful influence and participated in positive behavior with peers, while teacher warmth and supportiveness was positively related to student engagement. The current study further investigated a subset of these findings, namely, the teacher practice of warmth and supportiveness was evaluated quantitatively, in terms of the dimensions of support most highly related to well-being, and qualitatively, in terms of ways teachers (as perceived by teachers and students) and classmates (as perceived by students) convey care. Findings may contribute to the literature on building school communities.

Benefits Associated with Positive School Climate and Feelings of School Connectedness

Similar to the concept of school communities, school climate and school connectedness are unique, multidimensional constructs that are used to talk about the nature of the school environment and the extent to which students feel like valued members of the school.

Conceptualizations of both constructs include a relational element (e.g., teacher-student and student-student interactions) and therefore implications of each are discussed due to their relevance to the current study. In general, as a function of the amount of time students spend in school, the school environment inevitably plays a role in students' wellness. The direction and intensity of that impact depends on the extent to which schools create an environment that is sensitive to the developmental needs of students.

School connectedness has been identified as a potential protective factor for decreasing the likelihood of adolescents participating in risky, health-comprising behavior and for increasing students' academic success (Blum, 2005). It has been suggested that the relationship between misbehavior and school connectedness is best described as operating within a feedback loop such that a low level of connectedness to school increases the risk of students engaging in problem behavior; engaging in problem behavior leads to disciplinary action that further decreases a student's feelings of connectedness to school, and consequently, problem behaviors worsen (Loukas, Ripperger-Suhler, & Horton, 2009). If such is the case, preventative efforts to promote school connectedness may serve to interrupt this negative cycle. Blum (2005) consulted the extant literature and identified three school characteristics that appear to heighten students' feelings of connectedness towards school, while also increasing achievement. Namely, high expectations coupled with strong support from teachers, positive relations between students and teachers, and an environment in which students feel safe both physically and emotionally, stand out as factors for promoting school connectedness and academic success. In contrast, students who indicate lower levels of school satisfaction attribute these feelings to low levels of relatedness towards school and poor teacher-student relationships (Baker, 1999). Although most research has been conducted with adolescents, the facilitation of school connectedness during the

elementary years could serve as a way of preventing early problem behaviors, while facilitating well-being. It is important that future research explore these constructs further in the context of elementary schools.

Developing an understanding of variables within the school context that are relevant to students' well-being is necessary when considering the extensive amount of time students spend in school, coupled with consideration for the role the environment plays in influencing individuals' life satisfaction. Findings from Suldo, Thalji-Raitano, Hasemeyer, Gelley, and Hoy (2013) suggest a considerable portion of students' global life satisfaction is accounted for by perceptions of school climate. The study utilized the Yale Child Study Center School Development Program's conceptualization of school climate (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996) to investigate the relationship between the various dimensions of the construct and middle school youth's life satisfaction. The program's conceptualization consisted of six dimensions including safety, equity of resources, parent involvement, positive relations among peers, positive relations among students and teachers, and fair treatment of all students (Comer et al., 1996). Suldo et al. (2013) found four of the six dimensions to be unique predictors of students' global life satisfaction. Of note, all relational dimensions (i.e., parent involvement, teacher-student relations, and student interpersonal relations) were found to independently contribute to differences in students' life satisfaction after controlling for the shared contributions of all dimensions. Thus, relational dimensions of school climate appear to be salient contributors to students' wellness. More specifically, as it relates to teacher-student relationships, Suldo, Friedrich, White, Farmer, Minch, and Michalowski (2009) found perceptions of Emotional and Instrumental Support to be unique predictors of students' SWB, after controlling for the shared variance among other types of Teacher Support.

Taken together, the current study aimed to extend the current knowledge base on the extent to which the relational elements of school climate co-occur with students' well-being, as well as examine the extent to which unique dimensions within each relational element contribute to this relationship. In addition to extending previous findings, the current study filled a key gap in the well-developed literature on school climate, by exploring the relationship between these variables in an elementary, as opposed to middle or high school, sample. Elementary-aged students' well-being and other related constructs have gone understudied due, in part, to the elevated needs of adolescent populations (Klem & Connell, 2004). However, understanding these relationships among elementary-aged youth is necessary for facilitating early positive perceptions of the schooling experience and for developing personal resources that will be beneficial for the student throughout development. Further, unlike most previous research in this area, the current researcher adopted a mixed-methods approach to acquire a more well-developed understanding of those behaviors exhibited by teachers and classmates that convey support and care. This method was warranted due to the need to understand the relationship between school climate constructs (e.g., interpersonal relationships) and well-being in an elementary population, as well as enhance or explain these findings to gain insight on behaviors that might facilitate this relationship (Creswell & Plano, 2011). A mixed methods approach allowed for both a general understanding of the relationship between school-related social support variables and students' well-being in an understudied population, and a more detailed understanding of students' and teachers' perspectives in this regard. Similar to Suldo et al. (2009), qualitative analyses of student reflections on how their teachers and classmates showed care might also help to inform intervention aimed at enhancing relationships, one mechanism through which to enhance overall school climate. Based on recommendation from Mitchell, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2010), student

and teacher responses were compared to develop an understanding of the extent to which these informants' perceptions of support and care were congruent. In other words, the current study aimed not only to understand which relational aspects of school climate were most highly related to students' well-being, but also to identify the extent to which the perception of objectively similar experiences varied by informant.

Associations between Classroom Support and Students' Subjective Well-Being

An ecological perspective of understanding a child's behavior involves examining domains outside the child that may impact a child's development and subsequent behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). In accordance with this perspective, school-based interventions should logically target relevant contextual factors, manipulating the extent to which they fit students' needs, in order to provide a foundation for positive development. In considering potential interventions, professionals must identify malleable factors in the environment to help facilitate student success. Park (2004) noted that demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, parental occupation) are minimally associated with measures of youth life satisfaction, whereas environmental factors (e.g., intrapersonal and interpersonal variables) have been found to account for a greater proportion of the variance in students' life satisfaction. Qualitative studies investigating student perceptions of what constitutes their happiness across age, country, and culture found that in over half of the studies, youth described school experiences, including access to schooling, personal performance, and relationships in the classroom as factors that influence their happiness (Suldo, 2016). School-related environmental factors including student support, teacher support, and reasonable expectations have been identified in the literature as highly predictive of students' SWB (Samdal, Nutbeam, Wold, & Kannas, 1998). Malecki et al. (2000) defined social support as the perception of overall support or specific supportive

behaviors provided by individuals within one's social network, which enhance one's functioning and/or mitigate against negative life outcomes. The impact of social support appears to be robust across a student's educational career, as higher levels of life satisfaction have been found to co-occur with greater perceptions of social support from teachers and peers in samples of elementary, middle, and high school students (Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, & Birchmeier, 2009; Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnstrøm, 2003; Suldo & Huebner, 2006).

In self-determination theory, relatedness is recognized as an essential human need. One reason for this could be that supportive relationships make people feel good. According to broaden-and-build theory, the experience of positive emotions widens the range of thoughts and actions in which people participate, leading to a growth in mental, psychological, social, and physical resources. The acquired personal resources then facilitate opportunities for further positive emotions, creating an upward spiral (Fredrickson & Cohn, 2008). Thus, schools that help foster caring relationships between students, and between students and staff, are facilitating the accumulation of resources students will draw upon across their development to experience positive emotion and its associated outcomes. Due to the lasting nature of these personal resources, solidifying supportive relationships in elementary school would allow students access to the greatest number of positive outcomes, while continuing to build resources (Bono, Froh, & Forrett, 2014).

Empirical evidence provides support for the link between classroom relationships and students' well-being. Siddall et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between school-related social support (i.e., parent involvement, peer support for learning, and teacher-student relationships) and middle school students' satisfaction with life. Survey data from 597 students collected over two separate time points (5 months apart) were analyzed using bivariate

correlations and multiple regression analyses. Students' satisfaction with life and perceived levels of social support were determined based on their responses to the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale and Student Engagement Inventory, respectively. Findings revealed that the level of social support indicated at Time 1 was associated with global life satisfaction at both Time 1 and Time 2. The inclusion of social support variables added significant predictive power to a model previously containing demographic variables alone. Further, at Time 1, peer and family support for learning (but not teacher support) were found to be significant predictors of students' global life satisfaction. An additional hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the level of support received from various social sources at Time 1 predicted life satisfaction at Time 2. Findings of the study include that social support variables added significant predictive power to the model, after controlling for demographic variables and life satisfaction at Time 1. However, family support was the only source of support that uniquely contributed to the variance in students' life satisfaction. Findings from this study support the potential for social support variables to impact students' satisfaction with their life overall (not only in school).

In relation to SWB in school specifically (i.e., school satisfaction and affect in school; Tian, 2008), Teacher and Classmate Support variables have been identified as unique predictors (Liu, Mei, Tian, & Huebner, 2016). Among a sample of 2,158 Chinese students (ages 8-19; grades 4-11; 40.4% elementary school students), Teacher and Classmate Support emerged as significant predictors of school satisfaction at a second data collection point, after controlling for responses collected six months earlier (Liu et al., 2016). In elementary school students, this relationship was moderated by gender such that the relationship between Teacher Support at Time 1 and school satisfaction at Time 2 was stronger for boys compared to girls. Further,

Teacher Support accounted for the largest amount of variance in school satisfaction at Time 2, across grades. At the elementary level, Classmate and Teacher Support were also significantly related to affect in school at Time 2, whereas this relationship with Teacher Support was not present with older students. This study supports the importance of both Classmate and Teacher Support in predicting students' SWB in school, particularly among children. Of note, Teacher Support was identified as the strongest source of support influencing elementary-aged students' school satisfaction.

Although the relationship between social support and well-being has been relatively well documented in the literature, there is less clarity regarding the directionality of the effects. While Siddall et al. (2013) and Liu et al. (2016) ran prospective analyses, and thus were able to make *inferences* regarding causal relationships among school-related social support variables and increases in life satisfaction, most research investigating the relationship between these variables has been cross-sectional in nature. Findings from a longitudinal study by Stiglbauer, Gnambs, Gamsjäger, and Batinic (2013) provide support for a more dynamic relationship between social support and SWB than is typically discussed in the literature. Driven by self-determination and broaden-and-build theories, the authors hypothesized that positive experiences at school (defined as the extent to which students' developmental needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy were met) would promote future happiness, and increases in happiness would facilitate future positive experiences at school. Support for both hypotheses would serve as evidence for the presence of an upward spiral of positive school experiences and happiness over time. To investigate the extent to which such a reciprocal relationship existed, a sample of 215 secondary students (ages 16 – 18; $M = 16.51$) participated in five waves of data collection every two months, over the course of one school year. At each time point, students completed self-report

measures assessing positive school experiences and happiness. Responses were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Results included that positive school experiences impacted happiness over time and that happiness also had a lagged impact on positive school experiences. Thus, these findings suggest that positive school experiences (including positive relations with students and teachers) may not only lead to the outcome of increased happiness, but that this happiness may then facilitate an increase in future positive school experiences. As such, enhancing teacher-student and student-student relations may hold potential to facilitate an ongoing spiral (i.e., bi-directional, over time) of positive outcomes.

Teacher-student relations. High quality teacher-student relationships often include high levels of positive characteristics- such as the presence of closeness, warmth, perceived social support, nurturance, trust, and emotional security- and low levels of negative features- such as conflict and excessive dependency (Pianta, 1999; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011). The indicator of teacher-student relationship quality that has been investigated the most in relation to students' subjective well-being is perceived social support. This may be due to the multidimensional nature of social support, in that it encompasses many of the positive characteristics that constitute high-quality teacher-student relationships. These four dimensions of Teacher Support include *Emotional Support* (i.e., expression of trust, love, empathy, and care), *Instrumental Support* (i.e., deliverance of assistance), *Appraisal Support* (i.e., provision of evaluative feedback), and *Informational Support* (i.e., provision of guidance or advice; Tardy, 1985).

Globally, supportive relations between students and teachers have been found to keep students interested in academic material and social pursuits, which in turn enhances students' grades and social relationships (Wentzel, 1998). Not only has teacher support been found to

correlate negatively with depression (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003), it has been found to enhance students' academic performance, self-esteem, social skills, school engagement, and well-being (Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Chen, 2005; Colarossi & Eccles, 2003; Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Suldo et al., 2009; Vedder, Boekaerts, & Seegers, 2005). For students with developmental vulnerabilities, a positive relationship with a teacher may serve a protective function in decreasing externalizing problems (Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999) and enhancing behavioral adjustment, according to prospective analyses (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Further, studies indicate that Teacher Support is a significant predictor of school satisfaction across grades (King, Huebner, Suldo, & Valois, 2006), with some evidence suggesting that Teacher Support has the strongest impact in this area (compared to Parental and Classmate Support; Danielsen, Samdal, Hetland, & Wold, 2009; Liu et al., 2016), and is associated with higher SWB (Suldo et al., 2009). Specifically, Emotional Support and Instrumental Support appear to be the aspects of Teacher Support most salient to middle school students' SWB (Suldo et al., 2009). While most extant research is based on data collected from secondary students, this researcher investigated which of these dimensions stand out as most salient to elementary school students' SWB.

Alongside Suldo et al. (2009), Malecki and Demaray (2003) provided a unique contribution to the literature through their investigation of social support as a multidimensional- as opposed to a unitary- construct. The authors collected data from 263 students, in grades 5-8, across four schools, to investigate the dimensions of support most often perceived by students and the dimensions most related to positive student outcomes. The Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS; Malecki et al., 2000) was used to assess perceived support (e.g., Emotional, Informational, Appraisal, and Instrumental) across different sources (e.g., parents, teachers, classmates, and close friends). The Social Skills Rating System (SSRS; Gresham &

Elliott, 1990) was administered to teachers, and the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1998) was administered to students, as measures of student outcomes. In regard to Teacher Support, Informational Support was indicated as the form of support students perceived most from their teachers and also as the form of support students valued most from their teachers. Further, Emotional Support from teachers predicted students' social skills and academic competence, and overall support from teachers predicted students' school maladjustment (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). These findings are critical to informing teaching practices, considering the link between different forms of support and student outcomes.

Baker (2006) also added a significant contribution to the limited research on teacher-student relationships as it pertains to elementary-aged students. Participants included 1,310 students (grades K-5) from four elementary schools in a Southeastern state. Teachers in the study ($n = 68$) completed measures of relationship quality (Student-Teacher Relationship Scale; Ang, 2005) and measures of children's behavior (BASC; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1998). Students' academic achievement was assessed through students' scores on two standardized measures of reading performance and through report cards grades for reading/language arts. Report card grades in the areas of social development and positive work habits were also aggregated as a means of assessing classroom adjustment. Regression analyses revealed that the quality of teacher-student relationships predicted both behavioral and academic indicators of school success, across grade levels. Additionally, although students experiencing learning and behavioral problems were found to have worse school outcomes compared to typically-developing peers, those students who had a close teacher relationship fared better compared to similarly vulnerable peers who did not have this support. As such, this study provides evidence

for the role of teacher-student relationships as both a protective and promotive factor in an elementary school context.

An understanding of how to facilitate positive teacher-student relationships may be particularly important at the elementary level, as students are developing their beliefs and attitudes about school and about their own capacity to succeed in school (Baker, 1999). Unfortunately, the extant research on the impact of Teacher Support in elementary-aged populations has been limited and the construct has only been examined unitarily (i.e., without an examination of individual dimensions of support). The current study investigated perceptions of Teacher-Student Relations as rated by teachers, as well as perceptions of Teacher Support as rated by students. Individual dimensions were analyzed to determine the extent to which they contribute to the variance in students' well-being. Qualitative reports provided further insight into what specific teacher behaviors demonstrate support and care, in the eyes of both teachers and students.

Classmate support. High quality peer relationships are often characterized by high levels of closeness and support, and low levels of aggression and conflict (Brown & Larson, 2009). As with Teacher Support, Classmate Support can be broken down into four distinct dimensions: Emotional Support, Instrumental Support, Appraisal Support, and Informational Support. There is a paucity of research on Classmate Support as a multidimensional construct, particularly as it pertains to elementary school students. In the field of adolescent research, supportive peer relationships have been found to be negatively correlated with psychopathology (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003; Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, Hodgson, & Rebus, 2005; Kerr, Preuss, & King, 2006; LaGreca & Lopez, 1998) and positively correlated with school achievement and self-esteem (Domagala-Zysk, 2006; Torsheim & Wold, 2001). Simultaneous

regression analyses conducted by Suldo et al. (2013) revealed that teacher-student relations and parent involvement stood out as unique contributors to middle school students' (ages 11-15) life satisfaction, while other dimensions of school climate (e.g., peer relationships) were not as influential. This finding suggests that interventions targeting peer support alone may not drastically alter a student's satisfaction with life. These results are supported by findings from Tian, Liu, Huang, and Huebner (2013), which also revealed significant, positive relationships between teacher and parent support (but not friend support) and Chinese adolescents' (ages 12-14) school well-being. However, other studies have found that social support from peers appears to improve children's functioning by serving as a buffer to negative life events [Ezzell, Swenson, & Brondino, 2000 (ages 6-14); Wasserstein & La Greca, 1996 (grades 4-6)]. In this sense, support from peers may serve as a protective factor for students at risk for decreased well-being.

Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter's (2003) use of an experience sampling method through which youth recorded happiness ratings while engaged in different activities throughout the day revealed that middle and high school students reported the lowest levels of happiness when alone, compared to when they were in the company of friends. Further, high school students who reported receiving greater amounts of positive social acts, including compliments and help from peers when needed (elements of Emotional and Instrumental Support), have been found to report greater levels of SWB (Suldo, Gelley, Roth, & Bateman, 2015).

Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, and Zumbo (2011) examined this relationship more globally in a sample of 1,402 early adolescents (grades 4-7). Namely, the authors investigated the extent to which students' overall satisfaction with life was associated with various ecological assets. Results revealed that positive peer relationships were significantly related to students' life satisfaction. These results are supported by similar findings from Danielsen et al. (2009), in

which Classmate Support directly impacted students' school satisfaction and life satisfaction in a sample of Norwegian 13- and 15- year olds. Oberle et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of these findings for adolescents who may have fewer developmental assets (i.e., protective factors) in the home and therefore would benefit from efforts aimed at fostering such protective factors outside the family.

In one of the few studies conducted with elementary-aged students, Nickerson and Nagle (2004) collected data from 303 students in fourth ($n = 103$), sixth ($n = 103$), and eighth grade ($n = 97$) classrooms of three elementary schools and three middle schools. Participating students completed the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS; Huebner, 1994) and a self-report survey pertaining to attachment relationships, including parent and peer attachments. The only grade-level difference found in relation to life satisfaction included decreased satisfaction with family as a function of age (i.e., fourth graders were most satisfied, eighth graders were least satisfied). Both parent and peer attachment were found to correlate significantly with life satisfaction in all domains and multiple regression analyses revealed that both forms of attachment predicted greater life satisfaction. Interestingly, grade-specific multiple regression analyses revealed that neither parent nor peer attachment predicted fourth graders' satisfaction with *school*, while parent attachment did predict sixth and eighth graders' school satisfaction, with peer attachment also serving as a significant predictor for eighth grade students. Examination of the beta weights in a model of parent and peer attachment on school satisfaction revealed that only peer delinquency accounted for a significant amount of the variance in school satisfaction, in an inverse direction. In general, positive elements of the attachment predictors (e.g., trust and communication) were highly correlated with students' life satisfaction, while negative aspects (e.g., alienation) were inversely related to life satisfaction.

Further, peer alienation significantly predicted students' satisfaction with their friends, in an inverse direction. Of relevance to the current study, although peer attachment was not found to be a significant predictor of fourth grade students' satisfaction with school, peer attachment predicted students' *global* life satisfaction, regardless of grade. Considering previous research indicating that peer rejection, loneliness, delinquency, and alienation are associated with negative outcomes (McFadyen-Ketchum & Dodge, 1998; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004), it is important to consider what factors might mitigate this impact. Of note, loneliness and the absence of close peer relationships are both associated with engagement in bullying behaviors (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). To prevent a potentially maladaptive cycle in which negative indicators of attachment lead to further risk and chance for decreased physical and mental health outcomes (Rigby, 2001), protective factors must be fostered in the lives of young students.

Flaspohler et al. (2009) examined the impact of bullying and victimization on students' quality of life, as well as the role of teacher and peer support in moderating this relationship. Participants in this study included 4,331 students (grades 3-8) across nine elementary and middle schools. Student responses to a measure of bullying was used to classify students into four categories: bully, victim, bully-victim, and bystander. The extent to which students in each group reported differing levels of life satisfaction and support from teachers and peers was assessed through aggregating both life satisfaction and social support scores into composites, and evaluating mean differences in outcomes among students. Students were also categorized as high or low in teacher and peer social support, in order to assess the extent to which social support moderated the relationship between victimization and life satisfaction. Multivariate analyses of covariance revealed that students who did not participate in bullying (either as the bully or

victim) reported higher life satisfaction, and greater levels of support from teachers and peers, than students who were either bullies, victims, or both. Victimized students reported lower levels of life satisfaction and support from peers than did bullies. However, these students felt more supported by their teachers in comparison to bully's perceptions of teacher support. The worst outcomes were reported by the group of students who were both bullies and victims. These students reported the lowest levels of life satisfaction and social support of any other group. Although the authors controlled for students' gender and grade level (limiting the likelihood of a third variable explanation), due to the correlational nature of the study, it is unclear whether students who did not engage in bullying experienced greater levels of life satisfaction and social support, or if social support and satisfaction with life served a protective role against bullying and victimization. If the latter is true, there is a need for school programs aimed at enhancing students' well-being and relationships within the school. However, considering low levels of school connectedness (including interpersonal relations) have been linked to greater risk of peer victimization (Skues et al, 2005; Young, 2003), efforts to build strong social relationships within the school setting (along with bullying prevention efforts) would appear to serve a preventative function, regardless of the directionality of these effects.

Analysis of multigroup structural equation models revealed that the relationship between victimization and quality of life was moderated by peer support to a greater extent than it was by teacher support. Namely, the relationship between victimization and quality of life was weakened by a combination of high peer support and low teacher support to a greater extent than it was weakened for students who reported low levels of support, overall. However, this effect was not evident for students who reported high teacher support, but low levels of support from peers. Thus, teacher support alone may not protect students from the negative impacts of

bullying. However, fostering positive peer relationships, grounded in support, may play a role in mitigating against the negative effects of bullying (Flaspohler et al., 2009). Of note, these effects were demonstrated after controlling for grade and gender. As such, results from this study provide evidence for the importance of peer support in elementary populations, as well as middle school populations.

Similarly to Noddings' (2005) notion that it is the students' perception of support that matters, rather than teacher's interpretations of support delivery, Fogle, Huebner, and Laughlin (2002) discovered that teachers' ratings of adolescents' (grades 6 – 8) social competence were unrelated to students' life satisfaction; in contrast, students' self-reported perceptions of their social competence were found to be significantly related to their life satisfaction. While this could be partially attributed to a method effect, the current study nonetheless investigated students' perceptions of Classmate Support, as opposed to teachers' ratings or observations. Further, an investigation of fifth grade students ($n = 1,881$) and their homeroom teachers ($n = 90$) revealed no association between students' and teachers' ratings of overall school climate, with teachers' perceptions relating more closely to classroom-level factors (e.g., proportion of students with disruptive behaviors), while students' perceptions were related more closely with school-level factors (e.g., student-teacher relationships; Mitchell et al., 2010). As such, both students' and teachers' perceptions of supportive/caring behaviors were examined and compared in the current study. Overall, there appears to be a relationship between classmate relations and students' SWB such that students who experience the negative aspects of peer relationships (e.g., are excluded, talked about negatively) are likely to experience lower SWB as compared to students who experience the positive aspects of peer relationships (e.g., provided care and support; Suldo, 2016). Although somewhat limited, there is support in the literature for the

existence of a positive relationship between peer support and satisfaction with life in elementary-aged students (Oberle et al., 2011). Further, there is evidence to suggest that perceived peer support may moderate the relationship between peer victimization and decreased quality of life (Flaspohler et al., 2009). In regard to the individual dimensions of Classmate Support, one study found that Emotional and Informational Support were the forms of support students (grades 5-8) perceived most often from classmates (Malecki & Demaray, 2003). However, this is the extent of the literature on the individual dimensions of Classmate Support in an elementary population. The current study sought to fill this gap, specifically in regard to how different dimensions of support relate to students' SWB.

Teacher and Classmate Behaviors that Demonstrate Care

Noddings (2005) stated that teachers may believe they are conveying care; however, if students do not recognize this care, it is essentially meaningless. It is possible that as students age, they may develop a more nuanced understanding and appreciation of care. However, it is important to understand what aspects of social relationships are perceived by youth as caring in order to develop school programs and policies that facilitate the development of meaningful relationships.

Students' perceptions of caring relationships with their teachers have been found to predict school satisfaction among a sample of low-income, African American students (ages 8-13) who reported alienation from school (Baker, 1998). Of note, Malecki and Demaray (2003) found that students in grades five through eight reported Emotional Support (including communications of empathy and care) as one of the forms of support most demonstrated by classmates and close friends. Additionally, the perception of Emotional Support from teachers

was a significant predictor of students' social skills and academic competence (Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

Suldo et al. (2009) provided an invaluable contribution to the literature on teacher support both in the way of examining support as a multidimensional construct and gathering student opinions on how their teachers demonstrate support. The qualitative component of the study was derived from focus groups in which 50 students (grades 7-8) were asked questions based on items from the CASSS (Malecki et al., 2000) survey administered within the quantitative portion of the study. Those items selected from the survey were related to the dimensions of Instrumental and Emotional Support. Namely, students in gender-specific focus groups were asked how their teachers show care, display fairness, create a safe space for asking questions, and ensure they have learned concepts. Students were also asked to answer the same questions by responding with behaviors demonstrated by their teachers that do not convey support (Suldo et al., 2009).

Teacher behaviors that students specified as conveying Emotional and Instrumental Support included:

Teacher conveys interest in student wellness; takes actions to improve students' moods and emotional states; gives students what they want, specifically things that are pleasurable; is sensitive and responsive to the entire class' understanding of academic material; shows interest in an individual student's progress; uses diverse teaching strategies; provides evaluative feedback on student performance; helps students improve their grades; ensures a manageable academic workload; treats students similarly; punishes in a fair manner; and creates an environment in which questions are encouraged (Suldo et al., 2009, p. 75-76).

Teacher behaviors students specified as demonstrating low levels of support included:

Teacher conveys disinterest in student wellness; contributes to students' negative moods and poor emotional states; sets firm expectations, rules, and discipline procedures; insufficient interest in, and assistance with, students' academic progress; reliance on single mode of instruction; does not help students improve grades; assigns an overwhelming workload; treats students in a biased manner; punishes in an incorrect manner; and creates an environment in which questions are discouraged (Suldo et al., 2009, p. 78-79).

Teacher Support and care can be considered distinguishable, yet overlapping, constructs. Noddings (1992) proposed that caring teachers “model caring behavior to their students, engage students in dialogues that lead to mutual understanding and perspective taking, and expect as well as encourage students to do the best they can given their abilities” (Wentzel, 1997, p. 412). Wentzel (1997) drew from Noddings' (1992) conceptualization of care, as well as socialization models, to identify five dimensions of effective caregiving, including: “modeling, democratic communication styles, expectations for behavior, rule setting, and nurturance” (p. 412). As such, while there are overlapping aspects of Emotional Support and care (e.g., expressions of warmth), there are also differences between the two constructs (e.g., caregiving includes greater emphasis on modeling and expectation setting). Drawn from a sample of eighth grade students ($N = 375$), Wentzel (1997) obtained students' perspectives on what constitutes effective caregiving on the part of teachers in the classroom. Student responses indicated that expectations for behavior and democratic interactions were most characteristic of caring or uncaring teachers (Wentzel, 1997). If, as suggested by Noddings (1992), schools' academic objectives are unable to be attained unless teachers foster caring and supportive classrooms, then there is a need to empirically address the mechanisms through which this can be achieved. The qualitative arm of the current

study focused on teacher and classmate behaviors that fourth and fifth grade students reported as “supportive or nice” and teacher reports of how they showed “support/care.” Due to differences in the nature of teacher-student relationships in elementary and middle schools, it is necessary to develop an understanding of those teacher behaviors that lead younger students to believe their teachers care about them. As such, the extent to which students reported different types of support from teachers and classmates, as well as more specific instances of care were recorded in this study. Teacher reports of actions they took to demonstrate care were examined.

Summary and Gaps in the Literature

Although the relationship between school-related social support and students’ SWB is relatively established in the literature, less is known about how this relationship presents in elementary-aged populations. This gap is important to acknowledge considering Bowlby’s (1988) assertion that children form early representations of social relationships that remain relatively stable and serve as a reference from which subsequent relationships are judged across time. Consistent with the study purposes of Suldo et al. (2009), the current study paid additional attention to the unique dimensions of Teacher and Classmate Support. In this regard, a goal of the current study was to determine whether teacher displays of specific forms of social support (e.g., Emotional, Instrumental) would uniquely predict SWB with elementary-aged students, as it did with adolescents in Suldo et al. (2009), or if the relationship differs amongst age groups. Qualitative reports of teacher (as indicated by teachers and students) and classmate behaviors (as indicated by students) that show care were also investigated to allow for comparison to findings with an adolescent population (e.g., Suldo et al., 2009). There is some inconsistency in the literature regarding the extent to which Classmate Support contributes to SWB. Considering most research has been conducted with adolescent populations, a time when peer relationships

play a dominant role in development, the relationships between Classmate Support and SWB may look different for elementary-aged students. The current study further investigated this relationship.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHOD

In the current study, an explanatory mixed methods design was used to analyze preexisting data collected by Hearon (2017) and McCollough (in progress). Namely, this researcher examined the relationship between classroom support variables and students' subjective well-being (SWB) using a correlational design and hierarchical linear modeling (quantitative). Extant qualitative data on how students and teachers perceive support/care in the classroom were also investigated to supplement and explain quantitative data. A hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the qualitative arm of this study. This chapter details the participants and procedures involved in the study, including the measures utilized to assess the variables of interest. An overview of the data analysis approach as it relates to each research question is provided. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed.

Participants

The current study is a secondary analysis of data collected previously (during the 2015-16 school year) from fourth and fifth grade students at one large elementary school located in an urban school district in a southeastern state. The archival dataset used in the current study is part of a larger study investigating the efficacy of a classwide well-being promotion program (PI: Shannon Suldo, Professor, School Psychology Program; see Hearon, 2017; McCollough, in progress). The partnering school selected for the original study was chosen based on the administration's interest in positive psychology and a successful past partnership in implementing a teacher-focused well-being program. Based on recommendations by Suldo,

Hearon, Dickinson, et al. (2015), fourth and fifth grade students were selected for recruitment given their likely ability to better understand abstract concepts addressed in the intervention (e.g., character strengths, goal-directed thinking) compared to younger students (i.e., grades K – 3).

Students. Students who attended the partnering school were diverse in terms of race and ethnicity (22.6% Hispanic, 10.2% African-American, 3.0% Asian, 10.4% multiracial) and socioeconomic status (42.5% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch). All fourth and fifth grade students at the partnering school participated in the classwide well-being promotion program as part of the school's universal mental health efforts to promote student well-being. Student participation in the data collection process was determined based on returned parental consent forms. Only students who received active parent consent to participate completed self-report measures for the study. Incentives (i.e., snack party) were provided to classrooms with the highest return rate.

Of the potential 259 students eligible to participate in the larger evaluation study, 194 consent forms (74.5%) were returned, with 179 parents (69.1%) agreeing to allow their child to participate in the well-being program. Participants were nested within 13 intervention classrooms, with 8-18 participants in each classroom. There were an additional 7 participants from a 14th classroom (fourth grade) that was excluded from the larger evaluation study because the classroom teacher participated in a similar well-being promotion program during the previous school year. Data were still collected from the 7 students who obtained parent consent to rate their well-being throughout the school year, and these students' data were included in the dataset analyzed in the current study (but excluded in the study completed by Hearon, 2017). In sum, a total of 186 students from 14 classes participated at Time 1 (August). Due to attrition, a total of 179 students ultimately participated in data collection at Time 2 (December), which is the time

point examined in the quantitative portion of this study. The demographic features of this sample of 179 students are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Student Sample (N=179)

Characteristic	Sample Total (N=179)	Qualitative Subsample (N=86)*
	%	%
Gender		
Male	46.9	44.2
Female	53.1	55.8
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch		
Not Eligible	54.7	57.0
Eligible	41.9	43.0
Unknown	3.3	0
Race/Ethnicity		
White	58.1	53.5
African American	4.5	2.3
Hispanic	21.8	30.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.8	4.7
Multicultural	9.5	9.3
Unknown	3.3	0
Grade		
Fourth	52.0	51.1
Fifth	48.0	48.8

**Note:* The qualitative subgroup demographic information reflects only those students with parental consent to fill out program-related outcomes measures before and after the intervention was implemented. In reality, all students who participated in the program at this time (N=140 students attended at least 7 sessions) had the opportunity to respond to questions regarding teacher and classmate care, questions that were posed as part of the universal curriculum.

Teachers. A total of 14 fourth and fifth grade teachers completed surveys measuring Teacher-Student Relations. Participating teachers were primarily white and female (92.31% and 84.62%), and varied in age, degree earned, and years of teaching experience. Teacher demographic characteristics are represented as percentages in Table 2. Additionally, during intervention implementation, teachers completed weekly forms indicating different ways they displayed care to their students. In the current study, survey results from all 14 teachers were analyzed in relation to the first and second research questions. For the qualitative portion of the study, teacher reports of care were analyzed from those seven teachers that participated in the

spring implementation of the classwide Well-Being Promotion Program; the other seven teachers' classrooms took part in the fall, and student responses to questions posed to the class about supportive relationships were not recorded in that condition. Qualitative analyses were limited to this sample assigned to the spring intervention condition as student reports of teacher and classmate care were limited to these seven classrooms. Demographic characteristics of the qualitative subgroup of teachers can also be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Teacher Sample (N=14)

Characteristic	Total Sample (N = 14) %	Qualitative Subgroup (N = 7) %
Gender		
Male	14.3	0.0
Female	85.7	100.0
Age (Years)		
<30	14.2	14.3
31-40	28.6	28.6
41-50	28.6	14.3
>50	28.6	42.8
Race/Ethnicity		
White	92.9	85.7
African-American	0.0	0.00
Hispanic	0.0	0.00
Asian/Pacific-Islander	7.1	14.3
Multiracial	0.0	0.00
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelors	64.3	71.4
Masters	35.7	28.6
Years Teaching		
<5	7.1	14.3
5-10	42.9	42.8
11-15	7.1	14.3
16-20	42.9	14.3
>20	23.1	14.3

Procedures

Data collection. Approval to conduct the study was received from the participating school district's Department of Assessment and Accountability and the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants provided written assent on the student assent form read aloud by a member of the research team. Assenting students completed a demographics survey as well as baseline self-report measures of subjective well-being (i.e., global life satisfaction, positive and negative affect), perceived classroom social support (i.e., Teacher and Classmate Support), and classroom engagement (i.e., behavioral and affective engagement and disaffection). This study is focused on measures of subjective well-being and classroom social support. Additionally, teachers filled out measures of Teacher-Student Relations, which were also analyzed in the current study.

After baseline measures were completed (Time 1: August, 2015), 13 classrooms were randomly assigned to either receive the intervention immediately (fall 2015), or the following semester (spring 2016) as part of the delayed intervention control group. A 14th classroom was assigned to the fall intervention condition, but not included in the evaluation of program effects because the classroom teacher had previously taken part in the teacher well-being focused segment of the intervention. During the course of the intervention in both fall and spring, teachers filled out weekly check-ins regarding how they conveyed care in their classrooms. However, only those responses from teachers who participated in the spring implementation of the program were included for analysis in the qualitative portion of the current study. A second wave of quantitative data was collected in December 2015 (Time 2), to permit evaluation of the immediate effect of the intervention on student outcomes (e.g., subjective well-being) and intervention targets (e.g., classroom relationships). Additionally, for approximately the first five

minutes of the ten classwide intervention sessions, students were asked ways in which their teachers and classmates conveyed care and support (with teachers present). During the spring intervention implementation, student responses were recorded by the co-interventionist in the classroom. In this sense, quantitative data (Time 1: baseline; Time 2: post-intervention (fall condition); from approximately $n = 179$ participants) were collected prior to qualitative data (collected throughout the spring intervention for the sample that originally served as a delayed-intervention control condition; from approximately 140 students). Due to students being nested within classrooms, quantitative analyses were run at the student ($n=179$) and classroom ($n=14$) levels and hierarchical linear models were used to take the hierarchical structure of the data into account. Qualitative analyses focused on students who received the intervention in the spring. Of note, approximately 140 students had the opportunity to respond to questions regarding teacher and classmate displays of care; however, the data reflect only students who volunteered responses during opportunities for choral responding to questions posed by an interventionist.

Student survey administration. In the original study, participants completed self-report measures at three time points over the 2015-2016 school year: baseline assessment (Time 1), immediate post-intervention assessment (Time 2), and either three-month follow-up assessment (for immediate/fall intervention condition) or end of intervention for delayed-intervention/spring condition (Time 3). At these time points, a member of the research team read aloud survey items to assenting participants during school hours. Participating students completed the surveys at their desks, while nonparticipating students engaged in a quiet activity specified by the teacher. All participating students were provided a writing utensil and were asked to avoid speaking to each other to ensure privacy. Survey items were read aloud to students by one research team member, while another team member circulated the room. These measures were taken to ensure

that reading difficulties did not interfere with survey completion and to allow students the opportunity to ask for clarification on items considered confusing. Four counterbalanced versions of the survey packets were distributed across classes to control for order effects. Prior to collecting survey packets, members of the USF research team (including the author of this thesis) reviewed each student's packet for skipped items or response errors and asked students to correct any identified errors. Immediate post-intervention assessment data from all research participants in the 14 classes of fourth and fifth grade students were collected in December 2015, and data from this wave were examined to inform the research questions pertinent to the quantitative portion of this study. This wave of data was selected under the assumption that teachers and students would have spent sufficient time (over four months) together to meaningfully report on the quality of classroom relationships. While Time 2 data (immediate post-intervention) includes additional variation between classes (half of the students already took part in an intervention intended to improve student SWB by generating positive emotions and strengthening relationships), this factor may be considered another piece of a student's history, and thus was unlikely to pose a threat to identifying relationships in the data.

Teacher survey administration. Teachers completed measures of student engagement, student behavior, and teacher-student relationship quality at all three time points (Time 3 was only completed by teachers in immediate intervention classrooms). The current study examined teacher survey responses on a measure of Teacher-Student Relations from the second wave of data (consistent with student survey data). It took teachers approximately 30-45 minutes to complete data on all students at each time point. Surveys were completed individually and were returned to the research team, who scanned surveys for missing or incomplete data.

Student Self-Report Measures – Quantitative Component

Demographics form. The demographics form (see Appendix A) was displayed in multiple choice format and consisted of questions regarding students' gender, age, grade, race, ethnicity, and free or reduced lunch status.

Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS; Huebner, 1991). The SLSS is a self-report measure consisting of seven items targeting the global life satisfaction of children in grades 3-12 (see Appendix B). Respondents rate the extent to which they agree with statements about the quality of their life (e.g., "My life is going well," "I have what I want in life") on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). After reverse scoring two items, a mean score is calculated to represent the student's overall life satisfaction, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction with life.

Huebner (1991b) found adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$), test-retest reliability ($r = .74$), and a unidimensional factor structure in a sample of 254 students, ages 7-14. Additionally, Huebner (1991c) found support for the construct validity of the SLSS in a sample of 254 children in grades 3-8. Namely, children's life satisfaction ratings were differentiated from ratings of affective states, supporting the measure's ability to detect cognitive as opposed to affective judgements. This measure was selected for the original study based on its widespread usage and validation for use with elementary school students (Hearon, 2017).

Ten-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children (10-item PANAS-C; Ebesutani et al., 2012). This version of the PANAS-C was modified from the 27-item PANAS-C (Laurent et al., 1999) measuring children's positive and negative affect (see Appendix C). Respondents indicate the extent to which they have experienced both positive (i.e., joyful, cheerful, happy, lively, proud) and negative emotions (i.e., miserable, mad, afraid, scared, sad)

during the past few weeks, on a scale from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Positive and negative affect scores are obtained by averaging the five items pertaining to each of the two affects, separately.

Although there have been relatively few reports on the use of the ten-item PANAS-C, Ebesutani, Regan, Smith, Reise, Higa-McMillan, and Chorpita (2012) found high internal consistency for both positive ($\alpha = .86$) and negative ($\alpha = .82$) affect scales in their study with 799 students, ages 6-18. The authors mentioned that the modified PANAS-C appears to identify youth in need of mental health services to the same extent as the original 27-item PANAS-C measure. Despite its infancy, the 10-item PANAS-C was selected for the original study based on its promising psychometric properties and reasonable length for use in schools (Hearon).

Children and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS; Malecki, Demaray, Elliot, & Nolten, 2000). The CASSS contains 60 items assessing students' perceptions of support from teachers, parents, classmates, close friends, and school (see Appendix D). In this study, students' responses to 12-item teacher and classmate subscales were analyzed. Both subscales measure Emotional, Instrumental, Appraisal, and Informational dimensions of support, with three items corresponding to each type of support. "My teacher cares about me" is an example of an Emotional Support item. "My classmates help me with projects in class" is an example of an Instrumental Support item. "My classmates tell me I did a good job when I've done something well" is an example of an Appraisal Support item. "My teacher helps me solve problems by giving me information" is an example of an Informational Support item. Subscale scores are determined by averaging students' responses to all subscale items, with individual item response scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*). Higher scores are indicative of greater levels of support.

Malecki and Demaray (2002) utilized data from 1110 students in grades 3-12 in order to assess the reliability and validity of the CASSS. Of relevance to the current study, the authors found high internal reliability for teacher ($\alpha = .88$) and classmate ($\alpha = .93$) subscales, as well as total scale/subscale intercorrelations ranging from .65-.86, for students in grades 3-6. The measure also correlated moderately with Harter's (1985) Social Support Scale for Children ($r = .52-.59$). In regard to the 4-factor structure of the CASSS, internal consistency for the frequency type scores (e.g., Emotional, Instrumental, Appraisal, and Informational) ranged from .81 to .82, and .80 to .87 for Teacher and Classmate subscales, respectively. Test-retest correlations were significant, ranging from .46 to .75, and .51 to .67 on Teacher and Classmate subscales. Further, graduate students were able to categorize 92% of CASSS items under the appropriate support type, providing evidence that items on the CASSS measure the dimensions of support intended by the authors (Malecki & Demaray, 2003).

Teacher Report Measures – Quantitative Component

Teacher-Student Relationships Inventory (TSRI; Ang, 2005). This 14-item measure assesses teachers' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with students (see Appendix E). Teachers respond to questions surrounding their relationships with individual students on a scale from 1 (*almost never true*) to 5 (*almost always true*). Traditionally, the TSRI includes subscales of Instrumental Help (5 items; e.g., "If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help"), Satisfaction (5 items; e.g., "I would describe my relationship with this student as positive"), and Conflict (4 items; e.g., "This student frustrates me more often than most other students in my class"). However, due to low teacher acceptability of the Conflict scale, this subscale was removed from data collection in the larger study, and therefore was not analyzed in this study.

Ang (2005) utilized exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to develop and validate use of the TSRI with elementary school students. In this study, 19 teachers rated their relationships with individual students in their classrooms (averaging 22 students, grades 4-6), whom they had been teaching for at least 8 months. Ang (2005) found high internal consistency for both Instrumental Help ($\alpha = .94$) and Satisfaction ($\alpha = .84$) subscales. Further, 23.3% of the variance in students' academic achievement scores was accounted for by the three TSRI factors, with Instrumental Help and Conflict arising as positive and negative statistically significant predictors. This finding supports the predictive validity of the measure.

Student Weekly Reports of Teacher and Classmate Care – Qualitative Component

For approximately the first five minutes of the ten classwide intervention sessions (in line with the protocol for intervention sessions in the original study), the interventionist asked students to recall any instances over the past week where their classmates were particularly nice to them or to another student. Similarly, the interventionist asked students to recall times when their teacher or other adults in the school were particularly nice or supportive (see Appendix F). Students raised their hands to respond to the posed questions and the co-interventionist recorded students' responses. Due to the nature of the intervention being implemented (i.e., a well-being promotion program intended to improve relationships, in part through recognition of positive relational behaviors), and each teacher's presence in the room at the time questions were being asked, no non-examples of support were collected for the qualitative portion of the current study. Rather, co-interventions recorded students' responses on a pre-populated sheet of possible responses (i.e. the Supportive Behaviors Record Form; see Appendix G), with space to note what students mentioned more specifically, as well as space to record answers that did not align with categories on the pre-populated data collection tool. The Supportive Behaviors Record Form was

created after fall implementation of the intervention to allow co-interventions to record students' responses more readily. Categories listed on the form were developed based on common student reports from the fall, as recalled by interventionists.

Teacher Weekly Reports of How They Convey Care – Qualitative Component

The co-interventionist delivered a half-sheet of questions to teachers at the beginning of nine of the ten classwide intervention sessions (see Appendix H). Teacher responses to question one (i.e., “What did you do or say to show support/care to your students?”) were coded as they related to the four dimensions of support. Of the nine opportunities to return responses, teachers returned between two and nine sheets each, with six sheets returned per teacher on average.

Analyses

Various statistical procedures were conducted in the current study as they pertained to each research question. Data from the original study were entered into SPSS software where it was checked for data entry errors and screened for systematic errors on the part of participants. This researcher used SAS to look at the data for missing values and to conduct preliminary analyses for quantitative data. Qualitative data were entered and coded in ATLAS.ti.

Quantitative Component

Preliminary analyses. Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine if any violations of assumptions occurred in the data. Intercorrelations among the dimensions of support for teachers and classmates and the dimensions of teacher-student relationships were also analyzed to assess for multicollinearity. After conducting preliminary analyses, various other statistical analyses were conducted in relation to each of the research questions:

1. *To what extent, if any, are classroom support variables (i.e., Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations) related to students' subjective well-being (SWB)?*
2. *Which individual dimensions of Teacher Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), Classmate Support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, Informational), and Teacher-Student Relations (i.e., Instrumental Help, Relationship Satisfaction) are most highly related to students' SWB?*

Relationship between classroom support and SWB. Bivariate correlations between each classroom support variable and the outcome variable of SWB were analyzed to determine the strength and direction of the relationships. To examine the effect of a block of predictors [e.g., Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help together (i.e., Teacher-Student Relations alone)], nested models (those with and without predictors) were estimated using full maximum likelihood and the -2 log likelihood values were contrasted using a chi square difference test. However, to estimate the individual parameters of each model (all following analyses), restricted maximum likelihood was used. Finally, all classroom support variables were entered into a multilevel model to examine the unique predictors of SWB.

A similar process was followed to explore the dimensions of each support variable individually. Individual models were created for Teacher Support dimensions, Classmate Support dimensions, Teacher-Student Relations dimensions, as well as one model containing all support dimensions, and one containing Teacher and Classmate Support dimensions alone. The intraclass correlation was calculated to determine the degree to which there were differences in SWB between the 14 different classrooms. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to take the nested structure into account.

Multilevel equations for Research Question 1:

$$\mathbf{SWB}_{ij} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{teacher support}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{classmate support}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{teacher-student relations}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

Multilevel equations for Research Question 2:

$$\mathbf{SWB} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{teacher instrumental support}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{teacher emotional support}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{teacher appraisal support}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{teacher informational support}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

$$\mathbf{SWB} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{classmate instrumental support}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{classmate emotional support}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{classmate appraisal support}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{classmate informational support}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

$$\mathbf{SWB} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{teacher-student instrumental help}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{teacher-student satisfaction}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

$$\mathbf{SWB} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{teacher instrumental support}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{teacher emotional support}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{teacher appraisal support}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{teacher informational support}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{classmate instrumental support}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{classmate emotional support}} + \beta_7 X_{\text{classmate appraisal support}} + \beta_8 X_{\text{classmate informational support}} + \beta_9 X_{\text{teacher-student instrumental help}} + \beta_{10} X_{\text{teacher-student satisfaction}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

$$\mathbf{SWB} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{\text{teacher instrumental support}} + \beta_2 X_{\text{teacher emotional support}} + \beta_3 X_{\text{teacher appraisal support}} + \beta_4 X_{\text{teacher informational support}} + \beta_5 X_{\text{classmate instrumental support}} + \beta_6 X_{\text{classmate emotional support}} + \beta_7 X_{\text{classmate appraisal support}} + \beta_8 X_{\text{classmate informational support}} + u_j + e_{ij}$$

Qualitative Component

3. How do students report their teachers and classmates convey support/care?

Student perceptions of care. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis in which a hybrid process of inductive and deductive inquiry was used to identify themes in the data. An explanatory style was utilized to further explain quantitative findings and to provide a deeper glimpse into teacher and student perceptions of support/care. Namely, data were coded for key elements of social support and care (deductive), as well as for other themes that emerged in the data (inductive). The six step process outlined by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) was utilized to create code manuals (see Appendices I-J) for interpreting the data in this study. The

process involves integrating a priori themes derived from theory with data-driven themes to fully capture participant responses and requires going through the data multiple times (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Specifically, the researcher went through the stages of developing a code manual (with a template developed a priori); testing the reliability of established codes; summarizing the data and identifying initial themes; uploading data to ATLAS.ti (a qualitative data analysis program), applying a priori codes, and adding additional codes; connecting all codes and identifying themes, and finalizing and legitimating themes. Although a systematic process, this form of analysis is characterized as iterative and reflexive (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). All student and teacher responses were coded as they aligned with codes in the three code manuals (student perceptions of teacher support/care, student perceptions of classmate support/care, and teacher report of conveying support/care; Appendices I-K). Super codes were established based on Tardy's (1985) dimensions of support and were used across codebooks to allow for comparison. All responses fell into these support dimensions and thus no further Super codes were established. Under each Super code are Family codes developed a priori based on support dimension definitions. Family codes were refined as they aligned with student and teacher responses, with additional Family codes added as themes arose in the data. Individual codes were established based on themes from the data as well as from theory [i.e., Wentzel's (1997) care framework]. In addition to the current researcher, a second research team member coded a sample of student and teacher responses to support the trustworthiness of the analysis. After establishing 100% agreement for a subsection of responses, no further reliability checks were completed. Frequency counts, including the proportion of student comments that fell within a theme, were utilized to answer this research question. Additionally, the content of students' responses was examined for *how* or in *what ways* themes are salient for students.

4. *How do teachers report showing support/care to their students?*

Teacher perceptions of their own supportive behavior. The hybrid process of inductive and deductive analysis described for research question three were also applied for research question four in order to learn more about how teachers believe they demonstrate support/care in the classroom. Quantitatively, teachers reported on the quality of their relationships with individual students, including their satisfaction with the relationships and the extent to which they believed students would come to them for help. Qualitative data corresponded more directly to ways in which teachers believe they convey support/care to students. Multiple codes were permitted for both student and teacher individual responses, if multiple codes were indicated.

5. *To what extent are teachers' reports of showing care similar to students' perceptions of care?*

Agreement between teachers and students. For those themes that overlapped between students and teachers, the proportion of student comments that fell within a theme were compared to the proportion of teacher comments that fell within that same theme. A bar graph was incorporated to illustrate this relationship. Further, qualitative similarities and differences between student and teacher responses were assessed to determine not only how frequently themes were reported, but also *how* different themes are salient to teachers and students.

Ethical Considerations

The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the participating district's Department of Assessment and Accountability both granted approval for the original study prior to any form of data collection. While all fourth and fifth grade students participated in the Well-Being Promotion Program (Suldo, 2016) associated with the original evaluation study, no survey data

were collected from students who did not receive written parental consent and who did not provide written assent themselves. Both forms described the study purpose and potential risks and benefits associated with participation in the study. Participating students were reminded of their right to discontinue participation at any time.

Participants were labeled with a code number prior to data collection and were not asked to provide any identifying information at that time. The electronic files linking participants' names to their code numbers are available only to approved research team members. In the current study, teacher's names were replaced with a label (e.g., Teacher 1) and therefore are not identifiable.

Finally, although classrooms were assigned to both experimental and control conditions, both groups received the intervention by the end of the 2015-2016 school year, and therefore neither group was deprived of services intended to improve student well-being.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter includes a description of the results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted to answer the five primary research questions of this study. First, steps taken to create variables of interest are described, followed by results from preliminary analyses. Next, results from a series of hierarchical linear models are presented to explain the extent to which the various support variables (i.e., Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations), and their individual dimensions (i.e., Instrumental Support, Emotional Support, Appraisal Support, Informational Support, Instrumental Help, and Relationship Satisfaction) contributed to students' SWB. Qualitative results are presented as they relate to research questions three and four, with question five including a comparison of responses. First, teacher and classmate behaviors identified by students as supportive are presented, including both frequency counts and descriptions. Next, teacher reports of how they displayed support and care to students are similarly described through frequency counts and descriptions. Finally, a comparison of teacher and student reports is provided.

Quantitative Component

Data Screening

Data entry. As part of the larger study conducted by Hearon (2017) and McCullough (in progress), student self-report and teacher-reported data were entered into Microsoft excel. As reported in Hearon (2017), IRB-approved research team members reviewed data for entry errors

for a random selection of 14% of participants; 99.99% of data were found to be entered accurately, and the few errors detected were corrected during this verification process. Thus, data used for the current secondary investigation are considered trustworthy. These data were converted into a file compatible with SAS for analysis in the current study.

Missing data. Rates of missing data were low for variables from student self-report surveys, likely due to rigorous data collection procedures in which research team members checked students' surveys for missing items prior to accepting the completed survey packet. However, teacher-report data used to create the Teacher-Student Relations variable are missing completely for 42 participants (specifically, 3 of 14 teachers did not complete the TSRI for any of their students, and 2 additional teachers did not complete the measure for a total of 7 students). Thus, while reported results are based on a sample size of 179 youth participants, for those models including Teacher-Student Relations, sample size includes only those participants with complete data, resulting in a sample size of 137 for those analyses.

Variable Creation

Student self-report measures. Individual items contributed to composite scale and subscale scores to enable analyses across the student-reported constructs of interest, including life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, classmate social support, and teacher social support. Global life satisfaction scores were calculated by averaging the 7 items from the SLSS, after reverse-scoring items 3 and 4. Positive and negative affect scores were calculated by separately averaging the 5 Positive Affect scale items and the 5 Negative Affect items from the 10-item PANAS-C. Average scores were also obtained for both support variables (i.e., Teacher and Classmate Support) by calculating mean responses on the 12-item Teacher Support subscale and 12-item Classmate Support subscale of the CASSS. A SWB variable was created by

transforming life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect scores into z-scores and subtracting negative affect from the sum of life satisfaction and positive affect scores.

Teacher-report measures. As with student self-report measures, participant scores from individual items from the Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help subscales of the TSRI were averaged to create a Teacher-Student Relations composite score. Subscale scores were created by averaging together the 5 items from each subscale, respectively.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses included calculating (a) reliability for all scales and subscales using Cronbach's alpha, (b) descriptive statistics (i.e., means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis) for each composite score, and (c) correlations between primary variables of interest.

Measure reliability. Internal consistency was assessed for all multi-item scales, composites, and dimensions of interest (i.e., from SLSS, PANAS-C, CASSS, TSRI). Results are presented in Table 3.

Internal consistency for all student and teacher self-report scales, composites, and dimensions are considered to be in the acceptable to excellent ranges. After reverse scoring items 3 and 4, the 7-item SLSS had acceptable internal consistency with a coefficient alpha of .75. Similarly, the Negative Affect ($\alpha = .77$) and Positive Affect ($\alpha = .81$) subscales of the PANAS-C had acceptable and good internal consistency, respectively. In regard to support variables, the CASSS had excellent internal consistency overall ($\alpha = .93$), with excellent and good internal consistency for both the 12-item Classmate Support ($\alpha = .93$) and 12-item Teacher Support ($\alpha = .89$) subscales, respectively. Coefficient alphas for individual Classmate Support dimensions each fell within the acceptable to good range ($\alpha = .79-.86$). Internal consistency for individual Teacher Support dimensions was largely acceptable ($\alpha = .66-.72$), with the exception of

questionable internal consistency for Teacher Informational Support ($\alpha = .66$). Lower internal consistency for individual dimensions is expected due to the number of items being assessed ($n = 3$ vs. 12 as in the support source composite). Overall, internal consistency on the TSRI was considered good with a coefficient alpha of 0.89. Individual dimensions also had excellent internal consistency, with coefficient alphas of 0.91 and 0.93 for Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help, respectively.

Table 3

Internal Consistency of Scales and Composites from Measures

Measure	Internal Consistency	<i>N</i>
<i>Student-Report</i>		
SLSS	.75	179
10-item PANAS-C: Positive Affect	.81	179
10-item PANAS-C: Negative Affect	.77	179
CASSS	.93	179
CASSS: Classmate Support	.93	179
Emotional Support	.85	179
Informational Support	.83	179
Appraisal Support	.86	179
Instrumental Support	.79	179
CASSS: Teacher Support	.89	179
Emotional Support	.70	179
Informational Support	.66	179
Appraisal Support	.72	179
Instrumental Support	.72	
<i>Teacher-Report</i>		
TSRI	.89	137
TSRI: Relationship Satisfaction	.91	137
TSRI: Instrumental Help	.93	137

Note. SLSS = Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991), 10-item PANAS-C = 10-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children (Ebesutani et al., 2012), CASSS = Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (Malecki, Demaray, & Elliot, 2004), TSRI = Teacher Student Relationship Inventory (Ang, 2005)

Descriptive analyses. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation) and normality (e.g., skewness, kurtosis) were assessed for each variable of interest. Results are included in Table 4. Most variables had an approximately normal distribution, as defined by

skewness and kurtosis values ranging from -2 to +2. Exceptions included kurtosis values outside the normal range for the Negative Affect subscale of the 10-item PANAS-C (kurtosis = 2.29) and Teacher Support subscale of the CASSS (kurtosis = 2.65). Within subscales, the Emotional Support dimension of Teacher Support (kurtosis = 3.85) and Relationship Satisfaction dimension of Teacher-Student Relations (kurtosis = 2.31) also fell outside the normal range, reflecting a distribution with more extreme positive values (i.e., teachers reported quite positive relationships with most students). These deviations were accounted for through the use of 2-level hierarchical linear models, a design found to be relatively robust to non-normally distributed variables (Cheong, Fotiu, & Raudenbush, 2001; Maas & Hox, 2004; Zhang, 2006).

Correlational analyses. Intercorrelations among variables, as well as bivariate correlations between SWB and support variables are displayed in Table 5. Correlations with an alpha less than .05 were considered statistically significant. Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations were all significantly correlated with students' reported SWB with small to moderate ($r = .25$), large ($r = .46$), and small ($r = .17$) effect sizes, respectively. Bivariate correlations between SWB and all individual dimensions of support reached statistical significance, with the exception of teacher-rated Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help. Large intercorrelations among Teacher Support dimensions ($r = .57-.67$) and Classmate Support dimensions ($r = .65-.75$) indicate high multicollinearity, making it difficult to detect unique effects between support dimensions and SWB. Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help were moderately related ($r = .38$).

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kurt
<i>Student-Report</i>							
Subjective Well-Being	179	-8.30	3.56	.00	2.26	-.99	1.05
Life Satisfaction	179	2.29	6.00	4.79	0.80	-.69	-.04
Positive Affect	179	1.20	5.00	4.18	0.77	-1.25	1.57
Negative Affect	179	1.00	4.80	1.70	0.72	1.43	2.29
Classmate Support	179	1.25	6.00	4.23	1.17	-.50	-.52
Emotional Support	179	1.00	6.00	4.46	1.15	-.84	.26
Informational Support	179	1.00	6.00	4.28	1.30	-.48	-.63
Appraisal Support	179	1.00	6.00	3.84	1.53	-.21	-1.03
Instrumental Support	179	1.00	6.00	4.35	1.32	-.67	-.50
Teacher Support	179	2.33	6.00	5.33	0.69	-1.54	2.65
Emotional Support	179	3.00	6.00	5.57	0.63	-1.95	3.85
Informational Support	179	2.33	6.00	5.38	0.80	-1.47	1.71
Appraisal Support	179	1.67	6.00	5.17	0.89	-1.24	1.22
Instrumental Support	179	2.00	6.00	5.19	0.93	-1.42	1.86
<i>Teacher-Report</i>							
Teacher-Student Relations	137	2.30	5.00	4.18	0.67	-.49	-.35
Relationship Satisfaction	137	2.80	5.00	4.69	0.48	-1.64	2.31
Instrumental Help	137	1.00	5.00	3.68	1.08	-.42	-.72

Relationship between Classroom Support and SWB

Intraclass correlations. The intraclass correlations coefficient (ICC) was calculated for the unconditional model to account for the variability between classes. The intercept-only model revealed an ICC equivalent to 0 for SWB, suggesting that there is very little variability in responses between different classrooms on average student SWB. Despite the minimal variability, hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) was still conducted to account for students being nested within classrooms.

Table 5

Correlation Matrix for Outcome Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<i>Student-Report (N = 179)</i>																
1. SWB	1.00															
2. LS	.77*	1.00														
3. PA	.74*	.34*	1.00													
4. NA	-.76*	-.39*	-.32*	1.00												
5. TSup	.25*	.24*	.26*	-.05	1.00											
6. TEemoSup	.29*	.27*	.33*	-.06	.82*	1.00										
7. TInfoSup	.15*	.21*	.13	-.01	.81*	.58*	1.00									
8. TAppSup	.19*	.15*	.20*	-.08	.87*	.63*	.57*	1.00								
9. TInstruSup	.22*	.20*	.26*	-.04	.89*	.67*	.61*	.71*	1.00							
10. CSup	.46*	.31*	.42*	-.32*	.50*	.39*	.37*	.44*	.48*	1.00						
11. CEemoSup	.48*	.35*	.40*	-.35*	.42*	.32*	.33*	.34*	.41*	.86*	1.00					
12. CInfoSup	.39*	.23*	.39*	-.26*	.48*	.35*	.36*	.40*	.51*	.92*	.75*	1.00				
13. CAppSup	.33*	.24*	.32*	-.19*	.44*	.34*	.30*	.46*	.39*	.88*	.65*	.75*	1.00			
14. CInstruSup	.45*	.29*	.38*	-.34*	.41*	.35*	.33*	.35*	.38*	.87*	.67*	.74*	.67*	1.00		
<i>Teacher-Report (N = 137)</i>																
15. TSR	.17*	.10	.16	-.11	.13	.11	.11	.14	.09	.19*	.20*	.10	.22*	.15	1.00	
16. RS	.12	.08	.07	-.12	.17	.14	.10	.21*	.11	.23*	.24*	.15	.27*	.15	.67*	1.00
17. IH	.16	.09	.17*	-.09	.08	.08	.08	.07	.05	.13	.14	.06	.15	.12	.94*	.38*

Note. SWB = Subjective Well-Being, LS = Life Satisfaction, PA = Positive Affect, NA = Negative Affect, TSup = Teacher Support, TEemoSup = Teacher Emotional Support, TInfoSup = Teacher Informational Support, TAppSup = Teacher Appraisal Support, TInstruSup = Teacher Instrumental Support, CSup = Classmate Support, CEemoSup = Classmate Emotional Support, CInfoSup = Classmate Informational Support, CAppSup = Classmate Appraisal Support, CInstruSup = Classmate Instrumental Support, TSR = Teacher-Student Relations, RS = Relationship Satisfaction, IH = Instrumental Help; * $p < .05$

Effect of classroom support variables. For the purposes of examining the effect of a block of predictors alone, nested models were estimated using full maximum likelihood (in contrast to restricted maximum likelihood). After contrasting the -2 log likelihood values to a chi squared difference test, Teacher and Classmate Support variables individually contributed to students' SWB ($\chi^2(8) = 16.5, p < .05$; $\chi^2(8) = 55.9, p < .05$, respectively). The block of Teacher-Student Relations variables (Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help together) was not statistically significant as evidenced by the difference in deviances ($\chi^2(4) = 4.08, p > .05$).

Two-level hierarchical linear models. To account for the shared variance that results when students (level-1) in the same classrooms (level-2) experience common teachers and other common classroom elements, as well as individual differences (i.e., between-group and individual variation), six separate models, including both individual and class-level predictors, were conducted to determine the extent to which support variables (i.e., Teacher Support, Classmate Support, Teacher-Student Relations) and individual student- and teacher- rated support dimensions (i.e., Teacher Emotional, Informational, Appraisal, and Instrumental Support; Classmate Emotional, Informational, Appraisal, and Instrumental Support; Relationship Satisfaction and Instrumental Help) predicted students' SWB. The dependent variable for each model was students' self-reported SWB composite. Student-level predictors included group means for the variables of interest, while class-level predictors included class averages. Results from the six models are presented in Table 6.

In two-level hierarchical models including Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and Teacher-Student Relations, Classmate Support significantly predicted SWB, such that a one unit increase in Classroom Support would predict a .93 unit increase in SWB, while holding Teacher Support and Teacher-Student Relations constant ($p < .001$). Teacher Support ($b = .04, p = 0.88$)

and Teacher-Student Relations ($b = .24, p = 0.38$) were not significant predictors. In the models including Teacher Support dimensions, Teacher Emotional Support significantly predicted changes in SWB ($b = 1.00, p = 0.02$), while Teacher Informational ($b = -.12, p = 0.66$), Appraisal ($b = -.04, p = 0.89$), and Instrumental ($b = .19, p = 0.52$) Support were not significant. In models comprised of Classmate Support dimensions, both Classmate Emotional ($b = .75, p < .01$) and Instrumental Support ($b = .48, p = 0.02$) significantly predicted changes in SWB, while Classmate Informational ($b = -.10, p = 0.65$) and Appraisal ($b = -.09, p = 0.55$) Support did not. For Teacher-Student Relations, neither Relationship Satisfaction ($b = .32, p = 0.47$) nor Instrumental Help ($b = .27, p = 0.19$) significantly predicted changes in SWB. In models including all dimensions of each support variable, only Classmate Emotional Support ($b = .81, p = <.01$) was a statistically significant predictor of students' SWB. All other dimensions of support did not reach significance in these models. Because the sample size is reduced substantially when the Teacher-Student Relations variables are included in the model (due to missing data on the TSRI) and those variables did not emerge as significant predictors of SWB, a final model with all potentially significant predictors (dimensions of Teacher Support and Classmate Support) was examined. In this model, Teacher Emotional Support is also significant ($b = .84, p = .028$), in addition to the unique effects of Classmate Emotional ($b = .75, p = .003$) and Instrumental Support ($b = .44, p = .028$).

Table 6

Two-level Hierarchical Linear Models

Model	Parameter	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	<i>p</i>	
Support	<i>Fixed Effects</i>				
	Intercept	-5.14	1.64	.011	
	Teacher Support	.04	.29	.888	
	Classmate Support	.93	.16	<.001*	
	Teacher-Student Relations	.24	.26	.384	
	<i>Variance Estimates</i>				
	Intercept	.00	--	--	
	Residual	3.57	.45	<.001	
			AIC	BIC	
			571.5	572.3	
Teacher Support	<i>Fit Indices</i>				
	<i>Fixed Effects</i>				
	Intercept	-5.70	1.50	.002	
	Emotional Support	1.00	.38	.021*	
	Informational Support	-.12	.28	.662	
	Appraisal Support	-.04	.28	.887	
	Instrumental Support	.19	.29	.524	
	<i>Variance Estimates</i>				
	Intercept	.00	--	--	
	Residual	4.71	.52	<.001	
		AIC	BIC		
		791.7	791.8		
Classmate Support	<i>Fit Indices</i>				
	<i>Fixed Effects</i>				
	Intercept	-4.65	.61	<.001	
	Emotional Support	.75	.20	.003*	
	Informational Support	-.10	.21	.653	
	Appraisal Support	-.09	.15	.552	
Instrumental Support	.48	.17	.016*		

Table 6 (continued)

Model	Parameter	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	<i>p</i>
Classmate Support	<i>Variance Estimates</i>			
	Intercept	.00	--	--
	Residual	3.83	.41	<.001
		AIC	BIC	
		754.9	755.5	
Teacher-Student Relations	<i>Fit Indices</i>			
	<i>Fixed Effects</i>			
	Intercept	-2.50	1.85	.207
	Relationship Satisfaction	.32	.42	.469
	Instrumental Help	.27	.19	.188
	<i>Variance Estimates</i>			
	Intercept	.00	--	--
	Residual	4.83	.59	<.001
		AIC	BIC	
		606.6	607.0	
All support	<i>Fit Indices</i>			
	<i>Fixed Effects</i>			
	Intercept	-5.71	2.16	.025
	Teacher Emotional Support	.62	.39	.143
	Teacher Informational Support	-.27	.29	.383
	Teacher Appraisal Support	-.22	.32	.510
	Teacher Instrumental Support	.09	.30	.772
	Classmate Emotional Support	.81	.22	.005*
	Classmate Informational Support	.03	.25	.904
	Classmate Appraisal Support	-.02	.19	.902
	Classmate Instrumental Support	.25	.19	.230
	Relationship Satisfaction	-.25	.39	.543
	Instrumental Help	.22	.17	.244
	<i>Variance Estimates</i>			
	Intercept	.00	--	--
	Residual	3.37	.44	<.001

Table 6 (continued)

Model	Parameter	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	<i>p</i>
All support Teacher and Classmate Support	<i>Fit Indices</i>	AIC	BIC	
		564.9	565.7	
	<i>Fixed Effects</i>			
	Intercept	-6.54	1.36	<.001
	Teacher Emotional Support	.84	.34	.028*
	Teacher Informational Support	-.31	.25	.232
	Teacher Appraisal Support	-.07	.26	.777
	Teacher Instrumental Support	-.13	.27	.640
	Classmate Emotional Support	.75	.20	.003*
	Classmate Informational Support	-.06	.22	.801
	Classmate Appraisal Support	-.12	.16	.476
	Classmate Instrumental Support	.44	.17	.028*
	<i>Variance Estimates</i>			
	Intercept	.00	--	--
	Residual	3.76	.42	<.001
	AIC	BIC		
<i>Fit Indices</i>	754.0	755.3		

Summary of Quantitative Findings

In response to Research Questions 1 and 2, intercorrelations among variables and bivariate correlations between SWB and support variables were assessed to determine the relationships between variables. All bivariate correlations between support variables and students' SWB reached statistical significance, with effect sizes ranging from small (Teacher-Student Relations) to large (Classmate Support). In order to identify the relationship between the three support variables and students' SWB, six multi-level models were run to take into account both student (level-1) and classroom (level-2) regression relationships. Classmate Support stood out as a significant predictor of students' SWB when assessed in combination with Teacher Support and Teacher-Student Relations. Further, in models including individual dimensions of Classmate Support and in models containing both Teacher and Classmate Support dimensions, Classmate Emotional and Instrumental Support significantly predicted students' SWB. In a model assessing the relationship between student-rated social support dimensions and SWB, Teacher Emotional Support was also identified as a significant predictor. Teacher-rated Teacher-Student Relations did not significantly predict students' SWB nor did individual support dimensions.

Qualitative Component

With an understanding of the statistical relationships between support variables and students' SWB, this section brings to understanding a more nuanced interpretation of how support is displayed and to what extent teachers and students are in agreeance in terms of delivering and perceiving support. Qualitative results are offered to provide a glimpse into those practices that fourth and fifth grade students and teachers at one elementary school found to be supportive, and to strengthen understanding of how practice can be enhanced through

considering these responses. Student verbal responses were recorded in writing by co-interventionists as they aligned with predetermined categories of supportive behaviors, with “other” categories also available to describe responses that did not correspond with a predetermined category (see form used to record, in Appendix G). Teacher responses were recorded weekly in writing by teachers. All responses were typed and analyzed through Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis program. Separate codebooks were created for student-perceptions of Teacher (Appendix I) and Classmate (Appendix J) Support, as well as for teacher-perceptions of their own supportive behaviors (Appendix K). To enhance trustworthiness of results, this researcher and a second coder engaged in independent coding of the same subset of data (5% of student responses; 18% of teacher responses). Specifically, this subset included one student-perceived Classmate Support and Teacher Support response per classroom and one teacher-perceived Teacher Support response per classroom. In this first round of inter-coder reliability (ICR) checks, it was found that researchers agreed on 100% of codes applied (e.g., *Helped student with schoolwork during class* was a student perception of Teacher Support coded as Instrumental Support-Services-Assistance with Schoolwork by both coders; *Spent time with student* was a student perception of Classmate Support coded as Instrumental Support-Time-Quality Time by both coders; *We went over their test scores and talked about how to change something we are doing to make them better* was a teacher perception of Teacher Support coded as Appraisal Support-Feedback-Areas for Improvement by both coders), indicating high reliability of analyses completed by the first coder. Qualitative findings of analyses completed by the first coder (author of this thesis) are described below.

Student Perceptions of Support

Teacher support. Students mentioned each dimension of support (i.e., Instrumental, Emotional, Appraisal, and Informational) at least once during the course of data collection. Responses were coded as they related to the four dimensions of support (i.e., Super codes), with themes (i.e., Family codes) and subthemes (i.e., Individual codes) established both inductive and deductively. A total of 59 forms, each including both teacher and classmate behaviors, were collected and analyzed. The number of student responses on each form (pertaining to Teacher and Classmate Support) varied by classroom. Each form included approximately four responses regarding Teacher Support, and three responses regarding Classmate support, on average across classrooms. Frequency counts, along with a description of themes, can be found in Table 7.

Table 7

Student Perceptions of Teacher Support/Care

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of responses overall, % of Super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Instrumental Support	Offering of one's time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	165	<u>73%</u>
<i>Time</i>		13	<u>6%</u> , 8%
Being present	Shows up to class	2	<u>1%</u> , 1% , 15%
Out-of-school assistance	Provides students with assistance outside of regular school hours	2	<u>1%</u> , 1% , 15%
Individual support	Attends to specific student needs (e.g., writing down a student's assignments so they don't forget)	5	<u>2%</u> , 3% , 38.5%
Extended explanation	Continues to teach material until students fully grasp concept	4	<u>2%</u> , 2% , 31%
<i>Skills</i>		9	<u>4%</u> , 5%
Humor	Makes jokes that make learning more enjoyable	8	<u>3%</u> , 5% , 89%
Fairness	Demonstrates fairness when making decisions	1	<u><1%</u> , 1% , 11%
<i>Services</i>		73	<u>32%</u> , 44%
Fun projects	Sets up additional fun projects/activities for students; makes learning fun	6	<u>3%</u> , 4% , 8%
Assistance with schoolwork	Offers students assistance with schoolwork/homework during class	50	<u>22%</u> , 30% , 68.5%
Diverse strategies	Explains material in different ways, consistent with students' needs	3	<u>1%</u> , 2% , 4%
Preparation	Helps students prepare for upcoming testing	11	<u>5%</u> , 7% , 15%

Table 7 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of <u>responses overall</u> , % of Super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Clean up/organization assistance	Helps students clean desks and/or organize their work	3	<u>1%</u> , 2% , 4%
<i>Tangibles</i>		32	<u>14%</u> , 19%
Special items	Purchases, shares and/or brings special items into the classroom for student(s) (other than treats)	8	<u>3%</u> , 5% , 25%
Treats	Brings in food or drink as a reward	14	<u>6%</u> , 8% , 44%
School supplies	Provides students with school supplies when they are in need (e.g., markers, paper)	5	<u>2%</u> , 3% , 15.5%
Extra practice	Provides students with materials for extra practice	5	<u>2%</u> , 3% , 15.5%
<i>Non-tangibles</i>		38	<u>17%</u> , 23%
Privileges	Gives students special non-tangible privileges (e.g., extra recess, parties, time for computer games, no homework pass, extra-credit)	38	<u>17%</u> , 23% , 100%
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	50	<u>22%</u>
<i>Trust</i>		4	<u>2%</u> , 8%
Actions	Communicates trust through lifting punishments and allowing student travel to other places on campus	4	<u>2%</u> , 8% , 100%
<i>Love</i>		6	<u>3%</u> , 12%
Acts of kindness	Interacts positively with students	4	<u>2%</u> , 8% , 67%

Table 7 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (<u>% of responses overall</u> , % of Super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
<i>Empathy</i>		15	<u>7%</u> , 30%
Understands students	Understands students, including times when students are in need, regardless of whether students explicitly communicate that need	2	<u>1%</u> , 4% , 13%
Cool off	Allows students to step out and cool off when they are frustrated	1	<u><1%</u> , 2% , 7%
Comfort	Is a source of comfort for students, including when students are in conflict, being bullied or are worried	5	2%, 10% , 33%
Differentiation	Understands students' different needs and conducts class accordingly	7	<u>3%</u> , 14% , 47%
<i>Care</i>		25	<u>11%</u> , 50%
Modeling	Models caring behavior to students through demonstrating how students can help one another	3	<u>1%</u> , 6% , 12%
Democratic communication styles	Gives students choice or otherwise allows students to be part of the decision making process	6	<u>3%</u> , 12% , 24%
Nurturance	Supports students' independence and builds capacity	5	<u>2%</u> , 10% , 20%
Best interests	Helps students stay out of trouble; keeps students safe	3	<u>1%</u> , 6% , 12%
Encouragement	Offers words of encouragement prior to or after completion of a task	8	<u>3%</u> , 16% , 32%

Table 7 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of <u>responses overall</u> , % of Super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Appraisal Support	Provision of evaluative feedback including suggestions for improvement	11	<u>5%</u>
<i>Feedback</i>		11	<u>5%</u> , 100%
Mistakes	Identifies and provides suggestions for correcting mistakes	2	<u>1%</u> , 18% , <i>18%</i>
Revisions	Allows students to try again after receiving feedback	8	<u>3%</u> , 73% , <i>73%</i>
Punishment	Holds students accountable for actions by establishing negative consequences for behavior	1	<u><1%</u> , 9% , <i>9%</i>
Informational Support	Delivery of advice or guidance aimed at providing a solution to a problem	1	<u><1%</u>
<i>Guidance</i>		1	<u><1%</u> , 100%
Testing	Provides students with guidance on tests	1	<u><1%</u> , 100% , <i>100%</i>

In relation to the broad dimensions of support, students reported forms of Teacher Instrumental Support greater than any other form (73% of 227 total responses). In line with Tardy's (1985) definition, responses coded as forms of Instrumental Support fell under the categories (i.e., Family codes) of time (8% of Instrumental Support responses), skills (5%), services (44%), and tangibles (19%). Non-tangibles (Family code), including the deliverance of privileges (Individual code), was also included as an inductive code derived from the data and accounted for 23% of responses related to Instrumental Support. Deliverance of services, including organizing fun projects, assisting with schoolwork, using diverse teaching strategies,

preparing students for upcoming tests, and helping students clean their spaces or organize their work was the Family code reported most frequently by students within the Instrumental Support domain (44%). Of the Individual codes, assistance with schoolwork was reported most frequently within the services family (68%) and Instrumental Support domain (30%). This included teaching content, helping with various assignments, assisting with homework before dismissal, using different tools and examples to help students understand tough concepts, and reviewing material with students.

Second to Instrumental Support, students frequently mentioned that teachers showed support and care by displaying various forms of Emotional Support (22% of responses). Descriptions of trust (8% of Emotional Support responses), love (12%), empathy (30%), and care (50%) are consistent with Tardy's (1985) definition of Emotional Support and were established as deductive codes for the current analyses. Further, as a unique construct in and of itself, deductive individual codes were created based on Wentzel's (1997) dimensions of effective caregiving as they aligned with students' reports of caring behaviors (i.e., modeling, democratic communication styles, and nurturance). Inductive Individual codes were also created to account for those student responses that did not align with a specific deductive code (i.e., acting in students' best interests, encouragement). Perceptions of empathy and care were reported most frequently compared to other forms of Emotional Support. Perceptions of empathy accounted for 30% of Emotional Support responses and included general perceptions of feeling understood, particularly when students were in need, regardless of whether or not that need was expressed (13% of empathy responses). Other examples included teachers understanding when students need time to "cool off" (7%) or times when students are in need of comfort, such as when students are being bullied or when they are worried (33%). Finally, students reported perceptions

of empathy when teachers demonstrated that they understood students' individual classroom needs (e.g., allowing extra time, allowing students to stand while working) and conducted class accordingly (47%). In regard to perceptions of care, modeling (12% of care responses), democratic communication styles (24%), and nurturance (20%) were included as Individual codes as they aligned with Wentzel's (1997) framework. Although constructs within the framework, rule setting and expectations for behavior were not included as codes as students either did not report these specific forms of care, or responses were better accounted for by other codes. Acting in students' best interests (12%) and providing words of encouragement (32%) were also included as inductive themes based on students' responses. Offering words of encouragement was the most frequently reported caring- and emotionally supportive- behavior and included responses such as teachers offering words of support prior to or after students complete a task and/or telling students not to give up when they don't do well.

Approximately 5% of student reports of Teacher Support were forms of Appraisal Support. Specifically, students identified feedback (Family code) as the primary mechanism through which teachers communicate this form of support. According to students, this feedback included teachers communicating and offering suggestions for how to fix mistakes (18% of feedback responses), allowing students the opportunity to revise their work (73%), and holding students accountable for their actions by establishing consequences for bad behavior (9%). The opportunity for revisions was reported as a supportive behavior most frequently and included teachers allowing students to re-do commonly-missed test items or other assignments to bring up their grades.

Only one mention was made to Informational Support throughout the duration of data collection (.4% of responses). Although perhaps not one of the primary forms of support

recognized by students, it may still be noteworthy that receiving guidance on tests was a source of Informational Support that was considered worth mentioning in a discussion of supportive behaviors. Despite the rarity with which acts of Informational Support were offered as examples, it is important to remember that informants were limited to those students that volunteered responses and recalled a form of support that stood out as particularly salient. As such, findings do not confirm that Informational Support goes unrecognized by students, but rather that it was not as commonly acknowledged as other forms of support in this particular setting.

Classmate support. When asked to discuss the ways in which their classmates convey support and care, students' responses fell into the support dimensions of Instrumental (75%) and Emotional (25%) Support. Similar to perceptions of Teacher Support, responses were coded as they related to dimensions of support (i.e., Super codes), with themes (i.e., Family codes) and subthemes (i.e., Individual codes) established both inductively and deductively. For responses related to supportive classmate behaviors, Individual codes that fell under the care family were derived exclusively from the data, as Wentzel's (1997) framework is specific to teacher care and did not apply to responses concerning classmate behaviors. Frequency counts, along with a description of themes, can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

Student Perceptions of Classmate Support/Care

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of responses overall, % of super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Instrumental Support	Offering of one's time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	147	<u>75%</u>
<i>Time</i>		24	<u>12%</u> , 16%
Quality time	Spends time participating in different activities with classmates	24	<u>12%</u> , 16% , 100%
<i>Skills</i>		13	<u>7%</u> , 9%
Humor	Shows support by making classmates smile/laugh	8	<u>4%</u> , 5% , 62%
Creativity	Shares/makes artwork or other creative pieces with/for classmates	5	<u>2%</u> , 3% , 38%
<i>Services</i>		64	<u>32%</u> , 43%
Assistance with schoolwork	Offers classmates assistance with schoolwork/homework during class	22	<u>11%</u> , 15% , 34%
Clean up/organization assistance	Helps classmates clean up messes/organize schoolwork	19	<u>10%</u> , 13% , 30%
Travel companion	Accompanies classmates from one place on school grounds to another	9	<u>5%</u> , 6% , 14%
Helping hand	Assists classmates (e.g., hold open door, offer a hand) who have fallen or are in physical (e.g., have a broken leg) or financial need (e.g., fundraising)	14	<u>7%</u> , 9% , 22%
<i>Tangibles</i>		43	<u>22%</u> , 29%
Special items	Shares items other than school supplies or treats with classmates (e.g., a drawing)	13	<u>7%</u> , 9% , 30%

Table 8 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of <u>responses overall</u> , % of super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
School supplies	Shares school supplies with classmates when they are in need (e.g., markers, paper, books)	18	<u>9%</u> , 12% , 42%
Treats	Offers classmates snacks	12	<u>6%</u> , 8% , 28%
<i>Non-tangibles</i>		4	<u>2%</u> , 3%
Invitations	Invites classmates to attend events	4	<u>2%</u> , 3% , 100%
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	50	<u>25%</u>
<i>Love</i>		10	<u>5%</u> , 20%
Acts of kindness	Communicates kindness through delivering compliments	10	<u>5%</u> , 20% , 100%
<i>Empathy</i>		17	<u>9%</u> , 34%
Forgiveness	Communicates forgiveness	1	<u><1%</u> , 2% , 6%
Comfort	Available as a source of comfort for classmates when they're feeling down	16	<u>8%</u> , 32% , 94%
<i>Care</i>		23	<u>12%</u> , 46%
Inclusion	Makes space for classmates at the table; includes classmates in group projects	6	<u>3%</u> , 12% , 26%
Ally	Sticks up for classmates that are being bullied	3	<u>1%</u> , 6% , 13%
Encouragement	Offers uplifting words after classmate receives bad news or is feeling down (e.g., a bad grade, cat died)	14	<u>7%</u> , 28% , 61%

Of the 197 student responses regarding ways their classmates show care and support, the majority of students' responses were elements of Instrumental Support, including the provision of time (16% of Instrumental Support responses), skills (9%), services (43%), and tangibles (29%; Tardy, 1985), as well as non-tangibles (3%) in the form of invitations to attend events (inductive). Most responses addressed different services their peers offered including assistance with schoolwork (34% of services responses), clean up/organization assistance (30%), accompanying them to another place on school grounds (14%), and offering a helping hand (22%). Examples of assistance with schoolwork included helping peers with problems they didn't understand in class and working together to solve problems. Offering a helping hand ranged from helping students up when they fell to holding open the door for peers to helping a peer pay for something when he or she did not have the money. For example, one student reported that classmates helped their peer raise money to help her dog that was hit in an accident. Tangible forms of support took the form of special items (30% of tangibles responses), school supplies (42%), and treats (28%) shared with classmates. Special items included pictures, comic books, sports equipment, and other items belonging to a student (e.g., jacket, school tickets).

Students also reported various forms of Emotional Support categorized into deductive family and inductive Individual codes. Responses included forms of love (20% of Emotional Support responses), including delivering acts of kindness; empathy (34% of Emotional Support responses), including communicating forgiveness (6% of empathy responses) and offering comfort (94%); and care (46% of Emotional Support responses), including engaging in acts of inclusion (26% of care responses), serving as an ally (13%), and offering words of encouragement (61%). Under the Family code of empathy, comfort behaviors were reported most frequently and included helping classmates feel better after they were teased, assuring

classmates that “it would be okay” after they receive bad grades, being there for classmates through sad times, providing distractions when peers are worried, cheering classmates up when they’re sad or hurt, and using humor to uplift an upset peer. Acts of inclusion included inviting students to join a group for a project, at the lunch table, or otherwise preventing students from feeling left out. Similarly, albeit less frequently, students reported standing up for each other as a caring behavior, seeming to communicate a sense of comradery with classmates where they are there for one another. Further descriptions can be found in Table 8.

Teacher Perceptions of Support

When asked to describe in writing what they did or said to show support/care to their students, teachers endorsed all forms of Tardy’s (1985) support dimensions in their responses. A total of 40 forms were collected from seven teachers and coded in a similar manner as was followed when analyzing recorded student verbal responses. Teachers typically responded to the question in one or two sentences. In response to the prompt “What did you do or say to show support/care to your students,” teachers indicated engaging in acts of Instrumental (37%) and Emotional Support (36%) most frequently, while reporting forms of Appraisal (22%) and Informational Support (5%) less often. Frequency counts, along with a description of themes, can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Teacher Reports of Supportive/Caring Behaviors

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (<u>% of responses overall</u> , % of super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Instrumental Support	Offering of one's time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	22	<u>37%</u>
<i>Time</i>		5	<u>8%</u> , 23%
Self-care	Takes time to engage in calming activities prior to start of school day	1	<u>2%</u> , 4.5% , 20%
Pacing	Slows down the pace of instruction to allow students time to better comprehend confusing concepts	1	<u>2%</u> , 4.5% , 20%
Availability	Expresses availability to help students with problems or concerns	1	<u>2%</u> , 4.5% , 20%
Individual support	Offers time to speak with students alone or work with students individually	2	<u>3%</u> , 9% , 40%
<i>Services</i>		6	<u>10%</u> , 27%
Working with struggling students	Provides additional assistance to students in need of more academic support		<u>7%</u> , 18% , 67%
Re-teaching	Goes through difficult content with students again	1	<u>2%</u> , 4% , 16.5%
Extra practice	Provides students with extra practice before testing knowledge	1	<u>2%</u> , 4% , 16.5%
<i>Tangibles</i>		4	<u>7%</u> , 18%
Treats	Brings in food or drink as encouragement, a reward for good behavior, or for meeting a class goal	4	<u>7%</u> , 18% , 100%

Table 9 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of <u>responses overall</u> , % of super code responses , % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
<i>Non-tangibles</i>		7	<u>12%</u> , 32%
Privileges	Gives students special non-tangible privileges (e.g., extra time outside, no homework)	6	<u>10%</u> , 27% , 86%
Time to prepare	Gives students time to prepare for upcoming testing	1	<u>2%</u> , 4% , 14%
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	21	<u>36%</u>
<i>Care</i>		21	<u>36%</u> , 100%
Modeling	Demonstrates kindness and empathy through actions	5	<u>8%</u> , 24% , 24%
Democratic communication styles	Engages in reciprocal communication where students' input is taken into consideration	3	<u>5%</u> , 14% , 14%
Expectations for behavior	Sets expectation that students engage in kind behavior	2	<u>3%</u> , 9.5% , 9.5%
Nurturance	Provides students with resources and strategies to promote positive development	2	<u>3%</u> , 9.5% , 9.5%
Verbalizations	Explicitly expresses care to students (e.g., "I care about your future")	1	<u>2%</u> , 5% , 5%
Life outside of school	Inquires about students' lives outside of the classroom	1	<u>2%</u> , 5% , 5%
Encouragement	Offers words of encouragement before or after completion of a task to build students' feelings of competency	7	<u>12%</u> , 33% , 33%

Table 9 (continued)

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Frequency Count (# of coded responses)	Percentage (% of responses overall, % of super code responses, % of <i>Family code responses</i>)
Appraisal Support	Provision of evaluative feedback including suggestions for improvement	13	<u>22%</u>
<i>Feedback</i>		13	<u>22%</u> , 100%
Reinforcement	Expresses praise/pride in the quality of students' work and/or behavior; positive reinforcement	9	<u>15%</u> , 69% , 69%
Reassurance	Assures students that they are prepared for upcoming challenges	1	<u>2%</u> , 8% , 8%
Areas for improvement	Discusses with students how to improve work to make it better in the future	2	<u>3%</u> , 15% , 15%
Revisions	Allows students to correct previous work after receiving feedback	1	<u>2%</u> , 8% , 8%
Informational Support	Delivery of advice or guidance aimed at providing a solution to a problem	3	<u>5%</u>
<i>Guidance</i>		3	<u>5%</u> , 100%
Academic best	Advises that students not settle for less than their best work	1	<u>2%</u> , 33% , 33%
Future	Facilitates discussions about students' goals for future	2	<u>3%</u> , 67% , 67%

Reported most frequently, Family codes that aligned with Tardy's (1985) conceptualization of Instrumental Support and teacher responses included time (23% of Instrumental Support responses), services (27%), and tangibles (18%). Non-tangibles (32%)

were also coded including the deliverance of non-tangible privileges (86% of non-tangibles responses) and time to prepare for upcoming testing (14%). Teachers reported showing students support/care by providing certain privileges including rewarding students with extra time outside, removing homework, allowing time for free writing in addition to the required academic material, and having parties. Services teachers reported they offered included working with struggling students (67% of services responses), re-teaching difficult material (16.5%), and providing students with extra practice prior to assessing their knowledge (16.5%). Responses that fell under the time family included teachers themselves taking time to engage in calming activities prior to the start of the school day (20% of time responses), slowing down the pace of instruction to allow students to better comprehend concepts that they aren't initially grasping (20%), expressing to students that they are available to help (20%), and offering their time to speak or work with students individually (40%). Teachers also reported offering students treats as a way of rewarding individual students as well as the entire class.

Teacher responses that aligned with Emotional Support behaviors were consistent with Wentzel's (1997) dimensions of care. These included modeling (24% of Emotional Support/care responses), democratic communication styles (14%), expectations for behavior (9.5%), and nurturance (9.5%). Inductive codes included explicit expressions of care to students (5%), inquiries about life outside of school (5%), and words of encouragement (33%). Words of encouragement were described most frequently and included speaking with students individually about their strengths, encouraging them to do their best, and communicating that they can achieve anything for which they work hard. Teachers also described modeling behaviors as those when they explicitly showed students how to exchange kind words by engaging in role plays, treating students as they hope they treat others, being honest about their feelings and verbalizing

how to move forward after feeling disappointment, and showing students appreciation before having students practice showing it themselves.

Consistent with student perceptions of Teacher Support, teachers endorsed engaging in acts of Appraisal Support occasionally (22% of overall responses), albeit less frequently than Instrumental and Emotional Support. As with students, Appraisal Support was conceptualized as a way of delivering feedback, although for teachers this included providing positive reinforcement for the quality of students' work and behavior (69% of feedback/Appraisal Support responses), offering students reassurance that they are prepared for upcoming challenges (8%), discussing with students areas for improvement in their work (15%), and allowing students opportunities to revise work after receiving feedback (8%). Forms of reinforcement mentioned by teachers included expressing pride in students' test scores, using specific praise to make individual students feel good, praising students' focus in class, praising acts of kindness, offering words of encouragement during writing activities, and typing up student compliments to one another. Discussing areas for improvement involved going over students' work and talking about what students could change to make it better.

Mentioned least frequently were acts of Informational Support, including forms of guidance (5%). Forms of guidance included teachers advising students not to settle for less than their best work (33% of guidance/Informational Support responses) and facilitating discussions with students about their goals for the future (67%). Further descriptions of Individual codes can be found in Table 9.

Agreement between Teachers and Students

When asked about supportive behaviors demonstrated by teachers, students and teachers alike reported a majority of Instrumental Support behaviors (73% and 37%, respectively) as

forms of supportive behaviors that came to immediate attention. For both groups, Emotional Support was also mentioned frequently (22% and 36%, respectively), particularly within teacher self-reports. While both groups mentioned acts of Appraisal (5% and 22%, respectively) and Informational Support (<1% and 5%, respectively) as they related to teacher behaviors, these were mentioned much less often, especially within student report. Overall, students and teachers followed consistent patterns in their report of supportive behaviors, with students highlighting Instrumental Support to a greater degree than other support forms, while teachers maintained a somewhat more distributed description of different forms of support.

With respect to behaviors ultimately categorized as Instrumental Support, delivering/receiving individual support, extra assistance, and treats were all mentioned by students and teachers. Care behaviors were also mentioned by both groups including teacher modeling of kind behaviors, consideration of student voice when making class decisions, building students' capacity through providing them with resources and strategies to aid their development, and encouraging students. Both groups mentioned discussion of how students can improve mistakes and make revisions to work as forms of Appraisal Support demonstrated by teachers. One distinction included students' mention of the deliverance of undesired consequences, or punishment, as a way teachers hold students accountable for behavior, whereas teachers mentioned delivering forms of positive reinforcement. Having said this, students reported "punishment" infrequently (<1% of overall responses), whereas teachers mentioned providing positive reinforcement for both academics and behavior relatively more frequently (15% of overall responses). Although both forms of guidance, teachers reported instances of counseling students to not settle for less than their academic best and discussing goals with students as forms

of Informational Support, whereas students spoke more to the guidance teachers provide them as it relates to testing. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between teacher and student responses.

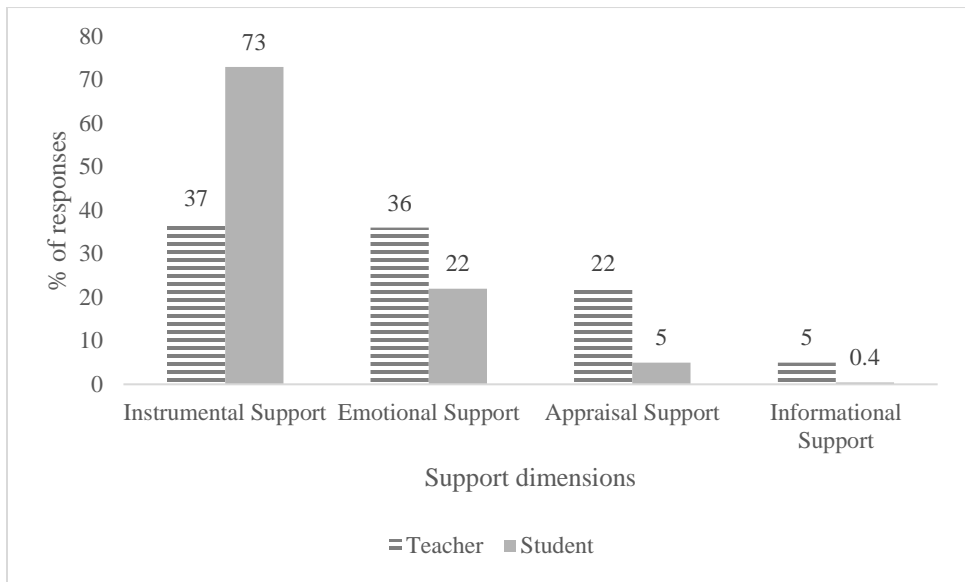


Figure 1. Supportive teacher behaviors by dimension, as reported by teachers and students.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Quantitative findings provide a rationale for developing a deeper understanding of Teacher and Classmate Support behaviors, with a particular focus on classmate behaviors that school systems can promote to potentially enhance student well-being. While this rationale is critical, quantitative findings alone do little to inform the *how*, or the process through which steps can be taken to act on these findings. Qualitative findings based on students’ and teachers’ reports provide richer information that sheds light on potential actions that can be taken to promote students’ sense that they are cared for and supported in the classroom. The current study illustrates different teacher and classmate behaviors that are perceived as supportive, and thus potentially health promotive. In regard to Teacher Support, students and teachers reported similar patterns in terms of Instrumental Support being recognized most frequently, followed by Emotional Support, instances of Appraisal Support, and few occasions of Informational Support. Many behaviors reported by teachers as acts they perform to demonstrate support were also

acknowledged by students as supportive, including assistance with schoolwork (for teachers: helping struggling students), and offering special items and supplies. These same behaviors were seen by students as supportive when performed by classmates. Additionally, students perceived several caring behaviors as supportive, when demonstrated by both teachers and classmates. These behaviors fell under labels of comfort and encouragement, with the latter being similarly recognized by teachers as a way of showing support. Forms of Instrumental and Emotional Support were seen as especially supportive by students and are seemingly at the forefront of students' minds when it comes to Classmate Support in particular. All four support dimensions were used to assess Classmate as well as Teacher Support, in line with Tardy's (1985) conceptualization of supportive behaviors. However, results from this study indicate that students may not perceive peers as sources of Appraisal and Informational Support, which are focused more on feedback and guidance, and may not be recognized as a role traditionally assumed by "equals."

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between classroom support and students' well-being, including both the extent to which perceived support from teachers and classmates contributed to students' evaluations of their well-being, as well as student and teacher reports of behaviors they perceive as supportive. In essence, this study sought to answer the questions: do teacher-student relationships and classmate relationships matter in terms of their contributions to students' overall well-being, and if so, whose perceptions seem to drive this relationship, and what behaviors are demonstrative of the types of care and support that elementary school students recognize and interpret as supportive. Such information would have utility not only as a guide for schools looking to build universal mental health supports, but also as a rationale for prioritizing an ethos of care in classrooms, as there appears to be a relationship between the perception of support in school and students' feelings about the quality of their lives, overall.

This chapter begins with a summary of key findings and how these findings fit into the current knowledge base on support and students' well-being. Further, implications for school professionals and other educational stakeholders are addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations associated with this study and recommendations for future research.

Key Findings

The quantitative aim of the study was to assess the relationship between students' and teachers' perceptions of support and students' subjective well-being. Results revealed that although bivariate correlations between composite scores for each of the major support variables (i.e., Classmate Support, Teacher Support, Teacher-Student Relations) were statistically significant, students' perceptions of support (i.e., Classmate and Teacher Support) were significant predictors of students' appraisal of their positive mental health (SWB), while teacher perceptions of relationship quality (i.e., Teacher-Student Relations) did not significantly predict students' SWB. Qualitative findings provided additional insight into support dimensions recognized most frequently by students and teachers, as well as examples of what those support forms look like in the classroom. Teachers and students reported delivering and receiving forms of Instrumental Support most frequently, with instrumentally supportive behaviors most recognized by students as ways their classmates offer support. Behaviors that fell under the label of Emotional Support were also frequently highlighted by teachers and students as caring and supportive.

Classmate support. Quantitative results indicated that when assessing the contributions of student-perceived Teacher Support, student-perceived Classmate Support, and teacher-perceived Teacher-Student Relations on students' well-being, Classmate Support was a significant predictor of variance in SWB. Further, examination of Classmate Social Support dimensions alone revealed that Classmate *Emotional* and *Instrumental* Support stood out as unique predictors of students' SWB, which remained true when examining the contribution of Classmate Support dimensions with all Teacher and Classmate Support dimensions. In line with the findings, and findings from Malecki and Demaray (2003) which indicated students in grades

5-8 most often perceived Emotional and Instrumental Support from classmates and close friends, qualitative examples students provided of Classmate Support in the current study were all consistent with Tardy's (1985) definitions of Instrumental and Emotional Support. Of the 197 student responses regarding ways their classmates show care and support, 147 of those responses related to ways their classmates offer their time, skills, services, or other tangibles/non-tangibles (i.e., forms of Instrumental Support) in the classroom. Students reported ways that their classmates conveyed care/support in each of those different areas (represented as *Family* codes), with the "provision of services" dimension of Instructional Support recalled most often. Assisting with schoolwork and homework, cleanup and organization, and other student needs through offering a helping hand were common "call outs" from students who volunteered to share about the care they noticed in the classroom. Overlapping some with providing a helping hand, students acknowledged sharing school supplies and treats with classmates as supportive. As such, classmates appear to appreciate when their peers provide the supports needed to succeed in the classroom.

On top of supporting their academic-related success, students recalled times when their peers supported them emotionally through performing acts of kindness and providing comfort when they were feeling down. Students also recognized encouragement that classmates offer to lift one another up after negative events as supportive, like receiving a bad grade or losing a pet.

While research is lagging on the contributions of peer relationships to elementary students' well-being, current findings add to the somewhat mixed literature on the relationship between Classmate Support and students' SWB. While some studies documented greater contributions from teachers and parents compared to peers (Suldo et al., 2013; Tian et al., 2013), others highlighted the direct impact of Classmate Support on students' school and life

satisfaction (Danielson et al., 2009; Oberle et al., 2011). Results from previous studies with younger students lend support to the potential protective role that peer support may serve in the face of negative life events (Ezzell, Swenson, & Brondino, 2000; Wasserstein & La Greca, 1996). Thus, although Classmate Support is mentioned less in the literature as it relates directly to elementary school students' SWB, the current study provides evidence for the potential health promotive benefits of focusing on peer relationships within the classroom, in addition to the prevention of distress and alienation noted in past studies (Flaspohler et al., 2009; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004).

Teacher support. Consistent with findings from Suldo et al. (2009) which found Teacher Emotional and Instrumental Support (but not Teacher Appraisal and Informational Support) uniquely predicted middle school students' SWB, Teacher Emotional Support stood out as a unique predictor of students' SWB compared to other dimensions of Teacher Social Support in the current study. Qualitatively, these forms of Emotional Support included the perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care described in Tardy (1985). Most often, students recalled instances when their teachers displayed empathy through conveying their understanding when students were in need and providing comfort and time to cool off when students were worried or frustrated. Students also recalled instances when their teachers communicated care through giving students voice in classroom-related decisions, nurturing students' abilities, and providing ongoing encouragement. In other words, students felt supported when their teachers attended to their emotional needs through recognizing times when they needed additional attention or time to calm down, as well as when teachers built them up and gave them choices or voice in classroom affairs.

Although not a statistically significant unique contributor, Instrumental Support was significantly correlated with students' well-being in the current study. Qualitatively, students recalled instances of Teacher Instrumental Support most frequently (165 of 227 responses), including times when teachers offered students individual support, made class enjoyable through using humor, assisted students with schoolwork, prepared students for testing, provided students with special items and treats, and gave students privileges like extra-credit or extra-time for computer games or recess, along with others. As such, despite not being a *unique* contributor to students' SWB in the current sample, students recognized that teachers were engaging in behaviors that supported their learning in the classroom and these forms of support emerged as salient when students were asked to share out. Thus, use of an explanatory approach led to findings that may have implications for the validity of the CASSS in capturing all facets of what instrumental support may mean to elementary school students.

While a quantitative study by Malecki and Demaray (2003) including a sample of students in grades 5 through 8 identified Informational Support as the type of support they perceived from teachers most often (related to students' well-being, but not a significant predictor in the current study), Emotional Support perceived from teachers individually predicted students' social skills and academic competence, and overall Teacher Support predicted students' school maladjustment. Such findings from previous studies are corroborated by current findings which indicate that students' perceptions of social support from teachers contribute to their functioning.

Teacher-student relations. Interestingly, results revealed that neither teachers' reports of satisfaction with their relationships with students nor their perceptions of whether a student would seek them out for support or advice significantly correlated with or uniquely predicted

students' assessments of their well-being. These findings are consistent with Noddings (2005) notion that students' perception of care – rather than teachers – is what is most important to student outcomes. Although not directly tied to Teacher-Student Relations as rated by teachers, teacher reports of how they offered support to students generally fell into the dimensions of Instrumental and Emotional support, with some reported instances of Appraisal and Informational support. For example, teachers reported offering the privileges (e.g., extra time outside) and extra assistance to struggling students that students reported as instrumentally supportive. Emotionally supportive behaviors reported by teachers also aligned with students reports of care. Teachers mentioned engaging in caring behaviors consistent with Wentzel's (1997) framework of care, as well as other forms of care including providing words of encouragement that students recognize as supportive, as a way of building students' feelings of competency. In addition to behaviors that more closely aligned to students' conceptualizations of how their teachers conveyed support, teachers discussed different forms of Appraisal Support focused on providing students feedback through praising quality work/good behavior, reassuring students that they are prepared, suggesting ways students can improve their work, and giving students the opportunity to correct their work to incorporate feedback. Of those behaviors, students acknowledged, albeit infrequently, that it was supportive when their teachers gave them suggestions for correcting their mistakes and then giving them the opportunity to revise their work. In contrast to teachers' reports of reinforcement, one student recognized that his/her teacher held the student accountable by putting consequences in place for bad behavior. Informational support went almost unmentioned by both students and teachers with one comment from a student regarding testing guidance, specifically, and three comments from

teachers with a more future-oriented focus on pushing students to do their best academically and keeping future goals in mind.

Contributions to the Literature

Findings from the current study support previous research highlighting the human need for- and benefits associated with- the presence of relational support. Specifically, results indicated that aspects of Classmate Support (i.e., Instrumental and Emotional Support) had unique implications for fourth and fifth grade students' well-being. The findings from the current study extend the current understanding of the role classmates play in promoting elementary-aged students' positive mental health. Results from the current study also indicated that Teacher Emotional Support played a critical role in promoting students' well-being, which, as an asset acquired at an early age, could have implications for a wealth of other positive outcomes throughout a youth's development including more positive school experiences (Stiglbauer et al., 2013), increased engagement in school (Lewis et al., 2011), resilience in the face of adverse life events (McKnight et al., 2002; Suldo & Huebner, 2004), and enhanced academic, social, and physical functioning (Gilman & Heubner, 2006; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008).

The most significant contribution of this study to the current knowledge base on school-related social support is a deeper understanding of how relationships in the classroom relate to elementary-aged students' positive mental health, and consideration to how that understanding might inform practice. Findings corroborate past evidence with adolescent populations of student-perceived Teacher Support as an element of teacher-student relationships that seems to positively impact student outcomes, with a focus on the unique value of Teacher Emotional Support. Less well-established with elementary-aged students is the value of fostering supportive classmate relationships, which the findings from the current study suggest may be more crucial

(with regard to impact on student SWB) than teacher support. The current study offers a rationale for increased attention to ways in which elementary school classrooms can be cultivated to allow students opportunities to interact in ways that are grounded in Emotional Support and promote academic growth.

Implications for Educational Stakeholders

Quantitative results provide a rationale for a focus on Classmate Emotional, Classmate Instrumental, and Teacher Emotional Support when considering efforts to prioritize when promoting students' positive mental health. Qualitative findings provide examples of the types of classmate behaviors that students perceive as emotionally and instrumentally supportive, and thus might be of value for educators to consider when organizing the classroom environment and facilitating peer interactions.

Although perhaps common sense that support from classmates and teachers would be factors related to students' positive mental health, an important finding from the current study includes evidence for student perceptions of supportive behaviors as important for impact on student-rated well-being. As noted by Noddings (2002), for a caring encounter to take place, there must be "some recognition on the part of the cared-for that an act of caring has occurred" (p. 19). Noddings describes a "caring encounter" as having three components that in the case of the current study can be understood as: teacher cares for student; teacher behaves in ways consistent with this care; student recognizes that the teacher cares for them. Thus, without student recognition, teacher acts of care may not have the same emotional benefit. Although both student- and teacher-rated variables were correlated with students' well-being in the current study, only those dimensions rated by students uniquely predicted student-rated SWB in multivariate analyses. Of note, there was less power to detect the effect of the Teacher-Student

Relations variable due to the decreased sample size; however, this variable also did not significantly predict students' SWB beyond a model absent of predictors. This finding lends support for student voice both in research and in the classroom as an important consideration when the goal is to effectively enhance student outcomes (e.g., SWB).

Creating caring classrooms in which care is demonstrated *and* acknowledged may not be as simple as teachers generally caring about their students, as “*caring-about* is empty if it does not culminate in caring relations” (Noddings, 2002, p. 23-24). Instead, classrooms must be intentionally set up in such a way that supportive behaviors are cultivated. Drawing from Noddings’ (2008) model for fostering care within the classroom, the following section describes how engagement in modeling, discussion, practice, and confirmation can serve as a framework for creating these spaces.

Data from the current study would support teacher modeling of emotionally and instrumentally supportive behaviors (e.g., empathizing or demonstrating understanding of what a student is going through) as a way of showing students what it means to be supportive through engagement in supportive behaviors. Alongside modeling, Noddings (2008) would suggest that teachers engage students in dialogue about what it means to care and consult with students on how they receive care. Additionally, and keeping in mind the important role of Classmate Support, if educators want students to engage in genuine caring behaviors themselves, the classroom environment must be set up in such a way that students are given opportunities to practice supportive behaviors “and reflect on that practice” (p. 191). For fourth and fifth graders in the current study, opportunities for practice might include setting up collaborative spaces for students to work together or provide one another assistance with assignments prior to turning them into the teacher, during which time students may also be able to practice skill in

demonstrating empathy and care. Finally, Noddings argues that students must be “confirmed” when they engage in behaviors recognized as “admirable, or at least acceptable” (p. 192). Importantly, this acknowledgement should not take the form of a commonly thrown around approval of a desirable behavior. Rather, such recognition should reveal that the one providing the confirmation knows the student well and is encouraging the best in that student. Although results from the current study bring to attention behaviors recognized as supportive in a sample of elementary school students, this is an aggregate of student responses, and care should be taken to individualize confirmations as they relate to the individual displaying care.

Although historically important as a way of fulfilling individuals’ needs for relatedness, there is also a timeliness to discussions of prioritizing care in the classroom. The concept of restorative practices (e.g., Song & Swearer, 2016; Wachtel & McCold, 2001) are becoming more common place as the conversation about how to keep students safe in school has become unavoidable and of top priority. At the foundation of restorative practices are safe environments grounded in strong relationships. Classrooms characterized by genuine care, by nature, are ones in which isolation and exclusion do not thrive. In other words, exclusionary practices are largely incompatible with genuinely caring classrooms. As discussed, caring classrooms are not simply classrooms in which all parties are “nice” to one another, but are characterized by a variety of supportive behaviors, including communicating empathy, nurturing students’ abilities, and providing encouragement. With a primary motivation of school violence purportedly being isolation and exclusion (Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta, & Roth, 2004), creation of these communities leaves the realm of a nice, or even touchy-feely idea, to one that is of vital importance. The current study lends some clarity to what these classrooms might look like. More generally, results from the current study have implications for school climate and connectedness

initiatives. Although current findings are confined to relationships in the classroom, relations between students and their classmates, as well as between students and their teachers, are fundamental building blocks to establishing a positive school climate, and thus may be considered one mechanism through which to promote school-wide climate efforts.

Limitations

Some limitations to the current study include sampling limitations, qualitative data restrictions, and an inability to make causal claims. First, the partnering school was selected for the original study using convenience sampling. Namely, the school was selected due to its interest in positive psychology and desire to implement universal mental health supports. While the use of non-probability sampling inevitably creates a threat to population validity, this means of sampling is common when conducting research in schools. Additionally, although the use of surveys may be seen as a study weakness, Haber, Cohen, and Baltes (2007) discovered that the actual receipt of social support is not what is necessary to facilitate positive outcomes; rather, the perception that one has received social support is what is important. In this sense, self-report data may be more meaningful than other methods of data collection (e.g., observational data). In the way of collecting data on SWB, perhaps the Experience Sampling Method utilized by Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter's (2003) might be a gold standard in collecting momentary affective data; however, this method can be expensive and difficult to implement in larger samples. Therefore, use of an aggregate SLSS and PANAS-C score is considered practical in schools as well as a reliable and valid means of assessing students' cognitive and affective judgements about their own lives.

A limitation to the quantitative portion of the study includes the reduced power to detect an effect associated with the teacher-rated variables due to missing data for 42 students (who

were served in 5 classrooms) on the TSRI. Additionally, because the current study is based on cross-sectional data (Time 2 survey data), causal statements are not able to be made regarding the directionality of the relationship between classroom variables and students' SWB. It may be that Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and strong Teacher-Student Relations lead to increased SWB, but it also may be that students with high SWB lead to increased levels of Teacher Support, Classmate Support, and better relationships between teachers and students. Additional possibilities include the presence of a transactional relationship in which classroom variables and SWB are reciprocally related, or the presence of some third variable influences both classroom variables and SWB. Therefore, future studies should investigate the directionality of the relationship between the two variables.

There are several limitations surrounding the qualitative data examined in this study. First, student accounts of teacher and classmate care were prompted by interventionists asking students to recall times when their teacher or classmates were particularly "nice" over the past week. Although the script for recalling teachers' actions also included support (i.e., "*What nice or supportive things have you noticed your teacher(s) do or say?*"), this wording may have led students to indicate instances of Emotional Support rather than other forms, such as Appraisal. Considering qualitative responses were recorded by dimension (as well as by other data-driven themes), this is something to keep in mind as frequency of Emotional Support responses may have been inflated as a result of the data collection procedure. Further, the qualitative component of this study was limited in that student accounts of classmate and teacher care were not recorded in the fall and therefore the sample is constricted to approximately 140 students who were physically present for the intervention (but may not have volunteered responses to questions posed to the class) in 7 classrooms. Additionally, the time allotted for student responses to these

questions was restricted to about five minutes at the beginning of each intervention session. These responses were not recorded verbatim electronically, rather co-interventionists recorded by hand the gist of students' responses under pre-specified categories. It is possible that collected responses are not representative of the feelings of the class as a whole, but rather of the students willing to share in front of their classmates and teachers. Due to the whole-class format and nature of the intervention (i.e., to promote positive feelings), no data were collected on teacher and classmate behaviors considered to reflect a *lack* of care or other negative dimensions of teacher-student or classmate relationships, such as conflict. This information may be just as important for informing school-wide efforts aimed at enhancing supportive relationships, school connectedness, and students' mental health. Focus groups or individual interviews may allow for more detailed, honest responses from a wider range of students. This forum would also allow the researcher to collect richer information that could be represented in quotations, as opposed to more quantitative reports of comments logged by co-interventions as was done in the current study. Despite the limitations of the qualitative data, it is still considered beneficial information, as it goes beyond surface-level investigation to provide insight into the voices of interacting individuals (Denzin, 1989).

Considering the approach taken to coding qualitative responses [i.e., largely frequency counts based on established frameworks for support dimensions (Tardy, 1985) and specific caring behaviors (Wentzel, 1997)], results are based largely on the work of a single coder. However, to support the reliability of the coding, a sample of the data [one student-perceived Classmate Support and Teacher Support response per classroom (5% of student responses); one teacher-perceived Teacher Support response per classroom (18% of teacher responses)] were coded by a second coder, a member of the positive psychology research team with expertise in

qualitative research methods. Because student responses were pre-categorized by the co-interventionist (see Appendix G) in the original study and teacher responses were not, a smaller proportion of student responses were checked compared to teachers. Due to 100% consistency in coding between researchers, no further checks were completed. Thus, although establishment of codebooks by one individual is a limitation of the current study, the straightforward nature of the way in which qualitative data were organized prior to analysis, the use of previously established frameworks to organize the data, and inclusion of a second coder to check a portion of the codes increases the reliability of results. A mixed-methods approach was selected to allow the researcher to accumulate a better-rounded picture of the relationships under investigation. In this sense, the limitations associated with one method might be offset by the strengths of the other. While one method alone may be insufficient in addressing the entire question, a mixed methods design allowed the researcher to address these individual inadequacies by pairing together multiple data sources (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

Finally, although supported by previous research, results of the current study are limited to the perspectives of students in one elementary school. Thus, while results may serve as a guide for educators interested in enhancing students' SWB through relationship-building efforts, it may be wise for educators to also collect their own ongoing assessments of what students in their classrooms find supportive and incorporate this population-specific feedback into classroom- and school-wide ways of demonstrating support and care.

Future Directions for Practice

Findings from the current study provide a rationale for *why* educators should care about care, *whom* are the expert consultants on whether support is being received in the classroom, and *what* behaviors educators might consider modeling, discussing, providing opportunities for

students to practice, and confirming within the classroom to encourage supportive relationships and promote students' well-being. Future directions include school- and classroom-based efforts to understand what unique caring behaviors are recognized by students of different ages and cultural backgrounds. Operating under a Funds of Knowledge Framework includes recognizing that students from different backgrounds come to the table with different strengths and assets gained from everyday experiences (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). These are not always recognized in schools. In a caring environment, teachers not only make efforts to care about students broadly, but get to know students through exchanging knowledge over time and developing an awareness of students' resources that can be used within the classroom. In this way, awareness of student context is embedded in displays of care and students' individual growth is supported. A critical piece of the caring relationship, students might be offered opportunities to provide feedback on whether they are receiving the care being communicated. This might be done through check-ins with the teacher or brief surveys of teacher and classmate support. From there, adjustments can be made to the way care is modeled, discussed, practiced, and acknowledged in the classroom.

Future Directions for Research

As many of students' qualitative responses concerning ways in which their teachers engaged in instrumentally supportive behaviors were not reflected in the CASSS, one direction for future research may include investigating the extent to which elementary students' responses on the CASSS result in comprehensive, valid representations of supportive behaviors. This may include expanding the number or content of items (currently three items per support dimension) to be more consistent with how young students perceive support. Future study of the CASSS may also include a comparison of how the CASSS predicts students' SWB compared to how the

TSRI predicts students' SWB. While the current study lends support for the importance of considering student perceptions, the contribution of teacher perceptions may be underacknowledged in the current study due to the reduced sample size for this variable.

Another direction for future research would be to dive deeper into qualitative reports of how teachers have successfully created supportive classrooms in which teachers feel care towards their students, engage in behaviors that communicate that care, and students report feeling that care. Understanding how those behaviors are delivered in a culturally responsive manner has implications for culturally responsive ways of promoting students' well-being.

In line with a restorative justice framework, researchers might also turn their attention to how students believe relationship-ruptures, or conflict, should be handled. In other words, how can students feel supported when they don't make what has been deemed a "good choice" by the school and how can they make it right in a way that does not ostracize the student, but rather aides the student's moral development. While it may be easy to show care to a student who is a loyal rule-abiding classroom participant, future research may investigate how teachers and classmates can provide a sense of unconditional support- that does not replace consequences- but that helps classmates feel accepted and cared for even when they make a mistake.

With a rationale for the importance of classroom relationships to students' SWB, future research may also include intervention research that investigates the effect of intentional teacher and classmate support on student outcomes. Such a study might include assessing elements of students' positive mental health throughout teacher participation in an intervention where they learn about the impact of their support on student outcomes, the importance of understanding students' ideas of what's considered supportive behavior, and how to cultivate classrooms that are grounded in this support. Teacher and student reports of supportive behaviors may be

supplemented by classroom observations of supportive behavior, in line with Noddings' (2002) conceptualization of the three components of caring encounters.

Summary

Results from the current study reveal types of classroom support that are linked to students' positive mental health; namely, that students' perceptions of Teacher Emotional Support and Classmate Emotional and Instrumental Support may be meaningful predictors of their overall well-being. Although there is some overlap between students' reports of support/care amongst the different dimensions used to organize responses in the current study, the real focus is not on the exact *Family code* in which responses fell, but rather the overall way that students perceive care compared to how teachers report delivering care, and the implications of those findings considering the consistency in the research indicating that students' perceptions are essential to development of their self-concept and how they judge the quality of their lives. Although teacher behaviors not acknowledged by students as supportive (e.g., pushing students to work hard to achieve future goals) may contribute to elementary students' later success in ways they may not currently recognize, there remains value in considering student voice, as the way individuals think about situations tends to impact their feelings and behaviors in those contexts and more globally. As such, it becomes particularly important to understand the student's perspective in order to foster positive schooling experiences that might facilitate a positive upward spiral of other positive outcomes. Taken together, results from this study do not suggest that educators narrow their focus to forms of Instrumental and Emotional Support as those that demand exclusive attention in the classroom. But rather, it provides evidence to support practice in which schools prioritize building caring classrooms characterized by attention to student voice and the needs of students in the local community. In this way, students' opinions

are considered, and teachers are given the autonomy to craft their classrooms in ways that are responsive to the needs and experiences of their students with the goal of aiding students' development. Future research is needed to increase understanding of how schools can better attend to students' positive mental health in ways that are recognized by students and are sensitive to the needs of the local community.

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APPENDIX A:

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS FORM

ID # _____ Fall 2015

Birthdate _____ - _____ - _____
(month) (day) (year)

PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION AND CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER TO EACH ITEM:

1. My gender is: Boy Girl
2. Do you receive free or reduced lunch? Yes No
3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
 - a. No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
 - b. Yes, Mexican American, Chicano
 - c. Yes, Puerto Rican
 - d. Yes, Cuban
 - e. Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (please specify): _____
4. My race/ethnic identity is (Circle all that apply):
 - a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. American Indian/Alaska Native
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. Other (please specify): _____
5. My biological parents are:
 - a. Married
 - b. Divorced
 - c. Separated
 - d. Never married
 - e. Never married but living together
 - f. Widowed
6. I live with my:
 - a. Mother and Father
 - b. Mother only
 - c. Father only
 - d. Mother and Stepfather
 - e. Father and Stepmother
 - f. Grandparent(s)
 - g. Other relative: _____
 - h. Other: _____

APPENDIX B:

STUDENTS' LIFE SATISFACTION SCALE (SLSS)

We would like to know what thoughts about life you've had during the past several weeks. Think about how you spend each day and night and then think about how your life has been during most of this time. Here are some questions that ask you to indicate your satisfaction with life. In answering each statement, circle a number from (1) to (6) where (1) indicates you **strongly disagree** with the statement and (6) indicates you **strongly agree** with the statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My life is going well	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My life is just right	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I would like to change many things in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I wish I had a different kind of life	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I have a good life	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. I have what I want in life	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My life is better than most kids'	1	2	3	4	5	6

Note. Items 3 and 4 are reverse-scored before creating a composite global life satisfaction score.

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APPENDIX C:

**TEN-ITEM POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN
(PANAS)**

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then circle the appropriate answer next to that word. Indicate to what extent you have felt this way during the past few weeks.

<i>Feeling or emotion:</i>	Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Sad	1	2	3	4	5
2. Happy	1	2	3	4	5
3. Scared	1	2	3	4	5
4. Miserable	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cheerful	1	2	3	4	5
6. Proud	1	2	3	4	5
7. Afraid	1	2	3	4	5
8. Joyful	1	2	3	4	5
9. Mad	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lively	1	2	3	4	5

Note. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 10 are averaged to create a composite positive affect score. Items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 9 are averaged to create a composite negative affect score.

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APPENDIX D:

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SOCIAL SUPPORT SCALE (CASSS)

On this page, please respond to sentences about some form of support or help that you might get from either a parent, a teacher, or classmates. Read each sentence carefully and respond to them honestly.

Rate how often you receive the support described. Do not skip any sentences. Thank you!

My Teacher(s)		Never	Almost Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Almost Always	Always
1	... cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	... treats me fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	... makes it okay to ask questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	... explains things that I don't understand.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	... shows me how to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	... helps me solve problems by giving me information.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	... tells me I did a good job when I've done something well	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	... nicely tells me when I make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	... tells me how well I do on tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	... makes sure I have what I need for school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	... takes time to help me learn to do something well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	... spends time with me when I need help.	1	2	3	4	5	6
My Classmates		Never	Almost Never	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Almost Always	Always
13	... treat me nicely.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	... like most of my ideas and opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	... pay attention to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	... give me ideas when I don't know what to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	... give me information so I can learn new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	... give me good advice.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	... tell me I did a good job when I've done something well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	... nicely tell me when I make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	... notice when I have worked hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	... ask me to join activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	... spend time doing things with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	... help me with projects in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Note. Items 1, 2, and 3 are averaged to create a composite score of Emotional Support. Items 4, 5, and 6 are averaged to create a composite score of Informational Support. Items 7, 8, and 9 are averaged to create a composite score of Appraisal Support. Items 10, 11, and 12 are averaged to create a composite score of Instrumental Support.

Note. Items 13, 14, and 15 are averaged to create a composite score of Emotional Support. Items 16, 17, and 18 are averaged to create a composite score of Informational Support. Items 19, 20, and 21 are averaged to create a composite score of Appraisal Support. Items 22, 23, and 24 are averaged to create a composite score of Instrumental Support.

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APPENDIX E:

TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY (TSRI)

These next questions ask about your relationship with _____. Please circle a number from (1) to (5), in which (1) indicates you feel the statement is **almost never true** and (5) indicates you feel the statement is **almost always true**. It is important to know what you REALLY think, so please answer the question the way you really feel, not how you think you should. All answers are confidential.

	Almost Never True	Seldom True	Sometimes True	Often True	Almost Always True
1. I enjoy having this student in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
2. If the student has a problem at home, he/she is likely to ask for my help.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I would describe my relationship with this student as positive.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This student frustrates me more often than most other students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
5. If this student is absent, I will miss him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The student shares with me things about his/her personal life.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I cannot wait for this year to be over so that I will not need to teach this student next year.	1	2	3	4	5
8. If this student is absent, I feel relieved.	1	2	3	4	5
9. If this student needs help, he/she is likely to ask me for help.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The student turns to me for a listening ear or for sympathy.	1	2	3	4	5
11. If this student is not in my class, I will be able to enjoy my class more.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The student depends on me for advice or help.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am happy with my relationship with this student.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I like this student.	1	2	3	4	5

Note. Items 2, 6, 9, 10, and 12 are averaged to create a composite score of Instrumental Help. Items 1, 3, 5, 13, and 14 are averaged to create a composite score of Satisfaction. Items 4, 7, 8, and 11 are averaged to create a composite score of Conflict.

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APPENDIX F:

STUDENT WEEKLY REPORTS OF TEACHER AND CLASSMATE CARE

A. Strengthen Classroom Relationships

Teacher Support	Immediately before or after this session, check in with the students' teacher(s) regarding the ways in which they conveyed support to their students. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How did students respond to intentional displays of teacher support and care?</i>• <i>Which strategies appeared effective in conveying support?</i>• <i>Any noticeable differences in classroom climate or relationships with specific students following purposeful communications of support or care?</i>
------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Classmate Support	Pose these questions to the group and facilitate a brief discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Since our last meeting, tell us about some times you've seen your classmates be particularly nice to you or another student, or times you've gone out of your way to help or support a classmate.</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Praise students for sharing• <i>Mr./Ms. (Teacher) thinking over the past week, when have you noticed your students treated each other particularly nicely, or worked together cooperatively?</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ask students to recall how they felt during that event (happier? Like school was more enjoyable?)• <i>Happy children also feel close to adults at school. What nice or supportive things have you noticed your teacher(s) do or say? Other kind behaviors or actions from other people at the school?</i>
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APPENDIX G:

SUPPORTIVE BEHAVIORS RECORD FORM

Teacher Support (*What nice or supportive things have you noticed your teacher(s) do or say? Other kind behaviors or actions from other people at the school?*)

<u>How did your teacher convey care?</u>	<u># of Times Mentioned</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped student with schoolwork during class <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped student with schoolwork outside of school, like before school <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave extra time on test <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave options during assignment <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed an assignment or otherwise reduced workload <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave student a special privilege <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave class extra recess or other privilege <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spent social time with student (e.g., ate lunch with student) <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listened to a student's long or repeated story <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought in something special to class (e.g., a Harry Potter book) <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Went above and beyond to clean up class (e.g., cleaned up vomit) <i>(specify):</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other: _____ 	
Other kind act from other people at the school? (other than teacher): _____ _____ _____	

Classmate Support (tell us about some times you've seen your classmates be particularly nice to you or another student, or times you've gone out of your way to help or support a classmate. (Teacher), when have you noticed your students treated each other particularly nicely, or worked together cooperatively?

<u>How did your classmates convey care?</u>	<u># of Times Mentioned</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spent time with student (e.g., played with me at recess, sat with me at lunch) (specify): 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped student with schoolwork (specify): 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared something with student, like a school supply or toy from home (specify what was shared): 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helped me clean up (e.g., dropped books, mess) (specify): 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walked me somewhere on campus (e.g., to nurse, library) (specify): 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<u>How did you show support/care to classmate(s)?</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other: _____ 	
(Teacher): Examples of students working together cooperatively or being nice? _____ _____ _____ _____	

APPENDIX H:

TEACHER WEEKLY REPORTS OF HOW THEY CONVEY CARE

Well-Being Promotion Program

Teacher Check-In: Classroom Support and Climate

Over the course of this past week...

(Date: _____)

1. What did you do or say to show support/care to your students?
2. How did the student(s) respond to those intentional displays of teacher support and care?
3. Which actions/strategies appeared particularly effective in conveying support?
4. What, if any, differences in classroom climate or relationships with specific students did you notice after those purposeful displays of support or care?

Note. Teacher responses to item 1 were coded in relation to research question 4.

APPENDIX I:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER SUPPORT/CARE CODEBOOK

Code (Super, Family, Individual)	Description	Example Response
Instrumental Support	Offering of one's time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	
<i>Time</i>		<i>"She's here every day."</i>
Being present	Shows up to class	
Out-of-school assistance	Provides students with assistance outside of regular school hours	
Individual support	Attends to specific student needs (e.g., writing down a student's assignments so they don't forget)	
Extended explanation	Continues to teach material until students fully grasp concept	
<i>Skills</i>		<i>"She makes us laugh."</i>
Humor	Makes jokes that make learning more enjoyable	
Fairness	Demonstrates fairness when making decisions	
<i>Services</i>		<i>"She explained problems through visuals"</i>
Fun projects	Sets up additional fun projects/activities for students; makes learning fun	
Assistance with schoolwork	Offers students assistance with schoolwork/homework during class	
Diverse strategies	Explains material in different ways, consistent with students' needs	
Preparation	Helps students prepare for upcoming testing	
Clean up/organization assistance	Helps students clean desks and/or organize their work	

<i>Tangibles</i>		<i>“She bought books from the book fair for the class.”</i>
Special items	Purchases, shares and/or brings special items into the classroom for student(s) (other than treats)	
Treats	Brings in food or drink as a reward	
School supplies	Provides students with school supplies when they are in need (e.g., markers, paper)	
Extra practice	Provides students with materials for extra practice	
<i>Non-tangibles</i>		<i>“She gave us time to play computer games if we had extra time.”</i>
Privileges	Gives students special non-tangible privileges (e.g., extra recess, parties, time for computer games, no homework pass, extra-credit)	
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	
<i>Trust</i>		<i>“She trusts us and doesn’t make us do silent lunch.”</i>
Actions	Communicates trust through lifting punishments and allowing student travel to other places on campus	
<i>Love</i>		<i>“She puts up with me even when I’m having a bad day.”</i>
Acts of kindness	Interacts positively with students	
Unconditional	Puts up with students even when they aren’t having a good day	
<i>Empathy</i>		<i>“If someone is frustrated, she knows and lets them cool off outside.”</i>
Understands students	Understands students, including times when students are in need, regardless of whether students explicitly communicate that need	
Cool off	Allows students to step out and cool off when they are frustrated	
Comfort	Is a source of comfort for students, including when students are in conflict, being bullied or are worried	
Differentiation	Understands students’ different needs and conducts class accordingly	

<i>Care</i>		<i>“She tells me not to give up, even when I want to.”</i>
Modeling	Models caring behavior to students through demonstrating how students can help one another	
Democratic communication styles	Gives students choice or otherwise allows students to be part of the decision making process	
Nurturance	Supports students’ independence and builds capacity	
Best interests	Helps students stay out of trouble; keeps students safe	
Encouragement	Offers words of encouragement prior to or after completion of a task	
Appraisal Support	Provision of evaluative feedback including suggestions for improvement	
<i>Feedback</i>		<i>“She told me nicely how to fix an assignment.”</i>
Mistakes	Identifies and provides suggestions for correcting mistakes	
Revisions	Allows students to try again after receiving feedback	
Punishment	Holds students accountable for actions by establishing negative consequences for behavior	
Informational Support	Delivery of advice or guidance aimed at providing a solution to a problem	
<i>Guidance</i>		<i>“She gave me guidance on a test.”</i>
Testing	Provides students with guidance on tests	

APPENDIX J:

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSMATE SUPPORT/CARE CODEBOOK

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Example Response
Instrumental Support	Offering of one's time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	
<i>Time</i>		<i>"Student eats breakfast with me."</i>
Quality time	Spends time participating in different activities with classmates	
<i>Skills</i>		<i>"Student helped me code a video game."</i>
Humor	Shows support by making classmates smile/laugh	
Creativity	Shares/makes artwork or other creative pieces with/for classmates	
<i>Services</i>		<i>"Student helped me with classwork when I didn't understand a problem."</i>
Assistance with schoolwork	Offers classmates assistance with schoolwork/homework during class	
Clean up/organization assistance	Helps classmates clean up messes/organize schoolwork	
Travel companion	Accompanies classmates from one place on school grounds to another	
Helping hand	Assists classmates (e.g., hold open door, offer a hand) who have fallen or are in physical (e.g., have a broken leg) or financial need (e.g., fundraising)	
<i>Tangibles</i>		<i>"Student let me borrow a book."</i>
Special items	Shares items other than school supplies or treats with classmates (e.g., a drawing)	
School supplies	Shares school supplies with classmates when they are in need (e.g., markers, paper, books)	

Treats <i>Non-tangibles</i>	Offers classmates snacks	<i>“Student invited me to work in their group.”</i>
Invitations	Invites classmates to attend events	
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	
<i>Love</i>		<i>“Student wrote me a letter saying nice things.”</i>
Acts of kindness	Communicates kindness through delivering compliments	
<i>Empathy</i>		<i>“Made me feel better when I was being made fun of.”</i>
Forgiveness Comfort	Communicates forgiveness Available as a source of comfort for classmates when they’re feeling down	
<i>Care</i>		<i>“I got a bad grade on a project and my friend told me it would be okay.”</i>
Inclusion	Makes space for classmates at the table; includes classmates in group projects	
Ally	Sticks up for classmates that are being bullied	
Encouragement	Offers uplifting words after classmate receives bad news or is feeling down (e.g., a bad grade, cat died)	

APPENDIX K:

TEACHER REPORTS OF SUPPORTIVE/CARING BEHAVIORS CODEBOOK

Code (Super , <i>Family</i> , Individual)	Description	Example Response
Instrumental Support	Offering of one’s time, skills, services, or other tangibles to assist someone in need	
<i>Time</i>		<i>“I offer lunchtime tutoring, including one-on-one tutoring to allow students with minimal understanding to ask questions.”</i>
Self-care	Takes time to engage in calming activities prior to start of school day	
Pacing	Slows down the pace of instruction to allow students time to better comprehend confusing concepts	
Availability	Expresses availability to help students with problems or concerns	
Individual support	Offers time to speak with students alone or work with students individually	
<i>Services</i>		<i>“In math, I slowed things down and re-taught when kids were struggling.”</i>
Working with struggling students	Provides additional assistance to students in need of more academic support	
Re-teaching	Goes through difficult content with students again	
Extra practice	Provides students with extra practice before testing knowledge	
<i>Tangibles</i>		<i>“I brought them donuts as a reward for their behavior during an observation.”</i>

Treats	Brings in food or drink as encouragement, a reward for good behavior, or for meeting a class goal	
<i>Non-tangibles</i>		<i>“We FSA tested on Tuesday. I made the rest of the day fun for them with an extra-long recess, no homework, and lunch in the room.”</i>
Privileges	Gives students special non-tangible privileges (e.g., extra time outside, no homework)	
Time to prepare	Gives students time to prepare for upcoming testing	
Emotional Support	Perceptions of trust and love, along with communications of empathy and care	
<i>Care</i>		<i>“Model, model, model acts of kindness and manners. I treat them as I hope they treat others.”</i>
Modeling	Demonstrates kindness and empathy through actions	
Democratic communication styles	Engages in reciprocal communication where students’ input is taken into consideration	
Expectations for behavior	Sets expectation that students engage in kind behavior	
Nurturance	Provides students with resources and strategies to promote positive development	
Verbalizations	Explicitly expresses care to students (e.g., “I care about your future”)	
Life outside of school	Inquires about students’ lives outside of the classroom	
Encouragement	Offers words of encouragement before or after completion of a task to build students’ feelings of competency	
Appraisal Support	Provision of evaluative feedback including suggestions for improvement	
<i>Feedback</i>		<i>“We went over their test scores and talked about how to change something we are doing to make them better.”</i>

Reinforcement	Expresses praise/pride in the quality of students' work and/or behavior; positive reinforcement
Reassurance	Assures students that they are prepared for upcoming challenges
Areas for improvement	Discusses with students how to improve work to make it better in the future
Revisions	Allows students to correct previous work after receiving feedback
Informational Support	Delivery of advice or guidance aimed at providing a solution to a problem
<i>Guidance</i>	<i>"We talked about setting goals and their expectations for the future."</i>
Academic best	Advises that students not settle for less than their best work
Future	Facilitates discussions about students' goals for future

APPENDIX L:

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER



RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX(813)974-7091

9/2/2015

Shannon Suldo, Ph.D.
Educational and Psychological Studies
4202 East Fowler Ave., EDU 105
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: Full Board Approval for Initial Review

IRB#: Pro00023292

**Title: Improving the Subjective Well-being of Elementary School Students and Teachers:
Efficacy of Classwide and Teacher-Focused Positive Psychology Interventions**

Study Approval Period: 8/21/2015 to 8/21/2016

Dear Dr. Suldo:

On 8/21/2015, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):

Protocol Document(s):

[Study Protocol_Research Design](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:

[Parent Consent_Positive Psychology Program Evaluation_V1_USF_Updated 8-27-15.pdf.pdf](#)

[Student Assent_Positive Psychology Program Evaluation_V1_Updated 8-27-15_USF.pdf.pdf](#)

[Teacher Consent Form \(Strengths-Based Intervention\)_Positive Psychology Program Evaluation_V1_Updated 8-27-15.pdf.pdf](#)

[Teacher Consent_Positive Psychology Program Evaluation_V1_8-27-15.pdf.pdf](#)

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

This research involving children was approved under the minimal risk category 45 CFR 46.404: Research not involving greater than minimal risk.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Schinka, Ph.D.".

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board