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## Teacher Perceptions on How to Best Support Student Well-Being in Elementary Classrooms

Elanna Beth Derby  
*University of North Florida*

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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

Teacher Perceptions on How to Best Support Student Well-Being in Elementary  
Classrooms

by

Elanna “Lani” B. Derby

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Leadership,  
School Counseling & Sport Management  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

This proposal of dissertation titled: Teacher Perceptions of How to Best Support Student Well-Being in Elementary Classrooms

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Chris Janson, Ph.D., Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lucy Croft Ed.D., Committee Member 1

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lunetta Williams, Ph.D., Committee Member 2

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Linda Skrla, Ph.D., Committee Member 3

\_\_\_\_\_

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## DEDICATION

*To my all-time favorite two teachers:*

*My dad, Rabbi Matthew I. Derby z”l*

*1934 – 1984*

*and*

*my 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Mrs. Judy Moss Wheeler*

*both of whom, always believed in me,*

*and to all of my friends and family,*

*as well as Little Derby.*

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have been professionally employed as an Educator in both regular education and drop-out prevention, in public and private settings serving pre-kindergarten through adult education for thirty-five years. After seven years in administration, I returned to classroom teaching five years ago and firmly believe all children can learn and deserve the opportunity of an education.

I was born with a severe speech impediment and unintelligible speech that only my older brother understood. I had a hip deformity and therefore never crawled as I was in a brace. I had a heart murmur. But the kicker came with my learning difficulties. My parents were told when I was in the second grade that the only academic setting for me was the mentally retarded class, that I would never graduate high school and that I needed to learn a trade. I have a severe learning disability in reading comprehension, math, spatial relationships, and memory retention.

This became my driving force in obtaining my high school diploma in the top quartile of my graduating class, achieving my college degree from a state university, and seeking my master's degree from an Ivy League institution. I also suffer from some debilitating diseases which takes their toll on my body as physical handicaps.

Most of my expenses for this endeavor have been self-paid and out-of-pocket. I truly would like to acknowledge my brother, Frank, who helped out several semesters by paying for tuition. I know "you love me in your heart." Thank you from the bottom of mine. My family are my biggest cheerleaders. My father, who is not around to witness this, although I know he is truly smiling down from heaven. My favorite two teachers in the entire world – my father and Mrs. Judy Moss-Wheeler, my fourth-grade teacher, who encouraged me to think outside of the

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box. My mom who always excused me from visits if I had writing to do and would light up whenever we spoke about my studies. Mom, I am so glad you are here with us to see my accomplishment. You have more lives than any cat. Frank, Emily, Lilly, Matthew, Michael, Karen, and Gavriella, thanks for all of the love and support. My heartfelt thanks to Drs. Sarah Friswold-Atwood and Jennifer Wright who dragged me along, proofed my writing and were the biggest supporters, as well as Amanda Friswold-Atwood for being such a wonderful cheerleader. To the Mah Jongg crew – thank you for all of your love and support! I am blessed to have a great support system via my family and friends that I can lean on for assistance.

To Dr. Janice Seabrooks-Blackmore and Dr. Chris Janson, thank you for your friendship, collegiality, hugs, support, and insight into my educational journey. To my dissertation committee, Dr. Lunetta Williams, Dr. Chris Janson, Dr. Linda Skrla and Dr. Lucy Croft, thank you for all your time, expertise, and input into my dissertation. Dr. Janson, I so appreciate all your time teaching, editing, and advising my dissertation.

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## PREFACE

This whole journey is because of Little Derby. Little Derby lived across the street from school in a foster home. As soon as he saw my car in the parking lot, he came over to school. Someone, anyone, would open the door for him and without a word, he would head back to my office. My office was housed in the back of the school, off of a large multi-purpose room. Depending on his mood, he would either sit quietly in one of my chairs and read a book or indicate to me that we had an “issue” to discuss. Many times, he would look at the stacks of papers on my desk, pick them up and deliver them to whomever I had indicated. He would walk into the Principal’s office unannounced and quietly give her the papers I needed to give her. He would also bring papers back to me from her.

Little Derby was in first grade and a holy terror. Little Derby would hit others in class and/or have major meltdowns and either way I would have to come remove him. I would wait until he was calm and then we would discuss what happened and how to handle it if it happened again. One of our strategies was to try and get him to come to me for a time-out before he did something wrong. The teacher and I had it worked out, where if he walked out, he was to come to me. That child could find me anywhere in the building. If I were doing an observation, he would come in, sit down, and put his head down and wait.

Meanwhile I am trying to get him staffed Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD). I am going through case workers, therapists, and guardian ad-litem. This kid had an entire team. No one said I was wrong. But it is a process to get a kid staffed.

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Little Derby started having lunch with me or by himself at the conference table outside my office. He was constantly getting in trouble in the lunchroom, so he gave himself a new strategy. I would be in my office and hear a noise and he would say, “It’s just me, Ms. Derby”.

Once early in the morning, as I was working, I heard this whole commotion in the multi-purpose room with chairs flying and things being thrown as he was crying and cursing on his way to my office. He threw his backpack in my office and I said, “I guess, we are not having a good morning”.

He said, “I hate her!”

Me: “Who?”

Little Derby: “She shouldn’t have gone in my backpack!”

Me: “What was she looking for?”

LD: “Money!” It was all mine!”

Me: “What did she do?”

LD: “She’s so stupid!”

Me: “Name. We don’t say that.”

LD: “Fine! She acted stupid!”

I burst out laughing.

He also hated going to after-school care and wanted to just go home, but that was a problem I could not solve. Meanwhile, I hated his foster placement, so I went through foster care training to become his new placement.

In the Spring, I suddenly, and I mean suddenly, thought this kid was not EBD. He had PTSD and triggers – noise and lights being some of them and he needed more strategies.



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I love this kid. We continued to work on our goals, and he was doing so much better. At the end of school, he was reunited with his father. I stayed as a foster parent, just in case, until Little Derby was to enter middle school. Placement had his name flagged that I was to be called immediately.

He called me just once that summer to say hi.

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## ABSTRACT

Elementary schools should be adept at assisting students in meeting their mental health need, such as, providing a non-violence approach to conflict resolution; strengthening the students' relationships with their family members and friends; taking responsibility for their education and future; creating a stronger positive image; handling tough times more effectively; and setting and achieving their goals in life. The purpose of this Q methodology was to explore what teacher perspectives are on how to best support student well-being in the elementary school classroom. Specifically, this study examined what factors emerged when faculty in a large urban school district in Northeast Florida were asked to model their perceptions about student well-being via a Q sort. This study serves as a foundation for further research into perceptions from teachers about the how to best support student well-being in elementary schools. Results of this study may affect positive social change by leading to increased mental health services in elementary schools.

*Keywords: Well-Being, Mental Health, PTSD, EBD, DSM-V, IDEIA*

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### Chapter 1: Introduction

Research on the importance of complete mental health has led to increased focus on students' well-being (Wingate, Suldo, & Peterson, 2018). When students learn about mental health as an important aspect of overall health and well-being, the likelihood increases that they would be able to effectively recognize signs and symptoms related to mental health issues in themselves and others and will know where to turn for help (New York State Mental Health Literacy in Schools, 2018, p. 4). Tragically there were too many workplace and school shootings in 2018. The conversation shifted from gun control to what schools can do to help students with mental health issues. Society finds out too late that these students were bullied and ostracized in their own school settings. Research found supporting student well-being as a way of instructional climate and mental health education under the same heading (American School Counselors Association (ASCA), 2018; Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2018; Kaplan, Tarvydas, & Gladding, 2014; National Association of Mental Illness (NAMI), 2018; New York State Education Department (NYSED), 2018; Tuttle, Yordy, Appling, & Hanley, 2018; Wingate, Suldo, & Peterson, 2018; World Health Organization (WHO), 1948).

More than 50% of all students taught have experienced at least one adverse childhood event (ACE). The ten types of childhood adversity are “physical, sexual, and verbal abuse; physical and emotional neglect; a parent who has an addiction or diagnosed with a mental illness; witnessing a mother who experiences abuse; losing a parent to abandonment or divorce;



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or a family member in jail (Gagnon). Access to mental health services was critical for the community, before behaviors can manifest into violence, through school counseling programs. (Porosoff, 2018). Mental health programs that generate large improvements in student behavior through expanded elementary counselor programs potentially improved student learning during both the early and later grades (Reback, 2010). Establishing healthy behaviors during childhood was easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood.

Schools played a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and in helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns (CDC, 2015). Research showed a link between the health outcomes of young people and their academic success. A wrap-around approach involving all stakeholders working together had also shown the most benefit for students (CDC, 2015). The educational institution was the most common place to service children for mental health services, including both mental illness prevention and mental wellness promotion programs were delivered (Cook et al, 2015). Teacher perspectives were important in how best to support children's well-being in schools.

The education, public health, and school health sectors have each called for greater alignment, integration, and collaboration between education and health to improve each child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development (CDC, 2015). Public health and education served the same children, often in the same settings. The Whole School, Community, Child (WSCC) focused on the child to align the common goals of both sectors. The expanded model integrated the eight components of a coordinated school health (CSH) program with the tenets of a whole child approach to education (CDC, 2015) (Appendix A).

### **Definition of Well-Being**

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For this paper, well-being is defined as an umbrella term that covers the balance of one's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual states (Soleil, 2019). Hettler (1979) adds a sixth state of occupational.

There are synonyms used throughout the research: well-being, mental health, social-emotional learning, and mindfulness.

### ***WHO***

The World Health Organization (WHO) (2019) defines “good mental health as related to mental and psychological well-being” (“Humanitarian Health Action”). The WHO (2019) further defines well-being as a “state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO, para.1) “Defining” mental well-being. There is no universally accepted “definition” of mental well-being. This is probably because mental well-being may have different connotations for different individuals, groups, and cultures. For some, it may be the notion of happiness or contentment. For others it may be the absence of disease” (WHO, 2019).

### ***CDC***

“Well-being integrates mental health (mind) and physical health (body) resulting in more holistic approaches to disease prevention and health promotion” (CDC, 2019) (Appendix B).

Well-being is a positive outcome that is meaningful for people and for many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well. Good living conditions (e.g., housing, employment) are fundamental to well-being. However, many indicators that measure living conditions fail to measure what people think and feel about their lives, such as the quality of their relationships, their positive emotions and resilience, the realization of their potential, or their overall satisfaction with life—i.e., their “well-being.” Well-being generally includes global judgments of life satisfaction and feelings ranging from depression to joy (CDC, 2019).

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### *CASEL*

“Mental health and well-being are foundational to social and emotional adjustment and competence. Trauma and other adverse childhood experiences (ACES) can negatively affect mental health as well as academic, social, and emotional development” (CASEL, 2019).

### *Crisp*

Well-being is most used in philosophy to describe what is non-instrumentally or ultimately good *for* a person. The question of what well-being consists in is of independent interest, but it is of great importance in moral philosophy, especially in the case of utilitarianism, according to which the only moral requirement is that well-being be maximized (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017, para. 1).

### *Campbell*

In Fletcher’s (2016), *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Well-Being*, Kagan (1993), Scanlon (1998), and Campbell (2016) “challenge the presumption that there is a single concept or property of well-being under discussion in the philosophical literature” (p. 402).

### **Current Practices that Support Student Well-Being**

There was more research on what student well-being or mental health looked like in adults and adolescents, however it has become a new topic for elementary school age children especially in the last 10-15 years given the increases in school shootings; the effects of the 9/11 attack and increase in physical and sexual abuse reports (Ray, 2014). Identification, assessment, and treatment must be developmentally appropriate to aid these youth (Ray, 2014). Child protection services in the U.S. received around three million reports each year (Ray, 2014). Ray’s (2014) research showed that this involves 5.5 million children. Of the reported cases, there was proof of abuse in about 30%. From these cases, it was determined that these different types

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of abuse occur: 65% neglect; 18% physical abuse; 10% sexual abuse; and 7% psychological (mental) abuse. Also, three to ten million children witnessed family violence each year. Around 40% to 60% of those cases involved child physical abuse. (Note: It is thought that two-thirds of child abuse cases were not reported.) Ray's (2014) studies showed that about 15% to 43% of girls and 14% to 43% of boys go through at least one trauma. Of those children and teens who had a trauma, 3% to 15% of girls and 1% to 6% of boys developed PTSD. Rates of PTSD, a type of trauma affecting mental health, are higher for certain types of trauma survivors (Ray, 2014). Elementary schools should be adept at assisting students in meeting their mental health need, such as, providing a non-violence approach to conflict resolution; strengthening the students' relationships with their family members and friends; taking responsibility for their education and future; creating a stronger positive image; handling tough times more effectively; and setting and achieving their goals in life.

Teachers developed a constructive response to their own affective needs and therefore equipped students to model after them (Wormelli, 2015). These responses supported making mindfulness and practice daily habits. Wormelli (2015) further stated that teachers who do not address the emotional elements of teaching and learning may become exhausted from endless confrontations with students' emotional states, where teachers blamed their own stress on students and their lack of motivation or maturity.

Fox (2011) suggested that meaningful relationships create meaningful lives, yet schools do not spend the time teaching students how to form relationships. Teachers were only called in if students were having a problem. Students socialized in the hallways, playground, cafeteria, and many other places and figured out how to choose friends, listen, give, and take, and forgive

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and accept. These relationship skills formed in elementary schools are often tied to workplace failures due to failed relationships rather than skills necessary for the job (Fox, 2011).

### **Models of Well-Being Programs**

Children with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that are being staffed Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD) are underserved in this setting, where the population is predominantly students with behavioral issues. Students with emotional issues and those with behavioral issues frequently manifested the same behaviors yet needed to be served and accommodated in different manners. Many school districts do not have the human or financial resources, trainings and/or support to offer mental health services or programs to their populations. According to Erbentraut (2015), there is a direct connection between students' attendance and the violence that they experienced outside of school. There are very few schools in the nation equipped to help the students; and schools may be the very best setting to help students. Erbentraut's report (2015) also cited an on-going study administered by the Los Angeles Unified School District of 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Los Angeles that over 50% have experienced five and eight traumatic events in their lifetimes.

Before a student is assessed for special education eligibility under the IDEIA category of emotional disturbance, screening techniques and pre-referral interventions are needed. Educators referred to mental disorders using different "umbrella" terms such as emotional disturbance, behavioral disorders, or mental illness. Beneath these umbrella terms, there was a wide range of specific conditions that differ from one another in their characteristics and treatment. These included (but are not limited to): anxiety disorders; bipolar disorder (sometimes called manic depression); conduct disorders; eating disorders; obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD); and psychotic disorders (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2008).

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The Individual Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEIA) defined emotional disturbance as follows: as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time, as well as, adversely affects a child's educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Depending on the specific mental disorder involved, a person's physical, social, or cognitive skills may also be affected. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) defined mental illness as medical conditions that disrupted a person's thinking, feeling and, and mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have an emotional disturbance include hyperactivity; acting out or fighting; withdrawal; immaturity; and learning difficulties (NAMI, 2015).

School counselors and school nurses strived to support the well-being of students in K-12 school settings. Both professionals often overlapped and interacted with the same students prompting the need for effective collaboration. A collaborative model to assist school counselors and school nurses in forming a partnership to support students in K-12 school settings in attaining positive mental and physical health, would thereby increase overall school success (Tuttle, Yordy, Appling, & Hanley, 2018).

### ***Trauma Sensitive Schools***

There was a tremendous need for supporting student well-being or mental health services in elementary schools. Conversation has led to the implementation of trauma-sensitive schools.

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These can vary from trauma-sensitive environments as is the case in Massachusetts or increased mental health services at district schools. Professional literature has not stayed current with different levels of implementation. Elementary schools have shifted and implemented trauma-sensitive schools in many communities as they have seen the need of trauma-sensitive programs (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). Creating trauma-sensitive environments in schools was the goal. The significance of trauma was that educators may not be aware that a student was learning or responding under a trauma response. Behaviors, learning patterns or social skills may be misinterpreted or mislabeled. Traumatized children were vulnerable, and teachers were the critical link to intervention with sensitivity and awareness (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). Best practices created an environment where students learned in a safe and positive environment (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). Trauma sensitive practice was a must for every educator's toolkit. Trauma had profound effects on a child's ability to participate and process the regular school day. Educators have had an opportunity to intervene and advocate on behalf of their students with trauma sensitive practice and awareness (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2007). According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (2007) there were

common elements that trauma sensitive schools should have:

- Comprehensive professional development for teachers and other staff
- A team of school/district personnel to assess individual student cases
- Expanded counseling services
- Referrals to outside support services
- Parent and family workshops on the effects of trauma
- Conflict resolution training for both teachers and students

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- Consultation with local hospitals, mental health facilities, women's shelters, and other community-based organizations
- School/district administrative support for establishing a trauma sensitive environment
- Academic instruction techniques for teaching traumatized students
- Development or revision of school policies to be more trauma sensitive (p. 1)

Desrochers (2015) reported that a successful program had invested a lot of money in its people and not in programs. The Westport School District, a school district with a successful school-wide student well-being or mental health program, then provided systemic, sustained professional development for everyone. The school district prioritized its spending so that it would meet professional standards in staffing levels for all mental health personnel, as well as staff each elementary school with two school psychologists. Research showed that schools with whole-school student well-being programs have average achievement test scores 11% higher than the ones that do not provide these programs (Desrochers, 2015). Desrochers (2015) further suggested a comprehensive mental health service model include a multi-tiered system of supports that include: a solid base of school-wide services; targeting a small group of at-risk students; and providing intensive services for students with the greatest need.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Research found the supporting of student well-being for students who are in elementary school are only a handful in number. Fewer studies seek to understand the way elementary teachers supported well-being in their classrooms. This study attempted to fill the research void



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about the ways that elementary teachers best supported student well-being in elementary classrooms.

### **Research Question**

What are teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms?

### **Significance of the Study**

Currently there are very few trauma sensitive schools and there is a tremendous need for the support of student well-being in elementary schools. Few schools identified themselves as trauma sensitive. There was a gap in research on the topic of student well-being and how teachers best supported it in the classroom. The current study aimed to examine and identify successful strategies for the classroom that teachers can do to support all students. This can help inform teacher practices and the need of supporting student well-being.

In this study, teachers were asked about on their perceptions on how they best support student well-being in elementary classrooms. The goal of this research was to address the gap created between the research and practice, as there were so few student well-being or mental health programs functioning in elementary schools.

### **Introduction of Q Methodology**

The current study used Q methodology to explore elementary teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms. Q methodology is a research method that offers a different “attitude” in the process of seeking answers through discoveries rather than experimental tests (Brown, 1980, 1993, 2002, 2006; Stephenson, 1953, 1967, 1977; Watts & Stenner, 2005, 2012). According to Stephenson (1967), Q methodology used participants as variables and allowed these persons to assign their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs

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about a research topic as they ranked the statements during the Q sort process. Therefore, human subjectivity was the focus of Q methodology. The Q methodology in this study was designed to identify perceptions of teachers on how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms. Q methodology is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

### **Summary and Organization of the Study**

This chapter began with an introduction describing the need for supporting student well-being in elementary schools. Next, this chapter included a statement of purpose for answering the research question. Also included in this chapter was the rationale for using the Q methodology to explore the perceptions that elementary school teachers have in supporting student well-being in elementary schools. Lastly, Chapter 1 concluded with a summary and organization of the study. The future chapters will include a review of relevant literature (Chapter 2), an overview of Q methodology and the research design (Chapter 3), an analysis of the data and interpretation of the study's results (Chapter 4), and implications and discussion of the results for future studies (Chapter 5).

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

Given the increases in school shootings; the effects of the 9/11 attack and increase in physical and sexual abuse reports (Ray, 2014). There was more research on what mental health looks like in adults and adolescents, however it has become a new topic on elementary school age children especially in the last 10-15 years. This is not to dismiss other types of trauma that affect a student's well-being.

### **Trauma**

Trauma is defined as an anxiety disorder that develops because of an event which causes psychological trauma in response to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violation (APA, 2013). One must directly experience the event, witness the event in person, learn of an actual or threatened death of a close family member or friend, or repeated first-hand, extreme exposure to the details of the event (APA, 2013). Traumas experienced may involve war, natural disasters, car accidents, sexual abuse and/or domestic violence (APA, 2013). A formal diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Table 1) is made when the symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social and/or occupational dysfunction for a period of at least one month.

The symptoms cannot be due to a medical condition, medication, or drugs or alcohol. Identification, assessment, and treatment must be developmentally appropriate to aid these youth

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(Ray, 2014). Child protection services in the U.S. received around three million reports each year (Ray, 2014). Ray's (2014) research showed that this involves 5.5 million children. Ray's (2014) studies showed that about 15% to 43% of girls and 14% to 43% of boys go through at least one trauma. Of those children and teens who have had a trauma, 3% to 15% of girls and 1% to 6% of boys developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a common mental health issue or having a direct impact on student well-being. Rates of PTSD are higher for certain types of trauma survivors (Ray, 2014). According to Erbentraut (2015), there is a direct connection between students' attendance and the violence that they experienced outside of school; there are few schools in the nation equipped to help the students; and schools may be the best setting to help students. Erbentraut's report (2015) also cited an on-going study administered by the Los Angeles Unified School District of 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Los Angeles that over 50% have experienced five and eight traumatic events in their lifetimes.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), trauma affected school performance. Goodman et al. (2011) found lower scores on standardized achievement tests. Delaney-Black et al. (2002) found substantial decrements in IQ, reading and language achievement, as well as students that were more likely to have had struggles in receptive and expressive language. Students who experienced trauma, were two and half times more likely to be retained, as well as, suspended more often (Grevstad, 2007; Sanger et al., 2000; and Shonk et al., 2001). Trauma had been found to adversely affect one's ability to organize narrative material, understand cause and effect, affects the ability to see multiple perspectives, attend to classroom instruction, regulate one's emotions, engage in the curriculum, and utilize executive functions, such as, making plans, attending to one's work, and following classroom rules (Grevstad, 2007; Sanger et al., 2000; and Shonk et al., 2001). Promoting student well-being as a way of

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instructional climate was what the researcher was advocating for; not a mental health course – as a fix-all or a one-time event. Teachers that are trained to see signs or symptoms. All school staff promoting student wellness. Teachers checking in with kids with failing grades or a marked change in grades. Checking in with a kid that had experienced loss. Finding outlets for kids that experience abuse and avenues for talk. Making sure that every child had a mentor, someone to talk to, even if it is not you. Teachers expressing that you are there for them, the kids, and not for the tests. Teachers noting the kid that wore the same clothes every day. Administration that pushed their school counselors to be in the classrooms, in the lunchroom and visible to the students. Making sure that the community service events your school was hosting, also targeted those students in your school. Making sure that the classroom was a safe space. Teaching compassion to the students to help, to befriend their peers. This is not a character education program that recognized the one perfect angel each month; teachers were teaching character education lessons and alternatives to their negative counterparts. Teachers find ways in their classrooms to relieve pressures students may be feeling and taught/practiced meditation and yoga. Teachers varying classroom instruction by chunking the lesson and providing brain breaks. Knowing that the kid that showed up late every morning and missed the free breakfast, had something to eat in your classroom because their last meal was the school lunch the previous day. Celebrating student successes verbally, in print and for all to see. All of this had to be part of the school culture.

The wraparound approach is multi-disciplinary in that it made extensive use of agencies outside the school program and included services for not only the student but the family as well (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003). The data from Child Protective Services (CPS) in 2011 documented that more than 6.2 million referrals involved children with about 19% substantiated referrals and

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more than 75% suffered neglect; more than 15% suffered physical abuse; less than 10% suffered sexual abuse; 8% experienced sexual assault; 22% experienced physical assault and 39% witnessed violence (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003) and the percentages increased for adolescents and other studies showed that 15% - 43% of girls and 14% to 43% of boys have experienced one traumatic event (Ray, 2014). These numbers suggested that complacency should be eliminated. Also, three to ten million children witnessed family violence each year. Around 40% to 60% of those cases involved child physical abuse. Unfortunately, the data did not show a decline in the number of events children witness and/or are inflicted upon them (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003), which further underlined the urgency in the need for effective treatment within the school setting. Wegmann (2010) reported that some events caused trauma in children. Children and teens could have trauma if they have lived through an event that could have caused them or someone else to be killed or badly hurt, such events include sexual or physical abuse or other violent crimes, disasters such as floods, school shootings, car crashes, or fires; war, a friend's suicide, or seeing violence in the area they live.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) (2017) found that child abuse and neglect and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) caused toxic stress that can disrupt early brain development and harm the nervous and immune systems. The Children Defense Fund (CDF) (2014) reported that every 47 seconds a child was abused or neglected; 5 children or teenagers committed suicide every day in the U.S.; and child maltreatment occurred in families of all socio-economic backgrounds, especially when parents faced challenges such as substance abuse, untreated mental health problems, and domestic violence without access to the services and treatments necessary. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2015) reported that of children living in the U.S., 13-20% experienced a mental

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illness each year and the prevalence of these conditions was increasing. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5<sup>th</sup> edition (DSM5), (APA, 2013, “Definition of a Mental Disorder, para. 2) the definition of mental illness is “clinically significant behavioral or psychological or biological syndromes that are associated with present distress, disability, or significant impairment in important areas of functioning”, requires a referral for treatment, must be sensitive to demographic information, and should not be used by law enforcement as legal definitions (APA, 2013). The National Institute of Health (NIH) (2015) reported that suicide is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for 15-24 year old’s and the third leading cause of death for children ages 10-14. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (2008) reported that trauma can impact school performance through lower grade point averages (GPA); higher rate of school absences; increased drop-out rates; increased suspensions and expulsions; and decreased reading abilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that around 20% of the world’s children and adolescents have mental disorders or problems (2010).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) defined emotional disturbance as follows: as a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affected a child’s educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. Depending on the specific mental disorder involved, a person’s physical, social, or cognitive skills may also be affected. NAMI defined mental illness as medical conditions that disrupt a

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person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have an emotional disturbance included: hyperactivity; acting out or fighting; withdrawal; immaturity; and learning difficulties (NAMI, 2015).

### **Awareness of Issue**

Schools were the obvious choice to identify students who needed additional support (Campus Safety, 2017). Professional development and early identification aided in having teachers aware of signs and availability of supports (Campus Safety, 2017; Hodas, 2006; Lehr & McComas (2005). Teachers played a critical role in identifying children, referring children, and assisting in the implementation of school-wide programs that served and provided services that support student well-being (Wegmann, Powers, & Blackman, 2013). Loades and Mastoyannopoulou (2009) completed a study where they found that teachers were successful in recognizing whether a child had an issue or not, however, "their problem recognition was affected by both the gender of the child and the type of symptomatology being displayed (emotional versus behavioral)" (p. 150). Rothi, Leavey and Best (2008) found that teachers are expected to be responsible in the early identification of children's mental health issues and to refer them for support (Sisask et al., 2014).

### **Early identification**

Children prone to violence can be identified early. Studies suggested 6-9% of children accounted for more than 50% of discipline referrals and nearly all serious offenses. Early discipline problems were predictive of later adjustment problems (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Early identification was the key to the support and treatment of children with mental health issues. Children of this age might also show signs of



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trauma in their play. They might keep repeating a part of the trauma. These games do not make their worry and distress go away. For example, a child might always want to play shooting games after he sees a school shooting. Children may also fit parts of the trauma into their daily lives. For example, a child might carry a gun to school after seeing a school shooting (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015). With students spending the bulk of the day in schools, it was imperative that schools provide the necessary programmatic supports. NAMI's research supported not only the identification and treatment of mental health conditions within school, but the importance that school personnel played in linking students to effective services and supports (2018).

Wegmann (2010) reported that the three risk factors for PTSD are based on. These factors included were how severe the trauma was; how the parents reacted to the trauma; and how close or far away the child was from the trauma. Besides PTSD, children and teens that have gone through trauma often have other types of problems. Wegmann (2010) further reported that much of what we know about the effects of trauma on children came from the research on child sexual abuse. This research showed that sexually abused children often have problems with fear, worry, sadness, anger, feeling alone and apart from others, feeling as if people are looking down on them, low self-worth, and not being able to trust others, as well as behaviors such as aggression, out-of-place sexual behavior, self-harm, and abuse of drugs or alcohol. Further research was needed in how some school districts utilized (DSM-V) to diagnose PTSD and why some school districts did not.

Collaboration among members of the multidisciplinary team, including parents, helped to ensure that identification and intervention efforts have ecological validity. Tests and techniques vary considerably, but developmental histories, interviews, observations across

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settings, and behavioral checklists and rating scales are recommended, along with cognitive and achievement testing (Plotts, 2012). Psychological reports performed privately do a more effective job of screening within the social history and then administered a wide range of tests including many from DSM-V (2013) to arrive at a diagnosis. If professionals were aware that children may develop PTSD, then appropriate screenings and referrals would be triggered (Cohen & Scheeringa, 2009; Scheeringa, Zeanah & Cohen, 2010). This process was how the school would then be able to establish what protocols and/or treatments were necessary for a child with a PTSD diagnosis. Under a blended model approach, educators looked at how to help students be successful in the school setting pulling and/or duplicating many of the resources historically allocated to secondary schools to elementary schools. Historical perspectives from two centuries ago regarding emotional and behavioral issues, referred to these individuals as “possessed”, “insane” or “retarded”, needing institutionalization. In the 1800’s, a shift came with a greater awareness of genetic factors, a medical focus, special ungraded classes, and little attention to individual needs. Post WWII, we saw a greater awareness of the power of ecological and social factors, a shift in responsibility for children with exceptionalities, from medical/mental health communities to educators (NAMI, 2015). Wegmann et al. (2013) research found that collaboration between the caregiver and the teacher increased the chances of “service sustainability and maintenance in school-based mental health initiatives” (p. 298).

A survey designed by Athena Health, a health insurance company, reported in October 2013 that 8.1% of U.S. children’s visits to a pediatrician in 2010 resulted in a mental health diagnosis; 10.5% of U.S. children’s visits to a pediatrician in 2013 resulted in a mental health diagnosis. In the same survey 14.1% of boys’ visits to a pediatrician resulted in a mental health

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diagnosis in 2013; 8.2% of girls' visits to a pediatrician resulted in a mental health diagnosis in 2013. Mental health diagnoses for children were increasing (athena.net, 2013).

Establishing healthy behaviors during childhood was easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools played a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and in helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns (CDC, 2015). Research showed a link between the health outcomes of young people and their academic success. To have the most positive impact on the health outcomes of young people, government agencies, community organizations, schools, and other community members must work together through a collaborative and comprehensive approach (CDC, 2015).

### **Triggers or Manifestations**

School personnel needed to understand how triggers and manifestations affect the school day and the implications for instruction. Webb (2015) identified triggers as loss of control, threats or feelings of being threatened or attacked, observing threats or assaults, isolation, interacting with authority figures, lack of information, being told what to do, lack of privacy, removal of clothing (as in medical exams), being touched, being watched, hearing loud noises, being in darkness, being asked intrusive or personal questions, being locked in a room, being ignored, receiving condescending looks, sensory experiences, separation or loss, transitions and disruptions in routine, feelings of vulnerability and rejection, and sensory overload or phobia. A trigger can be a person, place, thing, event, time, date, smell, or texture.

Fight or flight, one response children exhibit, can create havoc for an elementary school not knowing how to deal with triggers or manifestations. Triggers interfere with a student's learning. Triggers involve how the body functions, which then releases hormones, and the student is faced with whether to fight or flight. According to Babits (2011), symptoms of fight or

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flight manifested for elementary school children experiencing mental health issues in a setting where the students spend the majority of the day and affected how they engage in and what interfered with their learning (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003). The adrenal system releases and floods the body with adrenaline and stress hormones. Nonessential physiological processes shut down, such as, digestion stops, the skin chills, and blood is diverted to the muscles, in preparation for a burst of action. Also, breathing quickens, the heart races and blood pressure skyrockets, filling the body with oxygen while the liver releases glucose for quick fuel. The entire body is suddenly in a state of high alert, ready for fight or flight (Babits, 2011; Nemours Foundation, n.d.).

Children also exhibited their triggers through play, drawings and/or verbalizations of trauma reenactment (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003). Developmentally school-age children have fewer coping mechanisms to deal with the trauma-related event and need to be taught strategies to cope, calm down and relax. Other factors can also affect trauma. The more traumas a child goes through, the higher the risk of getting PTSD. Girls were more likely than boys to get PTSD. It was not clear whether a child's ethnic group may affect PTSD. Some research (Desrochers, 2015) showed that minorities have higher levels of trauma symptoms. Other research (Desrochers, 2015) suggested this may be because minorities may go through more traumas. Another question is whether a child's age at the time of the trauma influenced PTSD. Researchers thought it may not be that the effects of trauma differ according to the child's age (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Rather, it may be that trauma looks different in children of different ages (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). The prevalence of culturally and linguistically diverse children who are identified as having social or emotional disturbances typically have conflict with those in authority and of the child's culture (honesty vs. loyalty, for example). Exceptional children may be overrepresented among

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those who used drugs and alcohol and tended to have a predisposition to substance abuse, due to factors such as prescribed medication, social isolation, depression, family issues, etc.

(Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015). Trauma does not discriminate.

School-aged children exhibited trauma symptoms in different ways. These children may not have flashbacks or problems remembering parts of the trauma, the way adults with PTSD often do. Externalizing disorders are characterized by aggression and “acting out”. Externalizing disorders are mental disorders characterized by external behaviors directed toward an individual's environment, which causes a disruption in a person’s life (APA, 2013). In contrast to individuals with internalizing disorders who internalize their emotions and cognitions, whereas such feelings and thoughts are externalized in behavior in those with externalizing disorders (2013). Externalizing disorders are often specifically referred to as disruptive behavior disorders or conduct problems which occur in childhood (2013). Examples of externalizing disorders include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Conduct Disorder (CD), and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) (2013). Family risk factors included: family violence, including child abuse and violence against children. Many believe a child’s atypical behavior may cause parents to act in a way that is inappropriate, causing a downward spiral (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015). They also exhibited learned helplessness, which is the belief that nothing they do can stop bad things from happening. Learned helplessness may result in severe deterioration in performance after failure; pessimism about self and abilities; and suicide. Strong feelings of hopelessness can be a predominant reason for children to think about or attempt suicide and may require explicit instruction in positive coping skills and building a sense of self-control (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015).

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According to NAMI, mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion, or income (2015). Mental illnesses were not the result of personal weakness, lack of character, or poor upbringing. Mental illnesses were treatable. Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness experienced relief from their symptoms by actively participating in an individual treatment plan. Positive Behavioral Supports and Response to Intervention models provided empirically supported frameworks for establishing the need for formal psychological assessment. Children, though, might put the events of the trauma in the wrong order. They might also think there were signs that the trauma was going to happen. As a result, they think that they will see these signs again before another trauma happens. They think that if they pay attention, they can avoid future traumas. Students with trauma typically exhibit the following common characteristics: anxious; withdrawn; and fearful. Children who suffer from internalizing disorders, are usually not disruptive, have problems with excessive internal control as aggression is turned inward rather than outward, and may be rigid and unable to be spontaneous (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015). Students diagnosed with an emotional and behavioral disorder (EBD), whether exhibiting external or internal aggression, has an impact on all aspects of information processing. Anxiety and stress can influence all processing mechanisms. A team approach is required to provide appropriate supports to address externalizing or internalizing disorders and build self-confidence (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtshaffen, 2015). There are many risk factors for children with trauma and different manifestations of their behaviors.

### **Role of Exceptional Student Services in Mental Health Services**

The federal definition of Emotional & Behavioral Disorders (EBD) (NAMI, 2015): is a condition which not only does it exist over a long period of time but affects the educational

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performance and process of the student. The lack of performance and process cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; difficulty forming relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate behaviors in a normal setting; an overall sense of unhappiness or depression; and a manifestation of physical problems or irrational fears related to school (2015). What separated children with EBD from their average peers was the intensity of their behavior and the long-lasting nature of their behavior. According to NAMI (2015), there are other problems with the federal definition, in that, it placed all responsibility on the child, none on the environment, necessitating changes to the child and not the environment (2015). The term “behavior disorder” implied the child was causing trouble for someone else (2015). Diagnostic issues included the use of subjective judgments, often left to local personnel; a lack of a clear line separating severe from mild emotional and behavior disorders; over-diagnosis and over-treatment of certain disorders, such as, Bipolar Disorder, Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (2015). This research suggested that too often the emotional aspect of EBD was overlooked and undertreated (2015).

While one might think EBD students acted out as a reaction to failure in school, in EBD children aggressive behavior was typically observable before they enter school (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Violence was prevalent in schools, though typically to a lesser degree than in the community at large. Children prone to violence can be identified early. Studies suggested 6-9% of children accounted for more than 50% of discipline referrals and nearly all serious offenses (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Early discipline problems were predictive of later adjustment problems (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Early identification was the key to the support and treatment of children with mental health issues. Elementary school students who have been

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identified with mental health issues using the DSM-V, required mental health services instead of staffing into an EBD classroom (APA, 2013). The inclusion of exceptional student education (ESE) statistics was important because students with PTSD are often placed in EBD classrooms, as are students with behavioral disorders. According to the Florida Department of Education (2019), ESE is defined as students from the age of 3-21 with disabilities and/or gifted.

Providing a mental health service that was integral to a student's education was mandated to be provided in schools (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2017). Students with emotional needs may need a high teacher to student ratio; specialized teacher training; availability of psychiatrists and/or psychologists; and Individualized Education Plan (IEP)s that included detailed management plans. ESE eligibility does not determine the location of services delivered – a general education or self-contained classroom – they only determined the label of need. IEPs determined the location of services – the least restrictive environment for the student to receive services (2017). The problem became that the students who have emotional needs are placed in the same programs as those with behavioral needs. Different needs required different solutions.

Information from the *Twenty-fourth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) indicated that states served 5,775,722 students ages 6 through 21 under IDEA in 2000-2001. Nearly 474,000, or about 18%, of those students were identified as students with EBD (2002). This was less than 1% of the entire student population in 2000-2001. The *Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health* (U.S. Public Health Service, 2000) proposed the actual number of students with EBD was much higher. This suggested that many of the children and youth who could qualify for service under IDEA may not be identified and may not



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receive adequate supports to assist them with emotional and behavioral challenges they faced both in and out of school settings (2000).

On the other hand, researchers found that children and youth who are African American were disproportionately over-identified as having EBD (Losen & Orfield, 2002). Many concerns have been expressed about minority children being misplaced in special education, especially in certain disability categories (2002). Researchers have determined the level of risk for various subgroups associated with being identified as having EBD (2002). Using data from the U.S. Department of Education, analyses suggested that Black children are 2.88 times more likely than White children to be labeled as having mental retardation and 1.92 times more likely to be labeled as having an emotional/behavioral disorder (2002). Although students with disabilities were entitled to receive supports and services tied to their individual needs, the concern is that too often minority students are educated in separate settings, subject to lower expectations, and excluded from educational opportunities (Lehr C. & McComas, J., 2005). While minority populations were often at greater risk of living in poverty, many individuals argued that the effect of poverty does not adequately explain the racial disparities in identification of EBD (2005). Research suggested that unconscious racial bias, stereotypes, inequitable implementation of discipline policies, and practices that are not culturally responsive may contribute to the observed patterns of identification and placement for many minority students (2005). Lehr and McComas (2005) also found that EBD students are more likely to live in conditions of poverty, have a head of household with an education no higher than high school, and live with a single parent. Over 40% had attended five or more schools since kindergarten.

Students diagnosed as EBD, may be placed in a self-contained behavioral support system, and not receive the emotional support that they need (APA, 2013). Elementary school students

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who have been identified with PTSD using the DSM-V require mental health services instead of staffing into an EBD classroom (2013). The educational model needs to be modified to include the medical model to identify children more accurately with PTSD (2013). During the screening process embedded in the educational model, if a child's social history indicates exposure to incidents that have led to a potential diagnosis of PTSD, DSM-V would be the more appropriate direction to take as opposed to the educational tests that would lead to a diagnosis of EBD (2013). Children with PTSD who are being staffed EBD are underserved in this setting, where the population is predominantly students with behavioral issues (2013). Students with emotional issues and those with behavioral issues frequently manifested the same behaviors yet needed to be served and accommodated in different manners (2013). Many school districts do not have the human or financial resources, trainings and/or support to offer PTSD programs to their populations.

Maag and Katsiyannis (2008) found that current methods of eligibility identification for students with EBD were criticized as being invalid and resulting in over-identification. In the case of EBD, the recommendation was to use the medical model for making eligibility decisions (i.e., diagnosis by a physician). Maag and Katsiyannis' (2008) research found that while federal law sets the general parameters for identification in school settings, these criteria were vague and may lead to inconsistencies in selection and interpretation of assessment measures. Assessment practice across school settings was greatly influenced by clinical guidelines such as the DSM-V, which more specifically defines EBD and highlights the issue of co-morbidity (2008). Before a student was assessed for special education eligibility under the IDEIA category of emotional disturbance, screening techniques and pre-referrals (2008). Beneath these umbrella terms, there was actually a wide range of specific conditions that differ from one another in their

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characteristics and treatment. These included (but are not limited to): anxiety disorders; bipolar disorder (sometimes called manic depression); conduct disorders; eating disorders; obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD); and psychotic disorders (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2008).

Part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization of 2004 included the Response to Intervention (RtI) approach to improving student outcomes through evidence-based interventions (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2008). The eligibility process was embedded in the legislation. Prior to this legislation, students were eligible for an exceptionality if indicated from the psychological or had notes from a medical professional (2008). Because students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) and Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD) were over identified and the methods for determining eligibility were thought to be invalid, a medical model were moved and the RtI model replaced it (2008). The issue was not with the determination of eligibility, but with the placement of students with emotional issues in a one-size-fits-all self-contained EBD classroom with students with primarily behavioral issues (2008). Eligibility does not determine setting.

The WHO (2001) saw the emphasis moving away from a medical model, where mental health was the absence of mental illness. Some feel that doctors should not be part of the diagnosis part of the emotional and behavioral needs of students. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2004) recommended a collaborative effort between schools and doctors that would have a positive influence on the mental health of their patients. Brock and Brant (2015) recommended the need to broaden access to mental health supports beyond special education. This allowed access to services for students who did not meet the criteria of having a disability. Brock and Brant (2015) also recommended increased collaboration between schools and community to provide integrated and coordinated mental health care.

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Many students who were recommended for ESE due to behavioral or emotional problems may, in fact, be suffering from PTSD as the root cause (Ray, 2014; Scheeringa & Zeanah, 2008; Scheeringa, Zeanah, Myers & Putnam, 2003). Speaking with several school psychologists regarding the current practice of following an educational model in districts, Tucker (2007) cited an unfortunate finding in many other districts as well. The educational model, where the focus was on educational difficulties, does not do an effective job in the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to discern whether based on a student's social history the child would meet PTSD criteria or Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD) criteria. The MDT was made up of the classroom teacher(s), admissions representative for the ESE program, the school psychologist (assigned to multiple schools), the school counselor, and parent(s). The MDT determined if a referral was needed and the next steps. The level of educational need would drive the placement and services, just like any other disability.

### **Classroom Teachers' Practices**

There were reactive movements which demonstrate how to address mental health crises in the schools and there were proactive movements of how to address mental health for all. Mental health programs were only going to be successful if there was a relationship between the child and the instructor first before any other teaching or modeling was going to take place.

By engaging students in the objectives, students learned and began to trust their teachers (Noddings, 2015). There was a correlation between intellectual caring and interpersonal caring. By engaging in discussions with students, their thoughts and opinions were heard, validated, and expressed. Tomlinson felt that nothing would change until caring and continuity were included in the curriculum. Noddings (2015) reminded us of the neglect of our physical selves. Roehlkepartain et al. (2017) felt that relationships should be relevant across contexts of life,

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operationalize relationships that improved students' outcomes, and helped students be more intentional in forming relationships. Roehlkepartain et al.'s (2017) research found that a developmental relationship must include the 5 following elements: express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities (p. 4).

The following classroom practices could be easily incorporated into the school day and are relatively easy for the teacher to lead.

### *Yoga*

The conclusions found that yoga in schools were beneficial, yet due to poor research methods, the conclusions could not be supported because of poor research methodology. "Findings speak to the need for greater methodological rigor and an increased understanding of the mechanisms of success for school-based yoga interventions" (Serwacki & Cook-Cottone, 2012, p 101). A study two years later found that those students participating in a yoga program demonstrated marked improvements in the areas of anxiety, depression, and global psychological distress (Frank, Bose & Schrobenhauser, 2014).

Mendelson et al. (2010) completed a study on "mindfulness interventions" for urban students reduced involuntary stress responses and improved mental health outcome and social adjustments. Hagen and Nayar (2014) found that yoga helped children deal with stress and self-regulate. Yoga also taught them emotional balance and begin to listen to their bodies, so that they could be contributing members of society.

### *Meditation*

Utilization of meditation techniques and teaching of problem-solving techniques to decompress, deal with emotions and triggers to get the body ready to learn and deal with stressors helped decrease behavioral referrals (Commissioner, 2007; NCTSN, 2008). Self-

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regulation was another tool that would fall under learning how to calm themselves down. Bath (2008) suggested that labeling one's feelings was effective in calming effect. Bath (2008) further suggested that the primary role of teachers needed to be teaching and supporting students how to manage their emotions and impulses Webb (2015) suggested other stress-relieving strategies, such as, breathing, providing self-empathy, positive self-talk, feel your feet on the floor, count to 10, use fidgets, walk or stretch, chew gum, doodle, put lotion on hands and think of a favorite place or person.

### *Relationships*

More research needed to be done in the importance of relationships with students with mental health issues. This role was critical in establishing trust and rapport with not only the students, but the rest of the school community and other stakeholders. Psychological first aid touched on the area but really was key in repairing emotional damage. Relationships are a way of supporting others when coping with stress (Hodas, 2006; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015). Relationships can offset feelings of being alone, help the survivor's self-esteem, and reduce depression and guilt. A child's main attachment helped one learn to control one's emotions and thoughts. Plotts' (2012) research showed that when a caregiver's responses were in tune with a child's needs, the child felt secure. The child then used this relationship pattern as practice to build coping skills. On the other hand, a child who gets confusing or inconsistent responses from the caregiver might be fussy, have a hard time calming down, withdraw from others, or have tantrums. Through a relationship with their caregiver, children learn how to oversee feelings and behaviors, and how to act with other people. This could lead to better healing for children who go through trauma. Research (Commissioner, 2007; Desrochers, 2015; Skalski & Smith, 2006) recommended that teachers do as much to enable traumatized children to

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stay in general education. The focus was on the relationship between teacher and child, and, also on the effectiveness of teachers becoming part of a wider support team system. According to Bath (2008), the safety pillar depended on the second pillar of relationships or connections between traumatized students and their teachers and/or mentors (p. 19). Asay and Lambert (1999) as cited in Bath (2008) completed research into the healing and growth that positive relationships play in the lives of traumatized children.

### *Attending to basic needs*

Tomlinson (2015) reports that Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Appendix C) has stood the test of time. If the goal of life is self-actualization and if a child's physiological needs are not met there are barriers to learning. Insufficiently addressed physiological, safety, and belonging needs stop the learning process. Trauma affected the learning process through damaging the processing mechanisms. An EBD student whether exhibiting external or internal aggression had an impact on all aspects of information processing. While perceptual abilities may test as normal, how the child perceived stimulus may be altered. Anxiety and stress can influence all processing mechanisms. A team approach is required to provide appropriate supports to address externalizing or internalizing disorders and build self-confidence (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). Children and teens who go through the most severe traumas tend to have the highest levels of PTSD symptoms.

The main premises of trauma-informed care are based on three pillars. These pillars are safety, connections and managing emotional impulses (Bath, 2008). Maslow ranked safety among the primary survival skills and that was based on a sense of being safe (Bath, 2008). Bath (2008) further elaborated that students who have experienced trauma have general feelings of being unsafe – they are adult-wary. Common sense would then lead us to the conclusion that safe

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space is imperative. Bath (2008) referenced Perry (2006) stressed that children can express appropriate power and control over their circumstances where it is developmentally and practically possible.

Maslow is used as the construct of this paper. Some researchers have challenged the use of Maslow in their studies and found adapting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs better suited their construct. Maslow believed that one must pass through the steps in order, and not miss a step (Maslow, 1954). This would pose delays against an individual that might experience a life changing event, such as, losing a job, experience a family emergency or a major relationship break-up.

### *Adapting the Definitions*

One study found that as Maslow only vaguely defined self-actualization. The researcher conducted a study with the purpose of defining self-actualization through creating a list of common characteristics which would increase the number of participants that had attained the level of self-actualization (LeClerc, 1998). LeClerc et. al's (1998) research found that self-actualization is not an end goal, rather a set of basic characteristics of well-functioning individuals in society.

Another researcher found adapting Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs better suited for her construct through the defining of risk and resilience. Individuals experience risk in different ways. Some experience risk with a negative impact and others remain unaffected. Resiliency is seen as how well a individual experiences a trauma or a setback in life. Her study examined how schools can build resiliency among students, who have experienced trauma (Tichy, 2017).

Steele addresses some of the horrific events that have happened in recent history. He does argue for developmentally appropriate strategies be used for young children that include non-



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verbal and sensory-based interventions, while adolescents would require more cognitive approaches (Steele, 2015). Knowing that cognitive approaches are more developmentally appropriate for teenagers and young adults, while sensory-based, nontalking interventions are more appropriate for younger students needs to be part of the knowledge base of all those who may be involved in helping traumatized individuals (APA, 2013).

Benjamin and Looby (1998) add spirituality to the self-actualization stage of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Their research illustrates that the road to self-actualization leads to spiritual wellness, a balance of inner and outer selves.

Research also found that self-actualization is synonymous with theories of morality, spirituality, and utilitarianism, developed an activity chart that guides individuals through life, to reach self-actualization. This activity chart attributes the amount of time one must spend at each level to satisfy each need (D'Souza & Gurin, 2016).

Researchers redefined the Hierarchy of Needs as needs that coexist with one another, despite lower needs not having been met (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith & Huang, 2019). The researchers also amended Maslow's physiologic level to "basic determinants of good health" (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith & Huang, 2019). In their model, (Appendix D), the researchers created an integrated model of wellness framework, which serves as a modern revision of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Hale, Ricotta, Freed, Smith & Huang, 2019).

The school supports all children to feel safe physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. Children's traumatic responses, and the associated difficulties they can face at school, are often rooted in real or perceived threats to their safety that undermine a sense of well-being in fundamental ways. Therefore, the first step in helping students succeed in school is having them feel safe. This includes not only physical safety but also social and emotional

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safety, as well as the sense of academic safety needed in order to take risks to advance one's learning in the classroom (Cole, Greenwald, O'Brien & Gadd, 2005).

### *Psychological first aid*

One strategy to aid students in coping and relaxing was Psychological First Aid. This involved creating a safe environment that provided comfort and support; educated faculty and staff of potential changes in emotions and behavior; taught calming and problem-solving techniques (Hamblen & Barnett, 2003; Ruzek et al., 2007). The Psychological First Aid (PFA) was the most practical and less specialized intervention that does not require a medical doctor or psychiatrist to oversee. According to the Psychological First Aid for Schools Field Operations Guide (2009), PFA was an evidence-informed intervention model to assist students, families, school personnel and school partners in the immediate aftermath of an emergency. Providing PFA in schools was important as schools are typically the first service agencies to resume operations after a disaster or emergency and becomes a place of community support; staff preparedness for emergencies is critical; emergencies affect students' academic and social achievement; trauma related distress can have long term effects; and brief interventions can have positive impacts (Psychological First Aid for Schools Field Guide, 2009). The basic objectives of PFA included being a viable link in promoting resilience, recognizing signs of traumatic stress, and in helping students and families regain a sense of normalcy (Psychological First Aid for Schools Field Guide, 2009).

### *Classroom structure*

Other strategies included having classroom teachers playing an integral role in setting up the safe environment and continuing to create an accepting atmosphere and finding ways to foster academic success. Teachers continued to maintain classroom rituals and routines to create

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the accepting and safe environment to aid the student. The safe environment encompasses one that was free of physical and emotional harm, including bullying (Brown et al., 2006; Kerig, Fedorowicz, Brown & Warren, 2000; Ozkol, Zucker & Spinnazzola, 2011; Ray, 2014). With these strategies in a teacher's toolbox, teachers were more successful in re-acclimating a child with mental health needs to their current environment and providing the assistance that they need.

Teachers aided the building of resilience in students by (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.) making connections; having the student help others; maintaining a daily routine; taking breaks; teaching self-care; practicing goal-setting; nurturing a positive self-view; keeping things in perspective and optimistic; identifying opportunities for self-discovery; and accepting that change is part of our daily routine.

Implications for the physical environment included the context of a warm, nurturing, and protective relationship. Items that support a sense of safety and well-being included overstuffed chairs, pillows, and cozy corners (Sorrels, 2015). The organization of space and the sensory load also affected students' senses. Too many sights, sounds and smells may trigger the fight or flight response in some children (Sorrels, 2015). Overcrowded classrooms were a huge trigger for students. An accidental bump or brush with some students may be perceived as an act of aggression and may trigger more severe behaviors (Sorrels, 2015).

### ***Classroom Instruction***

Chunking of instruction was an educational term that means giving information in manageable loads. A teacher would break down a lecture into sub-sections of information or assign fewer pages of reading or workbook pages for completion. Chunks are manageable units of information that made it easier to remember and reduce the information overload. Research

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showed that “chunking” was critical in enhancing short term memory and the process of transfer from short term memory to long term memory. For chunking to improve comprehension, students were given a statement of purpose, which guided them to look for something specific in the text. To check comprehension, after students read a passage, they were asked to close their books and pretend they were teachers. They asked the questions. After a period, the teacher reversed the roles having the students answer the comprehension questions (Using “Chunking” Strategies to Help Students with Learning Disabilities, *March 4, 2011, Universal Reading, no author*).

### ***Conflict Resolution***

Under many different headings, Positive Behavioral Instructional Supports (PBIS), Safe and Civil Schools, Foundations, Restorative Justice, or Peer Counseling, schools have implemented these programs for years. According to Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, (2013) teachers created a peaceful, caring community within their classroom. It was important to understand that during any conflict, two major concerns come into play—achieving our goals and maintaining an appropriate relationship with the other person. Conflict resolution is important to help students make better choices and contribute positively to the classroom and school.

### ***Safe Space/Time-Outs***

By letting the students cool off in a safe space or time-out, the teacher was helping them immediately get their emotions back under control. The students would no longer be as combative, which means their disagreement would not lead to more arguing and potentially harmful personal attacks. They would also learn that it felt good to just stop and take a breath if they felt themselves getting too overwhelmed and angry. This cooling off period also helped

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students transition into the next conflict resolution strategy: teacher or peer mediated discussion. Calming corners (Hurley, 2017) included calming jars, stability balls, fidgets, tactile toys, stress balls, wiggle cushions, therapy bands and directions for simple yoga poses.

### *Teacher Voice*

A rich literature – both within education circles and in other kinds of labor markets – linked teachers' sense of efficacy and collective responsibility to their teaching effectiveness and improved student achievement (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010). Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder (2010) identified different elements of teacher voice. Teacher self-efficacy is strongly correlated with parental involvement and being a life-long learner (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010). Strong collaboration amongst peers and a voice in creating policies within the school lead to longer teaching careers (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010). Berry, Daughtrey and Wieder (2010) caution that there was little advancement for teachers without leaving the classroom. The drawback was that when promoted to administration, teachers were no longer working with students directly and they lost the classroom perspective, but also the credibility with their peers as instructional leaders (Berry, Daughtrey & Wieder, 2010). Research showed that when teachers are empowered to function as autonomous professionals and leaders, this built a sense of professional confidence and pride that feeds effective teaching practice. In fact, both individual and collective teacher leadership self-efficacy have been linked with successful school improvement and reform efforts, by creating a critical mass of empowered experts within the building (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2010).

### **School Leader Practices**

Elementary school leaders and their teachers should be adept at assisting students in meeting their mental health needs, such as, providing a non-violence approach to conflict

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resolution; strengthening the students' relationships with their family members and friends; taking responsibility for their education and future; creating a stronger positive image; handling tough times more effectively; and setting and achieving their goals in life.

A recent Scottish study, "*Curriculum for Excellence*", found that the environment of the school impacts the well-being of students and their behaviors. The study identified the relationships between existing structures and cultures and the promotion of mental health, specifically regarding the "curriculum, pastoral care, discipline and teacher/student relationships" (Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip & Watson, 2006). The study further found that the tendencies of schools is to patchwork different initiatives onto one another, instead of, providing a more basic review of "values, policies and practices throughout the school" and that oftentimes community health professionals work parallel to school officials in dealing with discipline problems and perhaps would be better reserved to assist in "building new cultures for the benefit of all students" (Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip & Watson, 2006, p. 14). Lehr and McComas (2005) also found that the shift from one of deficits to strengths fosters resilience, enhances competence, and facilitates successful school experiences for students with EBD.

An administrator from Brockton Public Schools, in Massachusetts, was alarmed after reviewing suspension data and determining that a change was needed in better serving students who were failing the system. He called a community-wide meeting where members from every school district, the district attorney's office, local police, departments of children and families, youth services, and mental health and local counseling agencies, where they spent a whole day learning about trauma and learning (Stevens, 2012).

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), the differences of a Trauma Specific Therapy program were that they offered licensed clinical mental health

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professionals; interventions occurred in a therapist's office or in small group sessions; and the focus was on addressing trauma reactions and reducing symptoms. In a trauma sensitive school, one would find licensed educators and student services professionals with a wide range of mental health training; sensitivity and accommodations happen fluidly throughout the school; and the "focus is on students' educational success through emotional and physical safety, empowerment, trust, choice and collaboration" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d. p. 4). In the same study, there was a difference within these programs of how teachers served these students. A collective view of school professionals sought to resolve anger management problems, address a student with ADHD that is acting out, as well as the student choosing to act out (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.). This view determined the response that the student needs consequences or an ADHD evaluation. Within a trauma-informed view, students may be viewed as having difficulty regulating emotions and focus, lacking necessary skills with an impacted neurobiological function, having difficulty trusting adults and setting off a trigger for the students. This view determined the response that adults and professionals needed to provide the supports necessary for the child to learn to meet with success.

Prevention science was on the rise and was "at the point where a number of preventive interventions have documented the ability to change developmental trajectories and reduce negative outcomes" (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000, "The Study of Implementation, para. 1). Unfortunately, many of these high- quality programs failed to take appropriate steps to monitor and verify the integrity of these programs (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000). Because of this, conclusions cannot be formed and reduced the chances of replication (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000). In many studies one finds that the mental health interventions were effective and relevant, however the context of the school was paid little attention, which in turn affected

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the “ability of schools to change current practices or adopt new ones” (Ringeyen, Henderson & Hoagwood, 2003, “Context Matters, para. 1). Research has shown child mental health interventions utilized in clinical practice are different and less effective from those utilized in academic settings (Ringeyen, Henderson & Hoagwood, 2003; Weisz, Donenberg, Han, & Weiss, 1995).

Teachers are relied on as primary reporters of students with mental health needs. Researchers (Ball & Anderson-Butcher, 2014; Durmuşçelebi, 2017; Reinke et al., 2011) found that the delivery of strategies to improve mental health instruction was affected by teacher stress. Because of this, leadership can understand and improve implementation of mental health services to alleviate teacher stress. Ball and Anderson-Butcher (2014) advocated for expanded school mental health (ESMH) programs. Mellin et al., found that research-based practice was slim on incorporating teachers into the collaboration process of ESMH (2017). Ekornes (2016) found that teachers were faced with students with poor readiness for learning, as the relationship between mental health and school performance became more apparent. Teachers were asked to attend to student mental health issues daily, that they often feel ill-equipped to handle (Ekornes, 2016; Holen & Waagene, 2014; Reinke et al., 2011). Teachers were further asked to prioritize academic and non-academic tasks. Ekornes’ (2016) research also identified teacher stress as a determinant in the promotion of student mental health. Holen and Waagene (2014, Mental Health in Schools, para. 1) “concluded that the main challenges for teacher engagement in student mental health promotion are lack of competence and, to a lesser degree, lack of time and resources, rather than the teachers’ attitudes or disregard of the importance of this work. In fact, most teachers clearly recognized their key role in mental health promotion” (Reinke et al., 2011).



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Teachers feeling inept and unprepared was a major cause of stress among teachers and contributed to burnout and attrition (Ekornes, 2016; Reinke et al., 2011).

Site-based leadership must take the lead on changes at the school level. Education and mental health integration will only be incorporated and utilized when the goal of mental health was intertwined with effective schooling, which in turn was intertwined with the healthy functioning of students. This change involved the incorporation of a new set of priorities, which included: the use of “resources within schools to implement and sustain effective supports for students' learning and emotional/behavioral health; inclusion of integrated models to enhance learning and support health; attention to improving outcomes for all students, including those with serious emotional/ behavioral needs;” and strengthening parental involvement (Atkins, Hoagwood, Kutash & Seidman, 2010, *Toward the Integration*, para. 1). School-based programs will not be effective unless there was collaboration between all stakeholders. Further, “an infrastructure, process and clearly defined roles must be painstakingly developed to address the varying needs of the student body. And the program must have the right team members, who bring unique skill sets and experiences to the endeavor” (Zucker, 2012, p. 24).

Schools self-reported that they needed in-depth training on developing and sustaining good mental health and improved access to better services (Hollinsley, 2018). Without intervention, the emotional impact would have played its toll on the generations to come. This was why professional development was so critical in this area and was the link to leadership.

A principal in Washington State, changed how his school addressed school discipline. Instead of responding to the behavior and assigning a consequence, usually suspension, school leaders addressed the underlying issues by talking with the student first. Students still received consequences for their behavior, however, instead of out-of-school suspensions, students

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received in-school suspensions where they had access to a teacher and a safe environment (McInerney & McKlindon, n.d.). Further, increases in reading achievement occurred in schools where all stakeholders worked collaboratively and where teaching and learning competencies were shared collectively (Joseph, 2008).

The Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund (2009) developed a Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment for Child Abuse Prevention Agencies that can be adapted for other organizations. The sections are supporting staff development through training, education and staff supervision, support and self-care; creating a safe and supportive environment through establishing a safe physical environment and establishing a supportive and trusting environment through information sharing/privacy and confidentiality, cultural competence, safety and crisis prevention planning, open and respectful communication, consistency and predictability; assessing and planning services through conducting intake assessments, developing goals and plans, and offering services and referring to community resources; involving participants; and adapting policies (Wisconsin Children's Trust Fund, 2009).

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the attributes of a trauma sensitive school included leadership and staff sharing an understanding of trauma's impact on learning; the school supported all students to feel safe physically, socially, emotionally and academically; the school addressed student needs in holistic ways; there was an explicit connection made between the school and the school community for the students; the school embraced teamwork and staff shared responsibility for all students, and leadership and staff anticipated and adapted to the needs of the students.

Stevens' (2009) research found that "to be successful trauma-sensitive schools required the participation of all schools in a district; the support of an entire community; and it took more

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than one school district to have long-term impacts on a state” (p. 140). Much more work was needed at the policy level to understand the key role that trauma played in schools. Payton et al.’s (2000) research found that schools were under increasing pressure to incorporate more than basic instruction within the academic areas. When schools offered more than one program, they faced more than implementation issues, such as, poor coordination, time constraints and lack support amongst stakeholders.

### *Professional Development*

In response to the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, Massachusetts, was the first state to recommend improvements to students’ access to mental health services and “additional resources for improved teacher training” (Campus Safety Staff, 2017). The Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence would help students experiencing from immediate well-being issues, such as, panic attacks, trauma, eating disorders, and self-harm (Campus Safety Staff, 2017). Schools were an obvious choice to identify students that need additional support. Rothi, Leavey, and Best’s (2008) research found that teachers felt inadequately prepared to teach and manage students with mental health needs.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), professional development for faculty and staff should include attention to relationships that enhanced learning, attention, affection, attunement, classroom strategies to establish safety, empowerment, collaboration, choice, trust and understanding the dynamics of interpersonal, community and historical violence. The focus on safety, empowerment, collaboration, choice, and trust, not only touched on professional development but bled over into a teacher-centered work environment, one which was modeled through the administration, affected school climate and ultimately affected policy.

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Through the establishment of safety, teachers were able to provide for clear and consistent expectations for managing behavior and setting limits; accommodations to meet individual needs; predictable structure, boundaries, relationships and environment; reduce bullying and harassment; and use seclusion and restraint only as a last means necessary.

Through the establishment of empowerment, teachers were able to provide for the embedment of mental health instruction into the daily curriculum of teaching coping skills and self-regulation skills; provide for meaningful participation; maintaining high academic and behavioral expectations; build on strengths; and build on competency.

Through the establishment of collaboration, teachers created a school staff that built an in-house consultation team that helped identify individual student triggers and work with classrooms; worked with students, families, provide family education, training and support, and community referrals, wrap around services and community partnerships.

Through the establishment of choice, teachers worked with students to create self-care plans that addressed triggers and how to eliminate and/or cope with triggers; collaborative problem solving; provide for choices and alternatives through the use of safe space, brain interventions, sensory diets and the safe and acceptable expression of feelings and emotions.

Through the establishment of trust, teachers built relationships that provided for unconditional positive regard for all students, self-check of assumptions, observations and questions, and becoming a relationship coach, one who knows the importance of relationships of peer to peers, peer to teachers, teachers to teachers and teachers to administration and allows for the reciprocal. Relationship building allowed for the regulation of emotions through self-soothing, development of trust in others, allowed for the exploration of the environment, understanding ourselves and others, and understanding our role of impacting the world around

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us. Relationships further allowed for the nurturing attachments with adults, a belief that good things are possible for the affected individual, feelings of self-worth, strengths are visible, declining view as a victim, optimism about the future, and feelings of positive impact (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, n.d.)

The emotional well-being of the staff also became a priority in the areas of self-care and signs of burn-out and the cycle of compassion. Kidger et al., emphasized that some teachers are hesitant to teach emotional and mental health to students, and that because staff's own needs are not being tended to, made them vulnerable to even want to teach or engage in emotional and mental health work (2010).

Trauma-sensitive schools had the expectation of having a leadership that was capable of “articulating and sustaining” (Craig, 2016, p. 103) its vision. As with any systemic change, a partnership of collaboration and inclusivity in the decision-making process was necessary (Craig, 2016). Administrators supported the vision by scheduling common planning time, creating community partnerships, establishing availability of appropriate coaching, and maintaining any necessary classroom coverage (Craig, 2016). Leadership was also necessary to manage the change factor in the culture of the school. This was from seeing the big picture to reassurance, as well as, providing additional professional development (Craig, 2016).

### ***Broader School Practices***

School climate was linked to increased testing results, as well as student self-image (Haynes, Emmons & Ben-Avie, 1997). The study found that when school climate was emphasized, teachers focused on student backgrounds, motivational factors, and the interactions among all stakeholders (Haynes, Emmons & Ben-Avie, 1997). Virtanen et al. (2009) found that

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school climate was linked to improved student voice, depression, physical and psychological symptoms, truancy, and health education.

Noddings (2015) expressed her disappointment in the extreme over emphasis in academic achievement in education today. She advocated for genuine education or a return to traditional education, which she defined differently than others. A genuine education included exploring new ideas, extending those ideas, and the expression in creative arts. It also included where students learn to care for themselves and others (p. xiii). Many educators, Noddings (2015) suggested, that those that subscribe to the heavy emphasis on standardized tests were not true traditional educators but would be labeled as progressive (p. xiii). Finally, she proposed that themes of care were integrated into either a traditional or a progressive school.

In a survey, Noddings (2015) found that in a Girl Scout survey, 1% felt that no adults cared for them. Only 7% said that they would go to an adult for advice. These students did not trust adults. 40% of young people reported feeling lonely (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017). Noddings (2015) advocated not for a revision in curriculum, which was what normally happens and expressed her disdain for performance objects and their limitations on student learning. Noddings felt that objectives should include students being able to think critically, express themselves, be able to problem solve, reflect on their decisions, communicate creatively, and work cooperatively (Noddings, 2015). Higher order thinking and synthesis of material would cover the concepts and skills needed to be successful. By engaging students in the objectives, students would learn and begin to trust their teachers (Noddings, 2015). There was a correlation between intellectual caring and interpersonal caring. By engaging in discussions with students, their thoughts and opinions were heard, validated, and expressed.

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Noddings felt that nothing would change until caring and continuity were included in the curriculum. Noddings (2015) reminded us of the neglect of our physical selves, and the importance of self-care. Roehlkepartain et al. (2017) felt that relationships should be relevant across contexts of life, operationalize relationships that improved students' outcomes, and help students be more intentional in forming relationships. Roehlkepartain et al. (2017) research found that a developmental relationship must include the 5 following elements: express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.

Constructivists believed that people are internally motivated and that they constructed their own mental representations of situations, events, and conceptual structures. Noddings (2015) embraced this theory as the teachers took the time to explore what their students knew and then helped the students figure out the why. Teachers have suggestions and extensions to move students to make strong and useful constructions. As a pedagogical theory, Noddings saw constructivism embedded in an ethical or political framework. This would support students who cared deeply. The aim would be to create the growth of students as competent, caring, and loving people. Teachers would use themes of care: for self; intimate others; global others; plants; animals and the environment, instead of, the traditional academic disciplines, modalities, and achievement levels (Noddings, 2015). The connection here with Noddings' focus on caring would be another great environment for students with mental health issues, as well as all students.

### ***School Counselor/School Psychologist***

Most schools shared a psychologist as school districts lacked the enough funding to hire one for each school. If schools could have a full-time psychologist, students would be able to receive professional services when they are facing chronic problems and/or a crisis. It is more

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than receiving a weekly therapy session (Hurley, 2017). School counselors would teach social skills lessons or help with anxiety by teaching deep breathing. Both professionals would also pull small focus groups around a specific need, such as anger management, or around a specific commonality, such as, loss. If the ratio of school counselors to student population, 1:250 was met, responsibilities would be easily distributed, and the needs of the students would be better met.

### **Policy Changes**

Fragmented policies lead to fragmented practices. Although many States have implemented policies regarding mental health, they are done piecemeal and without much thought. (Center for Mental Health in Schools, n.d). The efforts have mostly been reflected in reaction to pressures to deal with a specific social problem, such as, bullying, violence prevention and substance abuse prevention. Most initiatives came from the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Safe Schools/Healthy Students, and the Center for Disease Control. The WHO's (2010) research found and advocated for the resolutions of the five key roadblocks to increasing mental health services and availability: the absence of mental health from the public health agenda: including funding needs; the current organization of mental health services; lack of integration with primary care; inadequate human resources; and a lack of public mental health leadership.

Giordano et al., (2017) reported that the CDC immunized an average of 88% of children between the ages of 19 and 35 months and while the research of preventative medicine was staggering, there was little research done on the mental health needs of young children. One in four children under the age of 5 were at risk for a developmental, behavioral, or social delay



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(National Survey of Children's Health, 2011-2012, as cited in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.).

McInerney & McKlindon (n.d.) reported that school discipline policies are trauma informed when accountability was balanced with traumatic behavior; taught school and classroom rules while stressing that school was a non-violent place; minimized disruptions to the educational day while building in positive behavioral instructional supports; created consistent rules and consequences; modeled relationships; respected confidentiality; involved open communication with all stakeholders; and ensured ongoing monitoring of policies.

Dilley (2009) reported that the "lack of equal chances for success as a result of poverty, discrimination, unequal access to services, and other factors affected a student's health" (p. iii). These disparities were also mirrored in academic achievement. Dilley suggested that it would be unreasonable to expect to close the achievement gap without addressing health conditions for these same students.

### **School Models**

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model expanded on the eight elements of the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) coordinated school health (CSH) approach and is combined with the whole child framework. CDC and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) developed this expanded model to strengthen a unified and collaborative approach designed to improve learning and health in our nation's schools.

The education, public health, and school health sectors have each called for greater alignment, integration, and collaboration between education and health to improve each child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development (CDC, 2015). Public health and

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education served the same children, often in the same settings. The WSCC focused on the child to align the common goals of both sectors. The expanded model integrated the eight components of a coordinated school health (CSH) program with the tenets of a whole child approach to education (CDC, 2015).

Tiered systems of support modeled after the government's RtI (Response to Intervention) had students learning or progressing at their own pace. It was a data-informed process. One major drawback was that just because one uses data to inform decisions does not equal necessarily better services or services more appropriate to their needs (Balu & Malbin, April 2017).

Turn 2 Us was one example of a School-based Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Program (SBMH-PP) serving Latino students in Manhattan. Montañez et al.'s research found that there was increased pro-social behavior and classroom compliance, as well as academic achievement and attendance. Major drawbacks were the sample size and that teachers were the sole reporters which increased the possibility of bias (2015).

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) was found effective in reducing problem behavior and increasing academic performance. One major drawback was that if ineffective management practices were present, negative outcomes increased. "Traditional professional development methods were not effective in changing teachers' classroom practices" (Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013, p. 45). The study had a small sample size and did not evaluate schools that did not implement PBIS (Reinke et al., 2011).

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Collaboration between school counselors and community mental health providers was a dissertation designed to look at perceptions and experiences between school counselors and mental health providers to improve services provided to students (Moran & Bodenhorn, 2015). There were several drawbacks identified, including the chosen demographics of the study and the lack of collaboration provided from the community mental health providers (Moran & Bodenhorn, 2015).

Cook et al., evaluated the integrated approach of PBIS and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) (2015). The researchers examined the independent and integrated effects on student mental health outcomes (2015). The SEL approach utilized the Strong Kids curriculum and the PBIS adapted its approach from the Building Effective Schools Together (BEST) behavior approach. Cook et al., recommended further integration of stand-alone programs in improving mental health of students (2015). Drawbacks of this study were that they focused solely on mental health problems according to the universal screening measures and relied on teacher reports and identification (Cook et al., 2015).

Weissberg (2011) presented Strategies to Support Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs of Students at a Symposium for CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) and was an advocate for SEL. SEL was the process for children to develop essential social and emotional competencies. The drawbacks were that to be sustainable and effective school-wide, it required policy, principals, planning, professional development, program evaluation and partnerships (2011). CASEL (2013) identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies (Appendix E) with definitions of the students' objectives. On (Appendix E), CASEL's research showed the students' outcomes associated with the five competencies (2013) (Appendix F).

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### *Trauma Informed Schools*

A trauma-informed approach was “being informed about and sensitive to trauma, and providing a safe, stable, and understanding environment for students and staff” (McInerney & McKlindon, n.d. “Trauma Informed Approaches, para.1). A goal was to prevent re-injury or re-traumatization by recognizing trauma and its triggers, as well as the stigmatization and punishment of students (McInerney & McKlindon, n.d.).

Schools and teachers were often judged on academic results. Some schools were seeing the ties of teaching well-being, character, and confidence with academics to focus on the whole child. Providing access to counseling services helped build a supportive culture and improved engagement and student relationships (Weale, 2014).

Sisask et al. identified class size, time constraints and an already over-burdened teacher would affect the timing of addressing students’ mental health needs to when they caused a problem in the classroom. Whole school approaches shifted the focus of triage of those with mental health issues to the promotion and well-being of everyone, while working in a positive school climate that affected all, and everyone who worked and studied there share a joint responsibility of the mental health of all (Payton et al., 2000; Sisask, et al., 2014).

### *Trauma Sensitive Schools*

There was a tremendous need for mental health services in elementary schools. These can vary from trauma-sensitive environments as is the case in Massachusetts or increased mental health services at district schools. Creating trauma-sensitive environments in schools was the goal. The significance of trauma was that educators may not be aware that a student was learning or responding under a trauma response. Behaviors, learning patterns or social skills may be misinterpreted or mislabeled. Traumatized children were vulnerable, and teachers were the

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critical link to intervention with sensitivity and awareness. Best practices created an environment where students learned in a safe and positive environment. Trauma sensitive practice was a must for every educator's toolkit. Trauma had profound effects on a child's ability to participate and process the regular school day. Educators had an opportunity to intervene and advocate on behalf of their students with trauma sensitive practice and awareness. According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (2007) there were common elements that trauma sensitive schools should have:

- Comprehensive professional development for teachers and other staff
- A team of school/district personnel to assess individual student cases
- Expanded counseling services
- Referrals to outside support services
- Parent and family workshops on the effects of trauma
- Conflict resolution training for both teachers and students
- Consultation with local hospitals, mental health facilities, women's shelters, and other community-based organizations
- School/district administrative support for establishing a trauma sensitive environment
- Academic instruction techniques for teaching traumatized students
- Development or revision of school policies to be more trauma sensitive (p. 1)

According to Cook, Van der Kolk, et al. (2005) there were six core components of trauma sensitive schools that embraced safety, self-regulation, self-reflection, integration of traumatic experiences, relational engagement, and a positive self-image. Further research was needed in

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how some school districts utilize DSM-V to diagnose PTSD and why some school districts do not. Continued research on the effects of trauma-sensitive programs in schools in treating students with PTSD and/or other mental health disorders would also be beneficial. Trauma-sensitive school environments were implemented in all academic settings to assist in the identification and treatment of PTSD and other mental health disorders in children.

Desrochers (2015) reported that a successful program had invested a lot of money in its people and not in programs. The Westport School District, a school district with a successful school-wide mental health program, then provided systemic, sustained professional development for everyone. The school district prioritized its spending so that it met professional standards in staffing levels for all mental health personnel and each elementary school had two school psychologists. Research showed that schools with whole-school mental health programs had average achievement test scores 11% higher than the ones that did not provide these programs (Desrochers, 2015). Desrochers (2015) further suggested a comprehensive mental health service model which included a multi-tiered system or RtI supports that included: a solid base of school-wide services; targeting a small group of at-risk students; and providing intensive services for students with the greatest need. The RtI process starts with instruction and assessment of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are then provided with different interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. After the interventions are monitored, the students who are still struggling are offered different interventions. Students are then evaluated for

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learning difficulties. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, guided by data (Desrochers, 2015).

### *Logistical Shortcomings of School-Based Programs*

Primary prevention includes strategies and programs that were designed to prevent the development of problems, targeted all students, provided students and staff with a strong foundation for teaching appropriate behaviors and had a low-cost per individual. Programs would look like school-wide positive behavioral supports, school climate improvement projects, and increased collaboration between family, school, and community (Lehr & McComas, 2005).

Secondary prevention included programs that decreased the frequency or intensity of problems that are created to decrease the frequency or intensity of problems that are alterable factors that place students at risk and have a moderate cost per individual. About 10-15% of students would need supports at this level. Examples included conflict resolution lessons, peer-tutoring programs, and social-skills instruction (Lehr & McComas, 2005). Tertiary prevention included programs that are designed to remediate established problems, reduce the duration, and preclude negative outcomes. Programs were highly individualized, and student centered and provided effective and efficient responses to students most in need and have a higher cost per individual. Lehr and McComas (2005) reported “about 1-5% of students would have chronic problems that required more intensive supports (p. 37). Examples included wrap-around services, individual functional behavior analysis, and individualized behavior management plans” (Lehr & McComas, 2005, p. 37). Educators and administrators at all school levels used these models to guide prevention and intervention efforts.

No cost efforts included having teachers recognize every student, which can be as simple as greeting every student at the door. Provided wait time or think time to give students ample

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time to formulate questions before moving on to the next topic. Used the time to scan faces, make eye contact and smile. Reduced the number of your non-negotiables. Established your boundaries and made minimal rules, but ones you can live by and remember. Never shame a student. Discipline, correct and coach them and set high expectations. Unfortunately, many traumatized students sought the adult attention of public shaming (Benson, 2015).

### **Literature Constraints**

Dykeman (1994), found that most instruments developed were made by adults and from an adult perspective. This assumed the adult conceptualization of what children need. Recommendation was made to look at “children’s attitudes and address age, grade level, gender and cultural diversity” (Dykeman, 1994, p. 1). Policy initiatives to support children’s mental and emotional health were on the forefront of statements, while the role of teachers in these areas needed more exploration (Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell & Donovan, 2010). Kang-Yi, Mandell and Hadley (2013) identified the need to improve the way programs within schools measured outcomes to report success, as there were little differences between programs that they measured, as all had the same positive outcomes. Teacher self-reports limit researchers to how teacher attitudes affected their actual behaviors helping students (Sisask, et al. 2014). Loades and Matroyannopoulou’s (2009) research also found that teachers’ perceptions of children’s mental health problems were relatively unexplored.

### **Summary**

The literature review on the promotion of student well-being in elementary classrooms indicated some distinct features and characteristics of instructional practices that should be replicated. Time was a major constraint for teachers in the implementation and consistency of mental health practices. Teachers wanted to do what was right for their students and directly or



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indirectly increase student performance in schools. To identify the elementary teachers' perceptions of how to best support student well-being in the classroom, the researcher used Q methodology, which is explained in Chapter 3.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms. Using Q methodology, the study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare subjective perceptions shared by teachers regarding how they perceive how to best support of student well-being services. This understanding of educators' perceptions could help educators and education advocacy groups to work with policy makers and advocate for the best supports that work best for all students. In addition, such understanding can provide aspiring teachers with additional tools and approaches that may be useful to their efforts to impact education. Some of these additional tools and approaches may include those that assist them to work with other teachers to maximize their collaborative efforts to influence school reforms at the local, state, and national levels. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on how best to support student well-being in elementary classrooms.

Q methodology was identified as a research method, well-suited for the examination of human subjectivity (Kerlinger, 1972) and, thus, was used for this study to explore the research question: *How do teachers perceive the best ways to support student well-being in elementary schools?* Through this question and accompanying methodological approach, the researcher

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sought to collect the operant subjective perspectives held by diverse elementary teachers regarding their perceptions of student well-being practices in the classroom.

In this chapter, the content will be presented in the following order beginning with the research question and the appropriate selection and use of Q methodology to investigate that question. Next, the researcher provides an overview of Q methodology and its usefulness in exploring human subjectivity, particularly for this study. Following the description of Q methodology and its application with this study, study participants are described along with how they were identified and recruited, and the ethical considerations regarding their participation are explained. In the next section, the researcher describes the research design, including the construction of the research instrument, or Q sample, method of data collection and the procedures used to do so, the treatment of data, and the data analysis processes. The chapter progresses to a discussion of study delimitations and limitations and a statement from the researcher. Finally, a summary of Chapter 3 is included as well as a preview of Chapters 4 and 5.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Research Question and The Fit***

Howe and Eisenhart (1990) suggested five general criteria for high-quality educational research; these include the fit, effective application of data collection and analysis technique, overall warrant, alertness to and coherence of background assumptions, and value constraints. The criterion highlighted in this section is fit methodology, which means that the “research questions [should] drive data collection techniques and analysis” (Eisner, 1998; Howe & Eisenhart, 1990, p.6). The implication is that once the research questions are sound and “have potential to be useful” in a specific discipline, a best fit methodology must be chosen carefully to align with the research questions in regard to data collection and analysis techniques (Howe &

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Eisenhart, 1990; Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 10). This standard criterion was applied to this study by revisiting the research question first discussed in Chapter 1. The research question *how do teachers best support student well-being in elementary classrooms?* articulates an intention to identify, describe, and understand the subjective perspectives of the participants. Since the research question was exploratory in nature to discover the perspectives of the participants, it required a research methodology that was primarily exploratory and was designed to measure human subjectivity.

As a result of the focus on the perceptions of elementary school teachers, the researcher sought a methodological approach that was designed to maintain the closest possible proximity to the subjective perceptions of the participants. (Brown, 2006). Perceptions are also generally complex and influenced by many different elements, such as lived experiences, backgrounds, relationships, and knowledge. Just as most perceptions are complex, for this study, elementary teachers' perceptions of their teaching behaviors and practices in influencing the support of student well-being are indeed multifaceted. For instance, the perceptions of these teachers are likely formed by many different elements: their own perspective of education, their own purpose and action in education, their own experiences, training, and professional development. Thus, the research question for this study required a methodology that was designed to capture and represent the complexity of individual perceptions regarding how they support student well-being in the classroom. After a careful exploration of various methodological approaches, the researcher chose Q methodology because it was an exploratory research technique, maintained close proximity to the participants' perspectives at various stages of the research process, and was designed to provide participants with the opportunity and structure to represent the complexity of their viewpoints (Brown, 2006; Kerlinger, 1972).

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### **Overview of Q Methodology**

William R. Stephenson independently wrote in a letter to Nature dated June 30 and published August 24, 1935, that person correlations are an alternative means to conventional factor analysis by inversion process from an N population being measured by tests to N tests being ranked by persons (as cited in Brown, 1980). In other words, Q methodology represents correlation of persons as opposed to conventional correlation, R methodology, in terms of Pearson's  $r$  values. Specifically, Q factor analysis uses a transposed data matrix in which persons are factored across the sorted variables. The person factors, or clusters, that result from Q analysis represent prototypic ways of thinking about the variables being interpreted by the participants in the study. Because Q methodology has similar characteristics to both qualitative and quantitative research designs, it is referred to as qualiquantology (Watts & Stenner, 2005). Since 1986, Q methodology had become an alternative research design based on its theoretical basis that offered a different "attitude" in the process of seeking answers through discoveries rather than experimental tests. According to Stephenson (1967), Q methodology uses participants as variables and allows these persons to assign their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about a research topic as they rank statements during the Q sort process. Therefore, the subjectivity in the measurement of the person's Q sort is the focus of Q methodology. Befitting this current study, Q methodology is used to cluster, or group, the elementary teachers' perceptions of how to best support student well-being in the classroom.

While the traditional R methodology is detached from the "self" who performs the test to gain objectivity, Q methodology highlights the subjectivity in the measurement as the person Q sorts the statements. Subjectivity centers on an opinion, attitude, and belief of the person. Stephenson (1967) identified opinions as the "self-referent statements" (p.14) in the form of Q

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statements. During the Q sort, the participants use self-reference of the statements to rank them from most to least significant (Brown, 2002; Stephenson, 1967; Watts & Stenner, 2012). In other words, the researcher collects rankings of a series of self-referent statements from the persons about a specific area of interest. These statements are comprehensive and refer to the sample individuals' perspectives or viewpoints about their world in relation to themselves; therefore, these perspectives do not necessarily reflect objective facts. The important consideration is how the participants place these self-relating viewpoints on a rating scale that they see most relevant to themselves. The participants project their feelings, beliefs, and values as they clarify their relationship to these preferential statements by indicating their level of importance from greatest to least (Brown, 2006). Therefore, participants impose a certain level of subjectivity into the process.

In any Q study, a collection of self-referent statements gathered from participants can indicate cross-knowledge that people may have “shared knowledge and meaning from which it is possible to extract an identifiable universe of statements” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 33). This set of universally common statements is referred to as a *concourse* (Brown, S. R., 2006; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Watts and Stenner (2012) define a *concourse* as “the overall population of statements from which a final Q set is sampled” (p. 34). A *concourse* of any Q study is formed by a set of expressions made by the individuals chosen for a specific purpose. In essence, the *concourse's* outcome depends greatly on the purpose of the research question in Q studies set by the researcher. From the *concourse*, a manageable Q sample is then sculpted that can be sorted by the participants.

As Q methodology focuses on the perspectives and viewpoints of the participants, they are asked to perform a Q sort (Stephenson, 1977), requiring their subjectivity in the process. This

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subjectivity reflects the participants' behavior and their surroundings (Watts & Stenner, 2012). During the event of sorting, the participants' behavior is evidenced in the order of importance that they assign the statements from the Q sample. The Q factors represent commonalities among the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings expressed by the participants; thus, these factors become "operants within the minds of the [participants]" (Stephenson, 1977, p. 11). As a result, the factors act as attitudes characterized by the way the participants subjectively categorized their viewpoints when scaling their statements, indicating neither right nor wrong (Brown, 1993). In other words, the expressions of the participants' subjective viewpoints are how the participants illustrate and describe their understanding and meaning as they sort the Q sample items. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), "subjectivity, understood in operant terms, is simply the sum of behavioral activity that constitutes a person's current point of view" (p. 26).

Operating counter to R methodology, Stephenson (1953) had proposed that using persons' responses or statements could invert Spearman's approach to the traditional factor analysis as the measurement instead of test items. Brown (1972) asserted that "Q matrix was not the inverse of R but rather . . . [a] transpose . . . [of] the two factor systems [in reciprocity]" (p. 58). Furthermore, the reciprocity referred to the two different sets of data matrices and not particularly factor solutions (Brown, 1972). Q methodology uses persons as variables and tests from persons' statements as measurement units. This is where the inversion is referred. Instead of the correlation matrix gained from test-by tests as variables taken by the participants, Stephenson's correlations are produced from the responses of persons (Stephenson, 1953, 1967). In effect, Stephenson still used the Pearson correlations in the data matrix. The only difference here is that self-referent statements that the participants had ranked according to the importance of their preferences measure the Q correlations. Stephenson argued that the Q technique when R

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methodology is inverted can “capture the absolute characteristics or distinct perspectives of different individuals in a rigorous fashion” (Watts & Stenner, 2007, p. 65). The traditional R approach can provide statistics of the persons and generalize about the population; however, it does not reveal much information about the persons who perform the tests. The strength of Q is its ability to use complex factor analysis within the data of the individuals to produce factor scores of one or a group for an easy comparison in the final illustration (Kerlinger, 1972).

In Q methodology, the sample is not the participants themselves, but the statements, perspectives, or stimuli produced by the participants (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988). Basically, Q sample is a “research instrument” (Janson, Militello, Guajardo, & Guarjardo, 2012, p. 3). These Q statements, sometimes called Q sample or Q set, are typically subjective and unrehearsed in nature, not analytical or factual in consideration (Brown, 1993). The sample is naturalistic in that it represents the persons’ perspectives while reflecting the persons’ traits and their interactions with others around them as the participants attribute meaning of significance to the ranking process (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Stephenson, 1967). A Q set may be obtained from interviews, written and projective materials, or even from questionnaires. In other words, the Q sample can be gathered from written, oral, visual, tangible, and descriptive stimuli which lead to answering the research questions proposed for the study (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

In R methodology, the larger the sample, the more reliability, and better chances for statistical significance results. In Q methodology, it would be extraordinarily difficult to sort through a massive number of statements from across a large parent population. By applying

Fisher’s (1960) experimental design innovations, alternatives to large numbers became available . . . particularly the factorial variant . . . [These alternatives] were quickly integrated into Q technique; . . . they provided a reasonable way for selecting a Q sample theoretically (Brown, 1980, pp. 28-29).



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The strength of the sample is not in the large number of the participants but in the larger responses that the small number of participants make, which can later be reduced for the participants to rank. Like other methods, the research question guides the process and the structure of the Q sample to be performed by the participants. The Q set items should encourage participants to respond to the question with ease while illustrating all possible descriptions of that topic (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The task of creating the Q sample needs to be rigorous to obtain the final Q set. The final Q set should be supported by literature and/or theory and “must always be broadly representative of the opinion domain” based on the subject matter (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 75). The size of the Q sample is typically set around 40-80 statements, but Watts and Stenner (2005) recommended starting out with a large generation of statements to be condensed later. The most important aspect of the Q set is the way it engages the participants to gain the best overall responses.

In his foreword to Stephenson, Brown (1978) stated that “Q sort is like a photograph of subjectivity in action, held still for detailed factor analysis inspection” (p. 27). Q sort refers to the process during which participants examine the Q set items, create meaning from them, and then place the statements into different divisions according to their perceived level of significance. The participants offer the descriptions of their self-reference based on an instructed condition set by the researcher. Stephenson (1967) indicated that the participants tend to project their preference and make decisions on the ranking during the Q sorts in unique ways, making the outcomes quite different from one another. Meanwhile, Q sorting conditions participants with instructions to rank their self-descriptions by scaling stimuli items along a continuum from “most like” to “least like,” with a centered response option of “neutral” or “unsure.” In the process of Q sorting, the participants will be asked to place their statements in three divisions: (+) most like,

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(-) least like, and (0) neutral/unsure. The piles of divisions of statements are then sorted into a predetermined or forced frequency distribution that resembles a quasinormal distribution (Stephenson, 1967).

In traditional research methods, a phenomenon is studied through either deductive or inductive reasoning. In Q methodology, Stephenson (1953, 1993) recognized that observations are not absolute or concrete; they are more like “clues pointing towards some potential explanation” giving us insights into the observed phenomenon. Stephenson was adamant that the traditional inductive factor analysis founded by Thurstone in Chicago and strongly defended by Cattell was not appropriate for his approach to factor analysis for “grounded hypothesis formation and theoretically relevant description” (Zangwill, Kohlberg, & Brenner, 1972, p. xiii). Originally, it was Charles Sanders Peirce who called Stephenson’s factor analytical approach the “the logic of abduction” (Zangwill et al., 1972). After that, Stephenson (1953, 1967) called his methodology abduction because instances in the research strategy were defined as neither inductive nor deductive. Brown (1980) elaborated further that abduction “begins with effects and pursues potential causes (possibilities)” (p. 237).

As Watts and Stenner (2012) indicated, abductive reasoning is meant for the purpose of discovering new insights and generating theories about a phenomenon. Abduction is not meant for testing or verifying theories. In many cases, this empirical study approach can generate compelling results into deeper understanding of the phenomenon and provide insights for future probes of the study. Stephenson (1953) argued that because the subject’s subjectivity is isolated from the researcher in traditional methodologies, the researcher passively observes the unfolding of the meaning of factor configurations. No matter how different Q process is from that of the

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traditional qualitative and quantitative methodologies, Q methodology still follows a rigorous set of analytical procedures with a theory or research phenomenon.

### **Participants**

The participants in Q study are designated as P set (Watts & Stenner, 2012). In Q methodology, it is not important to have a large sample of participants but rather to gain a large number of responses produced by the participants in the concourse, which will be later reduced for the Q sample. The importance of the participants' responses suggests that the selection of each participant should be made with "care and consideration . . . to discover relevant viewpoints . . . [that] matter in relation to the subject at hand" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, pp. 70-71). Some of the participants for the P set were found through a snowball sampling method. In Q methodology, Watts and Stenner (2012) recommended "a minimum ratio of two Q-set items to every participant" (p. 72). In other words, if a given study has a 50- item Q set/sample, then the number of participants should not be more than 25. Concurrent with Brown (1980) and Stephenson (1953), Watts and Stenner (2012) indicated that "good studies and analyses might easily be carried out with considerably less" (p. 73) than 40-60 participants as recommended by Q methodologists in the United Kingdom.

### ***Informed Consent***

This was done with an embedded statement in both informed consent forms #1 and #2 to the participants, highlighting this potential issue (Appendices G and L). In addition, the researcher allowed the participants the opportunity to decline or discontinue their participation in the study. If they chose to participate, their positions, names, and other pertinent information would be codified in the analysis and interpretation to maintain confidentiality. As indicated above, Q methodology, like its counterparts of qualitative and quantitative research

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methodologies, provided means to protect the participants and data materials collected. After the participants categorized their own statements with consideration of significance during Q sort, the statements were then correlated using factor analysis.

### **Research Design**

There were two basic phases of Q methodology study. First, was the development of the research instrument, called the Q sample or Q set. Second were the collection of individual participant perspectives through the Q-sort process and the subsequent data analysis of those individual participant Q sorts in order to identify, describe, and make meaning from the statistically distinct factors or shared perspectives that were produced from the analysis. This section includes the description of the research design of this Q methodology study, including both two requisite phases.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument of Q methodology is also called Q sample, which is a set of items created from a concourse. Basically, a concourse is a collection of identifiable and pertinent statements gathered from several sources. The questionnaire was administered to the participants after the IRB proposal was approved. The researcher used UNF's Qualtrics—a service of data warehousing, emailing questionnaire invitations, and analysis of research and questionnaires—to conduct the first questionnaire for a concourse development.

### ***Concourse***

Concourse should be general but “representative of the opinion domain” based on the how the teachers perceive their roles in incorporating the support of student well-being in classrooms (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 75). The responses, or self-referent statements, elicited from the participants illustrate their shared knowledge based on their individual perspectives and

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viewpoints on the topic. The final Q sample with a set of items drawn from the concourse must retain the characteristics of a broad representation of the opinion field. The following section describes how a concourse was developed after the IRB proposal was approved.

After a purposeful sampling of up to 50 participants was identified, the researcher compiled a list of emails and names, with both last and first, and input them into Qualtrics. The list was called panel as used in Qualtrics. An initial email (Appendix G) via Qualtrics was sent out to the participant panel formally introducing them to the researcher with an inclusion of the approval by the University of North Florida's IRB (Appendix H) and a brief statement with the purpose of the research study and its processes. Next, an email via Qualtrics distributed questionnaire feature was sent out to the participant panel with a link to the Qualtrics page that contained the initial questionnaire (Appendix I) However, before the participants could really answer the questionnaire, the participants were presented with an informed consent #1 (Appendix J) and were asked to read as passive consent and check on the yes box prior to being allowed to transition into the next screen for the actual questionnaire. Informed consent was embedded into the Qualtrics questionnaire. For gathering self-referent statements directly from the participants, the researcher employed the naturalistic approach in gathering Q statements from the participants. In this first questionnaire for concourse development, the participants were asked the following question:

A. How do you best support the promotion of student well-being in the classroom?

1. Please list and briefly describe up to 8 distinct classroom practices, behaviors, and/or strategies that you used to support your students' well-being.

In addition to this question, the participants were asked to include general demographic information as seen at the top of the questionnaire form in Appendix I. Their statements or

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responses to this questionnaire were compiled into a communication concourse, which the Q methodologist for the Q sorted as data for collection and analysis later. The concourse was developed utilizing peer-reviewed professional literature, other sources of subjectivity, such as informal responses, blogs, response threads and earlier participant responses.

All questionnaire data were securely stored and were only accessed by the researcher with individual password and permission from IRB, the dissertation chair, and IRB personnel. Qualtrics allowed the researcher to create an automated reminder email once the first email was sent out. If there were enough responses to create a rich concourse of self-referent statements for Q sorts, then the research could start, reducing the statements to 38 statement items, which were appropriate for Q sorts and adequately addressed the research question. If there were not enough responses, the researcher could generate an automated reminder with the questionnaire Qualtrics link to the participant panel to complete the questionnaire. This concourse did not need to come from all participants if it represented the broad sentiment of opinions among the participants. Responses were collected until they reached a saturation point. In other words, the researcher stopped collecting statements when they were no longer new.

### *Q Sample*

After compiling all the responses from Qualtrics, the researcher reviewed all the statements, entered them in a Microsoft Word document file, and sorted them into similar categories of responses. From there, the researcher refined the concourse statements to ensure consistent language and format. Next, the researcher consolidated similar or saturated responses and rewrote them into fewer statements that still broadly represented the individual context of the opinion sentiment.

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Eventually, the concourse responses were reduced to about 38 statements for the Q sample, to be discussed in the next section. Unlike its R counterpart, Q methodology does not require a large participant sample size to obtain reliable results and to ensure chances for statistically significance results. The requirements for participation in this study was status as an elementary school teacher. The Q sample for this research study was naturalistic (McKeown & Thomas, 1988) as the statements were all derived from either earlier participants' responses to the concourse open-developed questionnaire and from professional literature. The Q sample represent the persons' viewpoints, reflecting the persons' traits and their interaction with others (Stephenson, 1967) around them while they attribute meaning of significance to the ranking process.

Once the Q sample was determined to represent the broad perspective of the opinion domain and to specifically address the content of the research question, the researcher presented the Q sample items to the dissertation chair for approval. With assistance from the committee chair, the Q sample was formatted into the FlashQ program (Hackert & Braehler, 2007), an electronic version of Q sorting, and an online tool used to collect data from the Q sorts. The detailed Q sort process will be discussed in depth in the next section on data collection and procedures.

### **Methods of Data Collection and Procedures**

The data collection and procedures in Q methodology are operated through a process called Q sort, in which participants rank the Q sample items in the order of importance depending on their attitude, preference, opinion, and belief. The purpose of a Q sort is "to provide quantitative data for its samples" (Stephenson, 1953, p. 72). Brown (1978) indicated that Q sort is a snapshot of subjectivity in action, held in place to be interpreted in the factor analysis

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later. Q sorting describes a process during which the participants examine the Q set items, create meaning from them intrapersonally and interpersonally, and then rank the statements into different divisions according to the level of significance to them. In actuality, the participants offer the descriptions of their self-reference based on an instructed condition set by the researcher in terms of how many statements are to be placed in the various score scales along the continuum of (+4) “most like,” (0) “neutral/unsure,” and (-4) “least like” in an inverted quasinormal distribution (Appendix K). The participants are instructed to place their statements in a predetermined distribution, forced frequency distribution, which resembles that of an inverted quasinormal distribution for each participant; therefore, the process is not simply about rank ordering of the statements (Stephenson, 1967). Rather it is more like a holistic ordering of perspectives and viewpoints expressed in the statements.

In the quasinormal, platykurtic distribution, the distribution curve of the statements is flatter at the center and thicker at the tails, making the responses more spread out and creating higher standard deviation (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003). However, there is not a universally recommended set of standards for a forced distribution in a specific shape. In any event, most Q researchers approach Q sorting with a forced distribution that best allows their participants to sort the Q set items subjectively. At any time during the Q sorting, the researcher has the responsibility to help participants to understand the procedure and to provide clarification to the participants without hindering the participants’ freedom to make meaning and to sort their preferences.

For the current study, the researcher employed an electronic version of Q sorting called FlashQ program (Hackert & Baehler, 2007). The Q sample items are input into the FlashQ program, an online tool used to collect data. However, before allowing the participants to Q sort,



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the researcher sent out an email (Appendix L) via Qualtrics asking the participants from the original panel list to participate in the Q sort. In addition, an informed consent # 2 (Appendix L) was also provided for the participation in Q sort. As with the informed consent # 1 (Appendix L), there was a short statement, alerting the participants, especially the very well-known individuals, of the potential recognition due to their unique position by readers. The Qualtrics format, then, prompted readers to accept the research terms and agreement by checking the yes or no box. To those participants that agreed to participate in the Q sort, the researcher sent them an email with a thank-you note recognizing their commitment to help in the study, a brief explanation in Q sort, and a link to FlashQ for them to begin the Q sorts.

At the beginning of the Q sort embedded in FlashQ, the participants were directed to a website through the University of North Florida domain. Then, an introductory page described the study, any risks and benefits of the study, and the continuance of the Q sort, conducted only with the consent of the participants. Using FlashQ, the participants were asked to respond to the command for each step and to eventually place each statement into the predetermined distribution format (Appendix M) until all Q set items were completed. FlashQ, an online Adobe Flash Player, was used to simulate the activity of the traditional physical cards during a Q sort. The Q sort results were stored in the secured server that was only accessible by the researcher and the chair. Another important note was that the participants were able to access the electronic Q sort at any time without first viewing the consent agreement.

During the first step in the Q sort, participants were given a Q sample with 42 statements and were advised to first review the statements to familiarize themselves with the general contents of the entire Q sample (Appendix N). The purpose for this overview of the statements in the Q sample was to prepare participants for the rank ordering of the Q sample items (Brown,

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1993). In the next step, the participants were conditioned and guided to rank the statements, one at a time, into three divisions according to the level of significance. The three divisions followed a continuum from “least influential of my instructional practices used in supporting student well-being in elementary classrooms” (-4) to “instructional practices used in supporting student well-being in elementary classrooms” (+4) with a central response option of “unsure” at (0)

Once these initial steps were completed, the participants were prompted to transition to another web page with the Q sorting grid viewable on the computer screen. For each Q sort, the participants were then instructed to place the Q sample items of 42 statements for “most like my instructional practices used in supporting student well-being” starting with the most extreme right end at +4 and “least influence on instructional practice” in the extreme left of the continuum at -4. Then, the participants were advised to return to the right side to place statements with a +3 ranking. The sorting was followed with a return to the left side of the continuum for the placement of the -3 rated statements. The process repeated the same pattern until the participants had completely placed all (+) and (-) statements into the forced distribution, or quasinormal distribution, conditioned by the researcher. The unsure (0) statements were last in the ordering.

As stated previously, Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (2003) indicated that the quasinormal or platykurtic distribution created a somewhat flatter center and thicker tails of the curve, making the responses more spread out and creating a higher standard deviation. Watts and Stenner (2012) suggested that such platykurtic distribution “offers greater opportunity to make fine-grained discriminations at the extremes . . . to maximize the advantages of the . . . participants’ excellent topic knowledge” (p. 80). Because there was no universal recommendation that a forced distribution should be in any specific shape, Q researchers should approach Q sorting with

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a forced distribution that best allows their participants to sort the Q set items subjectively. In the current study, the statements were arranged in a forced distribution (Appendix M) in the shape that was described here to encapsulate the participants' points of view.

At the end of the Q sort, the participants were prompted to consider whether there were any changes in the rank ordering of the statements. If the participants wished to alter any decisions, they could do so at this point. Otherwise, they were guided to the next section of post Q sort questionnaire (Appendix O). The post-sort questionnaire provided the researcher with additional information to aid in the interpretation of the factors that resulted from the data analysis. The post-sort questionnaire process typically examines

- (a) how the participants have interpreted the items given especially high or low rankings in their Q sort, and what implications those items have in the context of their overall perspective.
- (b) if there are any additional items they might have included in their own Q set (what they are, why they are important, and so on); and (c) if there are any further items about which the participants would like to pass comment, which they have not understood, or which they simply found confusing. (Watts & Stenner, 2005, p. 78)

In addition, the participants were asked to write comments explaining their rationale for the placement of the two statements on the extreme far right and far left. At the end of the post Q sort questionnaire, the participants were prompted to provide demographic information (Appendix M). The purpose for this last step was to enrich and/or clarify in the interpretation of the factors that emerge from the data analysis.

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### *Treatment of the Data*

Finally, the participants were asked to submit their data electronically. Their responses were sent directly to a database on a secure server located at the University of North Florida. The data were stored with the unique date and time at which the sorts were completed. The researcher was the only person beside the dissertation chair and IRB personnel with the access code to the database. As a reminder of the monitoring of the Q sort using FlashQ program in the steps described above, there was an introductory page describing the study and any risks and benefits, which were followed by the consent agreement that the participant accepted before each transitioning screen while using the electronic Q sort.

### *Data Analysis*

In Q methodology, the data analysis focuses mainly on the correlations, factor analysis, and computer computation of the factor scores. In general, the correlation and factor analysis procedures in Q method are mathematically statistical and objective based on computer computations. Brown (1972) asserted that “Q matrix was not the inverse of R but rather . . . [a] transpose . . . [of] the two factor systems [in reciprocity]” (p. 58). Reciprocity referred to the two different sets of data matrices, not particularly factor solutions (Brown, 1972). Q methodology uses persons as variables and tests from persons’ statements as measurement units. This is where the inversion is evidenced. Instead of the correlation matrix gained from tests, Stephenson’s correlations are produced from the responses of persons (Stephenson, 1953, 1967).

With that said, in effect, Stephenson still used the Pearson correlations in the data matrix. The only difference is that the Q correlations are measured by the Q sample statements that the participants have ranked in accordance with the importance of their preferences. Stephenson argued that the Q technique when R methodology is inverted can “capture the absolute

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characteristics or distinct perspectives of different individuals in a rigorous fashion” (Watts & Stenner, 2007, p. 65). Since participants categorize their own statements with consideration of significance during the Q sort, the statements are codified and correlated using factor analysis. As a result, a correlation matrix among all Q sorts is produced with eigenvalues, illustrating “100% of the meaning and variability present in the study . . . known as study variance” (Brown, 1972; Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 98). This variance can help explain the relationships among the Q sorts. The factor analysis is conducted to identify any distinctive pattern among the participants based on their Q sorts; this process is followed by the researcher’s identification of the key viewpoints shared by the participants.

The individuals in each distinctive pattern, or cluster, create very similar configurations during the sorting process. Thereby, those individuals can be grouped together as representative of a unique perspective or viewpoint in the opinion domain. Additionally, the sorts associated with a particular factor that are not highly correlated with other factors are considered distinguished from others and must not be ignored. These sorts are highly regarded in Q methodology due to their theoretical significance in the data analysis. The inversion of factor analysis underscores Q methodology’s reliance on the participants’ rather than the researcher’s frame of reference.

A centroid method with communality is usually used to extract factors (Brown, 1980). The centroid method that was used by Stephenson is simply a summation with “the sums of all factor columns divided by the square root of the grand total of these sums and the quotients give the factor loadings [saturation] for the first factor” (Burt, 1972, p. 50). According to Watts and Stenner (2012), the centroid factor analysis is a necessary step for many Q researchers. In most

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cases, principal components analysis is the preferred method of factor analysis. However, other methods are also acceptable as well.

The factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 are extracted and rotated by varimax in a simple structure. During factor analysis, a person's entire set of statements is then correlated with others' sets of perspectives to find commonalities, thus producing the person factors, or clusters. As a result, patterns or common configurations would emerge from the data for "each of the highly loaded persons for each of the factors" (Khare, 1972, p. 231). The formula  $\pm 2.58 \times$  standard of error (SE), which is  $1/\sqrt{N}$  with N being the number of statements in the Q sample, is employed to determine if certain factor loadings are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Watts & Stenner, 2012). Typically, the first factor would have the largest share of the study variance with each subsequent extracted factor's variance becoming smaller. There is a variety of methods for determining the number of factors to be extracted. Brown (1980) stated that the best way to decide on the number of factors for extraction is by examining a Kaiser–Guttman criterion in eigenvalues that are over 1.00. Another method is to take factors that have at least two very high saturations, which often indicates meaningful correlation between a Q sort and a factor (Stephenson, 1953, 1967). This rule, called Humphrey's Rule, states that the cross-product of the two highest loadings, regardless of negative or positive, in a factor must exceed 2 times the standard of error (SE). The reason for using the two highest saturations is that they often indicate meaningful correlation between a Q sort and a factor (Stephenson, 1953, 1967). The SE formula is  $1/\sqrt{N}$ , where N is number of the Q sample items. However, Brown (1980) also said that "the magic number 7" (p. 223) is a good guideline.

In the process of deciding which factors are significant to be extracted and interpreted, the researcher needs to employ various criteria. Q researchers favor judgmental rotation of

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factors to maintain the Q's theoretical focus over a purely statistical focus (Brown, 1980). When researchers look for the factors with significance in terms of the eigenvalues greater than 1.00, they must be cautious. At times, this assumption may give "dubious statistical importance, and this is no less true for other criteria for determining the number of factors" (Brown, 1980, p. 42). McKeown and Thomas (1988) stated that some factors may have high eigenvalues but provide no substantial meaning in the interpretation and explanation for the outcome of the study. Other times, the high eigenvalues may even yield too many factors resulting from large data sets (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

In some instances, factors with low eigenvalues may help highlight some crucial explanation from within the weak factor's eigenvalues. It is important that the researcher takes in various accounts when extracting the factor and not statistical criteria alone. The researcher should examine "the social and political setting to which the factor organically connected" (Brown, 1980, p. 42). Ultimately, the Q methodologist tends to focus more heavily on the theoretical significance. As matter of practice, a researcher should use common sense in selecting the factors in the context of the research questions, purpose, and study focus (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). For the current study, the researcher used the principal components analysis (PCA) for factor analysis and applied theoretical and statistical significance consideration when selecting factors for rotation.

The varimax method is considered an appropriate means of performing Q-factor rotation. Because varimax rotation is a simple structure, it can only ensure that each Q sort has high factor saturations on the first factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Most importantly, varimax rotation is programmed to create factor axis positioning such that "the solution maximizes the amount of study variance explained" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 125). Varimax orthogonal rotation with a

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90-degree angle holds a fixed position. In the current study, the varimax rotation method was utilized in performing Q-factor rotation.

After the factors are extracted for a final routine run of factor analysis, a table of factor scores is produced to show the z-scores that have been tabulated and converted into whole numbers ranging from -4 to +4 through 0 (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). This table is sometimes referred to as Q Factor Model which illustrates a factor array for each of the factors, defining the factor Q sort values for each of the statements. From the PQMethod (personal) or MQMethod (Mac) computer program, the z-scores are listed from the highest to lowest for each factor, typically ranking the order of importance that the participants have made for each Q sort as well (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Stephenson (1967) explained that “the factor-score estimates are made by adding the scores across statements of the Q-sample for the variables of a factor, weighting each in accordance with Spearman’s expression” (p. 26). The task for using the model is “to examine any hypothesis [a researcher may have], irrespective of the factors” (Stephenson, 1967, p. 28).

From the Q-factor model table, each statement should be “a tested hypothesis; each can be compared with every other statement and its scores” (Stephenson, 1967, p.27). This table of factor score estimates allows the researcher to begin an analysis with interpretation of the data and explanation of the phenomenon observed. One additional note is that the focus of the interpretation should be on the most significant statements in either “most like” or “least like” points of view (Khare, 1972). However, the PQMethod or MQMethod program provides an extension of the factor score estimates by giving additional output for a single factor array, describing further the perspective of each factor.



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A Q sort encapsulates the individuals' perspective, requiring the total configurations of all Q sample items within a forced distribution. This is precisely the point that Watts and Stenner (2012) attributed to the purpose of PQMethod or MQMethod. Moreover, factor estimates are intercorrelated and contain some error due to their estimated value (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The PQMethod or MQMethod yields an output of correlations among factor scores. Researchers should examine the factor score correlational values carefully. Excessive correlation may indicate that factors share too much commonality and may not necessarily shed light on distinct groupings, giving a clue that the number of factors may need to be reduced (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Correlation values can give rise to overall patterns of both similarities and differences. The actual factors consist of a grouping of participants to be interpreted as sharing common views in later stages. In the factor extraction decision process, examination of factor eigenvalues and variance-explained values should be examined to determine if any factor has a value lower than the acceptable level. If so, then perhaps this factor does not need to be extracted. After considering such subjective researcher-driven inspections, factor interpretation, including factor rotation, can begin.

The current study employed PQMethod or MQMethod software for data analysis. PQ/MQMethod is a freeware statistical program designed specifically for use in Q methodology studies. The researcher entered Q sort data for each participant into PQ/MQMethod version and conducted factor analysis using the statistical packages available in the software. PQ/MQMethod produced factor correlations, factor rotations, factor arrays, and distinguishing and consensus statements as described above which were insightful and informative in the interpretation of factors. The data analysis process and the results of those analyses are presented in Chapter 4.

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### **Process**

Beginning with the research question, “Teacher Perceptions on How to Best Support Student Well-Being in the Elementary Classroom”, the researcher started collecting opinion statements. These opinion statements on the research question began to build the concourse.

Some of the participants were selected from personal knowledge to the researcher. Some of the participants were selected as school principals known to the researcher were asked to disseminate the research email. Some were provided through other Educators. The researcher started with a balance of Caucasian and people of color participants, as well as male and female. Other variables, such as number of years teaching, geographical area teaching and their training, were not immediately known to the researcher. Demographic information was collected as variables to the study. The participants were asked their gender, race, number of years teaching, geographical area within the large city in northeast Florida they are currently teaching, and whether they were trained traditionally or through alternative certification. These variables created the P-set.

The participants were asked, “What are eight distinct practices, behaviors, and/or strategies you use in order to best support student well-being in your classroom?”. The opinion statements were sorted by commonalities in topic, which created the Q-sort.

From the respondents, another request was sent to rank order of a forced Q-sort, ranking -4 to +4 of most unlike to most like. The information provided will allow the researcher to run a Factor Analysis. The researcher will run Qualtrics to load factors to determine similarities and differences by variables. Then the researcher will interpret the findings and provide results, summary, and implications for further studies.

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### **Delimitations and Limitations**

As noted, both by Patton (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2011), there is no such thing as a perfect research design. This researcher recognized that specific parameters can be set to narrow the scope of this study and to give this study rich data and robust results. These parameters, uniquely set by researchers, are the delimitations of a study. Relevant to this study, the researcher had two delimitations. Specifically, the researcher focused on participants older than 18 years of age, and on a participant set with a composition that most closely reflected the demographics of the study's broader school population. The latter delimitation was particularly important as diversity in participants was essential to have representations of voices of all different ethnic and social groups.

However, challenges and unforeseeable situations arise that are beyond the researcher's control during the data collection. These potential problems, such as the participants' level of understanding during the Q sorts, which are beyond the researcher's control, are called limitations (Patton, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Roberts, 2010). For instance, as participants perform their Q sort, they may have difficulty making meaning from some of the statements, or the process might generate anxiety about the procedure causing their sorts to be skewed away from a purer representation of their perspectives.

### **Statement from the Researcher**

To self-regulate potential bias in the current study, the researcher acknowledged that the researcher personally knew some of the participants in the study. Because the researcher had been active in the community in education since 1993, the researcher had established relationships with many teachers over the years. Therefore, the researcher came into the study knowing and having worked directly with some of these individuals. The ability to know and

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interact with these teachers over the years helped the researcher identify who these teachers were and their unique perspectives to contribute to the current study. As a note, Q methodology encourages that the researcher maintains as close in proximity to the perceptions of participants, in this case teachers, as possible. Because Q methodology is an exploratory research technique, close proximity to the participants' perspectives at various stages of the research process is preferable in order to provide participants with the opportunity and structure to express the complexity of their viewpoints (Brown, 2006; Kerlinger, 1972). At this same time, Q methodology provides researchers with a unique opportunity to identify and categorize their own subjective perceptions within the same context as participants' experience. Specifically, though also engaging in a Q sort, researchers can determine their own perspective and with which of the resultant factors their own perspective most aligns.

### **Summary**

Because there was limited academic literature focusing on individual teachers, the researcher had great difficulties in finding adequate sources to learn and write about the teachers. Their teaching styles and the dynamics of their classrooms with a focus on supporting students' well-being were rarely studied. Even less available were the perceptions of their teaching behaviors, practices and/or strategies used in supporting student well-being education which were nonexistent in academic studies. Therefore, the current study was conducted to fill this gap in the literature. The limited literature focusing on teachers only served as a disservice to the social sciences. Because the world knew very little about this area and the teachers, the study would provide meaningful insight into how their shared subjective perceptions of the behaviors, practices and/or strategies influenced education reform (McDonnell, 2009). There had been studies of traits and attributes of teachers, but few studies in the recent decades had attempted to

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examine teachers themselves and their individual or collective teaching practices used in affecting educational changes or policies in the community in which they reside. The implication here was that teachers were important in influencing the direction of educational reforms.

As stated in Chapters 1 and 2, the purpose of this research was to explore the shared subjective perceptions regarding the way teachers perceive that their behaviors, practices and/or strategies are potentially supporting the student well-being in elementary schools. Using Q methodology, this study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare these subjective perceptions shared by teachers. Perceptions were generally complex and influenced by many different elements, such as experiences, relationships, and knowledge. This understanding of teachers' perceptions could help support the influential educators themselves to marshal their own behaviors, practices, and/or strategies to advocate for education reform that was most beneficial to students. In addition, with such understanding of their perceptions of how they influence elementary public education.

Chapter 3 described the general rationalities for using Q methodology to explore the shared subjective perceptions of teachers on the support of student well-being in elementary schools. An overview of Q methodology was presented with descriptions of its origin, research method features, usefulness to this study, and its unique use of logic of abduction as an alternative to the traditional deductive and inductive reasoning. Then, the researcher highlighted the purpose for selecting the participants and provided descriptions of who the participants are. The researcher also incorporated a section on ethical considerations for the participants. Even though steps would be taken to ensure the confidentiality and rights of the participants with codifications of the identities. Under the research design, details of Q features were discussed beginning with the research instrument, Q sample. A section on methods of data collection and

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procedures was followed with a thorough description of how Q sorts were conducted using an online program called FlashQ. The researcher also explained how data are treated to preserve the rights and confidentiality of the participants in the study. Then, the discussion focused on how data would be analyzed using PQMethod software to produce the person factors which group subjective, shared perceptions of the community teachers' behaviors, practices, and/or strategies used to influence educational policy. Next, a brief discussion on delimitations and limitations of the study explained some of the challenges and possible problems that may arise in the study beyond the researcher's control. Finally, the researcher acknowledged a potential bias because the researcher happened to know many of the participants as a result from years of community service in various social, religious, and cultural areas since 1988.

Q methodology was the appropriate research design for the current study to seek understanding directly from traditional elementary teachers, who had been neglected by the social scientists, of the perspectives of their potential influence in educational policies. Meanwhile, Q methodology also allowed the neglected, nontraditional, and underserved teachers to project their voice and viewpoints of their teachers' behaviors, practices, and/or strategies in influencing policy reforms. The resulting data were analyzed through factor analysis and post-sort questionnaires. The results, analysis, and interpretations of the study are discussed in Chapter 4.

### Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher's perceptions on how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. Through the use of Q methodology, the study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare operant subjective perceptions shared by teachers regarding how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. In order for the researcher to delve into and explore these subjective perspectives, the following research question was used to guide the study: *What are the collectively held teacher perspectives on how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom?* Q methodology provides a method for the scientific study of human subjectivity (Mckeown & Thomas, 1998).

Chapter 4 includes the results of this study. This discussion also includes a description of the statistical procedures used to determine the operant factors from the 38 Q sorts completed by participants and the qualitative analytic process for making meaning from these factors. The analyses produced 4 statistically distinct factors, or collectively held perspectives. The process for interpreted and naming these factors based on the factor arrays, accompanying participant responses to post Q sort questions, and the available demographic information for participants who loaded on each factor is also described.

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### **Study Participants**

The potential participants in this research study were delimited to elementary teachers in Duval County Public School District located in Jacksonville FL. The researcher used “purposeful sampling” to recruit participants during the second phases of this study during which participants would perform Q sorts and respond to post-sort questions a. In a Q Methodology study, purposeful sampling means that the researcher is purposeful about recruiting participants who are believed to have the widest possible perspectives on the issue or topic at hand. For this study, the researcher strove to recruit study participants from diverse ethnic and racial and gender backgrounds, from a wide range of work experience as teachers, as well as the educational background and type of teacher preparation. The researcher started with a balance of variables more easily identified phenotypically or known to the researcher, such as race and ethnicity, experience as a teacher, and gender. Other variables that were not immediately known to the researcher were collected through the data collection, including the specific number of years of teaching experience, location of the school within the large school district, and the type of teacher training they had received.

In total, 78 potential participants were contacted by the researcher through email and invited to participate and provided the link to the online Q sort. Of these 78 potential participants, 38 completed the Q sort for a completion rate of 49%. These 38 participants consisted of 34 females and 4 males. From the standpoint of race, 28 participants identified their race/ethnicity as White, 9 identified themselves as Black or African American, and 1 identified as Latina. Two participants were 25 years old or younger, 10 were between 26 and 35, 20 were between 36 and 50, and 6 were 51 or older. As far as teaching experience, 3 participants had taught 2 or fewer years, 5 had taught between 3-5 years, 12 had taught between 6-10 years, and



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18 had taught 11 or more years. These participants taught at 18 different schools. Regarding educational pathways to become teachers, 28 had graduated from teacher education programs with undergraduate degrees in education, 7 had become certified to teach through alternative programs, and 3 had gone through Teach for American. As far as level of education, 2 participants had doctorate degrees, 1 was completing their doctoral studies, 9 had master's degrees, and the remaining 26 had bachelor's degrees.

Last, background questions were asked to elicit participant attitudes regarding their capacity, autonomy, and responsibility to support student well-being as well as their overall attitudes toward the existence of inequity in school structures. Regarding their knowledge and skills regarding the practices, strategies or behaviors that support student well-being, 2 participants "strongly disagreed" they had that capacity, 7 "disagreed," 10 "neither disagreed nor agreed," 13 "agreed," and 6 "strongly agreed." In regard to their belief in their professional autonomy to implement strategies, practices, or teacher behavior to support student well-being; 7 "strongly disagreed" that they did, 11 "disagreed," 10 "neither disagreed nor agreed," 8 "agreed," and 2 "strongly agreed." As to participants beliefs as to whether teachers *should* be responsible for student well-being, 3 "strongly disagreed," 6 "disagreed," 14 "neither disagreed nor agreed," 10 "agreed," and 5 "strongly agreed." Finally, regarding their belief that inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle class students, 16 participants "strongly disagreed" with the statement, while 13 "disagreed," 2 "neither disagreed nor agreed," 4 "agreed," and 3 "strongly agreed."

### **Overview of The Analyses Used to Determine Results**

Q methodology was designed by Stephenson in order to systematically examine human subjectivity, or the perspectives, perceptions, or attitudes people have toward a topic or subject.

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One of the innovations in Q methodology is the participant performance of a Q sort, which provides researchers opportunities to observe a behavioral manifestation of a participants' subjective world through the performance of moving statements either physically or digitally in order to demonstrate an analogue to their inner perspectives. In Q methodology, Stephenson (1953, 1993) recognized that observations are not absolute or concrete; they are more like "clues pointing towards some potential explanation" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 39), providing us insights to the observed phenomenon. Q methodology has since become a theoretical basis that offered a different attitude in the process of seeking answers through discoveries rather than experimental tests (Stephenson, 1953). From this perspective, Stephenson referred to the process of exploring and discovering a phenomenon in Q methodology as *abductive* reasoning in which the researcher must look for clues toward the entire factor configuration.

Q methodology includes procedures from both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The fundamental mathematical or quantitative procedures in Q methodology involve first determining the correlation among 38 Q sorts, performing factor analysis of these correlations, extracting and rotating the factors, and, finally, converting factor z-scores to factor arrays. First a correlation matrix is generated from all Q sorts (Brown, 1972), illustrating "100% of the meaning and variability present in the study, known as study variance" (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 98). This variance can help explain the relationships among the Q sorts. Next, these correlations are factor analyzed and the researcher makes decisions regarding factor extraction. This decision-making process for factor extraction involves both statistical and theoretical considerations. While the statistical considerations are important, the conceptual and contextual significance of each factor is ultimately most important (Watts & Stenner, 2012), and is determined by examining the factor arrays.

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### **Statistical Procedures**

Factor analysis is the statistical and mathematical basis to identify distinctive but common patterns among groups of participants based on key perspectives they shared (Brown, 1980, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Stephenson, 1953; Watts & Stenner, 2007, 2012). The Q factors represent commonalities among the attitudes, beliefs, and feelings expressed by the participants; thus, these factors become “operants within the minds of the [participants]” (Stephenson, 1977, p. 11). For example, the Q sorts that are highly correlated with other sorts share similar perspectives reflected in the statements and are grouped together in the same factor instead of being grouped with other dissimilar factors. For this study, the factors illustrated distinct shared perceptions of elementary school teachers in how they best support student well-being in the classroom. The following sections describe the statistical findings and provide context for the correlation matrix, factor extraction, factor rotation, and factor interpretation.

### **Correlation Matrix Among the Q Sorts**

After participants completed the 38 Q sorts via FlashQ program (Hackert & Braehler, 2017), each of the Q sorts was then coded by the researcher and entered into PQMethod 2.35 (Schmolck, 2014). These 38 Q sorts were first correlated with one another resulting in the production of a Correlation Matrix Between Sorts (Appendix Q). The correlation matrixes contained all of the 38 sorts collected from the participants in this study and “represent[ed] or encapsulate[ed] 100% of the meaning and variability present in the study” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 98). Each Q sort was correlated with all others in this study, depicting the relationships between any two of the sorts. The Correlation Matrix Between Sorts (Appendix Q) illustrates a comparison of how each sort is correlated or not with others. Within the Q methodological

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process, the development of the correlation matrix is only an intermediate statistical procedure providing the correlation data necessary for factor analysis to occur.

### **Factor Analysis and Rotation**

Following the correlation of the 38 Q sorts, the researcher used principal component analysis (PCA) to determine and examine the relationships among those correlations. PCA was selected for the factor analyses rather than the other option of using centroid factor analysis. Although there are not specific guidelines for selecting either PCA or centroid, generally centroid is used when the subsequent factor rotation is completed using a judgmental or “hand rotation” approach. Ultimately, however, resultant factor structures for Q studies vary relatively unsubstantially whether PCA or centroid factor analysis is used. The researcher in this study utilized PCA for two reasons. The first is because Varimax factor rotation was used next, and secondly because some Q methodologist argue that “PCA will resolve itself into a single, mathematically best solution, which is the one that should be accepted” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 99). Following principal factor analysis and extraction, the resultant factors were rotated to simple structure using Varimax rotation. Varimax rotation was used because this topic of study is novel enough that there were very few previous studies or theoretical suppositions developed for it. Varimax rotation is most frequently used when the researcher does not enter into the study with strong theoretical conjectures about what data might emerge, nor when there are particular sorts that hold particular importance relative to the others.

### ***Determination of the factors for extraction***

For any Q methodology study, the researcher was able to determine and decide how many factors to extract. In a Q study, these determinations and decisions are made through the consideration of both objective statistical criteria and subjective conceptual meaning contained

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within the resultant factors. The researcher used statistical considerations that included: the Kaiser–Guttman criterion using eigenvalues, the number of significant factor loadings on each factor, and Humphrey’s rule. As with other elements of Q methodology studies, while the objective criteria can be useful, the conceptual or theoretical criteria employed subjectively by the researcher should be emphasized and privileged. Specifically, an examination of the factor arrays and contextual significance of the different possible factor solutions is most important. In this study, the contextual significance of the emergent factor arrays most influenced the decision as to what was the best factor solutions with the most informative determination of extracting factors. In this study, this was accomplished by the researcher comparing three different factor solutions: 4-Factor, 5-Factor, and 6-Factor solutions.

All three of these factor solutions met the first requirement of a Kaiser–Guttman criterion, having eigenvalues greater than 1 (7.21, 4.05, 3.38, and 2.78), deriving from the Unrotated Factor Matrix (Appendix R). A Kaiser–Guttman criterion ensures that a factor has statistical significance and strong rationale in the analysis. Brown (1980) stated that the best purely statistical criteria to decide on the number of factors for extraction is by including any factor from the unrotated factor matrix which contains an eigenvalue over 1.00. Next, Humphrey’s Rule (Table 2), suggests that the number of viable factors is related to the cross-product of the two highest loadings in an unrotated factor, regardless of negative or positive. Specifically, the product of the two highest factor loadings within an unrotated factor must exceed 2 times the standard of error (SE). The reason for using the two highest saturations is that they often indicate meaningful correlation between a Q sort and a factor (Stephenson, 1953, 1967). The SE formula is  $1/\sqrt{N}$ , where N is number of the Q sample items. Applicable to this study,  $SE = 1/\sqrt{38}$  which gives  $SE = .16$ . Furthermore,  $2 \times SE = .32$ . For this study, the cross-

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product of those two highest loadings must exceed .32. Applying Humphrey's Rule to this study showed that Factor 4 was the final factor in which the cross-product of the two highest factor loadings produced a result in excess of the .32 threshold (Table 2). Finally, both the 4- and 5-factor solutions had 29 of the Q sorts loading significantly on only one factor, while the 6-factor solution had only 26 significant loads.

**Table 2**

<i>Humphrey's Rule</i>				
	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	
Cross Product of Two Highest Loadings	.3249	.2914	.2256	
Stand. Error x2	.32	.32	.32	

Note: Standard Error <.01

In sum, the statistical considerations provided little guidance for the selection of a factor solution. Each of the 3 factor solutions examined by the researcher met the criteria for Humphrey's Rule. Likewise, seven factors were indicated from Kaiser-Guttman criterion, exceeding the numbers extracted in each of the solutions examined here. The 4-factor and 5-factor solutions each had 29 Q sorts load significantly on them, so the criteria of the number of factor loadings did not distinguish from at least those two factors. Finally, all of the three factor solutions examined had factor correlations under the .419 threshold for statistical significance associated with the study. As such, the researcher relied on the configurations of the factor arrays in each of the three factor solutions in order to decide. Through a process of examining the factor arrays within each factor solution, the researcher determined to select the 4-factor solution.

**Table 3**

*Quantitative Information Considered to Determine the Factor Extraction*

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Factor Solution	Eigenvalue Included (Kaiser-Guttman)	Number of Participants Loaded (Table 2)	Highest Correlation among Factors ( $\pm .419$ )
6 Factor	7 factors	26	.3927
5 Factor	7 factors	29	.43540
4 Factor	7 factors	29	.3393

***Characteristics of the 4-Factor Solution***

The overall factor solution for this study contains various statistical characteristics that provide meaningful data regarding elements of the study. These include the correlation between resultant factors, characteristics of each factor, and the correlation of each individual Q sort with each study factor which also demonstrates factor loadings. These data elements indicate some useful information regarding the overall contours of the study.

***Correlation Between Factors***

Correlation between factors refers to a level of relationship of a factor with other factors within factor solution and is often represented in terms of eigenvalue, which is sometimes called saturation or loading, ranging from -1.0 to +1.0. In this study, Correlation Between Factors (Table 4) illustrated that all factor arrays have positive correlations, ranging from .0126 to .3392. Specifically, Factor 1 and Factor 2 had the highest correlation at .3392, but that was well under the threshold for significance in the study which was .419. The remaining correlations between factors were .0720 between Factors 1 and 3, .2205 between Factors 1 and 4, .1426 between Factors 2 and 3, .0126 between Factors 2 and 4, and .1037 between Factors 3 and 4.

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**Table 4***Correlation between Factors*

	1	2	3	4
1	1.000	.3392	.0720	.2205
2	.3392	1.000	.1426	.0126
3	.0720	.1426	1.000	.1037
4	.2205	.0126	.1037	1.000

*Factor Characteristics*

As indicated in the data output Factor Characteristics (Table 5), seen below, factor characteristics mainly describe the defining variables, the reliability coefficient, the composite reliability, and the standard error (SE) of the factor scores. The number defining variables is identified as the number of participants who have the most significant saturations or loadings on Factors 1, 2, 3, and 4 (5, 9, 9, and 7) respectively. In Q methodology, reliability ( $r$ ) of factor is the estimate that study participants would perform the Q sort rankings with the same Q sample the same way at different times. Reliability also refers to the reduction of too many “specificities” and emphasis on “communalities” (Brown, 1980, p. 293; Watts & Stenner, 2012, p.131). Computation of reliability of factors can be accomplished by hand using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{0.80}{1 + (p - 1) 0.80}, \text{ where } p \text{ is participants loading on a factor}$$

(McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 54). The average reliability coefficient is standardized at .80 with the composite reliability ranging .95, .97, .97, and .97 for Factor 1, Factor 2, Factor 3, and Factor 4, respectively. Next, standard error (SE) for each of the factor scores is computed for Factor 1 (.218), Factor 2 (.164), Factor 3 (.164), and Factor 4 (.186). Calculation for SE can be



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accomplished with the use of  $SE = s \sqrt{1-r}$ , where  $s$  is the standard deviation of the Q sorts (McKeown & Thomas, 1988, p. 54).

As suggested in Table 6 and the SE formula, the factor reliability is inversely related to the standard error. In other words, as the factor reliability increases, the standard error of factor scores decreases. Relative to the study, the reliability based on Brown's (1980) preference for communalities illustrates that the Q sorts cluster into groupings that are communal, or have in common, with others.

**Table 6***Factor Characteristics*

	1	2	3	4
No. of Defining Variables	5	9	9	7
Average Rel. Coef.	.800	.800	.800	.800
Composite Reliability	.952	.973	.973	.966
S.E. of Factor Scores	.218	.164	.164	.186

*Factor rotation via varimax*

There are two options for factor rotation following the extraction of factors. Although some Q methodologists purists prefer the by-hand or judgmental rotation because it allows the researcher to follow hunches with a cluster of data that may best provide insights and new perspectives in the interpretation and explanation (Brown,1980). However, when the topic is not informed by preexisting literature or theory as was the case here, such judgmental rotation would be conducted in a largely intuitive manner and could lead to the appearance of arbitrariness in the results. Therefore, the researcher chose varimax rotation of factors instead of judgmental rotation. The varimax method is considered an appropriate means of performing Q factor rotation

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because varimax rotation seeks a simple structure that can best ensure that each Q sort has high factor saturations (Watts & Stenner, 2012). Relative to the issue of factor extraction, simple structure is generally considered an elegant outcome (Brown, 1980; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Stephenson, 1953, 1967) through orthogonal rotation, and this is what occurs with a varimax rotation. Most importantly, varimax rotation is programmed to create factor axis positioning such that “the solution maximizes the amount of study variance explained” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 125). As seen in (Table 6) above, PQMethod via varimax rotation produces an output with the heading Factor Matrix with an X Indicating a Defining Sort. The factor loadings on each factor that are indicated with an X illustrate which Q sort has the highest saturation and on which factor. These factor saturations merely inform how a certain Q sort is oriented near the tip of a factor axis in the rotation, associating itself with the closest proximity to a factor’s collective perspective (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

**Table 7**

*Factor Matrix With an X Indicating a Defining Sort*

Q Sort	1	2	3	4
1	-0.0049	0.7779X	0.1002	0.1009
2	0.5880X	0.3234	0.0504	-0.2273
3	0.2068	0.5817X	0.071	0.0611
4	0.6076X	0.0794	0.0959	0.0037
5	0.6649X	0.111	-0.0253	-0.1036
6	0.6981X	0.0952	-0.0902	0.2533
7	0.1265	0.4618X	-0.1499	-0.3188
8	0.5547	-0.035	0.4983	0.2479
9	0.1751	0.1009	0.0182	0.5728X
10	0.4989	-0.022	0.4098	-0.3783
11	0.4079	-0.0161	0.5145X	0.0627
12	-0.341	0.2823	0.4882X	-0.1186
13	0.2993	-0.2167	-0.2628	0.5013X

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14	0.0459	0.0231	0.0058	0.7733X
15	0.2457	0.5746X	0.0662	-0.0746
16	-0.1396	0.2483	0.3057	0.4721X
17	0.388	0.1439	0.3634	0.3137
18	0.1908	0.4084	0.0579	0.4714X
19	0.4577	0.3235	0.2147	0.2666
20	0.4533	0.3645	0.3218	0.1151
21	0.1442	0.2084	0.3768X	-0.1227
22	0.1449	0.0104	0.4644X	0.0775
23	-0.0237	0.3187	0.6089X	0.4092
24	0.4546	0.5972X	-0.2198	0.0797
25	-0.1028	0.7165X	0.1828	-0.1132
26	-0.0549	0.1011	0.7638X	-0.1109
27	0.4926X	0.1119	0.0961	0.293
28	0.0359	0.1049	0.7138X	0.0166
29	0.2353	0.5136X	0.1981	0.2176
30	0.2901	-0.3442	0.2184	-0.1456
31	-0.1385	-0.059	-0.0129	0.2193
32	0.0144	-0.1804	0.7185X	0.0571
33	-0.0539	-0.1748	-0.0016	0.6625X
34	0.4178	0.4063	0.0811	-0.1069
35	0.3949	-0.003	0.1123	0.5382X
36	0.2197	0.7248X	-0.1621	-0.3984
37	0.0896	-0.049	0.6152X	0.0525
38	-0.0049	0.7779X	0.1002	0.1009

**Factor Interpretation**

In Q methodology, factor interpretation requires an examination of factor arrays.

Factor arrays are determined by the factor scores which are derived from the computation of factor weights to determine how specific Q sorts' high saturations can contribute significantly to the final factor scores in the factor arrays (Watts & Stenner, 2012). The factor scores are measured as z-scores that have been tabulated and converted into whole numbers ranging from -4 to +4 through 0 (McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Watts & Stenner, 2012), (Table 5).

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According to Watts and Stenner (2012), factor interpretation needs to be thoughtfully anchored in a holistic approach to Q factor arrays through the logic of abductive process (Brown, 1980; Stephenson, 1953, 1967, 1993; Watts & Stenner, 2012; Zangwill, Kohlberg, & Brenner, 1972). Stephenson (1953, 1993) recognized that observations are not absolute or concrete; they are more like “clues pointing towards some potential explanation” (Watts & Stenner, 2012, p. 39), giving us insights to the observed phenomenon. For the study, factor interpretations rely on the factor arrays with the Q sample statements and the qualitative written responses from the participants’ post sort questionnaire embedded in the end of the Q sort. The researcher identified, examined, described, and interpreted each of the four prominent perspectives emerging within the four factors in the study.

The examination and description of the four factors resulted in identifying the name representing each factor and included a description of their demographics and a narrative into the development of factor names. After examination and analysis of the data, the four factors concerning how teachers perceive how best to support student well-being in the elementary classroom were named: Factor 1— Supporting Well-Being Through Encouraging Relationships, Factor 2— Supporting Well-Being Through Structure and Routine, Factor 3— Supporting Well-Being Through Attending to the Whole Child, and Factor 4—Supporting Well-Being Through Making Time to Nurture Students.

The discussion and descriptions of each factor begin with a description of the statistical characteristics of each factor (eigenvalues and explained variance) and an introduction of each factor’s participants’ demographics, including race/ethnicity, gender, age, level of education, teacher training, and number of years teaching. Following factor participant demographics is the factor description based on the factor scores and the statements for each factor array. To enrich

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the description of each factor (Appendix U), the qualitative written responses from the participants explaining the reason for their  $\pm 4$  statements gathered from the post-sort questionnaire are woven into the discussion. These responses provide not only a relevant narrative context to further support the explanation for each of the factors (Watts & Stenner, 2012) but also elevate the participants' voices. The responses add more contextual meaning toward the discovery of how teacher perceive how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom.

**Table 8***School Information*

Sort ID	Grades Served	# of Students	% Proficient in Reading	% Proficient in Math	SES %	% of Teachers in 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Years
1	K-5	575	56	77	55	2.9
2	PK-5	1056	72	76	41	22.4
3	PK-5	857	73	84	43	20.6
4	K-5	1042	74	75	29	10.8
5	K-5	540	77	87	35	6.1
6x	K-8	2384	62	39	41	86.5
7	PK-5	807	67	71	30	14.0
8	PK-5	408	34	42	88	26.5
9	PK-5	550	47	65	64	10.8
10	PK-5	636	34	57	81	31.6
11	PK-5	512	57	82	53	45.1
12y	K-5	244	72	72	2	25.8
13	PK-5	366	32	37	79	100.0
14	K-5	585	62	80	39	35.7
15	PK-5	409	67	72	25	21.6
16	K-5	515	62	77	49	7.4
17	PK-5	697	60	73	43	21.8
18	PK-5	427	23	38	84	46.4

x-Virtual School  
y-Charter School  
SES% - Percentage of Low Socio-Economic Status

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***Factor 1: Supporting Well-Being through Encouraging Relationships***

Factor 1 accounted for 12% of the study's explained variance and 5 of the 38 participants loaded significantly on this factor. As illustrated in Table 10, Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 1, 1 participant was a Black female and 4 were White females. In terms of age, 1 participant was between 26-35 years of age, 2 were between the ages of 36-45 years of age, and 2 were 56 or older. Their educational backgrounds included 3 participants with a bachelor's degree, and 2 participants with a master's degree. One (1) participant had been teaching for 6-10 years, 2 teachers had been teaching for 16-20 years, 1 teacher has been teaching for 21-25 years, and 1 for 36-40 years. One participant received their teacher training through a bachelor's degree in teacher education; two received their teacher training through alternative certification; one received their training through a post bachelor's program; and one participant indicated receiving their training in other. These participants reported that the percentage of students of color in their classroom were, 1 – less than 10%, 1 – 21-30%, 1 – 31-40%, 1 – 80-90%, and 1 – more than 90%. In response to the Likert Scale item (Table 9) designed to elicit whether participants believed teachers' roles included nurturing student well-being ("Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom"), 2 teachers agreed with this statement and 3 teachers strongly agreed. In response to the item "Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students"; 1 teacher did not answer, 3 responded that they "neither disagreed nor agreed," and 1 strongly agreed with this statement. Participants on this factor responded to the prompt, "I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices and behaviors in order to support student well-being in my classroom" in the following ways: 1 teacher did not answer, 3 teachers disagreed, and 1 teacher indicated that she "neither disagreed nor agreed" with this statement. Finally,

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participants on this factor responded to the Likert item “I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being” as follows: 4 teachers agreed, and 1 teacher strongly agreed with this statement.

**Table 10***Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 1*

Sort ID	Race	Gender	Age	Edu Level	Yrs. Teaching	Training
2	Black	Female	59	Bachelors	37	alt. cert (in)
4	White	Female	32	Bachelors	7	B in TE
5	White	Female	43	Masters	17	post BA
6	White	Female	60	Bachelors	17	alt. cert (in)
27	White	Female	65	Masters	25	other

Participants who comprised Factor 1 collectively expressed the perspective that student well-being is best supported in the classroom through encouraging relationships. Those on Factor 1 viewed encouraging relationships in two different senses. First, this perspective expressed that student well-being is best supported when teachers encourage students through affirmations, communicating support to them, and expressing care. Second, the Factor 1 perspective also included practices, strategies and behaviors that encourage healthy and supportive relationships among students in the classroom. As with the other three factors resulting from this study, this factor theme and description of supportive relationships was based on the following data: factor arrays, participant responses to the post-sort questions, and the demographic and other background data provided by participants.

The Factor 1 perspective emphasized teacher practices, behaviors, and strategies that build encouraging relationships with and among students. One of the Q sample items that occupied a space in this factor array’s “+4” column, representing a teacher behavior viewed to

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“best support student well-being in the classroom,” was Statement 27 (*I tell students that I care deeply about them and their well-being, not just their academic success*). This statement expresses the strong association those teachers comprising this perspective made between supporting student well-being and encouraging them by expressing care within the relationship. It is notable that through their responses on post-sort questions related to the sorting choices they made, teachers on this factor not only associated student well-being with encouraging relationships, but they also associated student well-being with stronger academic performance. For instance, one of the teachers who loaded on this factor elaborated in her post-sort responses regarding this statement by writing that “If they know you truly care, they will try harder.” Another teacher on this factor also commented on Statement 27 by writing that “I think kids want to perform better for you if they know you care about their heart and not just our scores.”

The central focus in this perspective of encouraging students through the teacher-student relationship to support well-being is also expressed by other statements. Statement 15 (*I affirm students in different ways throughout the year (e.g. Positive phone calls/texts to family members, giving shout-outs and awards, etc.)*) was a +3 in this factor array. This statement represents another strategy for building and sustaining encouraging relationships, this time through encouraging praise. The other two +4 statements in this factor array represent two other strategies for encouraging students to support their well-being. Statements 35 (*I teach students to believe their abilities and talents can grow over time if they work at it (i.e. Growth Mindset)*) and 24 (*I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – both in and out of school.*) both demonstrate the importance within this Factor 1 perspective to encourage students. Statement 35 represents the importance of not encouraging students through teaching them to believe in themselves, while Statement 24 represents the act of encouraging students to seek out



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help and the qualifier phrase of “both in and out of school” extends its meaning beyond the academic realm, to holistic health beyond the school walls.

The idea of encouraging relationships within the Factor 1 perspective extended beyond the teacher-student relationship to the relationships among students. Also prominent in the Factor 1 perspective were practices, strategies and behaviors that encourage healthy and supportive relationships among students in the classroom. Statements 8 (*Students and I develop classroom norms together for how we will treat each other.*) and 6 (*I provide a private way for students to express concerns they have concerning the class and those we share it with (e.g. Suggestion mailbox, anonymous question/comment box, etc.)*) were both +3 statements in this factor array, thus representing practices these teachers deemed to be effective in supporting student well-being. Taken together, these practices both focus on how students can learn to be intentional about their relationships with each other, including the importance of expressing concerns they might have with one another. These statements were further reinforced by two other statements, this time in the +2 column. Statements 26 (*I teach students about relationships including how to build positive ones and protect themselves from negative ones.*) and 17 (*I establish and reinforce rituals and routines.*) again demonstrate the association these teachers make with practices that directly teach about relationships as well as establish and reinforce class structures that remove unneeded ambiguity from relationships within the classroom.

In contrast, the teachers comprising the composite Factor 1 perspective did not view practices, behaviors, and strategies that extended beyond relationships with and among students as being as supportive of student well-being. For instance, practices and strategies more commonly viewed as being culturally responsive were among those least supportive of student well-being. Statements 25 (*I express curiosity and appreciation for students' unique cultural*

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*backgrounds.*), 31 (*I connect students and their families to resources and supports that are available to them in the school, district, and community.*), and 10 (*I build strong relationships with students' families.*) were -4s and -3 in the factor array. Two of these teachers wrote comments describing why they placed less value in expressing curiosity and appreciation for students' home cultures. One wrote that "It's important to know cultural backgrounds, but it's not something that needs to be focused on at all times," while the other simply noted that "This is an area where I am weak." These comments present very different reasons behind the low-ranking of this statement. The first teacher seemed to communicate that such a focus on students' distinct cultural backgrounds is ancillary to their well-being. The second teacher's comment seemed to be more of an admission of a lack of aptitude in doing in being to express curiosity and appreciation. Regardless, both seemed to align with the relatively lower regard for building relationships with students' families, a key component in understanding and appreciating students from a cultural standpoint, an interesting dynamic given the centrality of other relationships within this perspective.

All but one of the remaining statements that were -4s and -3s in this factor array reflected strategies and practices that attend to students beyond their academic selves. For instance, Statement 7 (*I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it.*) was elaborated on by two teachers in this factor. One wrote that "I model a strong work ethic but that lacks intentionally nurturing my own well-being at times." She was communicating that she understood the idea and purpose of modeling behavior for students, but she focused more on behaviors related to academic effort. The other teacher who commented on this statement expressed genuine confusion around this item, but like the other teacher she shifted focus to idealized workplace behaviors. She wrote: "I'm not sure what intentionally nurturing myself

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looks like? I think showing up on time, consistently being there, dressing professionally, all speak for themselves and are expected.” Participants comprising the Factor 1 perspective did not seem to value strategies and practices that support student well-being if they fell outside of the most conventional. This included even the instruction of strategies students might use to become more in control of their own emotions (Statement 13, *I teach students strategies for self-regulating emotions (e.g. Feeling charts, reflection, etc.)*).

How the Factor 1 teachers perceived these practices and strategies for supporting student well-being seemed to have been influenced by a certain rigidity in how they viewed their roles. This rigidity can be seen in their collective rejection of strategies seemingly in opposition to the orderly classroom they associated with student well-being. This can best be seen in the low ranking of Statement 1 in the factor array (-3). Statement 1 (*I provide students with as many choices as possible within the classroom and our learning activities.*). Two teachers explained their decision-making regarding the low value for student choice, with one displacing responsibilities while the other questioned its value. One teacher wrote that “Our district curriculum does not allow as many student choices” while the other explained that “I don’t see any big impact with giving a lot of choices” elaborating that when choices are offered they result in students choosing options that “they can complete quickest and easiest.”

As a result of the Factor 1 perspective focus around practices, behaviors, and strategies that represent encouraging teacher-student and encourage student-student relationships, while rejecting other practices that fall outside those relationships and traditional teacher practices, the researcher named Factor 1: Supporting Well-Being through Encouraging Relationships.

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***Factor 2: Supporting Well-Being Through Structure and Routine***

Factor 2 accounted for 13% of the study's explained variance and 9 of the 38 participants loaded significantly on this factor. As illustrated in Table 11, Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 1, 3 participants were Black females and 6 were White females. In terms of age, 1 participant was between 25 or younger, 1 was between ages 26-35, 1 was between the ages of 36-45 years of age, 4 were between ages 46-55, and 2 were 56 or older. Their educational backgrounds included 8 participants with bachelor's degrees and 1 with a doctorate. One (1) participant had been teaching for less than 5 years, 1 between 5-10 years, 1 between 16-20 years, 2 between 21-25 years, 1 teacher had been teaching for 26-30 years, 1 between 31-35 years, and 1 more than 36 years. Eight participants received their teacher training through bachelor's degrees in teacher education and one participant indicated "other" teacher preparation. These participants reported that the percentage of students of color in their classroom were, 1 – less than 10%, 2 – 21-30%, 3 – 31-40%, 1 – 80-90%, and 2 – more than 90%. In response to the Likert Scale item (Table 11) 0 designed to elicit whether participants believed teachers' roles included nurturing student well-being ("Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom"), 6 teachers agreed with this statement, 2 teachers strongly agreed, and 1 did not respond. In response to the item "Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students"; 1 teacher did not answer, 2 strongly disagreed, 1 indicated she "neither disagreed nor agreed," 3 agreed, and 2 strongly agreed with this statement. Participants on this factor responded to the prompt, "I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices and behaviors in order to support student well-being in my classroom" in the following ways: 3 teachers disagreed, 3 agreed, and 3 strongly agreed. Finally, participants on this factor responded to the Likert item "I have the

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skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being” as follows: 1 teacher disagreed, 2 neither disagreed nor agreed, 1 teacher agreed, and 5 teachers strongly agreed with this statement.

Participants who comprised Factor 2 expressed the viewpoint that student well-being is best supported in the classroom through structure and routine. The Factor 2 perspective was constructed around the overarching idea that student well-being can best be supported through the reduction of stress and anxiety that can accompany the establishment and maintenance of a highly structured classroom that includes established routines and rituals, including behavioral approaches to classroom management, rather than through learning experiences and practices that more directly and overtly support wellness. Notably, with one exception, the teachers who comprised this perspective were experienced teachers. Collectively, they averaged over 23 years of teaching experience even with one outlier who was in her first year.

The Factor 2 perspective emphasized teacher practices and strategies built around and supporting a highly structured classroom to support student well-being. The strategy deemed most supportive (+4) of this aim within this collective perspective was *I establish and reinforce classroom rituals and routines* (Statement 17). Multiple teachers who comprised this perspective provided individual context for this statement. One of these participants wrote that “Students need to be free to explore. However, I feel that they do so best when they feel they have a firm foundation upon which they can rely.” This teacher associated the freedom of students to explore as learners with well-being and that the best way to support that freedom is through a highly structured learning environment. This notion was supported by another teacher on this factor who explained that “rituals and routines help to set an atmosphere more conducive to learning.” A third teacher on Factor 2 provided similar context when she wrote that “if you don’t have

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structure and stability, you can't effectively teach the students anything. They need to have consistency in their lives and know that they don't; have to try and figure out what will be happening each day."

To the Factor 2 perspective, a highly structured classroom that supports student well-being should include behavioral approaches to managing a classroom. This idea was expressed through the position of Q sample statement reflecting another practice identified collectively by these Factor 2 participants was Statement 29 (*I use a behavioral management approach that focuses on positive behavior and positive reinforcement (e.g. A points system, "catching students being good," etc.)*). The use of behavior approaches to classroom management that are built around operant conditioning through positive reinforcement creates a great deal of structure for students in a classroom so this statement's place under the +4 column further develops this theme within the Factor 2 perspective and it served as a key method for understanding its complexity. In this respect, Factor 2 participants made meaning around other practices or strategies through the lens of structure and routines.

One example of how the Factor 2 perspective emphasis on structure and routine framed how this perspective perceived other practices and strategies was reflected in the remaining +4 statement, that represents a practice viewed as "most" supporting student well-being. Statement 12, *I use cooperative learning where students must work together to accomplish their learning/project goals*, does not on its face seem to align with the overall theme of structure and routine until participant descriptive comments are considered. One participant's post-sort comment was instructive. She wrote that "cooperating, compromising, civilly expressing disagreement, appreciating others – all these things are missing in the world and need to be taught and reinforced from a young age." Here again, the ideas of structure and routine emerge

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again in the context of the well-being that accompanies learning how to navigate the world with others.

The focus on structures and routines was demonstrated in the strategies, practices, and behaviors the Factor 2 participants next most viewed as being supportive of student well-being. Despite the items in this factor's +3 column focused on substantially different practices, strategies, and behaviors; individually on recognizing and connecting with students, ensuring students know how they are performing academically, and supporting the development of help-seeking behavior; collectively they all resonate with the underlying theme of structure and routine. For instance, Statement 9, *Every morning I greet each student by name and welcome her/him into class*, is a way to connect and recognize students, but it is doing so through routine and ritual. Likewise, Statement 4, *I make sure students know exactly where they stand grade-wise on assignments and for the term*, represents another routine. In this case, one that helps students know their academic standing, but also take more ownership over their performance and how its assessed. The encouragement of students' own routines in seeking assistance in and out of school was similarly embodied in Statement 24, *I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – in and out of school*.

Conversely, the Factor 2 perspective identify practices, strategies, and behaviors that more directly attend to student well-being as being as useful. The items that were in the -4 column of this factor array represented the classroom use of mindfulness, providing opportunities for play, and direct instruction around the importance of well-being. The practice represented by Statement 20, *I use mindfulness techniques, tools, or strategies (e.g. Yoga, meditation, brain breaks, etc.)*, was dismissed in several ways. One participant wrote that "this is often seen as a break and the students play too much." This response communicated the belief

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that mindfulness practices were too akin to “play” and thus an inherent breakdown of structure in the classroom. Similarly, Statement 19, *I make sure students have opportunities to learn through play*, was viewed as being too intrusive on the time demands of other curricular content - “There simply isn’t time” - or as something outside of personal comfort as a teacher. This was reflected by a participant who wrote that “This is just not my personality. We do have fun in our learning, but I tend to be on the serious side.” Finally, the idea of directly teaching about well-being was dismissed as something better taught by parents and family. One participant explained this by writing, “Generally, I think this is something that should be taught and reinforced at home.”

The Factor 2 perspective focused on structure and routine in the classroom to best support student well-being. The practices, strategies, and behaviors identified as being most supportive of student well-being were either directly providing, establishing, or reinforcing routines and structures, or they were interpreted to doing so, albeit more distally. Interestingly, practices, strategies, and behaviors that seemed more directly designed to impact student well-being were not considered to be as supportive. As a result, the researcher named Factor 2, Supporting Well-Being through Structure and Routine.

**Table 11***Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 2*

Sort ID	Race	Gender	Age	Edu Level	Yrs. Teaching	Training
1	White	Female	35	Bachelors	10	B in TE
3	White	Female	46	Bachelors	18	Other
7	Black	Female	58	Doctorate	35	B in TE
15	White	Female	63	Bachelors	41	B in TE
24	White	Female	53	Bachelors	31	B in TE
25	Black	Female	23	Bachelors	1	B in TE
29	White	Female	45	Bachelors	23	B in TE
36	White	Female	48	Bachelors	24	B in TE
38	Black	Female	50	Bachelors	27	B in TE



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***Factor 3: Supporting Well-Being through Attending to the Whole Child***

Factor 3 accounted for 12% of the study's explained variance and 9 of the 38 participants loaded significantly on this factor. As illustrated in Table 12, Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 3, 2 participants were Black females, 6 were White females, and 1 was a White male. In terms of age, 2 participants were between ages 26-35, 2 were between the ages of 36-45, 3 were between ages 46-55, and 2 were 56 or older. Their educational backgrounds included 7 participants with bachelor's degrees and 2 with master's degrees. One (1) participant had been teaching between 5-10 years, 2 between 11-15 years, 1 between 16-20 years, 1 between 21-24 years, 2 between 26-30 years, and 2 between 31-35 years. Six (6) participants received their teacher training through bachelor's degrees in teacher education, 1 through a post-bachelor's program, 1 through an alternative certification program, and 1 participant indicated "other" teacher preparation. These participants reported that the percentage of students of color in their classroom were, 1 – less than 10%, 1 – 11-20%, 5 – 31-40%, and 2 – 50-60%. In response to the Likert Scale item (Table 9) designed to elicit whether participants believed teachers' roles included nurturing student well-being ("Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom"), 4 participants strongly disagreed, 1 participant agreed with this statement, and 4 participants strongly agreed. In response to the item "Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students"; 1 participant did not respond, 1 participant disagreed, 2 neither disagreed nor agreed," 4 participants agreed, and 1 strongly agreed. Participants on this factor responded to the prompt, "I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices and behaviors in order to promote student well-being in my classroom" in the following ways: 1 participant strongly disagreed, 1 participant disagreed, 2 neither disagreed nor agreed, 1 participant agreed, and 5 participants

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strongly agreed. Finally, participants on this factor responded to the Likert item “I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to promote student well-being” as follows: 1 participant did not respond, 1 participant disagreed, 2 participants agreed, and 4 participants strongly agreed.

**Table 12***Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 3*

Sort ID	Race	Gender	Age	Edu Level	Yrs. Teaching	Training
11	White	Male	39	Bachelors	17	B in TE
12	Black	Female	49	Bachelors	26	B in TE
21	White	Female	47	Bachelors	24	B in TE
22	Black	Female	49	Bachelors	26	B in TE
23	White	Female	57	Bachelors	32	B in TE
26	White	Female	34	Bachelors	13	B in TE
28	White	Female	38	Bachelors	15	alt. cert. (in)
32	White	Female	32	Masters	10	other
37	White	Female	57	Masters	35	post BA

The Factor 3 perspective was built around the idea that student well-being is best supported through attending to the whole child. There was a balance to the practices and strategies this perspective identified most effective in supporting student well-being. These ranged from providing time to play, establishing rituals and routines, and building relationships with families. This balance was further communicated in these participating teachers’ descriptive comments they provided following their sorts. Relative to the study, the participants on Factor 3 were more diverse as they included a male teacher and along with both White and Black female teachers. These participants also had considerable teaching experience with the fewest years being 10 and 3 participants had taught more than 25 years.

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The balance in the Factor 3 perspective toward supporting student well-being was reflected in the diverse array of practices and strategies perceived to be most effective. For instance, this perspective placed great emphasis on the importance of working closely in relationship with students' families as expressed by one of the +4 statements in the factor array. Statement 10, *I build strong relationships with students' families*, was explored extensively by participants in their post-sort responses. One participant wrote that "a good relationship with parents helps promote the learning and well-being of their child." Another participant elaborated on just how she believed strong relationships with families helped to support student well-being by writing that "parents knowing that we're all on the same team is the best way I've found for families to buy into what I'm delivering." Underlying the importance of this practice within this perspective was the importance of congruence between students, families, and teachers and the communication that support it.

At the same time, the Factor 3 perspective also emphasized the importance of routines and rituals (Statement 17: *I establish and reinforce classroom rituals and routines*.). One participant on this factor wrote that this was "needed to keep behaviors under control and so that students know what is expected of them." Another also stressed the importance of rituals and routines, noting that "It sets a tone and shows students what is expected." This practice, which was prevalent in the preceding two factors was viewed similarly by the Factor 3 participants, but in yet was not a core element of most of the other highly valued practices like building strong relationships with families and creating space for play. Unlike Factor 2, the Factor 3 perspective saw value in both structure and play. Statement 19, *I make sure students have opportunities to learnt through play*, was also a +4 statement in Factor 3 and the teachers who comprised this view did not see it in conflict with classroom management and learning. In contrast, the teachers

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on Factor 3 explained that it is through play that powerful learning takes place for students. One of the participants explained this by writing, “the best learning takes place when students don’t even realize what they are doing is learning!” Another shared this understanding and added that she believed that play should be considered a need, writing that “kindergarten students need to play, and they learn a lot through play! It also makes school fun, and they WANT to come to school.”

The next most important practices and strategies for the Factor 3 perspective were similarly diverse in nature. The +3 statements ranged from the *use of behavioral management approaches and positive reinforcement in the classroom* (Statement 29), to *building in time for students and them to share important things about their lives* (Statement 14), to *ensuring that time was made for physical activity* (Statement 36). The descriptive comments participants left to explain these practices and strategies further support the factor emphasis that students are not just academic learners, but whole and multifaceted human beings. In describing the importance of Statement 14, *I build in time for students and me to share important things about our lives (e.g. Morning meetings, sharing time, etc.)*, one participant wrote that

Most people (even our littlest ones) want to be heard. Some are excited to come to school just to share what they did over the weekend. They want to celebrate with their friends, as well as get emotions that are bothering them off their chest. If this can all be released (in a sense) at the beginning of the day, they are more ready for success.

This participant’s comments reflect the understanding that students are people and that understanding must then be enacted through practices and strategies that acknowledge and honor the wholeness of what a person is and can be. The attention paid to the whole child within the Factor 3 perspective is also reflected in Statement 36, *I make sure to make time for physical*

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*activity*. In some ways, this perspective could be summed up by its relative embrace of one more statement, which was a +2 in its factor array. Statement 27, *I tell students that I care deeply about them and their well-being, not just their academic success*, was elaborated on by a participant in her post-sort response who wrote that “don’t just tell them, show them you care.” In Factor 3, care is shown by incorporating practices and strategies for well-being that acknowledge the fullness and wholeness of children’s lives.

Similarly, to the diverse assortment of practices and strategies the Factor 3 perspective valued as being most helpful in supporting student well-being, the nature of the strategies and practices this perspective found least valuable were also diverse. These ranged from making sure students know where they stand with their grades (Statement 4), to providing private ways for students to express concerns (Statement 6), to helping students explore their own agency to change their own lives (Statement 28). The descriptive comments provided by the Factor 3 participants indicated that they did not necessarily see less value in these practices and strategies. For example, one participant noted that some of the practices and strategies he sorted into the less helpful columns were really more due to time constraints. He wrote in reference to Statement 28, *I help students explore the power they have to change their own lives or circumstances*, that “I’m not against this. There is just no time to teach this and everything else. More and more responsibility is piled on to the teacher with not assistance, funding, time, or training.” Other teachers noted that they teach early elementary so that some of the practices were of less or little value. This was expressed by another participant when she wrote that “kindergarteners should not be worried about grades at all in reference to Statement 4, *I make sure students know exactly where they stand grade-wise on assignments and for the term*.

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Another participant expressed similar sentiments and added that “younger elementary students are egocentric and think everything they do is great. They don’t really understand grades.”

The Factor 3 perspective embraced a wide range of practices and strategies as most supporting student well-being. These diverse practices and strategies are rooted in the Factor 3 understanding that children in school are more than just students whose lives and growth should only be understood in only academic ways. The Factor 3 perspective favored practices that support students’ physical well-being, that strive for deep relationship with parents and families, that endeavor to establish rituals and routines in classrooms. As a result, the researcher named Factor 3, Supporting Well-Being through Attending to the Whole Child.

### ***Factor 4: Supporting Well-Being through Making Time to Nurture Students***

Factor 4 accounted for 10% of the study’s explained variance and 7 of the 38 participants loaded significantly on this factor. As illustrated in Table 13, Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 4, 2 participants were Black females, 2 participants were White females, 2 participants were Black males, and 1 participant was a White male. In terms of age, 2 participants were between 36-40 and 5 participants were between 41-45. Their educational backgrounds included 2 participants with bachelor’s degrees and 5 with masters. In terms of teaching experience, 1 participant had been teaching between 6-10 years, 2 between 11-15 years, and 4 between 16-20 years. In terms of teacher preparation, 4 participants earned bachelor’s degrees in teacher education, 1 participant earned a post-bachelor’s in education, 1 went through an alternative certification program, and 1 indicated “other” teacher preparation. These participants reported that the percentage of students of color in their classroom were, 1 – 21-30%, 2 – 31-40%, 1 – 51-60%, 1 – more than 90%, and 1 did not respond. In response to the Likert Scale item (Table 9) designed to elicit whether participants believed teachers’ roles

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included nurturing student well-being (“Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom”), 1 neither disagreed nor agreed, 1 agreed, and 5 strongly agreed. In response to the item “Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students”; 1 participant disagreed, 2 participants neither disagreed nor agreed, 1 participant agreed, and 3 strongly agreed. Participants on this factor responded to the prompt, “I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices and behaviors in order to promote student well-being in my classroom” in the following ways: 6 participants agreed and 1 strongly agreed. Finally, participants on this factor responded to the Likert item “I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to promote student well-being” as follows: 5 participants agreed, and 2 participants strongly agreed.

**Table 13***Demographic Information of Participants Loading on Factor 4*

Sort ID	Race	Gender	Age	Edu Level	Yrs. Teaching	Training
9	White	Female	44	Bachelors	17	B in TE
13	White	Male	44	Masters	16	B in TE
14	Black	Male	39	Masters	11	post BA
16	Black	Female	41	Masters	15	B in TE
18	Black	Male	39	Masters	16	alt. cert (in)
33	White	Female	44	Bachelors	19	other
35	Black	Female	41	Masters	10	B in TE

The Factor 4 perspective was built around the idea that student well-being is best through teachers making time to nurture them. Unlike previous study factor perspectives that demonstrated a focus on relationships with and among students, or focused on classroom structure and routines, or even a focus on addressing holistic needs of students, this collectively held perspective was focused on students themselves and how to nurture them. The practices and strategies that were viewed to best support student well-being by this perspective almost

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exclusively involved focusing time on students in nurturing ways. Notably, participants on Factor 4 had the most gender balance, with 3 men and 4 women. Like the previous factors, these Factor 4 participants were experienced teachers. The participant with the least years of experience still had taught for 10 years and the most experienced teacher had 19 years of experience.

The statements that were viewed by this perspective as being most effective in supporting student well-being each centered on making time to nurture students. This emphasis was seen clearly in the +4 statements in this factor array. Statement 14, *I build in time for students and me to share important things about our lives (e.g. Morning meetings, sharing time, etc.)*, was one of these statements. This statement explicitly expresses the practice of being intentional about ensuring that class time is used to elicit and honor students and teachers' stories. Similarly, Statement 30, *I spend focused time with students who are experiencing difficulty or are having problems*, represents a strategy that is about providing the resource increasingly perceived to be scant in the classroom: time. The importance of this practice was described by one of the Factor 4 participants when he wrote that "this allows students to know you care about them on a personal level." Time was again invoked in the final +4 statement in this perspective's factor array. While Statement 35, *I teach students to believe their abilities and talents can grow over time if they work at it (i.e. Growth mindset)*, does not focus on dedicating individualized time to nurture students, it does emphasize the instructional strategy of teaching students to understand that they can and should expect their gifts to expand, their abilities to improve, and their talents to grow. Notably, this form of instructional practice cannot be enacted in composite, large group instruction. Its use is predicated on individual time with students in ways that leverages a knowledge of their individual gifts.



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The practices and strategies that were viewed by the Factor 4 perspective to be next most effective in supporting student well-being (+3s) undergirded the focus of individual time with students with strong relationship building. These relationships focused on students, their families, and the relationship between students and their capacities to make changes in their own lives. Statement 10, *I build strong relationships with students' families*, signaled the understanding within this perspective that the benefits of individual time with students can both yield and be supported by stronger relationships with parents and families. Another +3 Q sample statement in the factor array was Statement 27, *I tell students that I care deeply about them and their well-being, not just their academic success*. The emphasis on expressing “deep” care about students and their well-being beyond academics represents an understanding of individual students that requires individual knowledge. That type of individual knowledge is developed through teachers being purposeful about spending individual time with students.

This purposeful time spent with individual students provides other opportunities for deeper work with them, one of example of which is the remaining +3 statement in this factor array, Statement 28 (*I help students explore the power they have to change their own lives or circumstances*). This type of student-focused and -directed teaching around student agency is another example of a practices and content domain that demands focused time nurturing the development of individual students. Within the Factor 4 perspective, Statement 28 provided a context for the remaining practices and strategies perceived to best support student well-being once the time has been committed to nurture them. These practices and strategies all represent different ways for helping students develop more agency in their lives. Statements 2, *I give students many opportunities to use their voices and express themselves – and then really listen to what they say*, and 24, *I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – both in*

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*and out of school*, both represent practices designed to help students develop agency through encouraging and magnifying their voices. Similarly, although Statements 21, *I teach students that making mistakes is an important part of learning and that they can grow from them*, and 13, *I teach students strategies for self-regulating their emotions (e.g. Feeling charts, reflection, etc.)*, focus on supporting student development in growing more comfortable in making mistakes and managing their emotions, this development can be viewed as subskills that support greater agency, which in the Factor 4 perspective is supported first and foremost through making time to nurture students.

Given the emphasis of the Factor 4 perspective on viewing the support of student well-being through the initially and primarily making time to nurture students, the practices and strategies that were collectively deemed less useful in supporting student well-being were not surprising. These Q sample statements included strategies and practices that make time for play (Statement 19), *providing context for curricular content* (Statement 22), and *including students in the development of classroom norms* (Statement 8). One of the Factor 4 respondents encapsulated this perspective toward these items when he provided context for Statement 8, *Students and I develop classroom norms together for how we will treat each other*. He wrote that “It is not that these are least effective, it’s just that it’s more important to build a foundation first.”

The Factor 4 perspective was situated around the importance of being purposeful in making time to get to know and subsequently nurture the development of individual students in the classroom. In this collective view, practices and strategies that nurture students, and their development are considered to be the most important as they provided a foundation for other approaches for supporting student development in more specific ways, but each contributing to

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the development of student agency. As a result, the researcher named Factor 4, Supporting Well-Being through Making Time to Nurture Students.

***Consensus Statements***

In a Q Methodology study, the main sources of data are the factors that are produced. Those factors, or distinct viewpoints comprised of study participants who viewed the phenomenon at hand in statistically similar ways, are then examined and described based on the holistic representation of the viewpoints as expressed by the relative positioning of the opinion statements within each resultant factor array. In addition to these data, and the incorporation of participant responses to questions and prompts inviting them to comment on their sorting processes and the demographic or background information from those participants, examination and exploration of consensus items can also provide insight into how individual Q sample items might have been perceived *across* factors. Consensus items, then, are Q sample items that occupied a statistically similar place across and within the factors. These are the items where there was consensus across those viewpoints represented by the statistical factors.

For this study there were 5 consensus statements (Table 14). These consensus statements were positioned on both the right (“+” or most effective) and the left (“-“ or least effective) ends of the forced distribution or factor arrays. Statement 24, *I teach students that it’s okay to ask for help when they need it – both in and out of school*, represents a practice that was viewed by each factor as being effective in supporting student well-being. This practice involves the purposeful affirmation of students through a variety of methods. Like many consensus statements, this statement was contextualized somewhat differently across factors illustrating the mechanism within Q methodology allowing individual statements to hold meaning based on the perceivers’ understanding in non-standardized ways. In this case the strategy of teaching students about the

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value and importance of seeking help was viewed through distinct perceptual lenses characterized by each of the unique study factor perspectives.

Table. 14

*Consensus Statements*

#	Statement	Position in Factor Arrays			
		Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
3	I make sure students know that I am on their side and will support them.	2	1	1	1
7	I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it.	-3	-2	-2	-1
15	I affirm students in different ways throughout the year (E.g. positive phone calls/texts to family members, giving shout-outs and awards, etc.).	3	2	2	2
21	I teach students that making mistakes is an important part of learning and that they can grow from them.	3	2	1	2
24	I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – both in and out of school.	4	3	2	3

The other two consensus statements that occupied spaces in forced distribution representing strategies and practices viewed by all four Factors as being supportive of student well-being were Statement 21, *I teach students that making mistakes is an important part of learning and that they can grow from them* and Statement 15, *I affirm students in different ways throughout the year (E.g. positive phone calls/texts to family members, giving shout-outs and awards, etc.)*. While the purpose of Q methodology is to identify the distinct, collectively held perspectives that exist in the flow of communicability around a topic, there can be some value in also understanding the elements that may be shared across perspectives.

In this study, each of the factor perspectives saw value in these practices that involved affirming students in various ways, teaching students that making mistakes is valuable to learning, and the importance of asking for help. These practices have long been enacted and

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valued in classrooms, unlike others that have emerged in this country only more recently like mindfulness practices, or situate focus more on teachers' own well-being, as is the case with Statement 7, which was universally viewed as being less helpful in supporting student well-being. This practice, *I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it*, is rooted not only in the valuable pedagogical technique of modeling, but also in the importance of self-care. In this era of unprecedented stress and anxiety produced from educating during an international pandemic, this practice seems to be all the more valuable despite it not being viewed as such by the perspectives identified here.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 described the results of this study. These results included the statistical procedures used to identify, extract, and rotate the four factors for this study. These statistical procedures included identifying the correlations between individual Q sorts, submitting those correlations to factor analysis, and then extracting and rotating those factors. The process for determining the 4-factor solution used in this study was also described. The four factors that were extracted were then examined systematically and described based on the factor arrays for each, along with the descriptive comments provided by participants following the performance of their Q sorts, as well as the demographic and background characteristics of the participants who comprised each factor.

Following this rigorous and systematic examination and analysis of the data, four factors representing how elementary teachers perceived how best to support student well-being in the elementary classroom were named: Factor 1: Supporting Well-Being through Encouraging Relationships, Factor 2: Supporting Well-Being through Structure and Routine, Factor 3:

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Supporting Well-Being through Attending to the Whole Child, and Factor 4: Supporting Well-Being through Making Time to Nurture Students.

In the next and final Chapter 5, the researcher will discuss the data findings and their relation to literature as presented in Chapter 2 with the inclusion of comparison and contrast of the factors and any themes that emerged from the analysis. In accordance with Q methodology, the study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare operant subjective perceptions shared by elementary classroom teachers regarding the most effective ways to support student well-being. The study addressed the following research question: *What are the collectively held perspectives held by elementary teachers regarding the practices and strategies best support student well-being in the classroom.* In addition, the researcher will explore the relationship between and among the four factors in this study as well as discussing the implications the results of this study hold for further research, theory, and practice, including practical recommendations. Finally, the research will explore study strengths and limitations and culminating and summarizing thoughts.

## Chapter 5

In Chapter 5, the researcher will discuss the data resulting from this study, their relation to literature as presented in Chapter 2; implications this study and its results hold for practice, theory, and future research; limitations that emerged; and finally, a context for the need for similar research as well as concluding thoughts. In accordance with purpose of Q methodology, this study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare operant subjective perceptions shared by elementary classroom teachers regarding the most effective ways to support student well-being. The study addressed the following research question: *What are teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom?* Previous chapters introduced the study and its context (Chapter 1), explored the literature pertinent to the study (Chapter 2), described the methodological approach and procedures used to execute it (Chapter 3), and provided and described the results (Chapter 4).

### Discussion

This Q methodology study aimed to rigorously and systematically examine and analyze the subjective perspectives elementary teachers shared around the practices and strategies that best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. This study began by creating a set of sortable items called a Q sample. The Q sample is a set of opinion statements regarding a topic or idea. For this study, the Q sample was constructed around classroom strategies and

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practices that support student well-being. This study's Q sample was produced from two sources: the existing literature and from the responses from (Appendix P) 38 participants at the first stage of this study. This process resulted in 103 items (Appendix S) that were then systematically reduced to a 38 item Q sample reflecting a diverse range of practices and strategies for supporting student well-being in the classroom. The 38 items in the Q sample were then sorted into a forced distribution by 38 participants based on what they believed were most and least effective. Teacher voice was central and critical to the success of this Q sample. Building the concourse and the Q sample were totally created with teacher voice and input. These sorts were then correlated with one another and those correlations were factor analyzed, a process resulting in the extraction of four statistically distinct, collectively held perspectives each representing a nuanced composite view on how best to support student well-being within elementary school classrooms. Using a systematic process for examining and describing these four factors, the researcher named them in ways that reflected their dominant themes. These names were: Factor 1: Supporting Well-Being through Encouraging Relationships, Factor 2: Supporting Well-Being through Structure and Routine, Factor 3: Supporting Well-Being through Attending to the Whole Child, and Factor 4: Supporting Well-Being through Making Time to Nurture Students.

### **Exploration of Study Factors and Their Relationship with One Another**

Each of the four factors produced for this study represented complex viewpoints on how to best support student well-being in the classroom. These four factor viewpoints were not only distinct from each other from a statistical standpoint, but there were clear differences conceptually as well. The Factor 1 perspective, named Supporting Well-Being through Encouraging Relationships, focused on practices and strategies that were intended to strengthen connections and quality of interactions between teacher and students, as well as among the



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students themselves. This Factor 1 perspective seemed to represent an understanding that the quality of the social environment of the classroom is what produces or at least allows for those in it to experience a sense of well-being. Given the emphasis on relationships *in the classroom*, it is notable that this factor placed little emphasis on strategies and practices focusing on relationships *outside of the classroom*. Specifically, participants in this factor did not associate building strong relationships with students' families with student well-being as reflected by the placement of Statement 10 in the -3 column of the factor array. It is also notable that this perspective saw the least value in expressing interest in the cultural backgrounds of students than any other factor given that developing relationships with students' families is one of the most effective ways to learn about them culturally. Statement 25, *I express curiosity about and appreciation for students' unique cultural backgrounds*, was a -4 in this perspective's factor array. As noted in chapter 4, two of the participants who loaded on this factor commented directly on this strategy with one minimizing its use by writing "It's important to know cultural backgrounds, but it's not something that needs to be focused on at all times," while the participant disclosed that "This is an area where I am weak."

In contrast to the focus on relationships with Factor 1 and the students themselves in Factors 3 and 4, the Factor 2 perspective was constructed around a focus on the classroom itself rather than the people in it. This perspective on how to support student well-being, named Supporting Well-Being through Structure and Routine, emphasized practices that established and reinforced order and routine in ways that reflect very high structure. Interestingly, even when these teachers identified effective strategies that appear to represent relational approaches, they emphasized the routine and ritual element of those practices. For instance, this Factor situated Statement 9, *Every morning I greet each student by name and welcome her/him into class*, as a

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+3 statement indicating they believed this was a highly effective practice. The emphasis on this statement within this factor perspective was that it was a predictable routine *every morning*. This factor perspective on teaching is one that, like the other three in this study, will likely seem familiar to those in education. The archetypal highly organized, orderly, and structured teacher who may be as relational as others but provides students with the security of always knowing just where they stand.

It is also notable that the Factor 2 perspective was unique in its appreciation for the effectiveness of incorporating cooperative learning (Statement 12). Statement 12 was a +4 in this factor array, but was a -2, -1, and -2 in Factors 1, 3, and 4 respectively. This instructional approach seemed ill-fit for this perspective given its overall emphasis on high structure and routine. However, it may be that *because of* the overall structure and routine in Factor 2 classrooms that a more socially complex and interactive teaching and learning approach can be meaningfully incorporated. With the exception of one first year teacher, the participants on Factor 2 had significant teaching experience with three having had taught more than 30 years. Teaching is demanding work and for anyone to be able to sustain careers in it exceeding 30 years one would imagine the importance of teachers maintaining their own well-being. For teachers who perceive that student well-being is best supported through the establishment and maintenance of such routines and rituals in their classes, it would be interesting to examine how such routine and structure might also support their well-being.

More than the other three factors, the Factor 3 perspective was more inclusive of a more diverse array of strategies and practices for supporting student well-being. Unlike the other three factors, this more holistic conception of student well-being incorporated emphases on both play and physical activity. Statement 19, *I make sure students have opportunities to learn through*

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*play*, was a +4 statement in Factor 3, but was not viewed as being effective in the other three based on the positioning of this statement in the other factor arrays (Factor 1, -2; Factor 2, -4; Factor 4, -3). The relative rejection of this strategy or practice in the other groups should be noted given what is known about child cognitive, emotional, and social development. Perhaps expectedly, this factor perspective was also the one to perceive the incorporation of physical activity as an effective means toward student well-being. Statement 36, *I make sure to make time for physical activity*, was a +3 in this factor array, but was only a +1 for Factor 1, a -3 for Factor 2, and a -4 for Factor 4. While participants in other factors expressed concerns that practices involving play or physical activity would be disruptive to the class and learning experiences, participants in Factor 3 understood play and physical activity to be central components to learning in the classroom. The participants who comprised Factor 3 were not different from those on the other factors in terms of their considerable years of experience as teachers, these participants did indicate a belief that they had more autonomy in their classrooms than did the participants on other factors. It may be that this belief helped support their use of play and physical activity because they felt less constrained by concerns that they stray from increasingly proscribed curriculum and pacing is not allowed. Also, although the grade level or levels each participant taught was not requested, a couple of these participants disclosed that they taught lower grades so it may be that the use of play and physical activity are viewed as being more permissible with younger students.

Finally, Factor 4 was the perspective that focused much more on nurturing individual students as the best way to support their well-being. This perspective leveraged practices reflecting individualized attention with students and that intentional use of time and one-on-one relationship building was activated to promote and support student development of agency and

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autonomy concerning their well-being. Demographically, this was also the most diverse perspective overall, but particularly regarding gender as there were nearly as many men (3) as women (4). This is worth exploring given that Factors 1 and 2 did not include any men and only one other man contributed to a factor structure. Given that few men participated in this study, any conjecture regarding the impact of gender on how elementary teachers perceive the best ways to support student well-being, however their presence on Factor 3 should be noted. In contrast to many broader gender stereotypes in this country, this factor that was more inclusive of male participant perspective focused much more directly on actual strategies that help students understand and manage their own emotions. .

### **Study Results and the Extant Scholarship on Student Well-Being**

In Chapter 2, the researcher explored the scholarly literature focused on ways student well-being is supported in the elementary classroom. Literature determining whether practices/strategies/behaviors were “most effective” or “least effective” were sparse. That is, while there were many conceptual articles exploring or describing practices and strategies that might support student well-being or concepts associated with it, there were fewer studies that evaluated the outcomes or impacts of these practices. One of the themes from this literature was the idea and expectation that teachers are responsible for student well-being, primarily through early identification of children with mental health issues (Rothi, Leavey & Best, 2008). The importance of early identification is viewed as paramount in providing students with mental health issues the support and treatment that was needed (Desrochers, 2015; Rechtschaffen & Rechtschaffen, 2015). This emphasis in the literature and now through most state and district policies, it is remarkable that *connecting students and families to resources and supports that are available to them* (Statement 31) was not a strategy or practice that was emphasized as being

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effective in any of the study factors. The respective placement of Statement 31 in the four factor arrays was: -4 for Factor 1, -2 for Factor 2, -1 for Factor 3 and +1 for Factor 4. It may be that the teachers in this study did not have the knowledge and skills to identify such mental health issues in their students, and that is why the practice of connecting them to useful resources was not identified as an effective practice. Regardless, organizations, such as the National Association of Mental Illness, (NAMI, 2018) who have been strong voices in the importance of not only early identification and treatment, but also that key school personnel should match students with effective services and supports. Such collaboration is paramount to establishing life-long healthy behaviors and well-being and does not take away from student academic development as the tie between academic success and health outcomes has also been established (CDC, 2015).

Despite the relatively large amount of academic literature focused either on student well-being or the importance of teacher self-care, there are few studies or conceptual articles linking the two explicitly. One notable exception to this was Noddings (2015) noting that care for oneself as an educator was also an important factor in supporting student well-being. Just as few previous studies have examined direct associations between teacher and student well-being, the four factor perspectives in this study also did not reflect an understanding that the two might be linked. For example, Statement 7, *I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it*, occupied spaces in columns -3, -2, and -1 indicated that the participants who comprised these four views saw little value in this practice for supporting student well-being. A number of participants elaborated on this topic further in their post-sort descriptive comments. Although nuanced, overall these participants seemed genuinely puzzled by how to model well-being in purposeful ways. For example, one of these participants wrote she was unsure “what intentionally nurturing myself looks like?” She continued by speculating

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that such modeling might possibly include “showing up on time, consistently being there” and “dressing professionally.” Still another seemed to associate well-being with basic professional behaviors but seemed to also be somewhat aware that this was not quite getting to the idea of well-being. She wrote that “I model a strong work ethic but that lacks intentionally nurturing my own well-being at times.” These tenuous and specious associations between “hard work” and well-being seem to communicate a basic lack of basic understanding of the construct of personal well-being and practices, strategies, and behaviors that might support it. Perhaps just as troubling were other participant comments regarding their relative lack of value for modeling well-being for students. In response to Statement 7, one of the participants wrote that “While I do think students need to see me working on my own well-being, in 2nd grade, they are not as focused on it. I do try to model healthy eating, but that is all I take time for in the class.” The nature of vicarious learning that occurs in early elementary classrooms from students observing their teachers seemed to be absent from this teacher’s understanding. In general, the comments by teachers about modeling well-being seemed to demonstrate fairly underdeveloped thinking about the topic, a sentiment perhaps best demonstrated by another participant who simply wrote that “I’ve never really thought about doing this in my classroom.”

There are a number of implications around the participants’ murky understandings of well-being – both their own and their students. First and foremost, it doesn’t appear that these teachers know how to take care of themselves. The question then is why don’t they? One contributing element might be the absence of such emphases in teacher preparation programs and in-service training and learning. Anecdotally, there was never a course in the researcher’s teacher preparation program that focused either on social-emotional learning or on self-care, two important components of personal well-being. Although this study was conducted prior to the

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COVID-19 crisis, the pandemic and the immense stress and anxiety it has helped produce make any such curricular absences all the more troubling. However, maybe the demands of educating during this pandemic might help better expose what this study seems to indicate is a substantial deficit amongst educators: the lack of knowledge and skills in cultivating their own self-care and the well-being it supports. After all, if you cannot take care of yourself, how can you take care of anyone else?

Participant reactions to the idea that student well-being can be supported through helping them discover ways they can take more control over the circumstances of their lives were also notable for what they seem to also communicate about their understanding of the purposes of education and child and youth development. Statement 28, “I help students explore the power they have to change their own lives or circumstances,” was a +3 for Factor 4, but no higher than a “0” in the other three study Factors. One participant wrote that she was not opposed to helping students explore the power they have to change their lives, but “there is just no time to teach this and everything else. More and more responsibility is piled on to the teacher with no assistance, funding, time, or training.” The implication here is that there is insufficient knowledge and resources in order to help students in this way. Another echoed the frustration of not seeming to have the time to nurture student agency, while still valuing empowerment more broadly. She wrote, “I hate to have this one as a least important and I do believe in empowering students, but I feel that it is important for a teacher to differentiate between helping a student understand the difference between changing their circumstances and changing their reaction to their circumstances.” It is important to consider that one implication of this teacher’s comments is that students, American youth, may not have the capacity to change their circumstances and thus should only be taught how they respond to them. What appears lost in such a belief is the

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inherent civic purpose of public education: namely that schooling should also be about preparing people to be active and engaged citizens capable of exerting power and influence over their lives and the systems that permeate them.

Another participant seemed to approach some proximity to an understanding that “agency” involves being empowered to influence one’s world when she wrote that “Fortunately, the population that I work with is relatively stable and affluent, so I have not had a lot of need to do this. I feel that if I worked in a differently neighborhood, this would be a more effective strategy than in my current school.” Aside from the insinuation that affluence equates to stability, her comment implied an understanding that advocacy and the agency that fuels it are important, albeit only to those who are marginalized (e.g. the “non-affluent”). These participant responses to just this one Q sample item illustrates the complexity of how teachers view or contextualize educational practices. This example demonstrates how an item produced in the context of supporting student well-being, seemed to also reveal participant misunderstandings of central assumptions and goals of social studies education. These misunderstandings varied, but all are concerning. When some participants rejected the idea of supporting the development of student agency, they also revealed their assumptions of student developmental readiness, pessimism about the possibilities of changing one’s own life, and the inequitable idea that such emphases are only needed for those schooling in “other,” less “stable and affluent” neighborhoods. To drive this point home, one participant even questions whether working to develop student agency was even an “appropriate course of discussion in a public school” at all.

Given that participant comments to an item around student agency revealed more global assumptions that seemed to indicate poorly informed understandings of social studies education, it should be less surprising that attitudes toward a practice like yoga would reflect



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misunderstandings and misinformation, Statement 20, *I use mindfulness techniques or approaches (e.g. Yoga and mindfulness)*, was -3 for Factor 1, -4 for Factor 2, and a 0 for both Factor 3 and Factor 4. Although many other researchers from various disciplines have, like Hagen and Nayar (2014), found that yoga was effective in teaching children to listen to their bodies to find emotional balance which would lead them to becoming contributing members of society or like Bath (2008) that teachers are responsible for teaching self-management of calming techniques to manage one's emotions and impulses, the participating teachers in this study did not convey such understandings. Based on the handful of participant responses to this item, it appeared their understanding of yoga was distorted and incomplete. Specifically, participant comments indicated they see yoga and mindfulness activities not as strategies for emotional self-regulation, cognitive discipline, and focus, but rather diversions from the real "work" of learning. For instance, one participant wrote that "I'm pretty serious and tend to push everyone to work as hard as they can. I also teach four classes a day, so in that hour I honestly don't think to much about breaks." Similarly, another participant noted that "This is often seen as a break and the students play too much." There may be a regional element to these misunderstandings. Yoga and other mindfulness practices are much more deeply rooted on the West and East coasts of this country, as opposed to the Southern context in which these participants teach.

Finally, it is also interesting to explore some of the nuances expressed by participants collectively and individually around how the idea of relationships and their value in supporting student well-being. The literature is clear that relationships play a role in our well-being. However, more research is needed to be done to better understand the role relationships play in supporting our well-being. For instance, Hodas, (2006), and the U.S. Department of Veteran

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Affairs, (2015) supported the need for psychological first aid and supporting those coping with stress to aid in building relationships. Asay and Lambert (1999) designed research that more directly explored the importance relationships play in helping support student well-being.

Perhaps what relationships can do to support student well-being is to create more of a sense of emotional safety, an idea which dates back to Maslow identifying safety as the first pillar in what many might now consider trauma-informed care (Bath, 2008; Maslow, 1954). In order for students to feel safe within the school, their holistic needs - physical, social, and emotional, and academic – must all be addressed (Cole, Greenwald, O'Brien, & Gadd, 2005). Teachers obviously play a critical role in creating classroom structures that provide accepting and safe environments (Brown et al., 2006; Kerig, Fedorowicz, Brown & Warren, 2000; Ozkol, Zucker & Spinnazzola, 2011; Ray, 2014). In this study, participants seemed to react in complicated and uneven ways to practices, strategies, and behaviors linked to relationships. For example, all but one of the four factors highly valued Statement 10, “I build strong relationships with students’ families.” Conversely, the more equity- and justice-oriented Statement 38, *I use restorative practices that help repair relationships between students when damage has been done*, did not occupy a place in a “+” column in any of the four factors. As a researcher and a life-long public educator, I found this unevenness both puzzling and fascinating given the central place relationships play in my own efforts as a teacher.

### **Study Implications**

The rich data produced through this Q methodology study provided a nuanced and holistic representations of four distinct approaches elementary teachers take to supporting student well-being. These perspectives and the diversity among them hold a number of implications for teacher and teacher educator practices, for educational policy, and for future

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research. While student well-being has long been a consideration within schools and classrooms, recent events and phenomena including acts and threats of lethal school violence, greater awareness on the prevalence and impacts of trauma – including racial, and the difficulty and shock of educating during a pandemic make these implications of heightened importance now.

### *Implications for Practice*

The results of this study should have implications on practice. Research might now always directly affect educational policy, but it can affect educational change by influencing teacher practices, beliefs, and strategies. The growing knowledge base on social-emotional learning may ultimately have an effect on instructional practice, through professional development offered by schools and districts. It is hoped that this study and its results might help current teachers and those involved with preparation programs to think through their own efforts to support student well-being in more purposeful ways. It is significant that the Q sample items in this study were largely drawn from practicing teachers providing strategies, practices, and behaviors they believed best support student well-being. Similar efforts could be undertaken in schools, districts, or preparation programs in order for individuals and the organizations to have increased reflective focus on what they may or may not be doing.

Another implication can be drawn from many of the comments participants provided indicating that there were many practices and strategies they viewed as helpful and useful in supporting well-being, but they did not believe they had the time to enact. Time is a major factor for schools and districts. There is a limited number of hours for professional development by school districts from the school, and then teachers have to access and utilize in their off-hours. More pressing, the time to implement practices and strategies during the school day – particularly when they are viewed as ancillary to the core academic curriculum - is a major

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roadblock for teachers. This roadblock comes from many sources, most directly from district and administrative directives that prescribe bell-to bell instruction of increasingly pre-packaged curriculum, as well as from broader state and national testing demands. It should be troubling to everyone that teachers do not seem to feel as if they have the time to nurture student well-being, particularly now that the COVID-19 crisis has forced more attention on the well-being of students attempting, like all of us, to navigate this time safely.

The perceptions teachers hold regarding the lack of time to nurture more holistic student development was perhaps best essentialized in this study through reactions to items related to play. Many of the participants in this study either did not recognize the fundamental importance of play or expressed concerns that there was no time to incorporate it into students' days. This is partially structural. Many schools have limited teachers on the amount of time they can provide to students for recess because of testing demands. There are also preparation challenges. For instance, play through instruction only happens when teachers are comfortable in their teaching setting or environment. Too many teachers still have concerns about noise levels in their classrooms and the belief that administrator perceptions toward play is that it amounts to little more than off-task behaviors. It also appears that many of the teachers in this study did not understand that physical activity does not necessarily translate to recess or free play, but rather than it can mean brain breaks and other stimulating activities (Statements 36 and 19). Again, as a lifelong educator, this researcher was surprised by many participant perceptions toward the inclusion of physical activity as the researcher has made sure students have opportunities to learn through play in her classrooms.

In addition to addressing perceptions and realities of insufficient time, advocacy needs to be a priority for professional development and for research-based programs on social-emotional

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learning that can support student well-being. Likewise, given the importance of better supporting student well-being, advocacy should also include more thorough and thoughtful reviews of initiative implementation before layering one initiative on top of others. Such sloppy implementation often creates substantial conflicts in the design and application of initiatives designed to help strengthen student well-being. This may be an opportunity for teacher unions and school districts to come together to collectively advocate for programing, training, and school restructuring that can better address teacher needs that can help them better support social-emotional learning and student well-being.

School leadership matters. It is a necessity that administration works to create a climate of supporting student well-being. Some ways they can do this is by scheduling common planning time, creating community partnerships, establishing availability of professional development or appropriate coaching, and maintaining classroom coverage (Craig, 2016). In addition, administrators should design or enlist professional development and create more opportunities for collaboration as both have been identified as keys to making any initiative successful.

Finally, a larger and sustained conversation should happen nationally and locally regarding student well-being and whether and how schools and educators can or should be responsible for it. Across all 4 Factors, 70% of the participants in this study supported the statement in the post-sort questionnaire that *teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom*. That obviously means that close to one third did not view student well-being as part of their responsibility as a teacher. Should not the definition of teaching be inclusive of being responsible for student well-being? Perhaps here again, teacher beliefs in being responsible for student well-being is closely tied to self-care. Maybe we simply cannot take care of others until we are able to take care of ourselves.

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*There Is No “One Size Fits All”*

Regardless of the designed goals or objectives, it is critical that school districts implement the initiative and curriculum that best suit the needs of their community, as there is not one program that meets the needs of everyone. There are a limited number of research-based social-emotional learning curriculums available. More and more curriculums are becoming available, because the needs of students are changing at national, state and district levels, yet they often lack the criteria of being research-based. As pushes grow for such programs to be available and implemented, it is critical that districts and schools collect their own student well-being data for review, which would aid in the process of being research based.

Unfortunately, many of these changes are happening because of an increase in violence incidents. Fortunately, educators and the communities that they serve, have realized the positive impacts that social-emotional learning have on students. By addressing the issue earlier in elementary schools and in a positive way, the hope is a lasting impact. There is not one curriculum or one approach that is best for all school districts. However, research has shown that one initiative after another is usually layered upon schools, and that has been found to be ineffective. To utilize human, as well as, financial equity, it is most beneficial for a school district to employ one initiative. This will help provide support and data collection expectations for the schools.

More encouraging was that eighty-three percent of the teachers loading on all four factors in this study agreed with the statement that “I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being.” As both a researcher and a practitioner, I was surprised that this percentage was so high. On one hand, a greater percentage of participants in this study believed they had the skills and knowledge to

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support student well-being than believed it was their responsibility to do so. If many did not have coursework in teacher preparation programs on social-emotional learning, where did these teachers learn and acquire these skills? One implication is that these participants were drawing from experiential knowledge rather than more research-based strategies and practices they could receive in pre-service coursework or in-service professional development. At the same time, effective professional development in this area might do well to surface and possibly integrate current teacher knowledge regardless of its sources, particularly as it appears teachers have been largely doing the best that they can to support student well-being without much formal support themselves.

This reality of teachers working in isolation without support to nurture student well-being should also be considered by administrators. Currently it may be argued that teachers choose student well-being practices that support their own well-being, or at least garnered from their lives outside of their professional work. The further reality may be that administrators themselves have deficiencies in the area of well-being. As a result, this ignorance is manifest as a lack of oversight rooted in hazy or inaccurate understanding of the need for social-emotional learning. As a result, administrators may not even be aware of teacher behaviors, practices and strategies being utilized within their own building. The possibilities of such systemic and systematic ignorance seem to further signal the importance of stronger assessment efforts within districts, within schools, and among school personnel and students in order to better inform program development or adoption, and implementation. Data collected from comprehensive and meaningful assessment would be critical for the curriculum decision-makers at the district level. Such assessments would likely also support the idea that for student well-being one size does not fit all.

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### *Implications for Policy*

The results of this study should have implications on policy. Research often does not directly affect educational policy, but it can affect educational change by influencing at the school level. The growing knowledge base on social-emotional learning may ultimately influence policy, through advocacy of legislators, school districts and teacher unions.

As different agencies examine the effects of a pandemic on educational institutions, policies are sure to be developed. Adaptations of distance learning and its effect on students, teachers, families, schools and school districts are sure to have an impact on state mandated testing, graduation requirements, and school district policies, while incorporating and managing student well-being virtually. The pandemic forced school districts to enact policies seemingly overnight. From the distribution of computers, hotspots for connectivity, virtual curriculum adaptations, to name a few, became connected and balanced out to prioritizing student well-being in a matter of days.

Time is a major factor for schools and districts. There is a limited number of hours for teaching and learning by national, state, and local school district mandates. The implementation of these mandates effect time constraints for teachers and school funding. Teachers are charged with teaching the mandated curriculum, as well as, creating the space and philosophy of a social-emotional curriculum to benefit the students. Beginning teachers may struggle with time balancing and incorporating the two curriculums. The ideal would be blending the two curriculums to create the desired environment of a focus on student well-being.

Advocacy needs to be a priority for legislators, school districts and teacher unions on the need and implementation of social-emotional learning curriculum. It's important that the collective voices of students, teachers and school districts are heard at the local, state, and



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national levels. This advocacy may bring about policy change, like the implementation of D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse and Resistance Education) did in the late 1980's and 90's and Response to Intervention (RtI) has had this last decade. The pandemic has brought about a new need for advocacy. Connecting with students virtually and ensuring their well-being has brought a new advocacy to the forefront. Parents as teachers, household sharing laptops, protective gear, COVID pre-cautions, hazard pay, are some of the issues that the pandemic has raised, in addition to social-emotional needs, all of which need to be advocated.

### *Districts or States Defining “Well-Being” So It Can Be Measured*

The results of this study should have an effect of the creation of a common definition of student well-being. More research and the creation of curriculum should help push society towards a common definition. A common agreed upon working definition of well-being needs to be in play to address all needs of students. Well-being that covers the balance of one's mental, physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and occupational states. A common definition is necessary, so that the goals and objectives are aligned with the evaluation instrument.

Fifty percent of the teachers loading on all 4 factors expressed a belief that “inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students.” Either 50% did not understand the question, and/or understand inequity was, and/or was coming from a place of privilege.

### *Curriculum*

The results of this study should have an effect of the creation of more curriculums on social-emotional learning. Advocacy at the local, state, and national levels should communicate the need for more curriculum on social-emotional learning. Again, more research and the creation of curriculum would aid society towards the greater need for social-emotional learning.

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Unfortunately, most districts “patchwork” initiatives into the curriculum, instead of providing a uniform curriculum that addresses all needs of supporting student well-being (Spratt, Shucksmith, Philip & Watson, 2006). Collaboration was needed between all stakeholders for the effectiveness of any school-based program (Zucker, 2012). Effective schooling must be linked to mental health for school-based programs to be successful, and site-based leadership, not teachers, must take the lead in this implementation (Atkins, Hoagwood, Kutash, & Seidman, 2010).

Sixty-three percent of the teachers loading on all 4 factors agreed to the idea that they have they “have autonomy to implement strategies or practices behaviors to support student well-being in their classroom.” Given mandates of bell to bell instruction, increased curricular specializations, increased demands from the integration of technology, I am surprised that teachers are reporting that they have the autonomy to support student well-being. The question of whether they do implement then needs to be asked.

### ***Commitment Through Policy***

The results of this study should have commitments through policy. The commitment needs to be a funded mandate, so that schools do have to secure funding to implement a social-emotional curriculum. Research often does not directly affect educational commitments through policy, but it can affect society at the local, state, and national levels advocate for funded mandates. school level.

More research is needed on the role that trauma plays in schools (Payton et al., 2000). Schools faced implementation issues such as, poor coordination, time constraints and lack of support amongst stakeholders (Payton et al., 2000). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (n.d.), reported that professional development should include attention to

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relationships, classroom strategies, and understanding of the dynamics of violence, which created a teacher-centered work environment, which was modeled through administration, which in turn affected the school climate and would ultimately affect policy. Leadership was key to managing the change factor of the culture of the school (Craig, 2016). Prior policies from states on the implementation of programs to support student well-being have all been done to address one problem, such as, bullying, and therefore do not address the whole child and all of their emotional and mental needs (Payton, et al., 2000).

Whole school approaches shifted the focus from the well-being of one to the support and well-being of everyone, creating a positive, school climate, and sharing a joint responsibility of the support of student well-being (Payton et al., 2000; Sisask, et al., 2014). One district prioritized spending so that it met professional standards and provided professional development for everyone, to have successful school-wide mental health program (Desrochers, 2015).

### *Implications for Research*

The results of this study should impact future research. This is important and timely research because it teaches and reaches the whole individual – child and adult. Given the recent unfortunate events in history have direct implications to the value of social-emotional research. From the murder of George Floyd to an unjust and reckless government response to a legal Black Lives Matter protest, to the pandemic, to the mass shooting in Parkland and unfortunately many more tragedies across the nation, the need for social-emotional research is ever more critical.

Within policy initiatives, the role of teachers needed more research (Kidger, Gunnell, Biddle, Campbell & Donovan, 2010). Dykeman (1994) reported that most instruments to address student well-being were made by adults and from the adult perspective as to what children need. Kang-Yi, Mandell, and Hadley (2013) identified the need to improve the reporting of data, as to

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how schools measured outcomes to report success, as there were little differences between the programs, as they all had positive outcomes.

Further studies might explore this topic through Q Methodology by shifting the condition of instruction. For example, it would be beneficial to find out what strategies teachers use, as opposed to exploring what they believe they should do in the classroom. Other research could ascertain whether teachers think and believe that supporting well-being is beneficial to students as well as how frequently student well-being needs to be addressed. Beyond teacher perceptions regarding the use, value, and importance of strategies, practices, and behaviors intended to support student well-being, research should be completed examining the impact such strategies, practices, and behaviors have on both students and teachers. Moving further from the purview of teachers, research assessing what students think is effective for themselves would likely be informative. Finally, because school and district administrators both enable and inhibit classroom practices, further research should be completed on determining school administrators attitudes toward supporting student well-being, as well as what specifically they believe to be useful or helpful.

### **Study Limitations**

This research had limitations that future research should address. There are currently few Q studies that have been completed in the area of teacher perceptions on social-emotional learning. The demographics on this research posed several study limitations. One is that this study had a definite lack of male participants. Even though elementary schools have a low number of male teachers, it would be interesting and beneficial research to examine their perceptions on social-emotional learning. All the participants for this research taught in one school district. Likewise, it would be interesting and beneficial research to examine the

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perceptions of teachers from different regions and states. There may be geographical variations in how teachers are prepared to understand student well-being and social-emotional learning. As was explored previously, yoga was not a frequently utilized strategy in this research, however in a California district, it might be utilized more frequently. This research also had a large percentage of teachers that were older and had served more years of experience. Participants representing different levels of experience and different ages might hold different perspectives on student well-being, particularly when it seems that this study's participants drew their perspectives at least as much from their lives outside of school than they did professional training and preparation.

### *Definition of Term for the Post-Sort Responses*

It may have been useful and helpful for the term "equity" to be defined and clarified for participants. The researcher was surprised such a small percentage of participants indicated agreement with the item "Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students" on the Likert-scored post-sort questionnaire. The provision of such a definition might have clarified whether respondents were responding to this item from a place of unacknowledged privilege, antipathy toward the idea of educational equity, or through a basic lack of clarity as to how inequity in education manifests itself. Without such clarity, the researcher is not sure that these responses are truly reflective of the respondents' beliefs.

### *More Clarity for Sorters and The Condition of Instruction*

Rather than participants engaging in online Q sorts, the researcher could have been administered the Q sorts for this study in-person either individually or in small groups to ensure greater understanding of the directions and to be present to address any misunderstandings. This

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might have helped ensure that the teachers were really answering the Q sort based on what they used in the classroom, rather than what they believed to be most effective in the ideal. Although either conditions of instruction and research questions could lead to strong and meaningful studies, greater clarity with the condition of instruction would have strengthened this study.

### *Nature of Self-Reports – Including Sorts*

When collecting data, there is always a risk of error when taking self-reports. The importance of building of relationships, as a strategy was skirted in the concourse. If there is any one skill or strategy that is of more importance than the others, it is the building of relationships. It is all about the relationships that we build with our students and within our classroom. Many teacher preparatory programs do not address Maslow's theories in educational psychology programs. If teachers are not taught the importance of safety, they will not be able to address the needs of their students. At-risk students come to school to sleep because it is a safe environment. At-risk students come to school to eat, because at many schools they are promised 3 meals every day. Safety is the building block of Maslow's Hierarchy. It is the primary need of every individual, on which the rest of learning and living are based.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 5, the researcher discussed the data resulting from this study, their relation to literature as presented in Chapter 2; implications this study and its results hold for practice, theory, and future research; limitations that emerged; and finally, a context for the need for similar research as well as concluding thoughts. In accordance with purpose of Q methodology, this study was designed to identify, describe, analyze, and compare operant subjective perceptions shared by elementary classroom teachers regarding the most effective ways to support student well-being. The study addressed the following research question: *What are*

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*teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom?*

Previous chapters introduced the study and its context (Chapter 1), explored the literature pertinent to the study (Chapter 2), described the methodological approach and procedures used to execute it (Chapter 3), and provided and described the results (Chapter 4).

### ***The Chapter***

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions on how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms. Q Methodology is the best research instrument to explore perceptions, which is why it was utilized. This chapter addressed implications and limitations resulting from this study.

We know from research that many behaviors for at-risk students begin at the ages in elementary schools. Yet, almost all interventions and supports do not begin until middle school and are most prominent in high schools. Student well-being needs to begin to be addressed at the elementary school level and provided to all students, to support the well-being of all students. Mental health or student well-being are all buzz words today in society. From school shooters to a global pandemic, education and supports to all affected people are being offered to address mental health issues. Media is being employed to spread the word that “you are not alone” or to please reach out to these resources within your community. Anti-bullying campaigns are springing up everywhere. Teaching communication skills is integral to counter a society that focuses on “snitches” and the consequences of communication to adults. Connecting students’ families to community resources is critical for families that might not know how to access or navigate the system.

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### ***A Growing Body of Literature***

There is research on individual strategies and their effectiveness, but there are few curriculum choices. These curriculum choices do not come with the necessary funding for human equity and the professional development for schools and school districts to be effective. Educational legislative mandates frequently are unfunded, making it necessary for school districts to find the funding.

### ***Importance of Student Well-Being, but Also to Support Learning***

There is not just one strategy that can be implemented in the classroom and be solely effective on supporting student well-being. Many of the strategies need to be implemented to be part of the structure of the classroom to be effective for most students. The rituals and routines support that structure, and the personality of the teacher is the icing. When all these pieces are in place, learning can truly take place and is proven to increase student learning.

### ***A Focus on Well-Being Can Literally Mean Life or Death***

Supporting student well-being is a non-starter in setting up any classroom in today's times. Our students are facing more uncertainties, more trauma, more change, more violence, and more anger than ever before. Teachers need to provide students with strategies to deal with stress, disagreements, and their own anger and insecurities. The classroom is a microcosm of our larger society. How to listen, how to decompress, how to communicate, and how to work together are essential skills learned in the classroom to apply to real life. A focus on student well-being will produce more balanced and productive citizens. Teachers modeling self-care becomes crucial in demonstrating to students how to tend to their own well-being. Wearing masks and disinfecting are extensions of how society is dealing with the pandemic. Discussions about the murder of George Floyd and other Black citizens are crucial to have with students and other



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racial injustices. Systemic racism needs to be eradicated; however, it must be identified first.

Frank conversations and modeling are the only way students today are going to be able to process the current events. This is social-emotional learning. Therefore social-emotional learning and a focus on student well-being are so critical in today's world.

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## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Table 1***Abbreviations and Definitions*


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Abbreviation	Definition
ACA	– American Counselor Association
ACEs	– adverse childhood experiences
ADHD	– attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
APA	– American Psychiatric Association
ASCD	– Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
ASD	– autism spectrum disorder
CASEL	– Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning
CDC	– Center for Disease Control
CDF	– Children Defense Fund
CPS	– Child Protective Services
CSH	– coordinated school health
DOE	– Department of Education
DSMV	– Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5 <sup>th</sup> edition
EBD	– emotional and behavioral disorder
ESE	– exceptional student education
ESMH	– expanded school mental health
GPA	– grade point average
IDEA	– Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IDEIA	– Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

IEP – individualized education plan

MDT – multi-disciplinary team

MTSS – multi-tiered system of supports

NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness

NCTSN – National Child Traumatic Stress Network

NIH – National Institute of Health

NYSED – New York State Education Department

OCD – obsessive compulsive disorder

PBIS – Positive Behavioral Instructional Supports

PFA – psychological first aid

PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

RtI – response to intervention

SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SBMH-PP – school based mental health promotion and prevention program

SEL – social emotional learning

SLD – specific learning disability

SW-PBIS – school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports

WHO – World Health Organization

WSCC – Whole School Whole Community Whole Child

---

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

*Humphrey's Rule*

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Cross Product of Two Highest Loadings	.46	.59	.54	.51
Standard Error	.16	.16	.16	.16
Difference	.30	.43	.28	.35
Standard Error x 2	.92	1.18	1.08	1.02

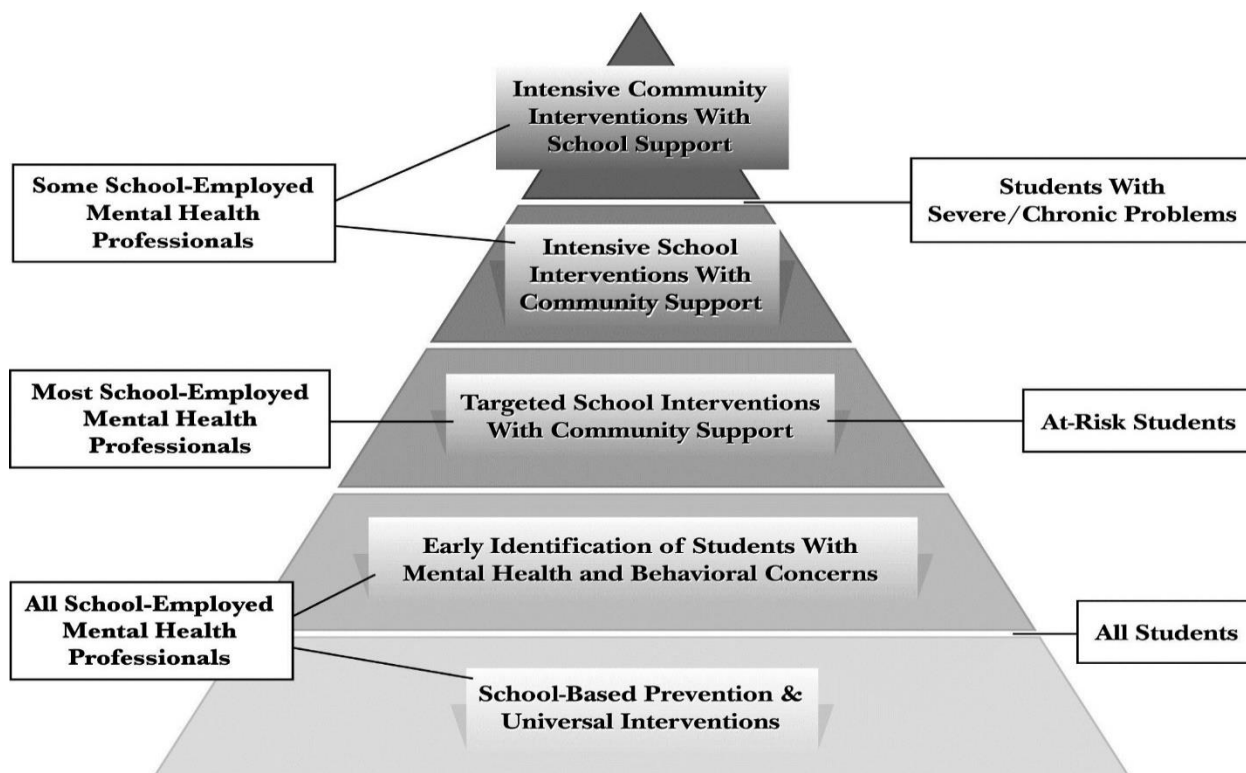
## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Table 9***Likert Scale Questions included in Q-sort Questionnaire*

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1. Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom.  
Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree 1-5
  
  2. Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle-class students.  
Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree 1-5
  
  3. I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices or behaviors to support student well-being in my classroom  
Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree 1-5
  
  4. I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being.  
Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree 1-5
-

## Appendix A



### The Continuum of School Mental Health Services

Adapted from "Communication Planning and Message Development: Promoting School-Based Mental Health Services" in *Communique*, Vol. 35, No. 1, National Association of School Psychologists, 2006.

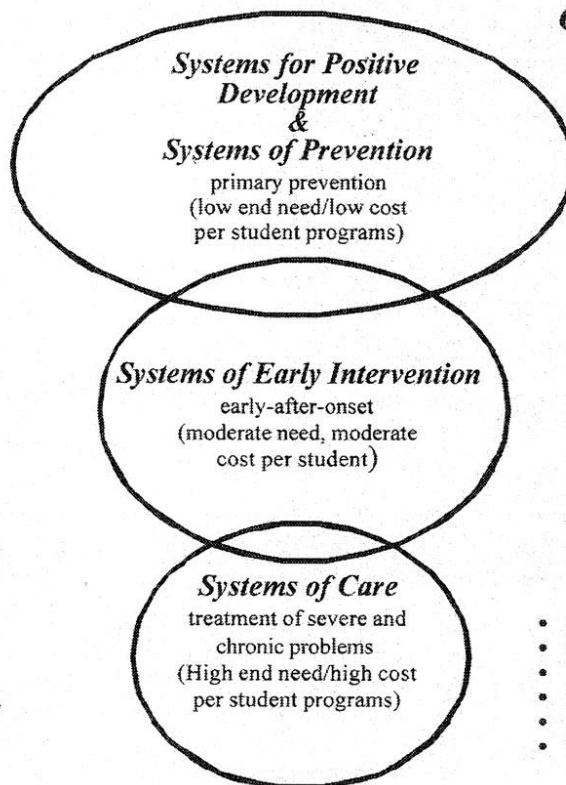
## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix B

**School Resources**  
(facilities, stakeholders,  
programs, services)

## Examples:

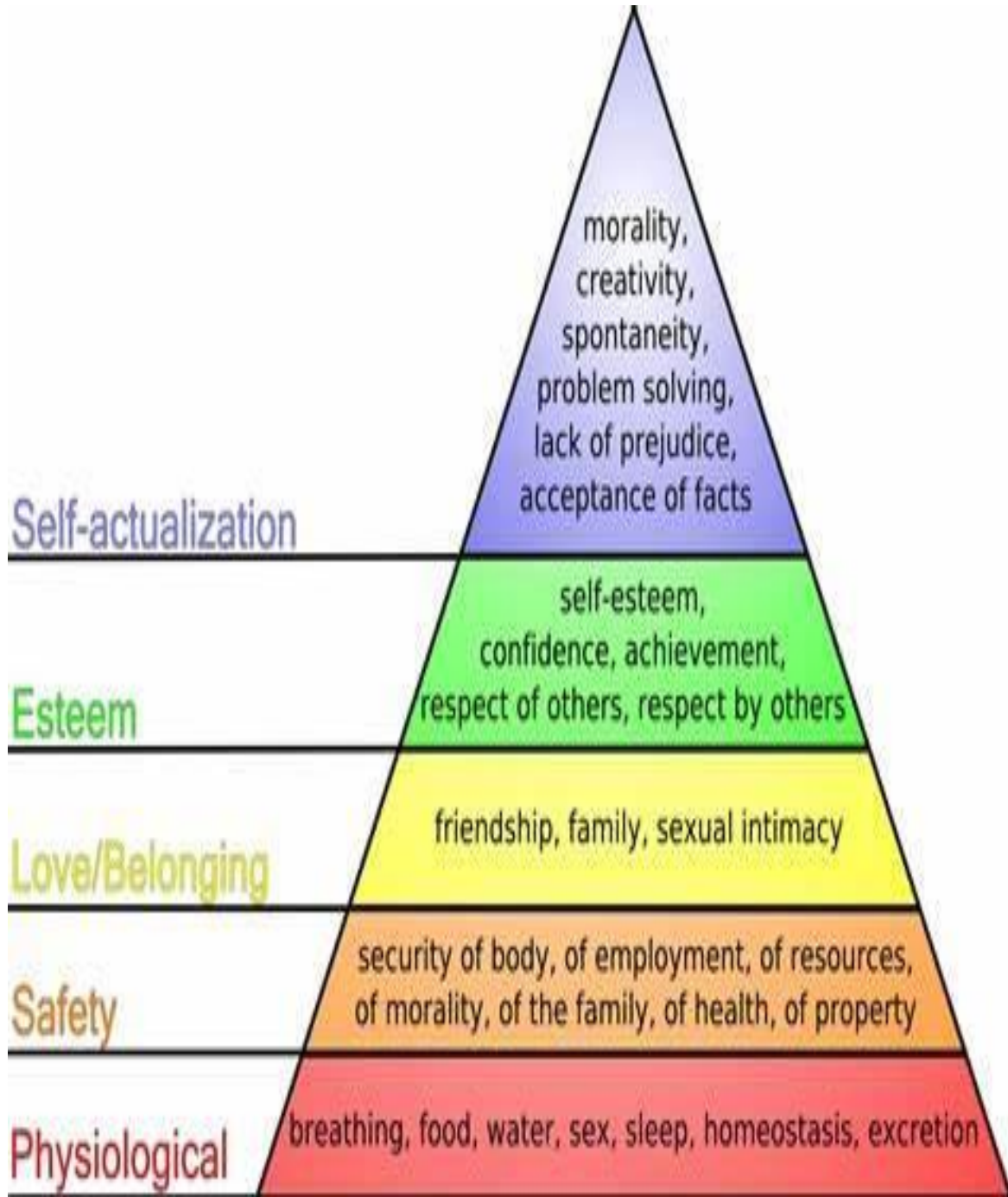
- Enrichment & recreation
  - General health education
  - Promotion of social and emotional development
  - Drug and alcohol education
  - Support for transitions
  - Conflict resolution
  - Parent involvement
- 
- Pregnancy prevention
  - Violence prevention
  - Dropout prevention
  - Learning/behavior accommodations
  - Work programs
- 
- Special education for learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, and other health impairments

**Community Resources**  
(facilities, stakeholders,  
programs, services)

## Examples:

- Youth development programs
  - Public health & safety programs
  - Prenatal care
  - Immunizations
  - Recreation & enrichment
  - Child abuse education
- 
- Early identification to treat health problems
  - Monitoring health problems
  - Short-term counseling
  - Foster placement/group homes
  - Family support
  - Shelter, food, clothing
  - Job programs
- 
- Emergency/crisis treatment
  - Family preservation
  - Long-term therapy
  - Probation/incarceration
  - Disabilities programs
  - Hospitalization

Appendix C





## Appendix D



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

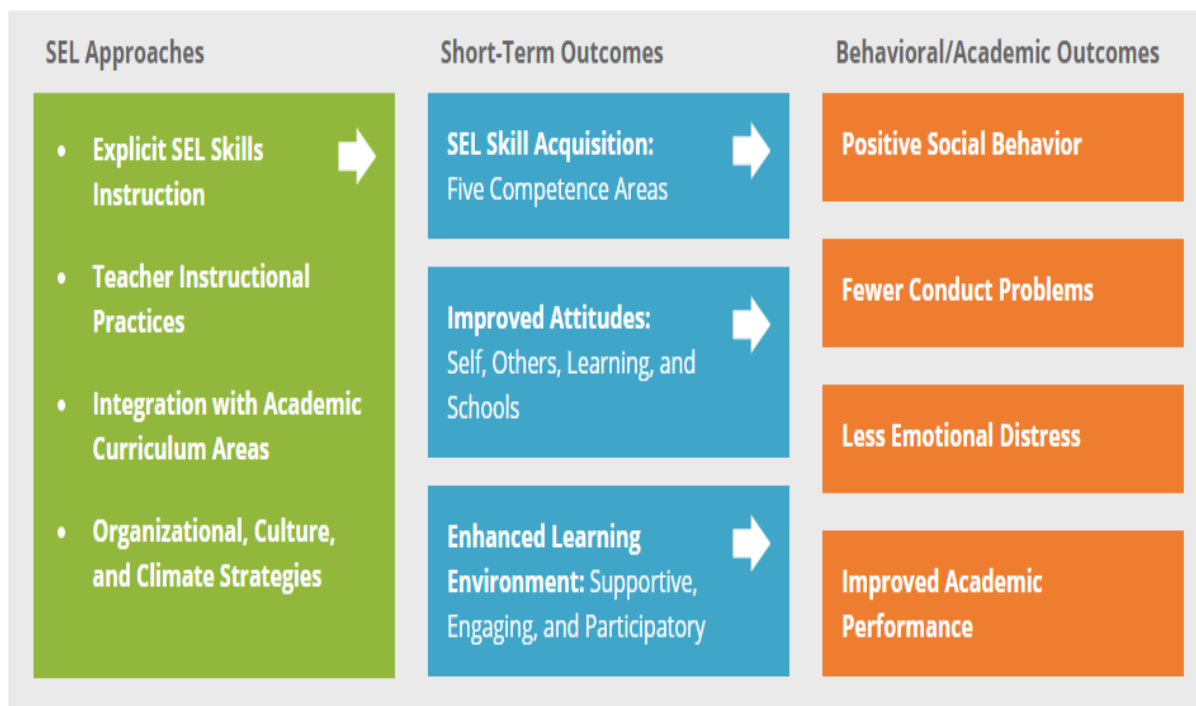
## Appendix E

Figure 2. Outcomes Associated with the Five Competencies



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix F



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix G**

## Informed Consent # 1, Survey Questionnaire for Concourse Development

**From:** Lani Derby**Date:** December 6, 2019**To:** Elementary Teachers via Qualtrics email questionnaire**Subject:** Informed Consent # 1 for Initial Questionnaire for Concourse Development of Teacher Perceptions of the Promotion of Student Well-Being in the Elementary Classroom

My name is Lani Derby. I am a UNF doctoral student conducting dissertation research on how teachers perceive how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. I am requesting your participation in this research study.

The questionnaire for the concourse of development will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential. In compliance with IRB requirements and to ensure data security, your answers will be stored on a secure UNF server and destroyed at the culmination of this research. No personal identifiers will be collected. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for your participation.

One possible benefit from taking part in this research is the knowledge that you are adding to the body of research on the various perceptions of teachers on the promotion of student well-being in the elementary classroom and the influence on K-12 public education. The University of North Florida, Institutional Review Board has approved this questionnaire. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of North Florida's Institutional Review Board Chairperson by calling 904.620.2498 or by emailing [irb@unf.edu](mailto:irb@unf.edu). Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at

██████████.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

Completion and checking on the agreement terms in the electronic questionnaire implies that you have read the information on this form and consent to take part in the research.

Please print a copy of this form for your records or future reference if necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lani Derby

Principal Researcher

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix H**

## Recruitment Email, Participation in Q Sort

**From:** Lani Derby

**Date:** January 21, 2020

**To:** Elementary Teachers via Qualtrics email

**Subject:** Recruitment email, participation in Q sort for data collection of teacher perceptions on the support of student well-being in their classroom.

My name is Lani Derby. I am a UNF doctoral student conducting dissertation research on how teachers perceive the promotion of student well-being in their classroom. I am requesting your participation in this research study. If you know other Duval County elementary school classroom teachers that might like to participate, please forward this email to them. If you are an elementary school principal, I am requesting your assistance in forwarding this email to your classroom teachers for their participation.

The research instrument (Q sample) will be used to Q sort and will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. Your participation is voluntary and will remain confidential. In compliance with IRB requirements and to ensure data security, your answers will be stored on a secure UNF server and destroyed at the culmination of this research. No personal identifiers will be collected. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for your participation.

One possible benefit from taking part in this research is the knowledge that you are adding to the body of research on how elementary teachers perceive the promotion of student well-being in the classroom and the influence on K-12 public education. The University of North Florida, Institutional Review Board has approved this survey. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of North Florida's Institutional Review

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

Board Chairperson by calling 904.620.2498 or by emailing [irb@unf.edu](mailto:irb@unf.edu). Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Completion and checking on the agreement terms in the electronic survey implies that you have read the information on this form and consent to take part in the research.

Please print a copy of this form for your records or future reference if necessary.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lani Derby

Principal Researcher

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix I



Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
 1 UNF Drive  
 Jacksonville, FL 32224-3565  
 904-620-3433 FAX 904-620-3437  
 Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action Institution

**MEMORANDUM**


**DATE:** December 3, 2019

**TO:** Ms. Emma Derby

**VIA:** Dr. Chris Janson  
 Leadership, School Counseling & Sport Management

**FROM:** Dr. Jennifer Wesely, Chairperson  
 UNF Institutional Review Board

**RE:** Declaration of Exempt Status for IRB#1432486-1  
 "Teacher Perspectives on the Promotion of Student Well-Being in Elementary Schools"

UNF IRB Number: 1432486-1  
 Exemption Date: 12-03-2019  
 Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB 

Your research study, "Teacher Perspectives on the Promotion of Student Well-Being in Elementary Schools," was reviewed on behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board and has been declared exempt under categories 2 and 3. Criteria defined at 45 CFR. 46 for this classification are as follows:

**Exempt Category 2:**

Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

- (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
- (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or
- (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Exempt Category 3:**

Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met:

- (i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;
- (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or
- (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).


Please be advised that any subject complaints, unanticipated problems, or adverse events that occur are to be reported to the IRB as soon as practicable, but no later than 3 business days following the occurrence. Please use the [Event Report Form](#) to submit information about such events.

While the exempt status is effective for the life of the study, any substantive changes must be submitted to the IRB for prospective review. In some circumstances, changes to the protocol may result in alteration of the IRB review classification.

To submit an amendment to your approved protocol, please complete an [Amendment Request Document](#) and upload it along with any updated materials affected by the changes via a new package in IRENet. For additional guidance on submitting an amendment, please contact the IRB administrator.

Upon completion of this study, please submit a [Closing Report Form](#) as a new package in IRENet. Please maintain copies of all research-related materials for a minimum of 3 years following study closure. These records include the IRB-approved protocol, approval memo, questionnaires, survey instruments, consent forms, and all IRB correspondence.

Should you have questions regarding your study or any other IRB issues, please contact the Research Integrity unit of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by emailing [IRB@unf.edu](mailto:IRB@unf.edu) or calling (904) 620-2455.

UNF IRB Number: 1433486-1 Exemption Date: 12-03-2012 Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB 
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## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix J**

## Initial Questionnaire for Concourse Development

**From:** Lani Derby**Date:** December 6, 2019**To:** Elementary Teachers via Qualtrics email**Subject:** Initial Questionnaire for Concourse Development of teachers' perceptions on the promotion of student well-being in the elementary classroom.

As I begin my data gathering for the dissertation process, I need your help with this questionnaire by responding to the following questions as honest, rich, and descriptive as you are able in order for me to obtain quality results.

**Demographic Identifiers:**

1. Please list how you identify your gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please list how you describe your race/ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of school you teach at \_\_\_\_\_
6. Percentage of children of color in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please select the response that best reflects your teacher training:
  - Traditional Bachelor's degree
  - Alternative Certification with the district
  - Alternative Certification through an outside organization
  - Teach for America
  - Other, Please list \_\_\_\_\_
8. Educational background:
  - Bachelors
  - Masters
  - Doctorate

**A. Research Question: How do you best support of the promotion of student well-being in your classroom?**

For the purpose of this study, well-being is defined as an umbrella term that covers the balance of one's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual states (Soleil, 2019). There are synonyms used throughout the research: well-being, mental health, social-emotional learning, and mindfulness.

**What are eight distinct teacher practices, behaviors, and/or strategies you use to support student well-being in your classroom?****Please list up to eight:**

- 1.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Thank you for your help.  
Lani Derby



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix L**

## Informed Consent # 2, Participation in Q Sort

**From:** Lani Derby

**Date:** February 2, 2020

**To:** Elementary Teachers via Qualtrics email questionnaire

**Subject:** Informed Consent # 2 for participation in Q sort to be used as data collection method in Q methodology to identify and analyze teachers' perceptions of how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom.

My name is Lani Derby. I am a UNF doctoral student conducting dissertation research on how teachers' perceptions on how to best support student well-being the in the elementary classroom. I am requesting your participation in this research study. The research instrument (Q sample) is used to Q sort, and the process will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential. In compliance with IRB requirements and to ensure data security, your answers will be stored on a secure UNF server and destroyed at the culmination of this research. No personal identifiers will be collected.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. There are no foreseeable risks for your participation. One possible benefit from taking part in this research is the knowledge that you are adding to the body of research on the various perceptions teachers have on how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom and the influence on K-12 public education. The University of North Florida, Institutional Review Board has approved this research. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of North Florida's Institutional Review Board Chairperson by calling 904.620.2498 or by emailing [irb@unf.edu](mailto:irb@unf.edu). Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

Please click the link below to go to the questionnaire web site or copy and paste the link into your internet browser to begin the Q-sort. Upon opening the link below, you will be asked to read the consent letter for this study. Once completed, you will be asked to check a box indicating that you have read the consent letter and agree to participate in this research study. Upon checking the box, the actual questionnaire instrument will be launched.

Survey link:

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lani Derby

Principal Researcher



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Post-Sort Questions**

1. If there are any additional items you wish had been included among the items you sorted, please list them in the space below:
  
2. Please list any statements you felt unsure or conflicted about and briefly describe your dilemma.
  
3. Looking at your “+4” statements, please briefly describe why you believe these teacher strategies/practices/behaviors are so valuable in supporting student well-being.
  
4. Now look at your “-4” statements and briefly describe why you believe these teacher strategies/practices/behaviors are not valuable in supporting student well-being.

**Background information**

1. Please list how you identify your gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please list how you describe your race/ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of school you teach at \_\_\_\_\_
6. Percentage of children of color in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please select the response that best reflects your teacher training:
  - Traditional Bachelor’s degree
  - Alternative Certification with the district
  - Alternative Certification through an outside organization
  - Teach for America
  - Other, Please list \_\_\_\_\_
8. Educational background:
  - Bachelors
  - Masters
  - Doctorate
9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:
  - a. Teachers are responsible for nurturing student well-being in the classroom.  
Strongly disagree | disagree | neither disagree nor agree | agree | strongly agree
  - b. Inequity is deeply embedded within the structures of our schools and school systems and that inequity disadvantages students who are not White and middle class  
Strongly disagree | disagree | neither disagree nor agree | agree | strongly agree
  - c. I have the autonomy to implement strategies or practices or behaviors to support student well-being in my classroom.  
Strongly disagree | disagree | neither disagree nor agree | agree | strongly agree



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

- d. I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being.

Strongly disagree | disagree | neither disagree nor agree | agree | strongly agree

10. Please list the estimated percentage of students in your current classroom that are \_\_\_\_\_ white \_\_\_\_\_ students of color

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Lani Derby

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix N**

## Script for Q sort

Welcome to this examination of teacher's perceptions of how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. My name is Lani Derby and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of North Florida (UNF) requesting your participation in my dissertation study. Your participation will involve sorting 38 statements representing your subjective viewpoints regarding various ways that teachers best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. Your participation in this sorting process and subsequent post-sorting questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. Your participation is completely voluntary; you may withdraw at any time during the process. Responses will be anonymous and kept confidential. In compliance with IRB requirements and to ensure data security, your responses will be stored on a secure UNF server and destroyed at the culmination of this research. Please note, no personal identifiable information will be used to formulate or compose any data reports. There are no foreseeable risks, direct benefits, or compensation for participating in this Q sort and follow-up questionnaire. By participating in this research study, you will help foster an understanding of the perspectives teachers hold in how to best support student well-being in the elementary classroom. The University of North Florida Institutional Review Board has approved this research study. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, please contact the University of North Florida's Institutional Review Board directly at (904) 620-2498 or via email at [irb@unf.edu](mailto:irb@unf.edu). Should you have any questions regarding this study or the research approach I am using, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this study or the research approach I am using, please feel free to contact me directly at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or my dissertation chair, Dr. Chris Janson, at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Completion of this Q sort and the accompanying questions implies that you have read the information describing the process and consent to take part in the research. Please note that this online process currently cannot be completed with a tablet or smartphone. Finally, feel free to print a copy of this form for your records.

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Lani Derby

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

### Introduction

Welcome to this examination of teacher perceptions of how to best support student well-being in elementary classrooms.

#### Step 1 of 5

From your experience as a classroom teacher, what best supports student well-being in the elementary classroom? Carefully read through the following 38 statements representing ways that teachers best support student well-being in the elementary classroom, sorting them into three piles: a pile for those statements that represent strategies, practices and/or behaviors that you have found to be MOST effective in supporting student well-being, a pile for statements representing the strategies, practices and/or behaviors you have found to be LEAST effective, and a pile for statements that fall somewhere in the middle or that you are simply not sure about.

You can either drag the cards with your mouse or finger into one of the three piles or press 1 (LEAST effective), 2 (Middle or unsure), 3 (MOST effective) on your keyboard. These initial designations are not final and changes can be made later.

After making these piles, you will then be asked to make even further distinctions

Note: If you want to read this instruction a second time, press the help-button at the bottom right corner.

#### Step 2 of 5

From your perspective, what are the most effective strategies, practices and/or behaviors that you have found in supporting student well-being? Take the statements from the “MOST EFFECTIVE” pile and read them again. You can scroll through the statements by using the scroll bar. Next, select the three statements representing ways that you have found to be MOST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher in supporting student well-being and place them in the boxes on the right side of the sorting grid below the “+4” column. NOTE: The order of the statements under a column is not important.

Now read the statements in the “LEAST EFFECTIVE” pile again. Similar to before, select the three statements that represent ways that you have found to be the LEAST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher in supporting student well-being and place them in the boxes on the left side of the sorting grid below the “-4” column.

Next, select the three statements that you found the next MOST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher and place them in the boxes under "+3" column. Then select the three statements that are the next LEAST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher and place them in the boxes under "-3" column. Follow this procedure for all statements in the “MOST EFFECTIVE” and “LEAST EFFECTIVE” piles. NOTE: The color coding for the three piles are simply guidelines. Feel free to sort those statements in the column that best fits your perspective regardless of its color. Now

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

that you have placed each statement within the sorting grid, please review your distribution once more and, if necessary, shift any statements around in order to best reflect your perspective.

Finally, read the “MIDDLE OR UNSURE” statements again and arrange them in the remaining open boxes on the distribution grid so they, in total, most represent your perspective.

Step 3 of 5

Review

Step 4 of 5

Please concisely describe why the statements you placed under the "+4" column have been found MOST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher. Likewise, please describe why the statements you placed below the "-4" column have been found LEAST EFFECTIVE as a classroom teacher. Why there?

Step 5 of 5

How many years have you taught?

What is the name of your current school?

What percentage of your current students are not White (e.g. 20%, 60%, etc.)

What best reflects your preparation/training as a teacher?

Bachelor's in Teacher Ed

Alt cert in district

Alt cert out of district

TFA

Post BA program

Other

Please enter your age

Please list your gender

Please list your race/ethnicity

What is your highest educational degree earned? (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate)

1. Teachers are responsible for student well-being in the classroom

Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree

2. Inequity is embedded within the structures of our schools and systems disadvantaging non-White and non-middle class students.

Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree

3. I have autonomy to implement strategies or practices and behaviors to support student well-being in my classroom.

Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree

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4. I have the skills and knowledge needed to implement strategies, practices, or behaviors needed to support student well-being.

Strongly Agree – Strongly Disagree

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

**Appendix O**

## Post Q-sort Questionnaire

1. If there are any additional items you might have wanted to include in your own Q set,

a. What they are? Please list.

b. Why they are important? Please list.

2. If there are any further items about which you would like to comment, which you have not understood, or which you simply found confusing, please explain.

3. Of your extreme far left and extreme right statements, please provide the best rationale for each.

a. Rationale for extreme far left:

b. Rationale for extreme far right:

**4. Demographic Identifiers:**

1. Please list how you identify your gender \_\_\_\_\_
2. Please list how you describe your race/ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years have you taught? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of school you teach at \_\_\_\_\_
6. Percentage of children of color in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please select the response that best reflects your teacher training:
  - Traditional bachelor's degree
  - Alternative Certification with the district
  - Alternative Certification through an outside organization
  - Teach for America

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

- Other, Please list \_\_\_\_\_
8. Educational background:
- Bachelors
  - Masters
  - Doctorate

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.  
Lani Derby

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix P

## Study Q Sample and Forced Distribution Table in Manual Sortable Form

1. I provide students with as many choices as possible within the classroom and our learning activities.	2. I give students many opportunities to use their voices and express themselves - and then really listen to what they have to say.	3. I make sure students know that I am on their side and will support them.
4. I make sure students know exactly where they stand grade-wise on assignments and for the term.	5. I help students find hope in their lives.	6. I provide a private way for students to express concerns they have concerning the class and those we share it with (E.g. Suggestion mailbox, anonymous question/comment box, etc.).
7. I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it.	8. Students and I develop classroom norms together for how we will treat each other.	9. Every morning I greet each student by name and welcome her/him into class.
10. I build strong relationships with students' families.	11. I create a space in the classroom where students can go to if they are feeling upset or need to step away from a situation (E.g. peace corners, chill-out space, etc.).	12. I use cooperative learning where students must work together to accomplish their learning/project goals.
13. I teach students strategies for self-regulating their emotions (E.g. Feeling charts, reflection, etc.).	14. I build in time for students and I to share important things about our lives (E.g. Morning meetings, sharing time, etc.)	15. I affirm students in different ways throughout the year (E.g. positive phone calls/texts to family members, giving shout-outs and awards, etc.).
16. I use systematic methods of collecting and compiling student information (E.g. Student info sheets, student inventories, student letters about what I should know, etc.).	17. I establish and reinforce classroom rituals and routines.	18. I use and encourage humor in the classroom.
19. I make sure students have opportunities to learn through play.	20. I use mindfulness techniques, tools, or strategies (E.g. Yoga, meditation, brain breaks, etc.).	21. I teach students that making mistakes is an important part of learning and that they can grow from them.
22. I tell students why a lesson is important and how the things they learn can be useful to them.	23. I help students to take more control of their learning by teaching them to explore how they arrive at answers and how	24. I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – both in and out of school.



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

	they can correct wrong ones (I.e. error analysis).							
<b>25. I express curiosity about and appreciation for students' unique cultural backgrounds.</b>	<b>26. I teach students about relationships including how to build positive ones and protect themselves from negative ones.</b>	<b>27. I tell students that I care deeply about them and their well-being, not just their academic success.</b>						
<b>28. I help students explore the power they have to change their own lives or circumstances.</b>	<b>29. I use a behavioral management approach that focuses on positive behavior and positive reinforcement (E.g. a points system, "catching students being good," etc.).</b>	<b>30. I spend focused time with students who are experiencing difficulty or are having problems.</b>						
<b>31. I connect students and their families to resources and supports that are available to them in the school, district, and community.</b>	<b>32. I teach about empathy and promote it in the classroom.</b>	<b>33. I teach about personal well-being and why it's important.</b>						
<b>34. I teach my students about ways that conflicts can be resolved in healthy ways.</b>	<b>35. I teach students to believe their abilities and talents can grow over time if they work at it (I.e. Growth mindset).</b>	<b>36. I make sure to make time for physical activity.</b>						
<b>37. I use chunking to break information I'm teaching into manageable pieces that are easier to process and learn.</b>	<b>38. I use restorative practices that help repair relationships between students when damage has been done.</b>							
<b>-4</b> (three statements)	<b>-3</b> (four statements)	<b>-2</b> (four statements)						
<b>-1</b> (five statements)	<b>0</b> (six statements)	<b>+1</b> (five statements)						
<b>+2</b> (four statements)	<b>+3</b> (four statements)	<b>+4</b> (three statements)						
<b>-4</b> (3 statements)	<b>-3</b> (4 statements)	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1</b> (5 statements)	<b>0</b>	<b>+1</b> (5 statements)	<b>+2</b> (4 statements)	<b>+3</b>	<b>+4</b>



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix Q

## Study Concourse

<p>The use of Calm-Classroom which is a SEL program used school-wide. It takes about 2 minutes daily. It includes breathing techniques and meditation exercises for the students led by the adult in the classroom.</p>	<p>Student info sheet for parents to fill out: In the students orientation pack we include a student sheet that asks about the child's home life and what things they are into. It also asks what triggers the child.</p>	<p>Morning greeting, positive comments</p>
<p>Mindfulness - I try to be actively mindful and aware of what is going on with my students in the classroom so that I can respond appropriately to their behaviors and needs.</p>	<p>Make learning relevant. The more relevant a topic or subject is to students' own success and happiness, the more engaged they'll become in the learning process. On a whole, when teaching math, science, social studies, even history, find ways to adapt the lesson or lecture to the interests of students. It's also helpful to discover the interests, talents, and learning styles of each student if possible. I use the classroom mini-economy to implement relevant learning to the students. In a mini-economy, students earn play money in a variety of ways and spend it at a class store, class auction, or at stores operated by their classmates. Although mini-economy activities vary widely, students typically apply for classroom jobs, run businesses, pay taxes, buy rental properties, and make investments. The mini-economy is, in effect, a miniature economic system operating within the regular classroom.</p>	<p>I share personal stories with my students.</p>

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

Greeting at the door, personal connection time	Give them a space where they feel safe, appreciated, and valued.	First, I try to build a respectful relationship with all students. I try to learn about each child and any needs they might have. I want to understand their background and challenges.
Establish rituals and routines.	During the first week of school we read books about good behavior, kindness, manners, etc.	Culture building, building a culture of respect together by setting rules together
Checking in. Asking students how they are, how was their evening. What did they do this weekend?	Beginning day one I explain we are a family. As a class we spend more time together than most students spend with their own family. We need to treat each other with respect. But just like a regular family we will have times that we do not all agree or get along. That is normal, we will address those situations as they come along. Even during times of disagreement, we MUST be respectful.	Allow for peer assistance.
We spend a lot of time on rituals and routines.	Student info sheet for students to fill out first day of school: Asks about home life, likes and dislikes.	I teach and review the expectation for my classroom. I make sure students are rewarded and they know the consequences. I try to be fair to all students.
Empathy- teaching empathy through books and discussions	Empathy- teaching empathy through books and discussions	Implementing an effective behavior management strategy is crucial to gaining students' respect and ensure students have an equal chance of reaching their full possibility. I make sure that the classroom is not loud or disorderly. Students must respect each other, and everyone connected to the learning environment. One way of insuring this concept is the use of CHAMPs. The overall goal of the CHAMPs

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

		<p>classroom management system is to develop an instructional structure in which students are responsible, motivated, and highly engaged in the specific task at hand. The teacher's goal is to teach students directly how to be successful in specific class situations.</p> <p>Conversation: Can students talk to each other during this activity? Help: How do students get the teacher's attention and their questions answered? Activity: What is the task/objective? What is the end product? Movement: Can students move about during this activity? Participation: How do students show they are fully participating? What does work behavior look/sound like? Success: When students meet CHAMPS expectations, they will be successful!</p>
<p>Morning meetings are completed daily. We have a topic that we select often times, students share what their weekend was like, they encourage one another, and we also discuss our success and failures continually motivating one another.</p>	<p>Using positive time out when needed. I use this as a calming technique.</p>	<p>Create a "Classroom Promise " with my students that states the expectations of how we will treat others daily.</p>
<p>I use a positive and negative point system for individual and team rewards. Students are grouped by "houses" based on their personality. The houses are based from Harry Potter series. This encourages students to help each other remember rituals, routines rules. I usually</p>	<p>I tell my students that we are all part of a classroom family, or community (for older students) and that we have to treat each other respectfully as we try to understand what we are all going through in our own lives.</p>	<p>I tell them all I care about them. This is especially important when I have to discipline a child. I don't want them thinking I don't like them.</p>

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

give/take 5 or 10 points. If I catch something that I really want promoted in the class I will give BIG points.		
Students earn points rather than lose points for behavior. I like to take the opportunity to "catch" a student doing a positive or kind behavior.	Morning meeting. This is a time for the children to get to learn more about each other and about me.	Conflict resolution
We create a class promise where we promise to help each other.	Caring, greet at door welcome them to class.	I stick to the plan, so they know what is going to happen. My students like to have a routine.
Teaching mindfulness	Feeling clips to discuss feelings daily	Inquiry based learning is a learning and teaching method that prioritizes student questions, ideas and analyses. It is important to recognize the learner and the teacher's point of view. Student point-of-view, inquiry-based learning focuses on investigating an open question or problem. Students must use evidence-based reasoning and creative problem-solving to reach a conclusion, which they must defend or present. Teacher point-of-view, inquiry-based teaching focuses on moving students beyond general curiosity into the realms of critical thinking and understanding. Teachers must encourage students to ask questions and support them through the investigation process, understanding when to begin and how to structure an inquiry activity.
Hugs and High-Fives are the way of life for my students and I. I make sure that I make a physical connection with EVERY student EVERY day.	Give students to use their voice. Allowing them to voice their opinions and letting them know what they think matters.	At the beginning of the school year, I have students complete "A Letter to Me". Students share what they are excited about this school

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

		year, something they would like to learn this year, some place they would like to go on a class trip, and their thoughts about classwork, homework, and tests. It also includes their favorites: movie, book, song, tv program, and thing to do. We revisit this letter at the end of the year to see how they have changed and grown during the year.
Error analysis. For all math and science assessments I allow students to make corrections. Though, this is not just pick another answer. There has to be an explanation and/or work shown. This gives me an opportunity to reteach and students to earn half credit back on assessments.	I honestly love my students - even if I don't like some of them at times! I care about their futures and their lives and I want to do whatever I can to positively influence them. I think that when you really love and care about your students they know it and it makes a difference in how they feel about school and how they feel at school.	I use humor when it its appropriate.
Compliment those students displaying the desired behavior. As others begin to conform, I compliment them by name.	A discipline plan that starts over each day. No matter how many times my students break rules, they get a fresh start tomorrow.	Lunch bunch...lunch with students or groups of students who are having problems or in need of remediation
Our behavior system allows students to both gain and lose points.	Talk to them with respect without yelling letting them know i care.	I try to differentiate lessons as much as possible. I like to give my students choices within the classroom.
Read alouds with friendship themes	I use technology to capture/engage my students. Throughout my lessons and small group centers students are encouraged to instantly research their ideas, visualize new/unfamiliar concepts, record information, take pictures, integrate educational programs, etc.	Lastly, I make sure that I end each day with... "If nobody told you, Mr. Clayton loves you and there is NOTHING you can do about it."
Using a journal to write their feelings, emotions for	At the beginning of the year, I send a student information	POWER HOUR after school! I allow students to stay after

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

gratitude and when they feel frustrated.	sheet home for the parents to complete. First section is contact information. Second part is called getting to know your child. Questions include describe your child's personality, what's your child's favorite subject, what is your child's strengths, describe your child's learning style, what motivates your child, do you have any concerns you would like to share	school until 4:00, unless of course we have early release or a faculty meeting. During this time students can have homework help, assistance with test corrections, use of a computer for blended learning or just a quiet place to work. I also welcome younger siblings as long as they behaved and have work to do. Often times this makes it easier on parents because they can make one trip to pick up kids. Most parents are unable to help with test corrections, so this is a great opportunity for me to offer help. In past years I have offered a before school power beginning at 7:30. That gives an hour in the morning for parents of bus riders that are unable to pick up at 4:00. I have had many students that show at 7:30 and stay until 4:00...they love it. To give students a break I take them outside when I am finished with dismissal until about 3:10. At this time I encourage eating a snack and playtime.
I try to use positive reinforcement as much as possible in my classroom.	I tell students why a lesson is important and how the skills associated with the lesson will be used in the future.	Greet each student by name in the morning.
I teach social skills and character traits. It is actually the focus of a lesson per week and I change once per month.	Group games, activities, and celebrations	We participate in team building activities where students work together to solve a problem.
Caring box in class: Put in any personal notes that you need to talk to teacher about.	Promoting that everyone makes mistakes and how to help others when they make mistakes instead of laughing.	Another strategy I use is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning involves organizing classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences.



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

		Cooperative learning is organizing positive interdependence. Students must work in groups to complete tasks collectively toward academic goals. Students learn cooperatively and benefit from one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc.). Cooperative learning tasks are intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended, and involve higher order thinking tasks. Cooperative learning has also been linked to increased levels of student satisfaction.
We also have a classroom/school-wide creed that we recite EVERY morning.	Teaching students about their emotions. Role play what emotions are.	Students create their own personal yearbook with photos and journal entries.
Once a nine weeks I ask students just to write anything they feel I need to know. Similar to a tattle book I had in 2nd grade. Often times there are dynamics going on in the classroom I don't know about. This gives students a chance to share anything bothering them they didn't feel comfortable sharing verbally.	I use a behavior management system that moves clips, or clothespins, to indicate how a student is acting in the classroom. I give them chances to move their clips up if they have been moved down.	I listen to what students have to say to let them know they are important.
Say goodbye to each student has they leave.	I try to check in with 2-3 kids each day at recess. It is just a special few minutes when I make sure nothing is falling through the cracks.	Class cards for sick or life traumas
We send positive notes, emails, or notes in their agenda.	Weekly emails to parents: Telling them what is going on to keep open communication.	One on one discussions with kiddos, about grades/behavior, explaining that I am an ally.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

<p>Differentiation within the classroom is a great source. I use a diversity of tasks based on students' abilities, to ensure no one gets left behind. Assigning classroom activities according to students' unique learning needs means individuals with higher academic capabilities are stretched and those who are struggling get the appropriate support. This can involve assigning work that varies in complexity to different groups of students, or setting up a range of workstations around the classroom which contain an assortment of tasks for students to choose from.</p>	<p>Allow students to have a choice.</p>	<p>Keep communication open with parents through phone calls, notes in agendas, and Class Dojo,</p>
<p>I have read about, and am currently doing a book study on, the Growth Mindset. I think that it can change the way students think about themselves and promote a continuum of life-long learning. Just saying to a child who can't get how to do something, no matter how hard they try, "You're not there yet but don't worry, you'll get there soon," is so powerful to a child's feelings and ego.</p>	<p>I allow students to make mistakes so they can learn and grow from them.</p>	<p>Send home a positive note to parents.</p>
<p>I am very data driven! But some of the things I take data on are things like favorites, strengths, weaknesses, number of schools attended...</p>	<p>Teacher mailbox for students to share concerns anonymously or privately.</p>	<p>We give student choices when we can.</p>
<p>Lunch in the class with different students every now and then to check in.</p>	<p>Relationship building, getting to know about their lives.</p>	<p>Suggestion Mail Box to share concerns about the classroom and or school community. The suggestion boxes used in</p>

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

		my classroom are email and labelled box titled "Mail".
Teach students how to monitor or regulate their emotions.	Every day, invite students into a calm, inviting classroom.	I try to use humor, to the best of my ability, when I can.
I help out students that appear to be struggling.	I try to send something positive about each student, through dojo, at least once every two weeks. I have a spreadsheet to make sure I don't inadvertently skip someone.	Tutoring after school
We use a lot of humor in the classroom.	Wellness Wednesday videos from district.	Teaching kindness and respect by forgiving kiddos for their mistakes and apologizing when needed.
Monthly special occasion parties to recognize students' hard work, encouraging them to keep up the excellent progress. Parties are usually held during recess or lunchtime (30 minutes).	Giving them time to have physical activity. Just being able to "run" it out or play give students the opportunity to release emotions.	Use a program called Calm Classroom. The focus is to help students to develop self-awareness, focus and emotional resilience.
Use a program called Calm Classroom. The focus is to help students to develop self-awareness, focus and emotional resilience.	I try to incorporate as much fun as I can, given curriculum expectations, into my instruction and lessons.	This seems little, but it is huge. I call my students "my kiddos" and they know they will forever be my kiddos. I have many students who email or stop by, out of the blue, because they know I cared then, I care now, and I always will.
Helping get families connected to free resources		

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix R

## Correlation Among Sorts

Sorts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1 26FW0322	100	22	32	1	0	16	9	9	7	-3	14	10	-11	2	32	30	19	24	14	28	37	-3
2 37FW5001	22	100	27	20	48	30	27	31	2	36	24	-15	4	-11	36	-5	10	19	41	25	21	-4
3 18FC5241	32	27	100	7	7	34	39	3	20	14	17	-4	-6	-2	34	2	16	34	40	46	1	35
4 32FW5332	1	20	7	100	36	39	13	33	8	33	19	4	12	11	16	2	52	7	13	44	23	4
5 43FC4322	0	48	7	36	100	35	5	25	-14	32	6	-11	2	16	50	4	30	25	28	30	-12	-1
6 17FC5522	16	30	34	39	35	100	0	36	31	20	25	-35	22	14	11	9	27	17	23	34	8	13
7 35FB1111	9	27	39	13	5	0	100	-4	3	4	-16	20	-15	-26	34	-26	0	13	12	11	-1	27
8 28FC5211	9	31	3	33	25	36	-4	100	26	22	61	12	10	13	16	12	39	30	50	28	18	26
9 44FC5421	7	2	20	8	-14	31	3	26	100	-14	10	-10	17	31	0	14	26	29	23	30	9	25
10 43FC5322	-3	36	14	33	32	20	4	22	-14	100	34	6	0	-21	4	-13	28	-1	13	31	13	34
11 39MC5011	14	24	17	19	6	25	-16	61	10	34	100	-5	4	-17	3	25	16	6	34	42	30	8
12 49FB5211	10	-15	-4	4	-11	-35	20	12	-10	6	-5	100	-32	-16	7	14	21	23	-6	-7	16	29
13 44MC4322	-11	4	-6	12	2	22	-15	10	17	0	4	-32	100	43	-27	-11	14	27	15	3	-19	5
14 "C:User	2	-11	-2	11	16	14	-26	13	31	-21	-17	-16	43	100	13	42	32	44	30	23	-11	-4
15 63FC4121	32	36	34	16	50	11	34	16	0	4	3	7	-27	13	100	4	28	24	27	34	8	-3
16 41FB5112	30	-5	2	2	4	9	-26	12	14	-13	25	14	-11	42	4	100	9	21	12	39	19	-15
17 42FC5421	19	10	16	52	30	27	0	39	26	28	16	21	14	32	28	9	100	27	25	29	22	36
18 39MB5122	24	19	34	7	25	17	13	30	29	-1	6	23	27	44	24	21	27	100	38	8	1	18
19 53FW5212	14	41	40	13	28	23	12	50	23	13	34	-6	15	30	27	12	25	38	100	54	9	14
20 50FC0222	28	25	46	44	30	34	11	28	3	31	42	-7	3	23	34	39	29	8	54	100	38	15
21 47FC4242	37	21	1	23	-12	8	-1	18	9	13	30	16	-19	-11	8	19	22	1	9	38	100	3
22 49FB1211	-3	-4	35	4	-1	13	27	26	25	34	8	29	5	-4	-3	-15	36	18	14	15	3	100
23 57FC1322	27	13	21	12	-9	3	2	35	31	3	29	29	-5	33	23	39	43	31	40	23	17	27
24 53FC5511	43	44	39	50	27	32	40	15	15	16	-4	9	17	4	27	-5	25	44	30	25	10	5
25 23FB4144	47	29	38	8	15	-6	22	-6	3	9	-7	30	-32	7	51	27	13	11	21	30	8	-17
26 34FC1411	7	-2	1	6	8	-13	-6	31	-3	41	28	42	-34	0	12	29	19	10	20	20	19	31
27 65FC4322	20	11	8	13	38	42	9	41	48	15	30	-5	9	9	11	19	31	19	31	21	9	31
28 38FW5244	20	8	14	8	0	-3	-8	27	-2	23	28	25	-7	11	18	10	22	8	21	37	41	37
29 45FC4223	36	22	30	30	9	36	17	29	22	17	26	24	24	16	23	25	25	35	37	40	10	22
30 47FB5111	-10	11	-28	27	21	19	-11	20	-5	9	-1	-11	2	7	-10	-4	17	-21	-4	10	39	-5
31 33FC5222	3	-18	11	-3	-12	7	-19	-11	-10	-10	-11	2	23	2	-16	0	10	-11	-7	0	-25	20
32 3FC5111	-15	13	17	0	13	-5	-20	29	-5	30	28	18	-9	20	13	10	25	6	12	19	3	43
33 44FW5221	-11	-20	5	-12	-5	8	-8	7	27	-25	0	-11	36	54	-7	25	12	20	8	13	-15	12
34 27FW5311	41	44	22	0	43	26	10	32	-1	20	30	-15	-8	-2	40	3	-7	26	39	23	17	-4
35 41FB3122	12	7	1	33	15	44	-27	42	37	4	31	-6	18	26	13	26	38	27	21	21	10	3
36 48FW0511	46	31	51	21	26	18	60	-20	-11	25	-4	20	-12	-30	40	-12	7	14	19	36	13	10
37 57FC1351	15	13	12	1	-8	6	-7	43	6	33	47	35	4	17	-22	15	18	6	6	10	6	35
38 27FB4243	100	22	32	1	0	16	9	9	7	-3	14	10	-11	2	32	30	19	24	14	28	37	-3

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38
27	43	47	7	20	20	36	-10	3	-15	-11	41	12	46	15	100
13	44	29	-2	11	8	22	11	-18	-13	-20	44	7	31	13	22
21	39	38	1	8	14	30	-28	11	17	5	22	1	51	12	32
12	50	8	6	13	8	30	27	-3	0	-12	0	33	21	1	1
-9	27	15	8	38	0	9	21	-12	13	-5	43	15	26	-8	0
3	32	-6	-13	42	-3	36	19	7	-5	8	26	44	18	6	16
2	40	22	-6	9	-8	17	-11	-19	20	-8	10	-27	60	-6	9
35	15	-6	31	41	27	29	20	-11	29	7	32	42	-20	43	9
31	15	3	-3	48	2	22	-5	-10	-5	27	-1	37	-11	7	7
3	16	9	41	15	23	17	9	-10	30	-25	20	4	25	33	-3
29	-4	-7	28	30	28	26	-1	-11	28	0	30	31	-4	47	14
29	9	30	42	-5	25	24	-11	2	18	-11	-15	-6	20	35	10
-5	17	-32	-34	9	-7	24	2	23	-9	36	-8	18	-12	4	-11
33	4	7	0	9	11	16	7	2	20	54	-2	26	-30	-17	2
23	27	51	12	11	18	23	-10	-16	13	-7	40	13	40	-22	32
39	-5	27	29	19	10	25	-4	0	10	25	3	26	-12	15	30
43	25	13	19	31	22	25	17	10	25	12	-7	38	7	18	19
31	44	11	10	19	8	35	-21	-11	6	20	26	27	14	6	24
40	30	21	20	21	37	40	10	-7	12	8	39	21	19	6	14
23	25	30	20	21	37	40	10	0	19	13	23	21	36	10	28
17	10	8	19	9	41	10	39	-25	3	-15	17	10	13	6	37
27	5	-17	31	31	37	22	-5	20	43	12	-4	3	10	35	-3
100	15	29	50	19	44	37	-9	-8	42	6	6	33	-12	27	27
15	100	21	-13	22	-3	29	-26	-1	-30	-14	34	35	52	-1	43
29	21	100	21	-5	19	40	-6	-3	3	-17	30	-13	43	10	47
50	-13	21	100	3	42	28	7	-24	50	-15	12	1	-2	22	7
19	22	-5	3	100	4	10	8	-5	-10	19	32	31	13	20	20
44	-3	19	42	4	100	6	28	25	49	2	27	7	-3	42	20
37	29	40	28	10	6	100	-13	-4	1	-6	15	15	39	6	36
-9	-26	6	7	8	28	-13	100	-14	9	-2	0	-5	-20	17	-10
-8	-1	-3	-24	5	25	-4	-14	100	3	24	-6	2	-6	21	3
42	-30	3	50	-10	49	1	9	3	100	21	-2	-3	-25	39	15
6	-14	-17	-15	19	2	-6	-2	24	21	100	-14	17	31	14	-11
6	34	30	12	32	27	15	0	-6	-2	-14	100	10	25	10	41
33	35	-13	1	31	7	15	-5	2	-3	17	10	100	-28	16	12
-12	52	43	-2	13	-3	39	-20	-6	-25	-31	25	-28	100	-7	46
27	-1	10	22	20	42	6	17	21	39	14	10	16	-7	100	15
27	43	47	7	20	20	36	-10	3	-15	-11	41	12	46	15	100

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix S

## Unrotated Factor Matrix

No	Factors							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	0.5537	-0.3883	0.0500	0.4068	-0.3299	-0.3426	-0.0488	0.1099
2	0.5182	-0.2764	-0.0721	-0.3929	-0.0803	0.1138	-0.2170	-0.1002
3	0.5318	-0.2873	-0.0451	0.1498	0.3942	-0.0559	-0.3289	0.0820
4	0.4498	0.0379	-0.1810	-0.3848	0.0136	0.0464	0.5364	0.3347
5	0.4227	-0.1016	-0.2341	-0.4712	-0.0580	0.4836	-0.0754	0.0631
6	0.4821	0.0859	-0.4889	-0.2999	-0.0373	-0.2036	-0.0299	0.1025
7	0.2217	-0.5473	0.0276	-0.0621	0.4792	0.0341	0.1257	-0.1330
8	0.5894	0.4507	-0.0012	-0.2612	-0.0645	-0.0695	0.0167	-0.3105
9	0.3026	0.2892	-0.3651	0.2465	0.1125	-0.1809	0.1817	-0.3247
10	0.3831	0.0300	0.2962	-0.5701	0.1921	-0.0329	-0.0101	0.0711
11	0.4815	0.3295	0.1724	-0.2553	-0.2187	-0.2882	-0.2352	-0.2549
12	0.1783	-0.0272	0.5731	0.2958	0.2826	-0.0131	0.4110	-0.0722
13	0.0294	0.3180	-0.5954	-0.0216	0.2089	-0.1259	-0.0978	0.2161
14	0.2176	0.4412	-0.4320	0.4148	-0.0815	0.4725	0.0136	0.2116
15	0.5174	-0.3618	0.0084	0.0430	-0.0517	0.4893	-0.0516	0.0020
16	0.3223	0.2601	0.0355	0.4741	-0.4281	0.0992	0.0100	0.0267
17	0.5562	0.2968	-0.0594	-0.0286	0.1703	0.0662	0.4207	0.2724
18	0.5000	0.0547	-0.2763	0.3153	0.2185	0.1765	0.0331	-0.2401
19	0.6296	0.0848	-0.1648	-0.0236	0.0533	0.2112	-0.2519	-0.1874
20	0.6685	0.0237	-0.0014	-0.0878	-0.1146	0.1006	-0.1247	0.3608
21	0.3625	-0.0072	0.2897	-0.0767	-0.4466	-0.2587	0.2771	0.1344
22	0.3245	0.2795	0.2378	-0.0524	0.6822	-0.2031	0.0051	0.0041
23	0.5609	0.3372	0.2458	0.3894	0.0331	0.1182	0.1306	-0.1652
24	0.5551	-0.4159	-0.3699	-0.0050	0.1676	-0.1482	0.2149	-0.0013
25	0.4484	-0.4387	0.2643	0.3267	-0.1220	0.2573	-0.0387	0.1452
26	0.3616	0.2487	0.6449	0.0206	-0.0067	0.2481	0.1162	-0.1973
27	0.4682	0.1784	-0.2883	-0.1272	-0.0062	-0.2327	0.0144	-0.2735
28	0.4224	0.3013	0.5019	0.0311	-0.0317	-0.0465	-0.1940	0.3194
29	0.6001	-0.0875	-0.0511	0.1880	0.1288	-0.0126	0.1613	0.0041
30	0.0226	0.2625	0.1051	-0.4371	-0.3664	0.0368	0.1937	0.3315
31	-0.0746	0.1502	-0.0728	0.1937	0.2714	-0.3097	-0.3163	0.5627
32	0.2425	0.5080	0.4816	-0.0582	0.2076	0.3263	-0.2670	0.1005
33	0.0071	0.4931	-0.3436	0.3335	0.1614	0.0828	-0.2430	0.1691
34	0.5121	-0.2548	-0.0410	-0.1697	-0.2769	-0.0015	-0.4483	-0.2008
35	0.4017	0.3963	-0.3728	0.0279	-0.1792	-0.1545	0.2198	-0.1263
36	0.4174	-0.7618	0.0329	-0.0547	0.2405	-0.0839	0.0324	0.1472
37	0.3196	0.3747	0.3823	-0.0545	0.1364	-0.4498	-0.1949	0.0111
38	0.5537	-0.3883	0.0500	0.4068	-0.3299	-0.3426	-0.0488	0.1099
Eigenvalues	7.2127	4.0541	3.3834	2.7847	2.3133	2.0022	1.7726	1.6771
% exp. Var.	19	11	9	7	6	5	5	4

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix T

## Q Sample Statements and Factor Arrays

No.	Statement	Factor Scores			
		1	2	3	4
1.	I provide students with as many choices as possible within the classroom and our learning activities.	-4	0	0	-2
2.	I give students many opportunities to use their voices and express themselves - and then really listen to what they have to say.	2	1	-2	2
3.	I make sure students know that I am on their side and will support them.	2	1	1	1
4.	I make sure students know exactly where they stand grade-wise on assignments and for the term.	1	3	-4	-2
5.	I help students find hope in their lives.	0	-2	-3	1
6.	I provide a private way for students to express concerns they have concerning the class and those we share it with (E.g. Suggestion mailbox, anonymous question/comment box, etc.).	3	-1	-4	0
7.	I model for students how I value my own well-being by intentionally nurturing it.	-3	-2	-2	-1
8.	Students and I develop classroom norms together for how we will treat each other.	3	0	0	-4
9.	Every morning I greet each student by name and welcome her/him into class.	-1	3	2	0
10.	I build strong relationships with students' families.	-3	1	4	3
11.	I create a space in the classroom where students can go to if they are feeling upset or need to step away from a situation (E.g. peace corners, chill-out space, etc.).	-2	-1	0	0
12.	I use cooperative learning where students must work together to accomplish their learning/project goals.	-2	4	-1	-2
13.	I teach students strategies for self-regulating their emotions (E.g. Feeling charts, reflection, etc.).	-3	0	0	2
14.	I build in time for students and I to share important things about our lives (E.g. Morning meetings, sharing time, etc.)	-1	-3	3	4
15.	I affirm students in different ways throughout the year (E.g. positive phone calls/texts to family members, giving shout-outs and awards, etc.).	3	2	2	2

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

16.	I use systematic methods of collecting and compiling student information (E.g. Student info sheets, student inventories, student letters about what I should know, etc.).	-1	0	-3	-4
17.	I establish and reinforce classroom rituals and routines.	2	4	4	-2
18.	I use and encourage humor in the classroom.	1	2	-1	-1
19.	I make sure students have opportunities to learn through play.	-2	-4	4	-3
20.	I use mindfulness techniques, tools, or strategies (E.g. Yoga, meditation, brain breaks, etc.).	-3	-4	0	0
21.	I teach students that making mistakes is an important part of learning and that they can grow from them.	3	2	1	2
22.	I tell students why a lesson is important and how the things they learn can be useful to them.	-1	0	-3	-3
23.	I help students to take more control of their learning by teaching them to explore how they arrive at answers and how they can correct wrong ones (I.e. error analysis).	1	-1	-3	-3
24.	I teach students that it's okay to ask for help when they need it – both in and out of school.	4	3	2	3
25.	I express curiosity about and appreciation for students' unique cultural backgrounds.	-4	1	-1	-1
26.	I teach students about relationships including how to build positive ones and protect themselves from negative ones.	2	0	0	1
27.	I tell students that I care deeply about them and their well-being, not just their academic success.	4	2	2	3
28.	I help students explore the power they have to change their own lives or circumstances.	0	-3	-4	3
29.	I use a behavioral management approach that focuses on positive behavior and positive reinforcement (E.g. a points system, “catching students being good,” etc.).	0	4	3	-1
30.	I spend focused time with students who are experiencing difficulty or are having problems.	0	1	1	4
31.	I connect students and their families to resources and supports that are available to them in the school, district, and community.	-4	-2	-1	1
32.	I teach about empathy and promote it in the classroom.	0	-1	1	0
33.	I teach about personal well-being and why it's important.	0	-4	-2	1
34.	I teach my students about ways that conflicts can be resolved in healthy ways.	1	-2	3	-1



## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

35.	I teach students to believe their abilities and talents can grow over time if they work at it (I.e. Growth mindset).	4	1	-2	4
36.	I make sure to make time for physical activity.	1	-3	3	-4
37.	I use chunking to break information I'm teaching into manageable pieces that are easier to process and learn.	-1	3	-1	-3
38.	I use restorative practices that help repair relationships between students when damage has been done.	-2	-3	-1	0

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

## Appendix U

## Participants' Comments

email #	Comments
1	comment1: (s33) Generally, I think this is something that should be taught and reinforced at home.
	comment2: (s19) I taught intermediate elementary, so there wasn't a lot of time for this and I don't believe it's as important as some of the other things. I think this does have a role in primary education, however.
	comment3: (s14) This is important, but when I was teaching elementary school, we could rarely find time for this. I instead would talk to students one on one as time allowed.
	comment4: (s17) Children need structure in order to learn. Rules, boundaries, limitations, and routine are part of creating a structured class room that eventually runs like a well-oiled machine even if the teacher isn't present.
	comment5: (s12) Generally, students love working together. Even if they don't, the world in which we live requires cooperation with others, in work, school, family, communities. Cooperating, compromising, civilly expressing disagreement, appreciating others--all of these things are missing in the world and need to be taught reinforced from a young age.
	comment6: (s9) This is the beginning of the day so it sets a tone of positivity and gives each student a feeling that I care about them. It inspires a positive attitude and a great start to the day.
2	comment1: (s16)
	comment2: (s12)
	comment3: (s7)
	comment4: (s27)
	comment5: (s26)
	comment6: (s10)
3	comment1: (s25) This is an area where I am weak.
	comment2: (s7) I model a strong work ethic but that lacks intentionally nurturing my own well being at times.
	comment3: (s1) Our district curriculum does not allow as many student choices.
	comment4: (s35) Students are reminded regularly that they are getting smarter and smarter everyday. The ultimate goal is to instill life long learners.
	comment5: (s16) The information that I compile is from the students, parents, data, and from previous teachers. This helps me to get to know the student .It includes interests, strengths, weakness, and goals.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

	comment6: (s15) It is very important to celebrate successes.
4	comment1: (s36) This is a limitation of the physical environment that I teach in, not what my preferred objectives would be.
	comment2: (s34) Conflict resolution is incredibly important. This response is probably more reflective of how effective I feel in employing these strategies than how important that I feel that they are.
	comment3: (s28) I hate to have this one as a least important and I do believe in empowering students, but I feel that it is important for a teacher to differentiate between helping a student understand the difference between changing their circumstances and changing their reaction to their circumstances.
	comment4: (s24) It is necessary for their comfort and safety, but also aids in interaction.
	comment5: (s21) We learn from mistakes as much as we learn from success.
	comment6: (s17) Students need to be free to explore. However, I feel that they do so best when they feel that they have a firm foundation upon which they can rely.
5	comment1: (s31) Once again, I don't think this is least effective but I don't have many resources that I know of so I don't do it.
	comment2: (s19) I do not go out of my way to create ways to learn. I feel like they come up naturally and good teachers act on them .
	comment3: (s12) I don't have enough time in my 3-way to do this. Maybe if I did it would work better.
	comment4: (s34) In fifth grade we see kids get very rude with others. I want them to know how you treat someone with kindness can go a long way.
	comment5: (s27) I think kids want to perform better for you if they know you care about their heart and not just our scores.
	comment6: (s3) If a student doesn't think you are on their team they will constantly feel like they have their guard up. They need to know they are protected here.
6	comment1: (s25) It's important to know cultural background, but it's not something that needs to be focused on at all times.
	comment2: (s13) I want students to have emotions, but they don't need a chart to monitor it.
	comment3: (s12) Cooperative learning is great but students need to feel they can do it alone too.
	comment4: (s27) I want students to know I care about them as an individual not just as a "score" on an exam.
	comment5: (s17) As an elementary teacher it's important to make rule together and provide structure for students.
	comment6: (s6) It's important for students to feel comfortable in a classroom so they can approach you when things get tough.
7	comment1: (s9) I try to acknowledge each student individually over the course of the day. I think that is more genuine than a daily greeting in the doorway. I feel that over time, the morning hello just becomes a mindless and automatic routine.
	comment2: (s7) I'm not sure what intentionally nurturing myself looks like? I think showing up on time, consistently being there, dressing professionally all speak for themselves and are expected.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

	comment3: (s1) I try to present information in a variety of ways to make things more interesting, but I don't see any big impact with giving a lot of choices. For one thing, when I do offer choices, 9 out of 10 students will opt for technology or whatever they can complete quickest and easiest.
	comment4: (s35) Students have to believe in possibilities before they will put forth their best effort. Otherwise, they feel defeated from the start and won't try very hard for you.
	comment5: (s27) If they know you truly care, they will try harder. One can't assume that they are getting a feeling of deep concern from home.
	comment6: (s3) Trust must be established before anything truly impactful can happen. When you have 9-year olds contemplating hurting themselves, you know there are children who need to feel supported.
8	comment1: (s25) This often gets out of control because students are not interested
	comment2: (s20) This is often seen as a break and the students play too much.
	comment3: (s11) gather additional information that can assist with academics or social behaviors. When the students go to this area, I have to closely this space because at times the students are trying to socialize with peers.
	comment4: (s37) easier for my ESE and bottom quartile students. I have to break assignments down and put them back together so that students are able to connect standards. I break down a standard within a standard. I also view data to assist me in chunking lessons. I use chunking to assist in arranging my small groups.
	comment5: (s22) This concept to me is the same as steps in a process. Students need to see that small steps make up an entire picture or scene. I also believe in taking the time to explain will assist with total comprehension.
	comment6: (s21) achieve greatness because of failed procedures. I believe that a mistake is just a learning opportunity waiting to happen.
9	comment1: (s31) Again, I don't know that is this not effective, I just have not had the opportunity to do this much in my experience
	comment2: (s13) I wouldn't say this is not effective, but I have found other things to be more effective. I do believe students should know how to regulate their emotions, I just felt that some of the other statements spoke to that better
	comment3: (s11) I tried this with a student and it caused him to act out more because he wanted to go to his space
	comment4: (s32) Students will be more successful in every area when they are kind, caring, and have empathy for others.
	comment5: (s27) Students need to feel loved and safe, and sometimes school is the only place where they get that feeling.
	comment6: (s26) I believe in developing the whole child. These relationship skills will help them for the rest of their lives
10	comment1: (s37)
	comment2: (s27) Don't just tell them, SHOW them you care
	comment3: (s22)
	comment4: (s35)
	comment5: (s30) This allows students know you care about them on a personal level.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

	comment6: (s24) Student's need to feel at ease. They may not feel comfortable talking during class.
11	comment1: (s31) If a family needs resources I will help lead them in the right direction but I haven't had the opportunity for that yet.
	comment2: (s10) It's important to have a good relationship with families, but I don't do anything out of the ordinary.
	comment3: (s4) Grades are important but its not the end all be all.
	comment4: (s29) I love "catching" students making good choices. It is meaningful and they love it too.
	comment5: (s19) I think the best way to learn at an early age is through play, creatively, and engaging in activities.
	comment6: (s8) I think it's important for students to know I respect them and I expect the same treatment from them as well.
12	comment1: (s31) I have lost faith in most of the support resources over the years teaching. From my experience the students don't have a bond with these individuals and are hesitant to speak about things with people they do not have a connection to.
	comment2: (s11) I want students to feel safe enough that they know it is okay to share your feelings. I don't feel that isolation will help solve the problem.
	comment3: (s6) I feel that my students are comfortable enough with me that they will come and talk. I don't feel that I need to provide a way.
	comment4: (s25) I want students to understand that we are all different and we need to value and appreciate those differences. Having the curiosity and discovering those differences in people will lead to new revelations with in themselves and it makes life fun.
	comment5: (s24) I believe that this is an educators main job. Help when and where help is needed. This is how you help people grow.
	comment6: (s21) I feel that once students understand that making mistakes is part of learning, and they get away from stigma that getting something wrong is bad, then they are free to try and real learning can take place.
13	comment1: (s35) Student abilities will grow over time
	comment2: (s15) This was placed out of order because I do affirm great behavior and grades through the Remind App. Parents and kids get a kick out of receiving a good call and love when I attach pictures of student work.
	comment3: (s6) Students are allowed to talk to me privately in all areas of the classroom not in just one specific place.
	comment4: (s17) Rituals and routines are needed to keep behaviors under control and so that students know what is expected of them.
	comment5: (s10) Communication is key so that parents are aware of what is going on in the classroom.
	comment6: (s9) Students might not have been acknowledged at home and appreciate being smiled at and talked to when they enter the room. It sets the tone for the day.
14	comment1: (s16) I don't collect student information. So this is least effective for my situation.

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT WELL-BEING

	comment2: (s11) I feel it's effective but just less effective than the other items on the list. My room also doesn't have space for a safe area.
	comment3: (s9) I've found that kids get numb to this routine. Some don't even respond when you say hello. I still do it cause it's the right thing to do.
	comment4: (s35) Follow their dreams and do the things that make them happy.
	comment5: (s28) Students need to know they have control over their lives.
	comment6: (s2) It's important for students to feel like they are valued.
15	comment1: (s36) I use systematic methods of collecting and compiling student information.
	comment2: (s19) I make sur to make time for physical activity
	comment3: (s16) I make sure students have opportunities to learn through play .
	comment4: (s35) I teach students to believe in their abilities and talents can grow over time if they work at it.
	comment5: (s27) I build strong relationships with students' families.
	comment6: (s10) I tell students that I care deeply for them and their well being, not just their academic success.
16	comment1: (s28) Again - with 2nd graders - this may not be an appropriate course of discussion in a public school. If I could find age-appropriate materials to make this more generic in content - then I would be more likely to place this in a higher level.
	comment2: (s20) Again, I would love to be able to do this more frequently - I do try to attempt brain breaks, but it is difficult to find the time to incorporate this into the daily schedule.
	comment3: (s5) It's not that I find these three items least effective - it is more of not being able to finding time to incorporate the ability to discuss this with them myself. Several of mine do go to social skills learning, which helps them, but in the public school, we must be careful in discussing student private home lives - especially with younger students.
	comment4: (s35) This is a no-brainer. A student who does not believe in his/her own abilities will shut down and not be as successful as they could be. This is especially true with 2nd graders - in my class, the SWD students make up about half the class - they have, so far in their academic career, been frustrated and it is imperative at this age to assist them in learning that current difficulties are not a lifetime issue.
	comment5: (s17) My 2nd grade students require structure and the rituals and routines help to set an atmosphere more conducive to learning. I also ask their opinions when creating some of these, including what the rewards or consequences for these actions might be. This helps provide them with ownership of the daily routine and allows them to be more involved with the learning process.
	comment6: (s9) I believe that this makes the student feel more welcome and helps to set a good relationship between teacher and student. It reinforces that the student is more than just a student number. Students at the primary/elementary level think more literally, and this approach seems uniquely geared toward academic success.
17	comment1: (s38)
	comment2: (s16)
	comment3: (s8) It is not that these are least effective, it's more important to build a foundation first.

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	comment4: (s27)
	comment5: (s9) Just good teaching
	comment6: (s6) These are structural
18	comment1: (s37) I believe this is essential but as mentioned in the previous statements building relationships and structure in the classroom must take place prior to teaching. It is imperative that classroom management and relationships are established so that learning can take place.
	comment2: (s16) This is effective, but I believe the relationships and personal aspects of the classroom should come first. There should be some organization of collecting information about the student so it can be used to find out information quickly that could help build the relationship with the students.
	comment3: (s11) I think that students tend to take advantage of situations to get out of doing things that they don't want or don't like to do. I encouraged them to try and work out a problem and if they were unable to calm down, then they could go to their desk area. I tried to encourage working together and preventive measures to discourage triggers that would make a student upset to begin with.
	comment4: (s27) Sometimes students act out because they lack the confidence that they can complete the work. If they know and trust that their teacher cares about them, they will build the incentive to do their work. They in turn feel better about themselves and will be less likely to act negatively in the classroom.
	comment5: (s17) I believe that this step is crucial to establish and follow with fidelity, especially in classroom where students need extra support with learning and controlling behaviors. Many students come from unstable homes. Rituals and routines set structure which in turns gives them a sense of stability which leaves room for learning and less time spent on correcting behaviors.
	comment6: (s8) This flows with rituals and routines. We would role play what our rules and guidelines meant. For example if a student yelled at another student for getting in front of him/her in line, we would discuss and role play a better way for the student to treat and express him/herself to the other student vice yelling at the other student. This teaches student how to treat each other in the classroom when they are frustrated which leads to a happier and comfortable learning environment.
19	comment1: (s36)
	comment2: (s19)
	comment3: (s16)
	comment4: (s10)
	comment5: (s5)
	comment6: (s3)
20	comment1: (s28) Because my students are so young, they do not have much control over home situations or public policy. I do teach them that they can choose any occupation they are interested in, but at this age, that too, is pretty limited. Many of my students genuinely want to be princesses or super heroes.
	comment2: (s12) Because my students are so young, I don't see it working very well. When I taught 4th grade, I used it more, but made sure to have systems in place to make students responsible for their own parts or I find some let the rest do all the work and they just earn the grade.

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	comment3: (s7) While I do think students need to see me working on my own well-being, in 2nd grade, they are not as focused on it. I do try to model healthy eating, but that is all I take time for in the class.
	comment4: (s35) When people feel like they have no control over their success, they tend to fail. When they understand that they can succeed and I believe they WILL succeed, they are more likely to work toward that success.
	comment5: (s27) I really do care deeply about my kiddos-why wouldn't I tell them. I believe students need to know that I care and am invested in them and their progress because together we can figure things out that we could not do independently.
	comment6: (s24) I find that some kids think that I expect them to be perfect and will be disappointed in them if they fail-the opposite is true. In my mind, growth is the true success. I am VERY data driven and
21	comment1: (s28) Fortunately, the population that I work with is relatively stable and affluent, so I have not had a lot of need to do this. I feel that if I worked in a differently neighborhood, this would be a more effective strategy than in my current school.
	comment2: (s16) I feel that we collect a lot of data in our jobs, and I don't feel that that data is always helpful. I would rather spend time working individually with students.
	comment3: (s7) I've never really thought about doing this in my classroom.
	comment4: (s27) I strongly believe that building good relationships with students is the best way to ensure their success. They need to know that they are important to me.
	comment5: (s24) Students need to feel comfortable asking for help, and knowing that everyone needs help at different points and in different situations. They need to know that they are not alone.
	comment6: (s21) If students know it's ok and safe to make mistakes, I feel they are more willing to try.
22	comment1: (s33)
	comment2: (s7)
	comment3: (s6)
	comment4: (s36)
	comment5: (s35)
	comment6: (s9)
23	comment1: (s28) Students work together in groups, pairs and in a class setting to explore this.
	comment2: (s11) In my classroom students can just come to me anywhere to talk privately about any issues they are having
	comment3: (s4) Most students only care about certain
	comment4: (s17) Structure in a classroom is very important. It sets a tone and shows students what is expected.
	comment5: (s5) Students learn better in a caring environment.
	comment6: (s3) Students need to know that they are cared about. They will work more effectively in a caring environment.
24	comment1: (s37) I differentiate for all students in order for them to be successful academically, but in this study my focus was more on building the relationship between



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	students, teacher, peers, and parents, because I strongly feel that needs to be the foundation for quality academic leaning.
	comment2: (s6) I feel it is important, but by valuing each student, they tend to feel open to share with me.
	comment3: (s5) I places this here mainly because of the age level with which I work.
	comment4: (s34) I feel it is an important life skill, especially in todays world, to be able to see that we can work through conflicts we have with others in a respectful way.
	comment5: (s15) Children need to feel special and important. It builds their self-esteem. Also when parents hear positive things about their child, it builds the relationship between parent and child as well as parent and teacher.
	comment6: (s10) There has to be that sense of trust and caring in order for students to want to do well and open up to the teacher. Also a good relationship with parents helps promote the learning and well being of their child.
25	comment1: (s25) It's not that these things aren't important, but once again there is rarely the opportunity to do so.
	comment2: (s20) Once again, I'm pretty serious and tend to push everyone to work as hard as they can. I also teach four classes a day, so in that hour I honestly don't think too much about breaks. If I see the need, I will though.
	comment3: (s19) This is just not my personality. We do have fun in our learning, but I tend to be on the serious side.
	comment4: (s35) Without the belief that they "can do it", the students won't even try. Many students only hear positive words and encouragement at school. I want to be there biggest advocate and help them to change their thinking and believe in themselves.
	comment5: (s17) I feel like if you don't have structure and stability, you can't effectively teach the students anything. They need to have consistency in their lives, and know that they don't have to try and figure out what will be happening each day. For some students, school is the only place they have consistency.
	comment6: (s3) Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. they need to know that you are for them no matter what.
26	comment1: (s38)
	comment2: (s34)
	comment3: (s5)
	comment4: (s27)
	comment5: (s17)
	comment6: (s12) I have to do certain things in my classroom. others I don't have time to build in or don't know how to incorporate.
27	comment1: (s28)
	comment2: (s5) Most kindergarten students are hopeful and although I do think this is important, I think this might apply to a specific case and not to the class as a whole.
	comment3: (s4) Kindergarteners should not be worried about grades at all.
	comment4: (s19) Kindergarten students need to play, and they learn a lot through play! It gives them a chance to make mistakes and feel ok about it. It also makes school fun, and they WANT to come to school.

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	comment5: (s9) Each child feels special when I specifically say their name and welcome them. We also do this when we leave in the afternoon.
	comment6: (s1) Let's students know they have a part in how they learn and helps them to be more engaged if they get to pick.
28	comment1: (s37)
	comment2: (s16) We keep extensive records. We have also had the opportunity to teach members of the same family, which gives us insight into family dynamics.
	comment3: (s11) We have a "time-out zone" to which students can retire to regroup and "get a grip on your bad self".
	comment4: (s24) My students struggle with asking for help - they feel it makes them look "stupid". When I do not know the answer I say "I don't know, let's look that up", letting them know that adults do not have all the answers, either.
	comment5: (s21) One of the biggest problems my students have is recognizing they do not know everything. When I make mistakes, I make sure I do not gloss over those mistakes, acknowledging that I have erred, correcting the error and moving on.
	comment6: (s18) Children respond well to humor. Makes adults seem more approachable.
29	comment1: (s28)
	comment2: (s4) Younger elementary students are egocentric and think everything they do is great. They don't really understand grades.
	comment3: (s1) Too many choices can lead to confusion and ineffective use of time.
	comment4: (s29) Choosing to be positive is a way to try to keep the negative out of your mouth and your mind. Everyone has something they want to earn.
	comment5: (s17) Knowing expectations helps students support each other and makes consequences clear.
	comment6: (s10) If students know that everyone is on the same page, they're more likely to follow through with what needs to be done. Parents knowing that we're all on the same team is the best way I've found for families to buy into what I'm delivering.
30	comment1: (s19) There simply isn't time.
	comment2: (s16)
	comment3: (s6) I don't have a mailbox or an official spot, but I see the merit.
	comment4: (s30)
	comment5: (s27)
	comment6: (s3) Having someone who cares means the most.
31	comment1: (s29)
	comment2: (s22)
	comment3: (s4) Not really least effective - forced distribution
	comment4: (s36)
	comment5: (s34)
	comment6: (s24) They are all equally important.
32	comment1: (s35)
	comment2: (s28)
	comment3: (s1)

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	comment4: (s30)
	comment5: (s13)
	comment6: (s5)
33	comment1: (s23)
	comment2: (s18) While I believe humor can lighten many situations, I don't think it is the most effective way to connect with students (maybe it's because I am not that naturally funny) HA .
	comment3: (s4) I am currently in a Waldorf Kindergarten setting. In this type of environment grades are not important. Growing and working to the best of our ability is where our emphasis is.
	comment4: (s19) The best learning takes place when students don't even realize what they are doing to learning!
	comment5: (s15) Many students have learned to gain attention through negative reinforcement. In order to change this pattern of behavior, I flood students with positive reinforcement so they see they can get attention in other ways. Once this has been achieved, the majority of students crave this type of praise. It also helps create a peaceful learning environment where everyone is ready to learn. Student's begin to think "Mrs. Curtis thinks I am good, so I must be good!"
	comment6: (s14) Most people (even our littlest ones) want to be heard. Some are excited to come to school just to share what they did over the weekend. They want to celebrate with their friends, as well as get emotions that are bothering them off their chest. If this can all be released (in a sense) at the beginning of the day, they are more ready for success.
34	comment1: (s35)
	comment2: (s34)
	comment3: (s15)
	comment4: (s17)
	comment5: (s10)
	comment6: (s9)
35	comment1: (s31) This one I chose as least effective because I haven't had much experience doing this. We have almost no participation with parents at our school. The main way we get them to come out to Literacy Night, STEAM Night, and conference nights is by providing them with food to eat for dinner. So, connecting them to resources is difficult because it's hard even contacting the parents at my school.
	comment2: (s16) I send home a sheet like this home on the first day that students enter my classroom, all throughout the year. This is helpful information but it just hasn't seemed to be the most effective for promoting students well-being with the students that I've had. The 22 most effective strategies that I chose to place in the 0 to +4 section have definitely proven to be more effective in promoting students' well-being, in my person experience.

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	comment3: (s10) This hasn't proven to be least effect, it just hasn't helped to promote the well-being of the students in my classrooms. I work in a very low-income area where I go the whole year without even meeting some of the parents because they just don't come in for conferences or after school nights, even when it's just at the beginning of the year to meet each other. I have tried and only succeeded in this with a handful of families. These families get excited still when we see each other at the grocery store or in Target and their kids are now in Middle school, Building the relationships are great, it just doesn't happen very often with the parents that I've had.
	comment4: (s32) This is very important and has proven to be most effective because majority of the time when I turn the tables of whatever the situation is, the student understands why the other person feels the way that they do. This usually helps students apologize and change their actions in the future in order to not hurt another student. The student who has been mean or done something that others don't like, usually then understands why it was wrong and they start to see why it's important to be nice or positive and not try to irritate others or bring them down.
	comment5: (s28) I have found this to be most effective because sometimes students really feel that the adults or students around them control their lives and they don't see how they can complete ignore negative behaviors and have a totally different, positive day, especially after someone is unfair or mean to them. Reminding them that they are the only ones in charge of themselves and that they can changed how they feel and behave on a daily basis, helps them feel more positive and gets them more in control of their emotions instead of letting others control them.
	comment6: (s18) I have found this to be most effective because it lets my students know that I am human and not a robot who expects them to only perform academically. My students, I feel have a greater respect for me because they can relate to me when I engage in jokes with them.
36	comment1: (s33) I think it should not totally fall on the teacher. A good counseling program will help to support the school in this area. The classroom teacher can reinforce it.
	comment2: (s19) It depends. On an everyday basis, No! Who has the time! However, there have to be strategic opportunities to do it.
	comment3: (s14) I don't necessarily think it is the least effective. My issue is the time to do it. The school counselor is vital to this statement. Teaching students how to do it. Then the classroom teacher can follow-up as needed.
	comment4: (s37) Learning happens in stages. it allows for students to process it in steps before moving on to the next part of the standard or benchmark. Allows for teachers to remediate prior moving to the next step
	comment5: (s29) Students need to be rewarded for positive behavior and know how to improve negative behavior based upon feedback.
	comment6: (s17) It is important to establish rituals and routines so students will know the classroom expectations. Expectations for the student, teacher, working in groups, getting along with each other, etc.
37	comment1: (s22)
	comment2: (s13)
	comment3: (s4)

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	comment4: (s19)
	comment5: (s17)
	comment6: (s12)
38	comment1: (s28) I'm not against this, there is just no time to teach this and everything else. More and more responsibility is piled on to the teacher with no assistance, funding, time, or training.
	comment2: (s20) I'm not against this, there is just no time to teach this and everything else. More and more responsibility is piled on to the teacher with no assistance, funding, time, or training.
	comment3: (s13) I'm not against this, there is just no time to teach this and everything else. More and more responsibility is piled on to the teacher with no assistance, funding, time, or training.
	comment4: (s35) I want students to know that we all learn at different rates, but we all learn. Keep practicing and it will come. Don't give up!
	comment5: (s18) If I didn't use humor in the classroom, I believe I would quit. The stress on teachers is so great that you have to bring humor into the classroom. Laughing can be a good thing.
	comment6: (s15) Students have to believe they can do the work or have the ability to do the work. Encouragement is super important! The family also needs to know that their child is being supported at school!

**Appendix V**

