ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPIES AND READING INTERVENTIONS:
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS

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ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPIES AND READING INTERVENTIONS:
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT

ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPIES AND READING INTERVENTIONS:
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Utilizing canines for therapy or interventions is a growing trend in educational settings. Research has focused on those actively participating in animal assisted therapy and interventions, but has largely neglected the views and perceptions of teachers. The current study investigated the results of a survey administered to educators in schools currently not utilizing animal assisted therapy or interventions. Results showed two main barriers associated with utilizing canines in school settings: fear of canines and allergies to canines. Results also showed a positive perception of canine assisted reading interventions from educators. Educators believed canine assisted reading interventions were more likely to increase reading fluency, comprehension, and on task behavior when compared to interventions that did not utilize a canine companion.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reading is utilized in nearly every class across the school day. Eventually, when children grow old enough (typically the transition from third to fourth grade), the focus of teaching children to read shifts; instead the focus becomes teaching children to learn by reading (Hernandez, 2012). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress” (NAEP) national report card (n.d.), in 2015 only 36% of fourth graders read at or above a proficient level. Struggling readers have been a growing trend in educational literature, particularly since the passing of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and policies in some states that require students be held back if they are not considered proficient in reading; such as the Third Grade Guarantee in Ohio (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002; Ohio Rev. Code § 3313.608, 2007). These laws and policies hold states and schools accountable for children who are not meeting academic standards. Most recently, the passing of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in many states has exacerbated the need for measurement of performance and achievement in schools. In order to assist struggling students, a variety of interventions, curricula, and supports have been researched and implemented in schools. One recent movement in the intervention literature is the use of animals to assist struggling readers; this strategy is known as Animal Assisted Reading Interventions (AARI).
Animal Assisted Reading Interventions stem from Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) and Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), which have demonstrated success in increasing positive social behaviors in children with a variety of disorders, particularly autism spectrum disorder (ASD; O’Haire, McKenzie, Beck, & Slaughter, 2013). Further, the presence of animals can decrease levels of stress, heart rate, loneliness, and isolation, and increase levels of social and emotional status in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and people in general (Nimer & Lundahl, 2007). AARIs are currently utilized in forty-three of the fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, and are beginning to be as extensively researched as AAI/AAT (Friesen & Delisle, 2012).

Numerous qualitative studies have investigated the impact of an AARI or AAT/AAI when implemented in a school system, and the results of these studies are largely positive (Bassette & Taber-Doughty, 2013; Fisher & Cozens, 2014; Friesen, 2010; Kaymen, 2005; le Roux, Swartz, & Swart, 2014; O’Haire et al., 2013; Tate, 2015). Participants in these studies have demonstrated an increase in on-task behavior during reading activities, as well as an increase of reading fluency and comprehension (Bassette & Taber-Doughty, 2013; Fisher & Cozens, 2014; le Roux et al., 2014). Participants in AARIs and AAT/AAIs also demonstrate an overall positive attitude towards animals in the school system.

Anecdotal stories and articles describe how children who participate in AARIs respond positively towards the program and canines in particular. For example, a student commented, “I love reading with the dog and her amazing owner” (Shaw, 2008, p. 368).
One adult associated with an AARI noted, “The results are quite extraordinary. The student who has social fears and is terrified to read out loud forgets what about what they can’t do. Dogs are magical catalysts” (Bueche, 2003, p. 46). Qualitative research on AAT conducted in schools asked the two school counselors associated with the AAT program to discuss the negative effects of AAT “neither educator could think of a negative situation” (Tate, 2014, p. 84).

Some studies, however, point to potential barriers or concerns related to having animals in the school setting. Reported barriers to AAIs in a school setting include allergies, sanitation concerns, safety considerations, fear of canines, cultural dispositions, and dog temperament (Jalongo, Astorina, & Bomboy, 2004; 2006; 2008). The views and opinions of some AARI/AAT/AAI participants are documented; however, there is a gap in the literature regarding the views of those who have not yet been able to, or who may refuse to participate in an AARI/AAT/AAI. While researching this topic, ERIC, Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), Education Research Complete, and PsycINFO databases were searched using the following keywords: “teacher perception” AND “dog”; “teacher attitudes” AND “dog”; "teacher survey" AND "dog"; “teacher perception” AND “animal assisted”; “teacher attitudes” AND “animal assisted”; "teacher survey" AND "animal assisted"; “teacher perception” AND “animal intervention”; “teacher attitudes” AND “animal intervention”; "teacher survey" AND "animal intervention"; and “Barriers” AND “animal assisted”. These search terms did not
uncover any research on the perceptions or attitudes of canines in an educational setting by educators who are not part of an AARI/AAI/AAT programs.

**Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of the current study was to quantitatively evaluate the potential barriers of using canines in school settings, specifically which barriers are important to teachers who do not utilize canines in their school currently. This study evaluated such teachers’ perceived effectiveness of canine AARIs.

This study added to the scant existing literature on AARI/AAI/AAT; it also added to the nonexistent literature regarding views and perceptions of educators who are not part of an AARI/AAI/AAT (Kaymen, 2005). The aim of this study was to identify the barriers that educators find most worrisome regarding AARI/AAI/AAT, and suggestions are provided for overcoming or educating the general population about AARI/AAI/AAT in a school setting.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The first section of this literature review summarizes the skills growing readers are expected to learn, information of why learning to read is critical, factors that can have an impact on a child’s ability to read, and common interventions to improve reading fluency and comprehension. The next section of the literature review discusses why and how animals are utilized in schools as an effective way to develop reading skills. Finally, literature on the potential barriers to utilizing animals in schools is examined.

Growing Readers

In the United States children formally take steps to begin learning to read as early as pre-school. This is done through reading to the students, allowing students the opportunity to identify common words such as their name, teaching phonemic awareness (being able to break words into their base sounds and syllables), and decoding (sounding out word and connecting them to spoken language) skills (Willis, 2008). Officially, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for reading and language arts begin in kindergarten, as pre-school is not required for all children.

As kindergarteners, students are expected to understand basic print concepts. This includes knowing to follow text from left to right, top to bottom, as well as recognizing and naming the letters of the alphabet (National Governors Association
Kindergarteners are also expected to become phonologically aware and able to isolate and pronounce phonemes of many consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. Fluency is expected in these aforementioned skills by the start of first grade. As for reading, Kindergarten students should be able to recognize and read grade appropriate sight words (i.e., she, is, my, etc.) and apply decoding skills for the “primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant”; effectively sounding out a word that is unknown to the student (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 16).

As children learn to read and develop literacy skills, they are continually assessed to measure and track growth, in part due to laws such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), known today as the Every student Succeeds Act or ESSA, which seeks to create high quality standards in teaching by improving teacher accountability and creating measurable goals and outcomes (No Child Left Behind, 2002; Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). NCLB, which was passed more than a decade ago, while criticized by many, did start an important discussion of ensuring the nation’s children are prepared for work and higher education after high school.

**Learning to read.** Learning to read is important for many reasons; first and foremost in a school setting, reading is primarily how children will learn and obtain information. When children are in early elementary school, their primary goal is to “learn to read”. However, as children develop into competent readers, their goals switch
from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” (Hernanez, 2012). During this transition students are less focused on learning how to break words down or read fluently, and more focused on comprehending what they read. Unfortunately, without the knowledge and skills to read fluently, reading comprehension, and ultimately learning, will suffer (Beers, 2003). This shift generally happens in the third grade (Hernanez, 2012); coincidentally, this is the same time some states, including Ohio, assess children via the Third Grade Guarantee to ensure that children are reading at an appropriate level (33 Ohio Rev. Code. § 3313.608, 2007). (Hernanez (2012) points out, children who are not reading at grade level by the third grade are four times more likely not to earn their high school diploma with same aged peers. These non-proficient readers go on to make up 63% of children who ultimately drop out of school before earning their high school diploma. High school graduates have a better chance of being employed, higher paying jobs when employed, and a decreased likelihood of incarceration after school (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2009).

Reading development. Reading is not an innate ability; the first several school years of a child’s life are spent learning the rules that dictate how to read. As a prerequisite to learning the rules and patterns of written language, a child must first be phonologically aware. McKenna and Dougherty Stahl (2009) define phonological awareness as “the awareness of sounds and spoken word” (p. 14). For example, CAT can be broken down into three simple sounds /C/ /A/ /T/. 
Once a child understands that spoken and written words are series of sounds to be placed together, they are able to start learning how text is constructed, as well as the rules and patterns that dictate how sounds are arranged and pronounced. McKenna and Dougherty Stahl (2009) point out, “the ability to decode requires both a knowledge of the process involved in decoding as well as the knowledge of specific letter-sound relationships” (p. 13). As a child grows and develops, their decoding skills will expand as well. A child may start by sounding out consonant vowel consonant (CVC) words such as *cat*; to decode this word the child only needs to know the consonant and vowel sounds presented in the word. As a growing reader develops, s/he will also need to learn consonant and vowel digraphs, consonant blends, long vowel sounds or the “silent e” rule, vowel diphthongs, R or L controlled vowels, and variant vowel sounds (McKenna & Dougherty Stahl, 2009).

While having decoding skills is very important, it is not the only concept needed for children to read confidently, fluently, or with understanding of a text. Sight words become an integral part of not only learning how to read fluently, but also reading in order to learn. Sight words are considered to be “all the words that a child recognizes „at sight‟, or automatically”, and “the most frequently used words in the English language” (McKenna & Dougherty Stahl, 2009, p. 12). Sight words should be recognized and read within half a second. These are the words that a reader is able to “read” without sounding out or using decoding skills that, when not automatic, may slow down reading speed and inhibit reading comprehension. This ability is called reading automaticity, and sight
words are developed and expanded with practice (Beers, 2003). Children who are not struggling with learning to read typically need to see and practice a word about ten times before it begins to transition into their mental word bank to become a sight word. For children who are struggling to read, much more practice is needed. Struggling readers may need to see and practice words upwards of forty times or more before it transitions into their mental word bank (Beers, 2003). As one can imagine, it would be frustrating taking four times longer to learn each word in comparison to same aged peers.

As a child becomes phonologically aware, masters decoding skills, and practices reading, the next important step for a child to begin to “read to learn” is to increase his or her vocabulary knowledge. A growing reader’s vocabulary is the best predictor of his or her comprehension skills (McKenna & Dougherty Stahl, 2009).

**Environmental Effects on Growing Readers**

Aside from the factors outside of an educator’s control, there are several facets of reading instruction and classroom environment that a teacher can control to support growing readers.

When a child learns to read, practice becomes essential for reading prosody and fluency, both of which contribute to comprehension. However, if a child is not motivated to read, this practice may not occur. Krashen (2004) found that voluntary free reading had the single largest impact on many different academic areas; among these areas were comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Hudson and Williams (2015) identified motivation as one of the key factors that leads to voluntary free reading. In their study,
motivation to read was increased by choice; children were given the choice to read books that they desired. Research has also shown that when children are given the opportunity to read books they choose, motivation is not the only thing that increases; time spent reading and reading comprehension skills also increase (Gambrell, 2011). While choice is one way to increase motivation to read, it is not the only way to increase motivation.

Another important factor to promote practice is managing the environment in which a child practices to read. Collins (2004) noted that in order to make an effort to practice techniques that lead to literacy, students need to feel that they are in a safe and welcoming environment. Willis (2008) has similar views in regard to reading fluency, stating:

To permit information to travel effectively through the limbic system to be processed and stored as word memories or decoding skills, it is necessary to create a classroom environment that is supportive and makes students feel safe. In a classroom where diversity is honored and mistakes are recognized as opportunities to learn, students develop trust that is critical if they are to persevere and take the risk of reading aloud to build fluency (p. 68).

One way educators can construct this type of environment is through respect and consistency. In a child’s learning environment, s/he should feel safe enough to take risks and ask questions without being scorned or made fun of by both the other students and the teacher. Non-verbal language is important for creating a safe learning environment; Fontenot (2014) notes that non-verbal communication is seen as a more authentic gauge
of a person’s feelings or emotions than verbal communication. While teachers, or even other students, may not verbally or intentionally make a child feel uncomfortable in his or her learning environment, eye rolling, heavy sighs, and head shaking can be some of the ways a child may feel “unsafe” and unable to actively engage and learn. To remedy these types of ailments in a learning environment Collins (2004) suggests consistency is key. Disrespect of any kind should never be tolerated from members of the reading environment, whether it is a reprimand by the teacher, embarrassing a child in front of the entire class, or laughter from a child with the intent of abasing another child who asked a “silly” question due to lack of understanding. Consistency should also be applied to the classroom schedule. This creates a sense of “comfort” for children (Collins, 2004 p. 6). When there is a consistent schedule, children know what is expected of them, where they are supposed to be, and what they are supposed to be doing. This type of consistency can help reduce the anxiety that can hinder reading fluency.

As Willis (2008) points out, students who are struggling readers are cognizant they do not read with the fluency or prosody of their peers. This can make a child feel embarrassed and anxious when having to read out loud. Ornstein and Sobel (1987) found when students feel anxious while reading, “emotional blockage in the amygdala interferes with the cognition needed to select out the important information” (Willis, 2008, p. 68); essentially, causing the reader to not comprehend the full scope of a text. One could easily deduce that in order for reading comprehension skills to grow, the reader must remain in a calm or non-anxious state.
Interventions Aimed at Increasing Reading Fluency and Comprehension

As previously discussed, several factors can inhibit or promote reading fluency and comprehension. Interventions aimed at increasing reading fluency may look to do two things. First, they prevent inhibitory factors, demonstrated in a study by Hudson and Williams (2015), which aimed to improve motivation through choice. Second, interventions attempt to increase factors that promote reading fluency and comprehension. Collins (2004) suggested the importance of a safe, warm, and inviting educational environment.

When reading interventions are broken down further, two types of interventions emerge. The first type of reading intervention, especially seen in a Response to Intervention model (RTI) is instructional (Shapiro, n.d.). These types of reading interventions may be used when a child does not have the skills needed to complete a task. For instance, a child who cannot distinguish between multiple words such as rat and rate will need an instructional intervention. This intervention should teach the child the difference between long and short vowel sounds.

If a child can distinguish between words such as rat and rate, but takes a long time to break the word down, sound the word out, and blend the sounds back together before reading on, the child will not need an instructional intervention because s/he has the skills needed to complete the task. Instead this child may need an intervention that enables him or her to practice reading words with a silent /e/. This would be considered a practice-based intervention (Shapiro, n.d.).
One commonly researched practice-based intervention, which increases reading fluency and comprehension, is repeated reading. This intervention has the reader read, and re-read a passage until he or she has reached a level of fluency that is appropriate for the age and grade with minimal mistakes (Guerin & Murphy, 2015). Strickland, Boon, and Spencer (2013) investigated the effects of repeated reading on fluency and comprehension skills in elementary-age students with learning disabilities. After reviewing 19 research articles, they found that, in students with learning disabilities, repeated reading was an effective intervention method. As previously discussed, Beers (2003) noted that struggling readers may need practice reading specific words up to 30 more times than average readers before committing them to memory; repeated reading is one intervention strategy that allows struggling readers the practice they need. More recently, Guerin and Murphy (2015) investigated the effects of repeated reading for three struggling adolescents; they found both reading fluency and comprehension increased for all three readers. Unfortunately there was a decrease in engagement by one of the more enthusiastic readers. This led researchers to believe that repeated reading should only be one part of an intervention strategy, even if it is effective alone. As one can imagine, reading the same passage multiple times may decrease motivation by the reader.

Definition of Key Terms

The current study defines the following terms as:

**Animal-assisted therapy (AAT).** A trained professional who utilizes an animal as part of his or her job; in order to work with an animal, both animal and person must be
trained and certified by a licensed entity. The AAT occurs in order to improvement social, emotional, or cognitive functioning (Fine, 2010).

**Animal-assisted intervention/activity (AAI/AAA).** Activities that involve animals visiting people; these visits aim to assist those receiving intervention through motivational, educational, or recreational enhancements. AAIs/AAAs can be utilized in a many differing environments, but must be done so by a trained professional, paraprofessional, or volunteer (Fine, 2010). For the purpose of this research, in a school setting, Animal-assisted activities are referred to as Animal-assisted interventions.

**Animal-assisted reading intervention (AARI).** Similar to AAI, animal-assisted reading intervention (AARI) includes activities that involve animals visiting people, is delivered in a variety of environments by trained professionals, paraprofessionals, or volunteers with animals that meet specific criteria; however, the activity which is completed is educational in nature, typically aimed at increasing a reading skill such as fluency, comprehension, prosody, etc. (Tate, 2014).

**Therapy dog.** A dog that goes who assists its owner or handler in a variety of settings. These settings may include, but are not limited to, schools, homes, or hospitals (American Kennel Club, 2016).

**Animal Assisted Therapy as a Reading Intervention**

In recent years, educators have begun utilizing animals to assist with reading interventions. AAI stems from AAT, which has many positive effects on children and adults. Research on AAT highlights an increase in positive social behaviors in children
with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who received AAIs when compared to children with ASD who were given toys instead of live animals (O’Haire et al., 2013). Participants in this study who were given a live animal also experienced decreased levels of stress, heart rate, loneliness, and isolation. Nimer and Lundahl (2007) concluded the overall “well-being” of participants was influenced in a positive manner, including social and emotional status.

When utilizing AAT or AAI for children in schools, dogs are typically the animal of choice, but smaller animals such as guinea pigs have also been used (Friesen, 2010; O’Haire et al., 2013). Animals used in school settings are intended not only to help with the social and emotional facets of life, but also the learning environment for children who struggle academically. One growing form of AAIs are animal assisted literacy programs, which “offer children unique and valuable social and emotional support precisely because they are active and willing participants, but with the qualifier that it is outside the realm of their communicative abilities to verbally criticize or judge the child’s progress” (Friesen, 2012, p. 266). Forty-three of the fifty states, as well as the District of Columbia, now utilize academic-based AAT programs aimed at increasing literacy among students (Friesen & Delisle, 2012). Many of these programs attempt to increase both constrained and unconstrained literacy skills. Constrained literacy skills are “letter knowledge, phonics, and concepts of print” (Paris, 2005, p. 187). These literacy skills are increased by utilizing the animal. For instance, with learning print concepts, when the child comes to a period he or she may be asked to pet the dog for two seconds; when reading past a
comma the child may be asked to pet the dog for one second. This makes the child cognizant of pauses during specific punctuation marks. Unconstrained literacy skills include oral language development, critical thinking, and comprehension; these skills are developed as the student becomes increasingly interested and willing to participate in reading.

As discussed earlier, Collins (2004) and Willis (2008) noted that in order to make an effort to practice techniques that will improve literacy skills, students need to feel safe in the reading environment. This is, in part, why dogs are so commonly used. Friesen (2010) notes that children associate dogs as non-judgmental good listeners; this provides a safe learning environment where children are able to learn without the fear of embarrassment. When researchers interviewed children who participated in an AARI, children stated they were “happy,” “really happy,” “really great,” “really excited,” and “good because it’s fun” when asked how they felt about reading to their canine companion (Kaymen, 2005, p. 34).

In review, AARIs seek to utilize the unconditional positive regard and non-judgmental attitude displayed by dogs to create a safe and welcoming environment, which Collins (2004) stated children needed in order to take risks and grow. AARIs also attempt to increase motivation by allowing children to read with a canine companion. One child stated, “All of the other kids want to read with her (the animal”s handler) and the dog. If I can read with her (the dog”s handler) and the dog every year I would” after participating in an AARI (Shaw, 2013, p. 368). AARIs typically involve repeated
reading where children are given the opportunity for repeated exposure to text and words they may be struggling with, while at the same time, being motivated to do so. The current research that will be discussed shows positive effects on reading fluency, on-task behavior, and positive attitudes towards animal assisted programs by those who have participated or been witness to an AAI (Bassette & Taber-Doughty, 2013; Bueche, 2003; Fisher & Cozens, 2014; Kaymen, 2005; Tate, 2014; Sheaffer, 2009); however, as research has suggested, due to barriers, some may view the idea of utilizing animals to help children read less than desirable (Jalongo, 2006; Jalongo, 2008).

**Research on Animal Assisted Reading Interventions**

While few peer reviewed studies have been published regarding AARI, several anecdotal stories are circulating in the popular media. All stories have the same thing in common - the positive demonstrated effects of canine assisted reading interventions. One such story comes from a paper, *Citizens' Voice*, in Pennsylvania, educators state that "It really helps the kids feel special," "They want to impress the dogs with their progress," and “the program helps build confidence in young readers” (Sheaffer, 2009). Another article states that “results are extraordinary” and children who suffer from social fears and fear of reading aloud forget these fears with the canines. One educator says, “dogs are magical catalysts” (Bueche, 2003).

Minimal quantitative and qualitative studies have evaluated the effects of AAI on reading, and on/off-task behavior while reading for students participating in an AARI. Bassette and Taber-Doughty (2013) addressed poor on-task behavior, while reading,
exhibited by children with emotional or behavioral disabilities (EBD). As the authors point out, not only do children with emotional disabilities lack social skills needed to make friends, they are also at the highest risk for receiving low grades, despite being in special education classes. The low grades are attributed to the amount of time students identified as EBD spend off-task, or not academically engaged.

The aim of the AAT in Bassette and Taber-Doughty (2013) study was to increase on-task behavior. Participants were pre-tested for their reading level using an Accelerated Reader (AR) program already in place in the school. Students spent half an hour a day completing independent readings out of AR books that were at the upper end or above their reading level to ensure the book was challenging. Readings were completed aloud, with a canine companion; the researchers used interval recording to determine whether or not the students were on-task during the independent reading time. Data were recorded every 15 seconds for the length of the book. For intervention integrity, each child was told the same script before being paired with the dog and was allowed to pet, play, or walk the dog after reading the book aloud. The intervention lasted four weeks from start to finish; all participants experienced a significant increase in on-task reading behaviors. Despite this positive finding related to increases in on-task behavior, there was no evidence of progress in students’ reading levels or words read per minute (WPM).

Research by Tate (2015) utilized a mixed methods design to add insight into a pet therapy school program. While this study did not evaluate AARIs, it did add to the scant
body of literature on perceptions and views of educators working with animals in a school setting. Tate evaluated an animal assisted therapy program that was implemented in a rural Missouri school for three years. Qualitatively, Tate found that, of those interviewed, only positive outcomes of having a dog (Braxton) in school buildings were reported. It is important to note that those interviewed were school counselors and actively engaged with Braxton. Participants reported that Braxton was successful in calming down students who were upset, was loved by all the parents who dropped their children off in the morning, and brought a smile to many faces. The researcher also found that teachers came to Braxton when they were having a bad day. While there were no negative outcomes of Braxton in the district’s schools, one counselor interviewed suggested that the only negative outcome associated Braxton could be an allergic reaction by a student; however, no such student was located in the district. Quantitatively, Tate administered a short survey to 38 teachers who worked at the same school as Braxton. The survey attempted to gain the perceptions of these teachers; however, only 13 teachers replied. Questions included:

- On a scale from one to five with five being the highest level, rate how you feel about animals in your building?
- Do you believe having a dog in your building is effective?
- Do you see a difference in student behavior when the dog is present?

Would you recommend pet therapy to colleagues in other districts? (Tate, 2015, p. 108)
For each of these questions, the average response was more than 4.6 on a 5-point Likert scale, suggesting that teachers had a very positive view of Braxton in the school.

The second study that investigated the effects of AARI was a single case design that evaluated the effectiveness of one child’s (Zack) progress through a reading program titled *Building Reading Confidence for Kids or BaRK*. Fisher and Cozens (2014) investigated Zack’s journey through the *BaRK* program. Zack received the reading intervention with his canine companion for 15 minutes every day, five days a week. Before the intervention began Zack was pre-tested with the *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* to collect baseline data (Neale, 1999). The intervention lasted eight weeks, and the *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* was administered to Zack as a post measure. Results showed that Zack’s reading comprehension increased by two years and 11 months after the eight-week intervention. Zack’s favorite part of the program was being able to read to his canine companion. He stated it was easier to read to a dog than an adult “because I don’t really feel that intimidated because it is a bit harder to speak to someone who actually talks back to you when you make a mistake” (p. 77). While this provides some qualitative data that canine literary programs can increase reading scores, the results of an intervention for one student cannot be generalized to the broader population.

A third study evaluated an AARI in South Africa and claims to be the first known research to investigate the influence an AARI has on reading skills (le Roux et al., 2014). Researchers identified 102 struggling readers through the ESSI reading and spelling test, a norm referenced, standardized assessment. Students were then assigned to one of three
experimental groups or a control group; groups consisted of reading to a canine companion along with the dog’s handler, reading to an adult, reading to a teddy bear with an adult present, and the control group. Data were collected on reading rate, accuracy and comprehension using the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability. Baseline data were taken before the start of the 10-week reading program; data were collected 8 weeks after the reading program was completed. Results showed that of the four groups, the group who read aloud to their canine companions in the presence of the dog’s handler showed the greatest rate of improvement in reading comprehension.

In one qualitative study, Kaymen (2005) interviewed third grade students participating in the SHARE a book pilot program in northern California. This program consisted of children reading to a canine companion (and the canine’s handler). No specific guidelines of the program were stated in the study. Three males and one female were interviewed to help learn more about a reader’s experience when participating in an AARI. During the interview process open-ended and closed-ended questions were asked of the participants and their families. Observations of the participants during the intervention were conducted as well. Information gathered by the researcher was examined, organized, transcribed, and coded to find reoccurring themes in the data. Several emerging themes occurred from interviews. First, all participants, including students, teachers, and parents agreed that the program was enjoyable; students and teachers believed reading to a canine companion was exciting. Teachers also believed the canine companions created a “positive, non-threatening experience for the students”
As previously discussed, it is this non-threatening environment that allows children to feel comfortable enough to practice the literacy skills that will lead to fluency and improved comprehension skills.

**Barriers to AARIs in a School Setting**

Although there are an abundance of benefits associated with utilizing canines in a school system, some have reservations. These reservations include possible allergies to pet dander, dog bites for children who do not properly know how to approach or interact with dogs, and cultural views of animals such as dogs being unclean. Other barriers such as sanitation concerns, general safety considerations, fear of canines, and dog temperament have also been documented (Jalongo, Astorina, & Bomboy, 2004; Jalongo, 2006; Jalongo, 2008; Johnson, Odendaal, & Meadows, 2002). Many of these issues can be remedied, or effects lessened through simple precautions. For example, Jalongo (2004) notes that dog bites are prevalent in the United States, especially among children who have not been taught how to properly interact with dogs, to decrease the chance of dog bites, children should be properly trained in how to behave around dogs before interacting with them. To reduce the effects of possible allergies, animals should be properly groomed and brushed daily. Unfortunately, while there is an understanding by animal handlers that safety precautions need to be taken when utilizing animals in schools, no research has investigated the views or perceptions of teachers in terms of barriers associated with utilizing animals in schools.
The Present Study

Most of the research on AAT or AAI is focused on the positive social, emotional, and environmental effects on students. Currently, research is beginning to focus on the positive academic results of AARI interventions; this was first done by le Roux et al. (2014) who investigated a canine assisted reading intervention in South Africa. Other researchers note that these types of interventions may have some potential issues and could be viewed negatively by school faculty, school children, or parents (Jalongo, 2006; Jalongo, 2008; Johnson, Odendaal, & Meadows, 2002). While Jalongo (2006; 2008) points out many potential barriers (i.e., fear of dogs, sanitation concerns, fear of dog bites, dog temperament, etc.) to having animals in schools, no research has investigated which of these, or other, barriers are important to teachers currently working in school systems that do not utilize animals in the school system.

The present study examined the barriers to AAI/AAT/AARI (specifically canine) via thoughts and perceptions of teachers who work in schools that do not utilize AAI/AAT in their school. This study is an extension of the quantitative study by Tate (2014) who collected survey information on teachers who were part of a school that utilized canines through AAT. Diverging from the Tate (2014) study, the present study solely evaluated the attitudes and perceptions of teachers who have not yet experienced AAT/AAI/AARI firsthand. This insight will allow an understanding of the barriers that must be overcome when attempting to gain faculty and staff buy-in for an AAI/AAT/AARI program.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following two research questions were posed in the present study:

Research question 1. What barriers to animal assisted reading interventions, animal assisted therapies, or animal assisted interventions (specifically canine) are viewed as most concerning by teachers who work in schools that do not currently utilize canines in any part of the school setting?

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that teachers who work in school systems that do not utilize canines in their school setting will be more concerned with more serious barriers such as dog bites. No research has investigated non-participant thoughts of animal assisted reading interventions, animal assisted therapies, or animal assisted interventions (specifically canine); however, Jalongo (2006; 2008) places a high importance on serious issues such as dog bites when discussing precautions handlers should take when bringing a canine into a school.

Research question 2. What are the perceptions of canine assisted reading interventions by teachers who work in school systems that do not currently utilize canines in any part of the school setting?
Hypothesis 2. It was hypothesized that teachers who work in school systems that do not utilize canines in their school setting will have negative views of canine assisted reading interventions. This was based on research by Tate (2014) who found the only non-positive perception of AAT was made teacher who did not associate with the school’s canine. This disassociation occurred because she was “too caught up in writing curriculum” to worry about having a dog in the building, and therefore would not recommend AAT (pp. 84-85).

Research Design

The present study collected quantifiable data via a survey design to examine the attitudes and perceptions of AAI and AARI (specifically canine) by teachers whose schools do not utilize canines in their school system. This research design was selected because it provides a fast, convenient, and low cost data collection method for a large number of participants (Converse, Wolf, Huang, & Oswald, 2008; Mertens, 2010). Descriptive data were also collected to analyze demographics of the sample for patterns or trends.

Participants

Participants included (n = 94) Pre-K – 8th grade general education, special education teachers, and curriculum coaches in an Ohio public school setting. General education and special education teachers’, as well as curriculum coaches and principals’ responses were included in this analysis as all teacher buy-in is important for intervention implementation. Pre-K – 8th grade level educators were selected as most AAI/AARIs are
utilized in elementary and middle schools. Teachers completed the survey during their own time and in the privacy of their own classrooms or offices.

Of the 94 respondents, 84.04% were female, 71.28% had pets at home, 62.77% had canine(s) at home, and 56.38% had 16 or more years of teaching experience. For complete demographic information, see Tables 1 - 5.

Table 1

Demographics of participants: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>84.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Demographics of participants: Grade level taught

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level Taught</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K - 2nd</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd - 5th</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th - 8th</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Grade Levels</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Demographics of participants: Years of experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16+ years</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56.38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Demographics of participants: Pets at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pets at home</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>71.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27.66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Demographics of participants: Dogs at home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dogs at home</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>62.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36.17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials

Measures. A quantitative, paper, survey (see Appendix A) was created and pilot tested among a group of school psychology graduate students to ensure question clarity and quality. This survey was adapted from the survey used in Tate (2014) and amended
to include specific barriers outlined in the literature by Jalongo (2004; 2006; 2008). The survey was divided into three sections: (1) demographics and background, (2) teachers’ perceptions of potential barriers of AAI/AARI/AAT (specifically canine), and (3) teachers’ perceived effectiveness of an AARI (specifically canine). Section one questions were multiple-choice; section two and three questions were rated on a Likert scale.

**Procedures**

Approval for the present research was obtained through the University of Dayton Institutional Review Board (IRB), as well as through the data management administrator at the school district where data was collected. With the district’s consent, participants were recruited via school principals. Data collection occurred via paper form which will were passed out at teachers’ meetings in the school, as well as in mailboxes.

Surveys were collected before teachers left the meetings or teachers were asked to return them to the school psychologist’s mailbox. Consent for these forms were attached as a cover letter to the survey and obtained prior to filling out the survey. All responses were voluntary. To maintain confidentiality, participants’ identifying information was not collected and unique identifiers were not used.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The survey results produced nominal and ordinal data. Background and
demographic or categorical data are displayed via frequency tables and percentages (see
Tables 1 – 5). Questions pertaining to the perceptions and attitudes towards animals were
collected via Likert style questions; responses ranged between one and seven and are
displayed via diverging bar chart.

Research Question 1

What barriers to animal assisted reading interventions, animal assisted therapies,
or animal assisted interventions (specifically canine) are viewed as most concerning by
teachers who work in schools that do not currently utilize canines in any part of the
school setting?

This research question was answered by analyzing questions 1 – 7 on the educator
survey using descriptive statistics. When asked if the respondents had concerns with dog
bites, 60.22% disagreed with these concerns, 21.51% gave neutral response, and 18.28%
endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns of student allergies, 33.33% of
responders disagreed with these concerns, 17.20% gave a neutral response, and 49.46%
endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns with sanitation, 74.19% of
responders disagreed with these concerns, 12.90% gave a neutral response, and 12.90%
endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns of diseases and infections transmitted by an animal, 38.71% of responders disagreed with these concerns, 7.53% gave a neutral response, and 53.76% endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns of student fears of canines, 37.63% of responders disagreed with these concerns, 21.51% gave a neutral response, and 40.86% endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns of poor student behavior in the presence of a canine, 60.22% of responders disagreed with these concerns, 18.28% gave a neutral response, and 21.51% endorsed these concerns. When asked about concerns of poor canine behaviors (licking, barking, et.), 82.80% of responders disagreed with these concerns, 7.53% gave a neutral response, and 9.86% endorsed these concerns. For a visual analysis of this data, a diverging bar chart is also displayed for Figure 1.
### Figure 1
**Barriers Diverging Bar Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Option 4</th>
<th>Option 5</th>
<th>Option 6</th>
<th>Option 7</th>
<th>Option 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If a canine was used in a school setting...

- I would be concerned with poor canine behaviors (e.g. barking, licking, scratching, not...)
- I would be concerned with poor student behavior in the presence of a canine.
- I would be concerned with student's fear of canines.
- I would be concerned with diseases and infections.
- I would have sanitation concerns.
- I would be concerned with student allergies.
- I would be concerned with dog bites.
Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of canine assisted reading interventions by teachers who work in school systems that do not currently utilize canines in any part of the school setting?

This research question was answered by analyzing responses to questions 8 – 11 on the educator survey. When asked if the respondents believed an intervention would be more effective when a canine was used than without, 56.99% believed it would be more effective, 24.73% gave a neutral response, and 18.28% did not believe it would be more effective. When asked if the respondents believed children, as part of a canine assisted reading intervention would spend more time off-task, 11.83% believed they would spend more time off task, 18.28% gave a neutral response, and 69.89% did not believe they would spend more time off task. When asked if the respondents believed an animal assisted canine intervention would help improve reading fluency, 64.52% believed it would increase reading fluency, 31.18% gave a neutral response, and 4.3% did not believe it increase reading fluency. When asked if the responders believed an animal assisted canine intervention would help improve reading comprehension, 59.14% believed it would increase reading comprehension, 34.41% gave a neutral response, and 6.45% did not believe it increase reading comprehension. For a visual analysis of this data, a diverging bar chart is also displayed for Figure 2.
When canines are used as part of an intervention...

I believe the child is more likely to improve his/her reading comprehension scores than children who do not utilize the assistance of a canine.

I believe the child is more likely to improve his/her reading fluency scores than children who do not utilize the assistance of a canine.

I believe a child would become distracted and spend more time off-task.

I believe the intervention would be more effective than if a canine was not used.

Figure 2
Perceptions Diverging Bar Chart
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

Review of Purpose and Major Findings

Animal assisted interventions (AAI) and animal assisted therapy (AAT) is a growing trend in the educational field. Previous research on AAT or AAI focused on the positive social, emotional, and environmental effects on students. Recent studies have demonstrated improvements in student on-task behavior during reading activities, as well as increased reading fluency and comprehension (Bassette & Taber-Doughty, 2013; Fisher & Cozens, 2014; le Roux et al., 2014). Student and teacher participants in AARIs and AAT/AAIs generally report positive attitudes towards animals in the school system. Tate (2014) examined the use of AAT in schools and found educators participating in the program could not find a negative situation resulting from having a canine in the school. These recent studies have demonstrated the positive academic results of AARI interventions, specifically canine assisted reading interventions in which students utilize canines to practice their literacy skills in a comforting and non-judgmental environment. Research has shown that children’s reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension significantly improved while reading to dogs when compared to children that read to adults, stuffed animals, or received no intervention (le Roux et al., 2014). Other researchers note that these types of interventions may have some potential issues and
could be viewed negatively by school faculty, school children, or parents (Jalongo, 2006; Jalongo, 2008; Johnson, Odendaal, & Meadows, 2002). Though potential barriers to having animals in schools may include fear of dogs, sanitation concerns, fear of dog bites, dog temperament, etc., no research has investigated which of these, or other, barriers are important to educators currently working in school systems.

While all previous research worked with educators who were already involved in a form of AAI or AAT, the current study attempted to build upon the literature regarding which barriers are most important to current educators who have not previously participated in any kind of canine assisted intervention or therapy. The current study also sought to understand perceptions of educators’ views on the effectiveness of canine assisted reading interventions.

Upon analysis, the current study found that educators had two main concerns: fear of canines and canine allergies; between 41 and 48 percent of educators had these concerns. The next highest rated barrier, with 28 percent of teachers expressing concern, was the transference of zoonotic diseases from animal to human. Although transference of zoonotic diseases from animal to human was the third highest barrier, 74 percent of teachers did not have sanitation concerns about bringing a canine into school, which is how transference of zoonotic diseases from animal to human would occur. Only 13 percent of educators endorsed concern with sanitation, and only 6 percent had strong concerns about sanitation.

The current study also found that educators have a positive outlook on the effectiveness of canine assisted interventions. The majority of educators believe that
reading fluency, comprehension, and on task behaviors would increase as a result of canine assisted reading interventions. Overall, a majority of educators believed a canine assisted reading intervention would be more effective than an intervention that did not utilize a canine.

**Implications for Schools and School Psychologists**

It is encouraging that educators view the effectiveness of canine assisted reading interventions as positive. Overwhelmingly, educators viewed the effectiveness of canine assisted reading interventions as either positive, or neutral. When evaluating the responses from educators regarding potential barriers to implementing canine assisted interventions in schools, transference of animal diseases, student allergies, and fears of canines were the top reported barriers, respectively. Positive news for those wishing to implement canine assisted interventions in their own schools, all of these barriers can be overcome or avoided. As for transference of diseases from canine to human, working canines must have up to date shots and medical checks to ensure they are healthy. As for student allergies, many working canines are now bred with poodles to ensure they are hypoallergenic. As for student fears of canines, no student who was afraid of dogs would be forced into an animal assisted intervention and a few studies have outlined the overwhelming positive interaction children have had with the canines (Kaymen, 2005; Shaw, 2013). Another important item to note is that one of the barriers of least concern to participating educators was sanitation. In order for zoonotic diseases to be spread (one of the highest concerns) there must be sanitation issues due to a canine in a school setting. This means that if transference of diseases from animal to human was a barrier of great
concern, sanitation concerns would also have been a reported concern. Clearly, further education of how zoonotic diseases are spread is needed.

Limitations

The study is not without limitations. While the survey was created with previous research in mind and some questions were adapted from previous surveys, the author of the study created an original survey to distribute. Therefore, reliability and validity of the survey was not established. Also, the participating educators were from a single school district in the Midwest, limiting the diversity of geographic and possibly cultural sample size. Finally, general limitations that are associated self-reported answers, such as exaggerated answers or social desirability bias, are also seen as possible limitations of this study.

Implications for Future Research

Future researchers may wish to broaden the scope of respondents to include a more diverse population. Respondents could be expanded in terms of geographical location, culture, level of socio economic status, or other demographics. One interesting path would be to investigate the different response styles of educators who own canines, and those who own different animals or no animals at all. Understanding which demographics to target in order to increase educator buy-in before implementing a canine assisted intervention may prove to be beneficial; it would allow those implementing the intervention to efficiently utilize resources geared at producing buy in.
Conclusion

Results of the current study show that educators’ three main concerns were with AAIs in schools were the potential for student allergies, fear of canines, and zoonotic diseases. In terms of the perception of educators in relation to the effectiveness of AAIs, specifically canine assisted reading interventions, educators have a very positive view that these types of interventions will be effective in increasing reading fluency, comprehension, and on task reading behaviors. Moving forward, research should investigate the differing demographics of educators. This will help to determine profiles in which to better educate faculty and staff in order to overcome barriers and misconceptions associated with AAI.
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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Please circle one of the options for each statement below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I teach a grade level between:</td>
<td>K – 2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>3 – 5\textsuperscript{th}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have between ____ years of teaching experience:</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have pets at home:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have canine(s)/dog(s) at home:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please circle a number below based on how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

\textit{STRONGLY DISAGREE} \hspace{1cm} \textit{STRONGLY AGREE}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would be concerned with dog bites

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{cccccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
If a canine was used in a school setting, I would be concerned with student allergies

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would have sanitation concerns

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would **NOT** be concerned with diseases and infections transmitted by the animal

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would **NOT** be concerned with students’ fear of canines

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would be concerned with poor student behavior due to the presence of a canine (e.g. off task, not following directions, etc.)

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

**Please Flip Over**
Please circle a number below based on how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th></th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If a canine was used in a school setting, I would be concerned with poor canine behaviors (e.g. barking, licking, scratching, not following commands, etc.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

If a canine was used as part of an intervention to assist a child in reading, I believe the intervention would be more effective than if a canine was not used.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

If a canine was used as part of an intervention to assist a child in reading, I believe a child would become distracted and spend more time off-task.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

I believe a child that utilizes a canine as part of his/her reading intervention is more likely to improve his/her reading fluency scores than children who do not utilize the assistance of a canine.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
I believe a child that utilizes a canine as part of his/her reading intervention is more likely to improve his/her reading **comprehension** scores than children who do not utilize the assistance of a canine.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Are there any other concerns you could foresee that this questionnaire has not addressed?
Hello!

My name is XXXXXXXXXX. I’m the School Psychologist Intern for XXXXXXXXXX City Schools this year. I am also completing research in the district on teacher perceptions of animal assisted interventions. This will allow me to earn my final degree. If you would take 5 minutes to complete the attached survey and return it to the School Psychologist mailbox, I would greatly appreciate it!

Thank you!

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Surveys and Interviews

Research Project Title:

CANINE ASSISTED READING INTERVENTIONS:
ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by XXXXX XXXXX from the XXXXXXXX, in the Department of Counselor Education & Human Services

The purpose of the project is to quantitatively evaluate which potential barriers of canines in school systems are important to educators who currently work in school systems that do not utilize canines in any part of the school setting. In addition, this research will evaluate the perceptions of these educators in regards to the perceived effectiveness of utilizing canines through animal assisted reading interventions.

You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.
• Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participating at any time for any reason. Answering the questions will take about 10 minutes.

• You will not be compensated for your participation.

• All of the information you tell us will be confidential.

• This is a written or online survey; only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to your responses. If you are participating in an online survey: We will not collect identifying information, but we cannot guarantee the security of the computer you use or the security of data transfer between that computer and our data collection point. We urge you to consider this carefully when responding to these questions.

• I understand that I am ONLY eligible to participate if I am over the age of 18.

Please contact the following investigators with any questions or concerns:

XXXXX, XXXXXX@XXXXX.edu, 555.555.5555

XXXXX, XXXXXX@XXXXX.edu, 555.555.5555

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact XXXXXXXXXXX, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at the XXXXXXXXX, XXXX@XXXXXX.edu; Phone: (555) 555-5555