

# RESEARCH PRESENTATION

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RESEARCH  
QUESTION

How class pets affect  
students' behavior

# PROBLEM STATEMENT

Classroom pets offer an added layer of compassion and empathy that the students subconsciously and consciously add to their environment.

Most research available on classroom pets is focused on Special Education classes instead of general education

Most research is based on younger classrooms leaving the older grade levels in the dark.

This research is here to help change that and provide researched based information gathered from our local area.



WHY IS THIS  
INTERESTING?

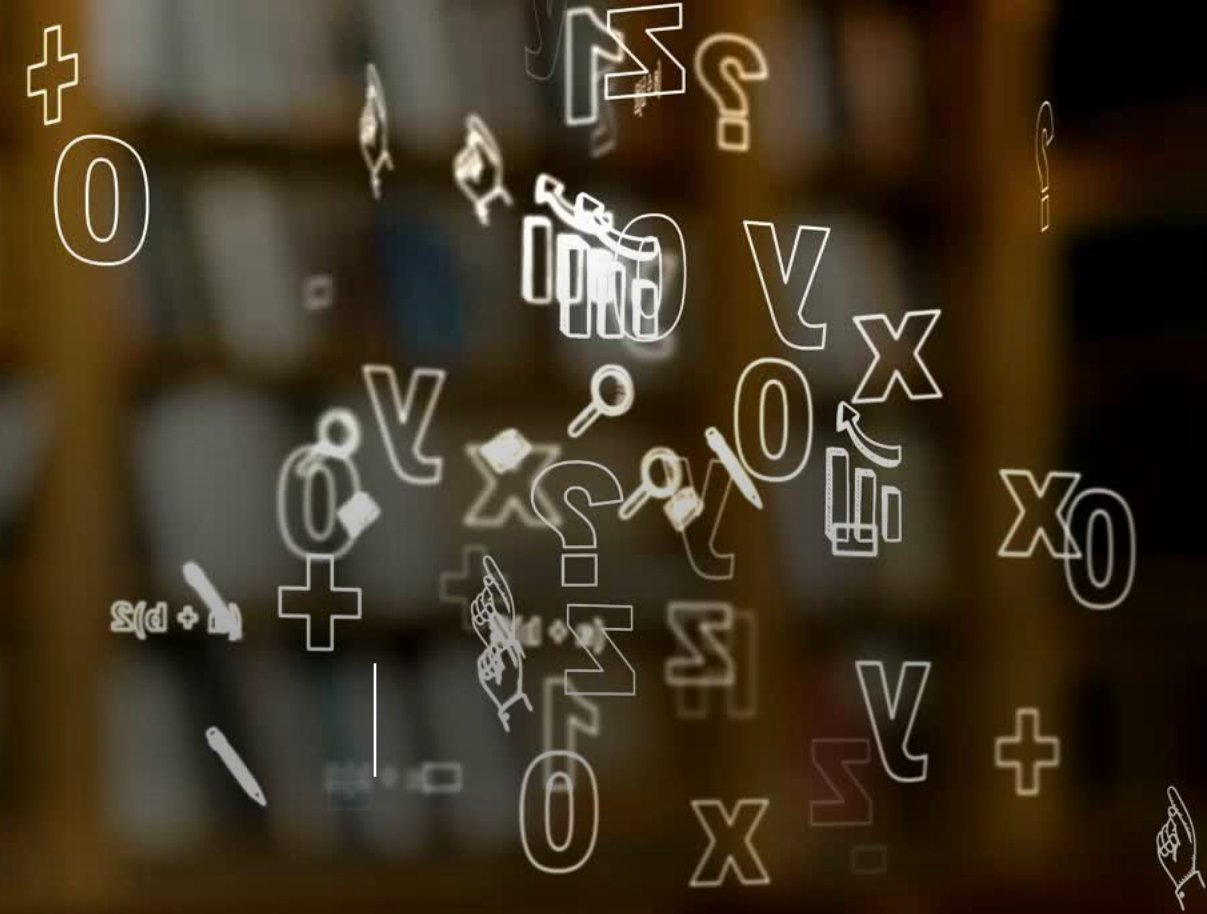
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WHY IS THIS  
IMPORTANT?

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# EXISTING LITERATURE







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# HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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- Smilie, K. D. (2022). Sex, death, and alienation: the burdened history of classroom pets in the American curriculum.
- Study notes the evolution of Human-Animal Studies and Humane Education has improved the roles of classroom pets.

# FOCUSING THE LITERATURE

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- Human-Animal Studies (HAS)
- Humane Education (HE)
- Human-Animal Interactions (HAI)
- Animal-Rearing Education (ARE)
- Animal-Assisted Education (AAE)
- Many studies about classroom interventions with trained therapy animals
- Dog-reading visitation programs
- Therapy animals used in self-contained, Special Education classrooms



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## RESEARCH BY GRADE LEVEL

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- Studies primarily focused on the effects of class pets on Elementary students.
- 1 study of Turkish secondary students

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

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All of the research we reviewed indicated students respond positively to a class pet:

- Improved academic performance
- Increased cognitive function
- Improved social interactions
- Improved student-well-being



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# GAP IN THE LITERATURE

Research was lacking on the effects of classroom pets on secondary students.

While it could be assumed they would also experience a positive effect from a class pet, research does not exist to support this.



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Interview- We interviewed the teachers of the classroom.

## METHODOLOGICAL PREPARATION

## DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

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Survey- A survey was given out to the students in the classroom to have them voice out opinions without feeling judged by the researchers, since it remained anonymous.

# OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

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- We examined participants' behaviors, whether they interact with others more, smile, show positive emotions

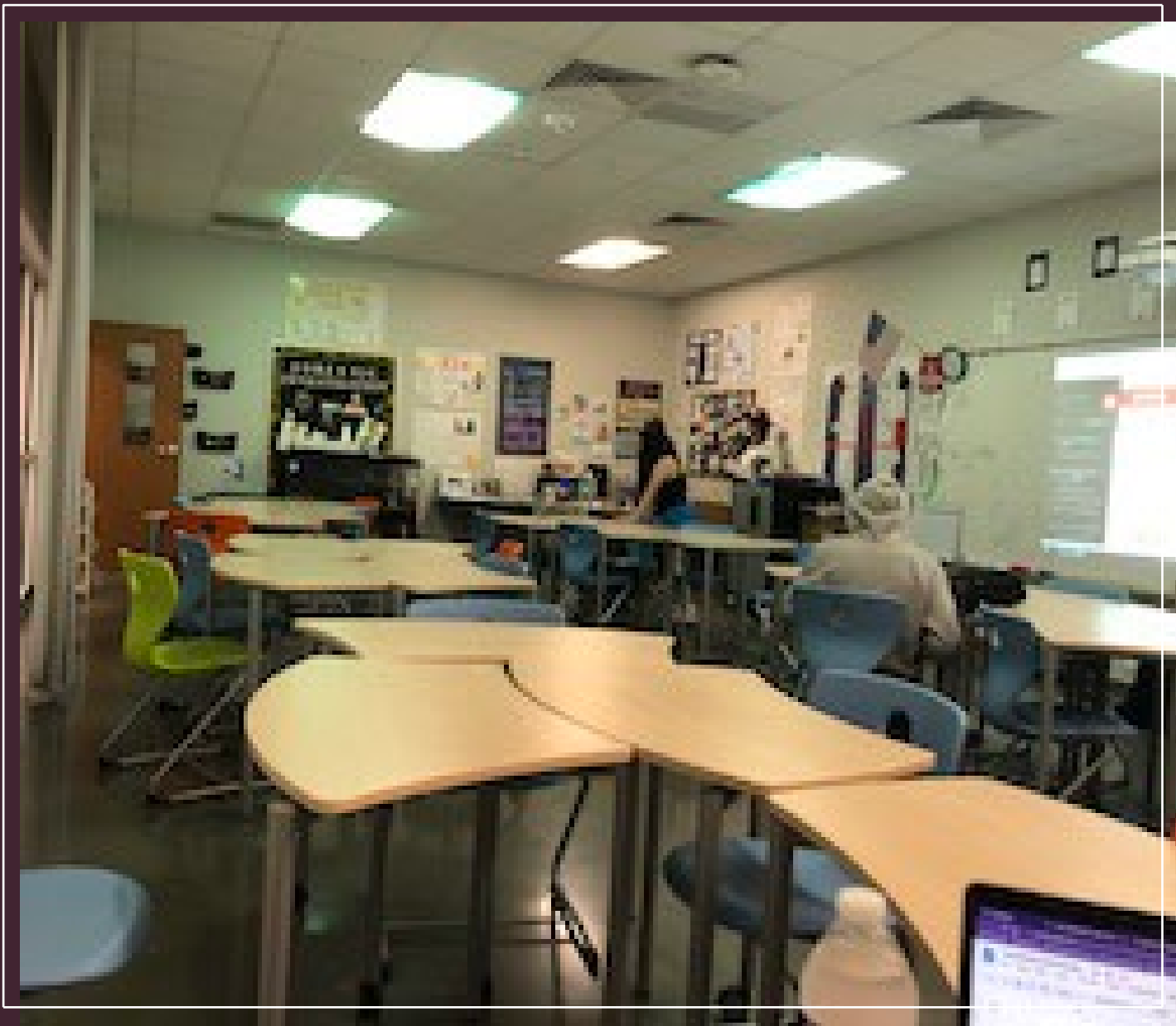






# OBSERVATION PHOTOS





# MS. MERREL'S BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CLASS

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## CHLEO IS A HARRY STYLES LOVER

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- Students taped Post-It note to tank, "Chleo is a Harry Styles lover!"
- Student photoshopped image of Cleo around Harry Styles's shoulders
- Cut-out of Harry Styles taped to back of tank.



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS - QUALITATIVE

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- Expected: positive correlation between elementary student behavior and the presence of a classroom pet.
- Interviews revealed the use of a class pet to positively influence student behavior.



- Concrete connection to two content areas: science and graphic design
  - Overall, students on all levels benefited behaviorally and emotionally from having a class pet
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- Teachers used the pet to teach skills like animal care and responsibilities.
  - Offered a tangible way to teach these skills and occasionally academic lessons that incorporated the pet.
  - Provided SEL qualities, such as:
    - giving some students something to care about outside of themselves
    - giving students another reason to attend class
    - giving students a common interest to discuss
    - giving students a creative outlet.



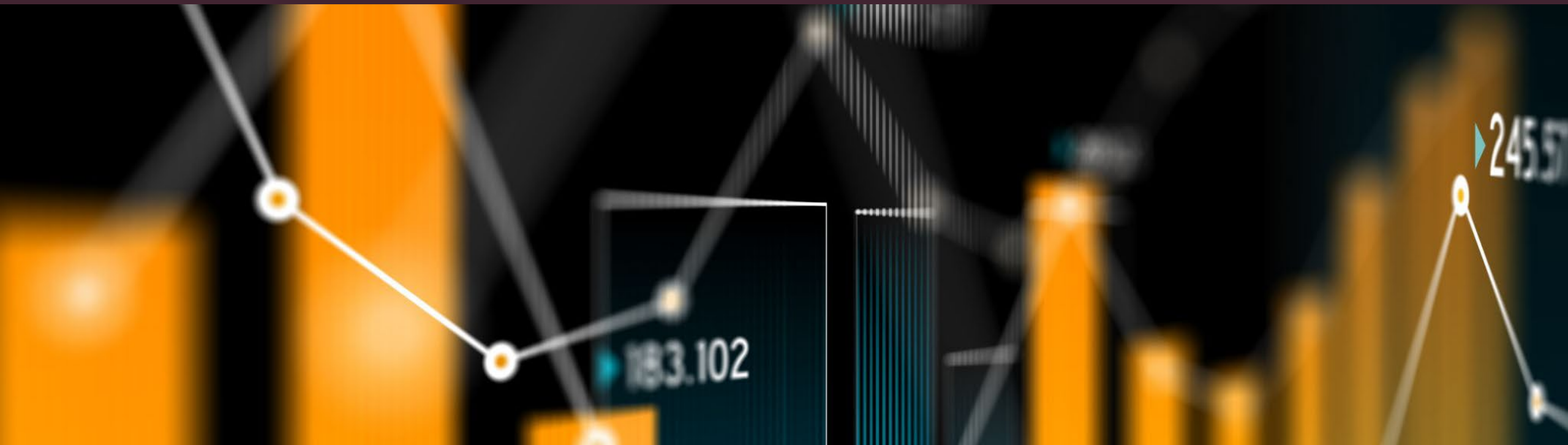
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## QUANTITATIVE

- Engagement was similar across grade levels in the high schools.
- Expected to see a positive correlation between the students initiating themselves with the classroom pet and their emotions.





- Initially we thought that having a classroom pet in the room might be a distraction to the younger students, but more than 56.1% of them felt more motivated to do their homework while in that setting.
- Survey participants said that 80.7% of the time they were able to fully pay attention to the lesson.
- Any grade level will initiate engagement with a classroom pet since it is an addition to the usual classroom environment and allows the mind some time away from the curriculum.
- Overall, of those students who interacted with the classroom pet, the effects were recorded to be more positive and some neutral compared to no negative outcomes at all.







# CONCLUSION

*What our study contributes to  
current research*

*How this research could benefit  
society*

# OUR CONTRIBUTION

## TO CURRENT RESEARCH

- Our study shows high school students benefit from having a classroom pet
- Teachers can benefit from having a pet too
- Our research supported the findings about elementary students
- We found several issues that need to be addressed with class pets

## TO SOCIETY

- Our findings indicate high school students are affected positively by a class pet.



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PROPOSED  
RESEARCH

| Expand research into  
Elementary, Middle  
and High school



# RESOURCES

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Thank You