

Canine Cognition (Dog Cog)

1. Research Laboratories

Apparently there are at least 16 (!) laboratories sponsored by prominent research universities, and dedicated to the study of “canine cognition.” The names of at least three of these labs suggest a focus upon the science of dog-human interaction.

See <https://dogcog.unl.edu/other-dog-labs>.

2. Petting vs. Food

Both petting and food have reinforcing effects upon dog behavior. However, dogs generally prefer food to petting. Some contextual factors will increase a particular dog’s preference for petting, *e.g.*, whether the person offering the “pets” is the owner. See Feuerbacher & Wynne, *Most Domestic Dogs Prefer Food To Petting*, 101 J. Exp. Anal. Behav. 385 (May 2014), <https://about.illinoisstate.edu/vfdouga/Documents/331/PDF/FeuerbacherWynneJEAB2014.pdf>

3. Petting vs. Praise

Dogs prefer petting to praise, according to this study. Feuerbacher & Wynne, *Shut Up and Pet Me! Domestic Dogs Prefer Petting to Vocal Praise*, 110 Behav. Processes 47 (2015), available at <https://www.companionanimalpsychology.com/2015/01/do-dogs-prefer-petting-or-praise.html>

4. Human-Dog Bonding

This is interesting and wide-ranging paper on the topic of human-dog bonding. In part, the authors conclude that “both positive attitudes and affiliative behavior seem to contribute to a strong dog-human bond.” In contrast, “negative attitudes, insecure attachment, and misunderstanding of dog behavior have the potential to disrupt relationships.”

Payne et al., *Current Perspectives on Attachment and Bonding in the Dog-Human Dyad*, Psych. Res. & Behav. Mgmt. (Feb. 24, 2015),

available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4348122/>