Trainers Workshops

Module 2

Training Methods

<u>**Module 2: Animal Learning :**</u>

I.   Types of training styles
    A. Lure training
    B. Shaping
    C. Capturing
    D. Compulsion Training

I.   Types of Training Styles

A. Lure Training

Lure/reward pet dog training techniques are Efficient, Effective, Easy, Efficacious, Enjoyable, and Expedient. Compared with trying to train using corrections and punishments, lure/reward techniques require less owner effort to produce much quicker and more reliable doggy results.

Lures are usually food, toys or target sticks or anything else the dog will follow. Trainers **<u>must</u>** take care to fade the lure early. Make the handouts appear to be unpredictable,

Lure/reward methods take less time than trying to train using corrections and punishments.

By nature, lure/reward training is much more efficient than punishment-training.

Whereas there are an infinite number ways for the dog to get it wrong (which require an infinite number of punishments), there is only one right way!

So in terms of your time-investment and your dog's speed of learning, it is far better to show your dog exactly what is required and to reward it for complying, than it is to attempt the impossible-trying to punish the dog for each and every mistake.

Punishment-training is relatively ineffective for pet dog training. People are just too inconsistent for punishment-training techniques to work in the domestic setting.

Aside from being an immense effort, and not always working particularly well in practice, punishment-training has yet another major drawback.

Timing of Rewards - **Lures**

1. A lure is presented before a desired behavior, specifically to entice the trainee to perform the required response voluntarily and on cue. When luring dogs, it is taken for granted that the dog would gladly do what we wanted, if only he knew what we wanted him to do. Luring specifically teaches the dog which response is required for each request. In a sense, luring teaches the meaning of the commands — English as a Second Language.

2. On the other hand, by simply requesting the dog to sit and moving a lure appropriately, not only does the dog understand that action is both required and desirable but also, which specific action is required ... and the dog sits. It's as simple as that. Without a doubt, luring is by far the quickest way to teach a dog the meaning of words that we use as requests, directions and commands and eventually as instructive reprimands. Lure/reward training is a user-friendly and time-efficient technique for all trainers, especially those with limited patience, i.e., many novice owners.

3. For most exercises, luring is an all-or-none response. Either the dog sits quickly and completely, or he doesn't. However, even when luring proves to be tricky, once the dog has been lured successfully on just one occasion, subsequent trials rapidly become progressively easier, such that in no time at all, the dog will lure quickly every time. When teaching some body positions (e.g., down and rollover) or when teaching more complicated responses (e.g., heeling and retrieval), luring may be used effectively to facilitate a shaping procedure, whereby the dog is rewarded for successive and progressive approximations to the ultimate response.

4. Now, some trainers might respond, "Why not physically guide the pup into the required body position?" Well, firstly, whereas an experienced trainer could easily guide a dog into almost any body position, a novice owner might not

have the necessary skill or patience, especially when working a novice dog. Moreover, when training the dog at home, frustration at being unable to copy a simple exercise demonstrated by the trainer in class, frequently manifests itself as manhandling and the novice dog is pushed and pulled around.

5. Secondly, physically prompting the dog to assume each desired position delays the ultimate learning process of establishing verbal control. By using a lure in training, the dog immediately starts to learn the meaning of hand signals (hand lure-movements) and verbal requests from the very first trial, whereas any physical contact introduces an additional, unnecessary learning stage. Virtually all untrained dogs selectively attend to physical contact rather than the words we use. Certainly, dogs quickly learn collar and rump contact means sit, but it is still necessary to teach the meaning of hand signals and verbal command, which is, after all, the whole point of the exercise.

B. **Rewards**

1. Rewards are given to the dog after the desired response, specifically to reinforce the immediately preceding appropriate behavior so that it is more likely to occur again in the future. In a sense, rewarding a dog following desired behavior teaches the dog the relevance of the exercise, so the dog learns why it should do what we request.

2. Praise is certainly the best reward since it may be used at almost anytime and in any scenario, especially even when dog is some distance away. Additionally, the dog's favorite toys, games and activities and of course affection may all be used effectively.

3. When initially training the pup in the home and for the first couple of classes, most novice owners seem to get on better using small, discrete, palpable rewards, such as toys and treats. Few novice owners have the requisite, exquisite timing of an experienced trainer and usually, it is easier for the owner to learn appropriate timing using toys and treats rather than praise and affection. Also, not all novice owners have the inclination to praise their pup,

especially in public. Indeed, many owners have to be taught how to praise, just as they have to learn how to reprimand.

C. **Bribes**

1. A bribe is offered, or promised, before a required behavior in an attempt to coerce the trainee to perform the specific task, usually against its will. Unlike luring, which is a precise educational process used to teach a willing puppy and/or novice dog the meaning of the Request, we assume bribed individuals know what we want, but simply just don't want to do it. Thus, bribery is a coercive attempt to corrupt the will of the trainee. And as such it is bound to failure. Additionally, when a dog doesn't want to do what his owner asks, the training program is already off-track and the dog/owner relationship is out of whack. Now, that is not to say, all dogs will always comply. On the contrary, the integral purpose of reward training is to teach the dog to *want* to comply. Teaching willing and eager compliance is easily accomplished using rewards, but not with bribes.

2. Unlike reward training, whereby specific and desired behaviors are reinforced by rewarding the dog after he has responded, bribes are offered or promised before the dog has done anything. In a sense, a bribe is an attempt to reinforce a response before it has happened, which of course is theoretically and practically impossible!

3. Not only is bribery ineffective, it creates all sorts of training problems. Some trainees may gladly accept the bribe but then still refuse to do what the trainer wants. Other trainees may comply if a bribe is in the offing but otherwise refuse. Indeed, bribe-contingent reliability is the most common problem created by dog trainers, parents and politicians misusing (otherwise extremely effective) lures and rewards as bribes.

A Potential Problem

A combination of luring and rewarding — luring the dog to do what you want and then reward him for doing so — is the fastest way to put behaviors on cue. However, when the same item (food or toy) is used both as a lure and as a reward for any appreciable length of time, lure/reward training approximates bribing. The dog's response becomes unreliable and contingent on the trainer having food in their hand or pocket. If the owner has a toy, a treat, or a happy frame of mind, the dog may do it, when he's good and ready, but … if the owner doesn't, the dog probably won't! These potential problems may be easily avoided by using different items as lures and rewards and especially by beginning to phase out the use of food lures and food rewards during the very first training session.

Use a wide variety of lures and rewards in training and specifically, use different items as lures from those used as rewards. For example, lure the dog to sit with a squeaky toy or chewtoy but offer a food treat from your pocket as a reward. Or, use a food treat to lure the dog to sit, down, sit, stand, down and rollover but then praise the dog and invite him up on the couch as a reward. Or, lure the dog to sit with a hand-signal but throw his tennis ball and say "Fetch" as a reward.A hands-off method of guiding the dog through a behaviour. For example, a food lure can be used to guide a dog from a sit into a down. This is a common method of getting more complex behaviours.

The dog only has to misbehave without being punished once to learn that there are occasions when it will not be punished for doing what it likes. This creates a multitude of problems, including owner-absent behaviour problems, owner-present but functionally-absent problems, and owner physically-present but mentally-absent problems.

Owner-Absent Problems: The dog learns it would be a mite foolhardy to act like a dog when its owner is present, and so it intelligently waits for its owner to leave before indulging its basic doggy nature. The dog learns to enjoy expressing its normal, natural, and necessary doggy behaviour (usually in a manner which owners consider to be inappropriate and annoying) when the owner is physically absent (out of the room, or away from home). Thus, punishment is often a primary motivator for owner-absent house soiling, chewing, digging, and barking. In a sense, the so-called "treatment" is the cause.

Owner-Present but Functionally-Absent Problems: The dog learns it cannot be punished for misbehaving when it is off-leash and out of reach, or when the owner cannot respond (chatting on the telephone, taking a shower, cooking at the stove, feeding the baby, talking to someone on the street, or driving a car). To make matters worse, these are all extremely inconvenient times for your dog to act up and misbehave.

Owner Physically-Present but Mentally-Absent Problems : Dogs quickly learn to discern those times when their owners are mentally absent, and not paying attention.

When reward-training goes awry, your dog may not completely master what you want it to learn, but it does learn to enjoy your ineffectual attempts at reward-training, and it does learn to develop a fondness for its hapless trainer-the reward-giver, i.e., you.

B. Shaping & Marking / Clicker Training

Shaping is reinforcement of successive approximations to a desired instrumental response.

In training a rat to press a lever, for example, simply turning toward the lever is reinforced at first. Then, only turning and stepping toward it is reinforced.

The outcomes of one set of behaviours starts the shaping process for the next set of behaviours, and the outcomes of that set prepares the shaping process for the next set, and so on.

As training progresses, the response reinforced becomes progressively more like the desired behavior; each subsequent behaviour becomes a closer approximation of the final behaviour.

C. Capturing & Marking / Clicker Training

Capturing is reinforcement of successive approximations to a desired instrumental response.

<u>Marking the behavior</u>

- Clickers are popular tools for marking

- Your voice is a great tool as well - with a Yes or a Yep

Charging the Marker

The easiest way to do this is by using food. I do this simply by giving my "Yes!" signal immediately before giving the dog a bit of food as a treat. Now I repeat this many times and after a few repetitions the dog will perk up its ears and wag its tail happily when he hears "Yes!". Technically we would say that we have created a *secondary reward* (as opposed to a primary or other unlearned reward such as food) and you may also hear this referred to as a *secondary reinforcer,* since it can be used to reinforce or strengthen a behavior.

A major difficulty with behavior capture training has to do with timing the reward.

1   Grab a yummy treat.
2   You sit or stand patiently and watch your dog
3   When the dog does the behavior you are looking for...Mark and Reward!
4   Repeat many times. The behavior will start happening more often. without a request - only a treat present… which is an example of what?

_____

Capture can be used to teach all of the basic commands, such as "come", "sit", "down", and "heel".
Capturing is particularly useful in teaching the dog to perform activities that are difficult or impossible to enforce. Example is going to the bathroom outside - aka - House Training for puppies.

Give 3 examples of this:
1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

G. Compulsion / Praise and Play Training

The traditional style of dog training, where the dog is modelled or otherwise compelled to perform the behaviour and physically corrected for noncompliance.

The trainer manipulates the dog into a position by using physical placement or training equipment. For example, the dog may be physically manipulated into sitting by applying pressure on his bottom or brought into heel position with a head halter or collar correction.

Reinforcement may be verbal praise and/or a toy or food reward.

Compulsion training refers to training using a level of compulsion or force as a means of teaching a behavior, instead of positive reinforcement.

The concept behind compulsion or punishment based training techniques is that a negative response is given immediately during or after an unwanted behaviour. The intended result is that the animal learns that the performed behaviour has a negative result and therefore will not perform the behaviour in the future.

The most common type of negative response that is used in dog training is a leash correction. Leash corrections are when the leash is jerked or popped quickly and normally a choke or prong collar is used to cause pain from that pop.

Also commonly used are electronic collars which produce a shock or physically hitting or kicking the dog. An example of how this technique is used would be when a dog jumps up on someone. As the dog jumps, the punishment (leash correction, shock...) is immediately given.

The intention is for the dog to not know where this punishment came from but only that jumping somehow caused pain to him and therefore he doesn't want to jump anymore.