Training Unadoptable Shelter Dogs

How training programs can benefit shelters and increase adoption rates.

Tag Words: Unadoptable; shelter dogs; breed personalities; training; volunteer; animal shelters; behavioral issues; relinquishment; adoption; positive reinforcement; negative reinforcement; punishment

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Summary

Each year millions of animals die in shelters, about half of which are put down simply because the shelters are overcrowded and no one adopted them in time. Many others end up being euthanized due to aggressive behaviors which are inevitable under the stressful conditions these dogs have to live under. Many dogs go un-adopted because of bad behavior. Most pet owners do not want to or know how to deal with misbehaved dogs. Some dogs even end up being returned to shelters for the same reason. Training programs could benefit shelters because the adoption rate for dogs will not only increase, but the chances of each dog staying permanently in its new home will increase as well. Since shelters are typically understaffed and overcrowded, the desperately need the help of volunteers. Our service project focused on educating college students on the issue and getting them to go out and volunteer at a local shelter. With the help of volunteers, training and socializing programs can be a success in animal shelters. (SC)

YouTube Link:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7OHj-mFWeY_

Behavioral Issues in Shelter Dogs:

The Statistics:
It is estimated that every year five to seven million animals enter into an animal shelter. Seventy percent of these animals unfortunately do not leave. Due to these large numbers there is not enough room to hold all of them and unfortunately animals will be euthanized to make room for others. It is estimated that half the dogs that enter animal shelters are put down because no one adopted them in the required time span. Even if the shelter is a “no kill” it does not mean that animals are not euthanized. The expression “no kill” simply implies that animals will not be euthanized if they are not adopted, under the conditions that the dogs do not become too sick, depressed, or aggressive.

The clarification for being too aggressive is a judgment made by the shelter; however, there is a rule that must be abided by: if a dog bites a human and draws blood then they must be put down. One moment of fear or frustration can seal the fate of a dog. These guidelines are not set by the shelter. The rules are set by the township or county so the decision to euthanize a dog may not be the one the shelter believes in.

It may appear as though these rules are not that extreme because it is unimaginable how often these circumstances would actually present themselves. However, the shelter environment is not ideal for the dogs’ psyche. A perfectly healthy dog can find the shelter a hard environment to adapt to. In order to accommodate more animals each individual run cannot be that large and if there are large runs they are usually reserved for extra large breeds. A more compact space can make a dog anxious and there is only a limited amount of time the dog can expend its energy outside in larger pens. With anxious dogs comes anxious barking which increases the stress level of every dog in the vicinity. Being introduced to strangers can also make dogs restless. Dogs may find it hard to sleep in their new surroundings. All of these stressor triggers will aid in changing a dogs behavior. Shelter employees as well as potential adopters may see dogs expressing strange behaviors such as: spinning, excessive barking, whining, excessive licking, and increased fear which would be seen as huddling in the back corner.

Research has shown that dogs that are housed in cell like conditions for a long period of time may develop atypical aggression and fear. Studies have also shown that the time frame for a dog’s behavior to start rapidly declining may be as early as two weeks. This decline into an almost feral behavior is known in the shelter community as going “kennel crazy”. To prolong the onset of this happening shelters try to get volunteers to take dogs for short walks just to get them to expend some energy. The problem with this scenario is that most volunteers go to the shelter on weekends because they have their own jobs or secondary school; this leaves the weekdays with hardly any volunteers to walk the dogs. The dogs will once again have pent up energy and start to express the atypical behaviors.

The key to stopping these atypical behaviors from surfacing is to have the dogs adopted out to good homes as soon as possible. In order to increase the adoption rate the dogs must be appealing to potential adopters. Adopters are first drawn to the dogs’ appearance which usually means picking a puppy. Adopters will not see dogs that have lost their puppy features as being as attractive and may not be as forgiving if the dogs express certain undesirable quirks. To conquer the task of making a dog more appealing one must first figure out why the dog was relinquished to the shelter in the first place.

Coppinger, R., & Zuccotti, J. (2000). Kennel enrichment: exercise and socialization of
Reasons for Relinquishment:

One of the main reasons for relinquishment is the dog’s behavior and the owners’ lack of tolerance for it. A survey was conducted to figure out what the most common behavioral issues owners were faced with before making the decision to give up their dog. These issues consisted of dogs jumping, barking, separation anxiety, and hyperactivity. These behaviors will mostly likely be heightened when placed in the shelter environment. What owners may not realize is that they may be the cause of some of these bad habits.

Dogs learn by association. For instance, if a dog jumps on a person for attention and the person pushes them off, the dog will see this as a success since the person started paying attention to them and initiating contact. The dog will then associate this as a way to get attention from there on out. The same goes for a barking dog. If a dog continues to bark for something it wants and the owner gives it to them just for a little bit of piece and quiet the dog will acquire the idea that barking equals getting what it wants. Other problem owners face is following through with corrections if a person does not correct a dog for expressing a bad behavior the dog will take it as a sign that this behavior is now acceptable.

One of the most important keys to getting a dog to listen to its owner is having the owner establish its dominance of the dog. Many owners struggle with this idea. Some may constantly baby their dogs while others may choose the other extreme and abuse their dogs. Both situations will not make the dog recognize that the owner is the master. It will simply make the dog try to establish dominance over the owner in the first situation and usually exceed. These owners will find it hard to command their dogs. While on the other hand the ones who abuse their dogs just establish fear in the animal. What makes an owner the master is a balance between love and discipline (not physical). This will make the dog respect the owner and be more likely to follow their commands. A dog is not born with bad behaviors it acquires them through its experiences.

Owners may also relinquish their dogs because they do not fully understand what they are getting themselves into when they get a dog in the first place. Some may buy a dog on impulse when they see a cute puppy in a puppy store window while others may get a dog for companionship without contemplating the new responsibilities they obtain along with it. Dogs purchased at puppy stores are from puppy mills. Within a puppy mill dogs are over bred and inbred leading to illnesses and neurological conditions. A puppy mill also exposes the new puppies to horrible conditions that may predispose the puppies to skittishness and other abnormal behaviors. These behaviors can be trained out of a dog but, new owners may be overwhelmed and give up. If a person adopted a dog from a reputable breeder they would have the chance to see and interact with at least one of the parents of the puppies, usually the mother. The parents of the puppies with give the new owners a way to gauge what the personality of their new puppy will be like. This is not a full proof method but it does give the owners a hint of what their
puppy will be like in the future. If the parents of the puppy are wild the owner should expect a wild puppy and should prepare themselves for that. This does not usually happen and owners are left confused and overwhelmed with their new puppy usually leading to relinquishment.


**Breeds and their personalities:**

 Probably one of the most common reasons dogs are relinquished to shelters is because people did not do their research before purchasing a dog. Many of the dogs that are relinquished to the shelter are actually purebred. Their owners were probably not aware that most dogs have different characteristics and personalities that go with their breed. Of course every individual will be different; however, there tends to be certain norms for certain breeds.

 Breeds categorized into the sporting group such as retrievers or spaniels need invigorating exercise if they are not being used for what they were bred to do, as in hunt. If their needs are not met they may become bored which can lead to destructive behavior such as chewing or scratching at furniture. Some owners may not want to keep up with the expenses or a certain thing of value may be destroyed that puts owners at their wits end.

 The hound group may drive their owners crazy with their constant howling and barking. This group includes beagles and bloodhounds. This group is also prone to being stubborn and for being wanderers. Some owners may become fed up with their dogs constantly leaving the property as well as the dogs not listening to the commands.

 There is a big concern for owners not doing their research when they get a dog that is a member of the working group. These dogs need to be socialized early or they have a tendency to become territorial and sometimes aggressive. This is easily avoidable; however, if an owner did not do their research they would not know to do this, resulting in a temperamental dog that does not get along with strangers. Two breeds of dogs in this group are Rottweilers and Siberian huskies. Owners must socialize their new puppies with other pets as well if no things can get dangerous and fights may break out.

 The terrier group is much like the hound with there hunting instincts and stubbornness. The smaller breeds in the terrier group can also develop a sort of napoleon complex where they will not back down from a fight. These dogs can also be quite yippy.

 The group that barks the most would be the toy group. They were bred for companionship. If they do not get the attention they demand they may become very vocal. Toy breeds may also take longer to house train. This is a big frustrating trigger for new owners. Some breeds in this group are Yorkshire terriers and Pomeranians.

 The herding group is like the sporting group. If they do not get their required exercise and mental stimulation they can become bored and destructive. Also they may resort to trying to do what they weird bred for, herding. Small children tend to be the target of this herding. This
may be dangerous since herding consists of chasing, barking, and nipping at heals. Some popular breeds in this group are border collies and Australian shepherds.

These bad behaviors are brought about when the dogs do not have their needs fulfilled. When a future owner does the research they should pick a dog that will fit their lifestyle. Too many times dogs are relinquished to shelters because they were forced into an environment that they were not equipped to handle.


**Keeping up with society:**

Foreclosure is a big problem many families are facing recently. Foreclosure forces families to pick up and leave their home to find a new one. This leads to people moving in to new places that do not allow pets. This is not a good enough excuse in the shelter community’s mind. It is believed that these owners could have found a place that allowed animals if they really tried. A survey was conducted to see if the relationship between owner and pet was strained before the relinquishment happened. The survey relieved that the average length of time the person owned the dog was only eighteen months before relinquishment. The strain was caused by miscommunications between pet and owner.

The fast pace of society is also affecting the rate of relinquishment. A graph was created in the article “Characteristics of Shelter-Relinquished Animals and Their Owners Compared with Animals and Their Owners in U.S. Pet-Owning Households” which depicted that the age of people who relinquish their pets are mostly in their early thirties to late forties. This is the prime time that people are working and trying to survive the recession. People in their twenties and fifties do not seem to relinquish pets and much. This may be because they are either just starting their careers or their careers are coming to an end.

The ones who relinquish their pets are the ones who do not have time to train them and assume they are doing the right thing by bringing them to a shelter. Their assumption is that the dog with find a loving home that has time for them and will give them the attention they need. However, they do not take into account that if they do not have time for an untrained dog, it is most likely that other families too do not have time for an untrained dog. Also, if families were going for a dog that is not trained they would probably lean more towards a puppy. One of the many reasons people adopt adult dogs is because they are searching for a prepackaged dog that can affiliate with their family with ease; hardly any training required.


**Why Behavioral Training Can Be Beneficial:**

(SC) The reason why many dogs have trouble getting adopted is due to behavioral problems that can be fixed with simple training if given the time. Many dogs end up being returned to shelters due to the fact that their owners either don’t know how to handle these issues
or just don’t have the time or want to spend the time on training their pets. Implementing an effective training program can be beneficial in multiple ways. These programs would not only help more dogs get adopted, it would increase the chances of dogs staying in their new homes permanently. A dog that knows how to behave properly is much more desirable to potential adopters, especially those who are first time pet owners with no experience. Dogs that are calm and know how to behave make easier transitions into their new homes. The training the animal has already received in the shelter makes it easier for the new owners to train their new pet. The behavioral training provided in the shelter shows the adopters that even dog owners with little experience have the capability to change their dog’s behavior. If the potential new owners see how well a dog is doing under the shelter’s training program, it gives them hope that they have the ability to do it themselves. It also encourages them to bring their dogs to additional training classes which will help increase the chances that the dog will remain a permanent part of the family and won’t be relinquished back into a shelter.


**How Behavioral Training Works (Learning Process):**

There are different ways in which dogs learn including habituation, sensitization, classical conditioning, and operant conditioning. It is essential to understand how each of these processes influences the learning process of dogs in order to try to teach them new behaviors and correct unwanted ones.

1. **Habituation:** This occurs through repeated exposure to a stimulus which then causes a decrease in response. Through habituation, the dog learns to ignore unimportant stimuli which won’t cause it any harm or give it any benefit. There are two types of habituation, short-term and long-term. Short-term occurs when a stimulus is continuously repeated over a short period of time. The dog learns to ignore the stimulus but may respond to it if it’s introduced again at a later time. This response is called spontaneous recovery and can be reversed is the stimulus does not cause a harsh response. When spontaneous recovery no longer occurs when the stimulus is reintroduced, long-term habituation has been achieved. Habituation is generally used with puppies; it’s used when introducing a puppy to different situations and environments and is how dogs get socialized. A dog that lacks habituation will have exhibit fear and anxiety to stimuli they weren’t properly exposed to.

2. **Sensitization:** This occurs when a repeated exposure to a stimulus causes an increase in response. The responses generally involve fear or aggression. Repeated exposure to a negative or harsh stimulus can cause future reactions to reintroduced stimuli. It is also common for dogs to generalize sensitization with similar stimuli; for example a fear of children may occur after the dog had an intense negative experience with a child. Stimuli that have already been habituated may become sensitized if it changes slightly or if that
stimulus becomes negative; for example if a dog has already been habituated to bicycles but then gets hit by someone riding one, it may become sensitized to them.

3. **Classical Conditioning**: This theory of learning was discovered by Pavlov who used a dog in his experiments. Every time the dog was given food a bell was rung directly before. Over time the dog began to associate the ringing of the bell with food and would salivate after hearing the sound. The focus of this learning process is creating a relationship between at least two different stimuli. Constant pairing of the two stimuli together leads to classical conditioning. The first stimulus is one that is initially insignificant to the dog and the second stimulus that immediately follows is one that has meaning. For example, the first stimulus would be the trainer saying “Time to eat” and then second stimulus would be food. After time the dog associates the second stimulus (food) with the first (the words “Time to eat”) and asking the question alone will produce the same response the food did (salivation).

4. **Operant Conditioning**: This theory of learning was discovered by Skinner. This theory differs from Pavlov’s in that it is dependent on the action of the learner (in this case the dog). While classical conditioning does not necessarily rely on behavior, operant conditioning does. In operant conditioning, the dog gets either reinforced or punished as a result of its behavior. If there is an enjoyable consequence it reinforces the behavior and the dog is likely to repeat it because the dog will associate the behavior with something positive (a reward); this is called reinforcement. When using reinforcement there are two categories of reinforcers; primary and secondary. This is used in behavioral training, a word or sound is used as a secondary reinforcement, after giving a primary reinforcement (food) to the dog for a good behavior. The dog will associate the word or sound (secondary reinforcer) with the reward (primary reinforcer). Overtime the word/sound will be able to be used as a reinforcer alone because the treat has given it value by association. For example, by using food as a primary reward followed by the word “good”, the dog will associate the two reinforcements together. Over time it will be possible to simply reward the dog with the word “good”. If there is a negative consequence for a behavior, the dog is less likely to repeat that behavior; this is called a punishment.


**Different Methods of Operant Conditioning:**

In operant conditioning there are a few different types of response-consequence associations. Positive reinforcement involves rewarding the dog for a good/desired behavior. In positive reinforcement a common and effective training method used is clicker training. Negative reinforcement causes a dog to increase wanted behavior by avoiding a negative consequence. Positive punishment is when a negative consequence follows an unwanted behavior. Negative punishment is when an enjoyable stimulus is removed as a consequence. It
is important to remember that whichever method is chosen must be applied consistently. Inconsistent training will not be effective because the dog will get confused. Consistent reinforcement methods are important as well as using consistent words to give commands. Each behavior should have its own short and simple command word (sit, down, etc.) that is held constant. Pick one word or short phrase to describe the behavior and stick with it; changing the word for the command will make it harder for the dog to learn it and associate it with a behavior. Timing is also important to remember; reinforcement must immediately follow the behavior for the dog to understand why it is receiving either a reward or punishment.


**Positive Reinforcement:**

Positive reinforcement focuses on encouraging good behavior with meaningful rewards. In order to promote acceptable behaviors (good behaviors) they are rewarded. The addition of extra attention is a strong enough reinforcer to be used to encourage certain behaviors. In order for the dog to learn these behaviors the rewards must be consistent and they also must be meaningful. There are many different rewards one can use for positively reinforcement. These can range from simple physical affection and praise to food and treats or even toys and playtime; you can use any of these as long as it’s rewarding and meaningful for the dog. Timing is one of the most important aspects of training. It is important to remember to reward the behavior as soon as it is completed to ensure the dog knows exactly what it is being rewarded for. When the desired behaviors are continually rewarded in this way the dog will learn them through conditioning. Continuous rewards for doing certain behaviors will allow them to be associated together which will cause the dog to want to display them willingly. After the dog has learned the behavior, intermittent reinforcement can be used. Intermittent reinforcement consists of not always giving rewards for the completed behaviors and rewarding only some of the time. While the number of treats given is being cut down it is still important to always praise the dog every time it completes a command. Care must also be taken because going too long without giving the dog a primary reward, the dog will lose its conditioning.


**Clicker method:**
The clicker method is a commonly used training method. It utilizes a small metal or plastic device that emits a small sharp clicking sound. As soon as the desired action or behavior is completed the clicker is clicked and the dog is rewarded. This then associates the clicking noise with rewards and positivity. Every time the dog hears a click they know they are going to be rewarded for displaying that behavior. This is an example of a conditioned reinforcer (secondary reinforcer). Clicker training isn’t the only way to mark desired behaviors. This can also be achieved through vocal feedback (such as saying “yes”). However whichever marker is used must be consistent; it will not be effective to alternate between the clicker and voice. Although, while using one’s voice can be effective, the clicker is the more effective tool to use because it is a quicker and much more clear and consistent response. A vocal reinforcement is not always consistent because it can vary depending on tone. This type of method utilizes conditioned reinforcement which means that the dog learns to exhibit certain behaviors through repetition. The clicker (or voice) reinforces that behavior by associating it with a reward. Clicker training can also be used to teach a dog a complicated behavior broken down into multiple simple steps. Once the dog learns each step they can be linked into a sequence to form the complex behavior. The way the clicker method is carried out is in three steps;

1. Give the dog a command
2. Click the clicker and reward
3. Repeat

Clicking can also be used to fix “bad” behaviors. After the dog is conditioned to know that the clicker sound means receiving a reward, the clicker can be used whenever the dog is exhibiting good behavior. It will then learn to repeat these “good” behaviors and discontinue “bad” ones.


**Negative Reinforcement and Punishment:**

Negative reinforcement focuses on correcting bad behaviors with a negative stimulus. The dog learns to increase a wanted behavior by avoiding the negative stimulus. When using negative reinforcement, it is important to remember not to correct the dog too harshly as this can damage the dog. Negative reinforcement can be useful in ending undesired behaviors if used correctly. Punishment is used to stop unwanted behaviors. One thing that is important is to remember that punishment must directly follow the behavior you want to discourage. If the punishment is not given directly after the unwanted behavior, it will not be associated with it and the dog will either not understand why it is being punished or associate the punishment with something else. Also, the punishments must be consistent and permanent. If punishment is not consistent the dog will get confused and will not learn. The problem with negative reinforcement is that it teaches the dog what not to do but doesn’t necessarily teach it what to do. The dog learns by trying to offer a behavior that will not cause it to receive the negative stimulus. This puts stress on the dog and can also cause fear which interferes with the learning process.
Methods Compared:

Positive reinforcement is the more effective learning tool than both negative reinforcement and punishment. It encourages the dog to do a specific behavior, while negative reinforcement and punishment just deter the dog from doing unwanted behaviors. It is also more enjoyable for both the dog and human because it’s positive and pleasurable and is not associated with stress or fear; it is a more humane approach to training. Positive reinforcement should be the method used when working with shelter dogs, especially those who come from abusive homes. Many shelter dogs come from abusive backgrounds and using punishments to correct bad behaviors would not be affective at all and might actually terrify them. With harsh punishment it is possible to damage the dog and make them fearful of humans. When using positive reinforcement good behaviors are reinforced and bad behaviors are less likely to occur. Positive reinforcement can also help to strengthen the bond between a dog and its owner.

How to Solve Specific Behavioral Issues:

1. **Jumping**: When the dog is jumping one way to discourage this behavior is to take attention away and ignore the dog. Then, when the dog has all four feet on the floor or is sitting give the dog praise and affection. This will reinforce the dog to stay on the ground and not jump up. In order for this to be effective always be consistent and never let the dog jump up on anyone. A good way to keep a dog from jumping is to give it something else to do. Teaching the dog basic obedience is a good way to keep jumping under control. By teaching the dog the command “sit” it can be used when the dog is jumping. This gives the dog something else to do and will help to calm it down.

2. **Barking**: One thing to remember when dealing with unwanted barking is to never reinforce the behavior. By yelling at the dog, this is giving it attention and will unintentionally reinforce the barking. A good way to deter barking is to ignore the dog when it is barking and to give affection and praise the dog when it quiets down. Another way to stop barking is to teach the dog the “quiet” command. When the dog is barking wait for it to stop, say the command “quiet” and give praise and a reward (treats, toys, etc.). Once the dog knows the “quiet” command it can be used to stop unwanted barking.
3. **Hyperactivity**: Hyperactivity in dogs can be caused by lack of exercise as well as lack of training. One simple solution to help solve this issue is to have the dogs walked regularly. Dogs in the shelter are kept in cages all day long and build up energy and get bored. Having a volunteer come in to the shelter and walk and play with the dog a couple of times a day is a good way to release built up energy. Another solution is to reinforce the dog when it is being calm. By rewarding the dog with praise and affection when it is being calm, that will reinforce it to act in that manner.


**The Trainers:**

(CC) Shelters are constantly begging for volunteers because the people who work at the shelter are busy with the business aspect, cleaning, and keeping the animals healthy. Volunteers are the ones who supply the extra love and attention to the animals. The ones who should be the volunteers are college students. College students do not have the normal “5 to 9” schedules as most people do. College students have chunks of time in their day waiting to be used up. It is a perfect opportunity to have students, especially animal science students, to put what they were taught to good use.

Not only will the animals benefit from this but the college students will as well. Based on the cognitive behavioral theory, dogs will show unconditional love that helps combat the constant pressures of college society. Students may become overwhelmed with school work and exams and may forget that one exam is not the end of the world. Training a dog lets them escape from the pressure for a while and actually make a difference. When the students are given a dog to train they gain a new responsibility that doesn’t rely on studying and taking an exam. The students can have more control of the outcome. Students can see their hard work pay off right before their eyes. A cute happy dog licking your face doesn’t hurt either.


**Service Project:**

**Service Project:**

(CC) Our service project is to create two lectures for a new course on Companion Animal Behavior. The lectures will be based on dog breeds and a How-To on how to break bad habits that dogs acquire. The companion course will show reasons why these dogs do what they do.
Our lectures will teach the students on how to deal with these natural habits that turn obnoxious. We also worked with Kristen Lester in charge of SPIN to make sure students will indeed get credit for their efforts.

We pulled information from a compilation of books. We will teach the tactic of understanding the dog. This will be the first approach for the students. The students will be using these tactics in real life. These lectures will prepare the student for interning at a local animal shelter. Here their first job will be trying to understand their particular dog’s situation and why they were relinquished to the shelter in the first place. Then they must establish dominance at the same time making the dog feel comfortable and safe with them.

The following email was sent to four local animal shelter:

Hi,

There are around 400 students within the animal science program at Rutgers University. This means that there are 400 students that are willing to dedicate the rest of their lives to helping animals. If the students live on campus they are not allowed to have pets in their dorms or apartments so they will be missing companion animal contact. These students sound like perfect volunteers to help your shelter.

Rutgers will be starting a class soon called Companion Animal Behavior. During the class students will learn different techniques on how to train dogs and break them of their bad habits using positive reinforcement. If your shelter is willing, the students would then come to the shelter and help walk and socialize the dogs as well as train them. The goal is to make the dogs look more appealing to future adopters. The students will also be able to socialize the cats.

If your shelter is interested in this opportunity please contact Kristen Lester at SPIN lester@sebs.rutgers.edu. Your shelter will be put on a list that students can view. The students will then see your shelter and will be able to earn credits volunteering. This will give more incentive for the students to volunteer. The shelter will also gain a reoccurring volunteer. Kristen Lester will be sending a follow up email.

Thank you,
Chelsea Cannon & Sarina Cella

The Animal shelter that got back to us was Franklin Township. A connection was then made between the animal shelter and the program SPIN at Rutgers. The program focuses on experienced based education. The students who intern will go to the shelter and take the dogs out and train them. The students will help the dogs become more appealing by making them better behaved.

The project was then passed along to Dr. Fagan who maintained contact with the shelter.

Outline Of PowerPoint’s:
First Lecture:
(CC)

The Cause of Bad Behavior
No dog is born bad
Personality

• A dog’s personality is usually based on breed, genetics, and experiences
• Though every dog is an individual
• The American Kennel Club has separated the breeds into different group
• These groups are a general view of what each breed was bred for
• Sporting, Hound, Working, Terrier, Toy, and Herding.

Sporting Group
• Members of the Group include pointers, retrievers, setters and spaniels
• Naturally active and alert (distractible)
• This helps breeds find birds and other game

What Can Go Wrong
• If proper exercise and mind stimulation are not met then the dogs may become bored which can lead to barking, pacing, digging, and chewing

Hound Group
• Members of this group include Pharaoh Hounds, Norwegian Elkhounds, Afghans, beagles and many more
• Ability to hone in on sights or smells
• Independent behavior

Baying!
• Hounds have independent behavior that may lead to wandering
• Also, each hound has the ability to make the sound called baying which is like howling and can be very annoying

Working Group
• The working group held jobs such as guarding, sled pulling, and water rescue
• Breeds that belong to this group are usually strong, large, and dominant
• Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, and Siberian Huskies are just a few breeds that belong to this group

Too Dominant
• If these dogs are not properly socialized and order within the family is not established these dogs can try to dominant their owners and become possessive and aggressive

Terrier Group
• These dogs are feisty and energetic
• They were bred to kill vermin
• May be stubborn, will not back down from a fight

Hyperactivity
• These dogs tend not to get along with other animals if not properly socialized
• May become destructive or aggressive if they do not have an outlet for their energy

Toy Group
• Breeds of the toy group are small and bred to be lap dogs
• They are fragile and owners tend to baby them
• They also bark a lot to make themselves known
  Napoleon Complex
• These dogs tend not to notice their size and will challenge bigger dogs
• These dogs are also harder to train due to owners babying them and putting up with bad behavior
  Herding Group
• These dogs are high energy and intensely loyal
• They were bred to herd any animal with barking and nipping
• Are very sensitive to owners behavior
• Need large space to run
  Separation Anxiety
• These dogs can get hyper easily with lots of commotion
• If there is no outlet for their energy they will find one
• They may herd anything including children
• Since they are so loyal they may become anxious and destructive when along
  Apple Does Not Fall Far From the Tree
• A good predication of what a puppy will be like in the future is to look at the parents
• Chances are if the parents are hyper the puppy will be too
  Associative Behavior
• Dogs learn by association
• Dogs will test their boundaries to see what is acceptable and what is not
• Puppies learn how rough they can play by interacting with their littermates and responding to their littermates’ reactions
• The mothers will give puppies corrections if they push the limits
  Puppies Learn From Their Owners
• For instance, if a dog jumps on a person for attention and the person pushes them off, the dog will see this as a success since the person started paying attention to them and initiating contact. The dog will then associate this as a way to get attention from there on out.
  Barking
• If a dog continues to bark for something it wants and the owner gives it to them just for a little bit of piece and quiet the dog will acquire the idea that barking equals getting what it wants
  Balance of Love and Discipline
• One of the most important keys to getting a dog to listen to its owner is having the owner establish its dominance of the dog
• Many owners struggle with this idea. Some may constantly baby their dogs while others may choose the other extreme and abuse their dogs.
• Both situations will not make the dog recognize that the owner is the master
  Dogs are Not Babies
• If a dog is treated like a baby it will develop the idea that it can do anything
• Even try to dominate the owner
• These dogs will be hard to train
  Abuse is not the Answer
• Abuse will not make the dog respect the owner only fear them
• Dogs may also lash out from fear and uncontrollably shake
  Give the Dogs New Experiences
• Bad habits can be trained out of a dog using positive reinforcement
• The balance of love a control make a happy healthy dog

Second Lecture:
(SC)

Training Shelter Dogs
Why training is beneficial and how it works.
Benefits of Training Shelter Dogs

• Increased adoption rates
  – Better behaved dogs are more attractive to potential adopters
• Increased probability that the dog will remain a permanent part of it’s new home.
  – Dogs will behavioral issues are often returned to shelters
  – Training programs in shelters give adopters hope that they themselves will be able to train their pets

The Learning Process
• There are a few different ways in which dogs learn
  – Habituation
  – Sensitization
  – Classical Conditioning
  – Operant Conditioning

Habituation
• Repeated exposure to a non-threatening and weak stimulus
  – The stimulus causes no harm or gives any benefit to the dog
  – Causes a decrease in response
• The dog learns to ignore this stimulus over time
• Occurs in two steps
  – Short-term habitation
  – Long-term habituation

Short-term Habituation
• Consistently repeated stimulus over a short period of time
  – Dog learns to completely ignore the stimulus by the end
• Reintroduction of the same stimulus at a later time produces a response
  – This is called spontaneous recovery

Long-term Habituation
• Occurs over a longer time period
• This is achieved when spontaneous recovery no longer occurs
• The dog learns to ignore the stimulus over time and no longer produces a response when the stimulus is reintroduced

Sensitization
• Repeated exposure to a stimulus that causes an increase in response
  – Generally related to fear, anxiety, and aggression
  – Stimuli generalization can occur
    • Ex. A dog has negative experiences with one child but then becomes afraid of all children

• Habituated stimuli can become sensitized
  – This can occur is the habituated stimuli changes or becomes associated with something negative
    • Ex. A dog that has been habituated to bicycles and is normally not bothered by them gets hit by someone riding one. The dog may become sensitized to bicycles and develop a fear of them

Classical Conditioning
• Discovered by Pavlov
  – Experiment involving a dog where the ringing of a bell was used to associate sound with food.
    • The dog would salivate upon hearing the sound of the bell
• This training technique involves creating a relationship between two different stimuli

• The first stimuli is something that initially has no value for the dog
  – For example, the trainer saying “Time for dinner”
• The second stimuli has meaning
  – For example, a tasty treat
• The dog learns to associate the two stimuli together and will produce a response upon hearing the first stimulus that it would normally produce upon receiving the second.
  – For example: The dog hears “Time for dinner” and will begin to salivate. This response is normally only produced upon receiving food but is produced because the dog has associated the two stimuli together.

Operant Conditioning
• Discovered by Skinner
• Differs from Classical Conditioning
  – Operant conditioning relies on behavior of the dog while classical conditioning does not
• Four types of response –consequence associations
Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment.

Positive Reinforcement

• A good/desired behavior is rewarded with something positive
  – Ex. Treats, Play, Affection
• Increases the probability that the dog will offer a desired behavior
• Reinforcement must be consistent, meaningful, and timed properly
  – The dog will only associate the reward with the behavior if rewarded as soon as
    the action is completed or even while the dog is still displaying the action
• Two types of reinforcers
  – Primary
    • Food
  – Secondary (conditioned)
  • Vocal praise, clicker
• Two common methods:
  – Clicker Training
  – Lure and Reward

Clicker Training

• Used as a conditioned reinforcer
  – The sound of the click is then followed by the reward of food
• The Clicker is a great reinforcer
  – It’s short and consistent
  • Its shortens then time between the end of the behavior and the reward
  • Vocal praise may vary with tone

Intermittent reinforcement

• Occasionally rewarding the dog for good behaviors
• Once the dog is conditioned through continuous reinforcement and knows that the
  secondary reinforcer (clicker or vocal praise) is linked with a food reward, intermittent
  reinforcement can be used
• Going too long without a reward will cause to the dog to lose its conditioning

Negative Reinforcement

• Focuses on increasing good behavior through avoidance of a negative stimulus
  – Ex. Collar jerks and verbal reprimands
• Useful for discouraging dogs from displaying unwanted behavior
  – Not as useful in encouraging wanted behavior

Punishment

• Focuses on discouraging bad behaviors through correction
• Must be timed correctly
  – If punishment does not immediately follow the unwanted behavior the dog will not
    associate them together
• Harsh corrections can be damaging to dogs – especially those who have been
  abused
• Positive punishment: negative consequences result from an unwanted behavior
  – Ex. Verbal reprimands and physical corrections
• Negative punishment: an enjoyable stimulus is removed as a negative consequence
  – Ex. The removal of a toy when a dog becomes aggressive while playing

Which Method Is Better?
• Positive reinforcement is the more effective training tool
  – Encourages specific desired behaviors while negative reinforcement and
    punishment only discourage unwanted behaviors.
  – It is more humane
    • Negative reinforcement and punishment is controversial
• Negative reinforcement and punishment is associated with fear and anxiety
  – Both of which can interfere with the learning process
• Positive reinforcement can strengthen the bond between the trainer and the dog

How to Correct Common Behavioral Issues:
• Jumping:
  – Ignore the dog while it is jumping
  – Give the dog praise and reward once it has all four feet on the ground
    • This will reinforce the dog to stay on the ground and be calm
  – Teaching the dog the command “sit” through operant conditioning can be useful
    • Commanding the dog to sit will give the dog something else to do (which is an
      acceptable behavior)

• Hyperactivity:
  – Commonly due to lack of exercise
  – Have the dogs walked regularly, and allow for some play time to release built up
    energy
    • Volunteers can help out in the shelter by walking the dogs and playing with
      them
  – Positively reinforcing the dog while it is calm will encourage the dog to behave in
    this manner

• Barking:
  – Ignore the dog while it is barking
  – Reward the dog when it quiets down and stop barking
    • This will encourage the dog to not bark
  – Teach the dog the “quiet” command
    • Through operant conditioning positively reinforce the dog when it is being quiet.
First tell the dog “quiet” and then reward
• Once the dog knows “quiet” it can be used to stop barking
What can you do to help?
• Volunteer your time at a local shelter!
  – The shelters desperately need the help of volunteers
  – Volunteering not only helps the shelter but can benefit the individual as well by giving them valuable experience.

References


Editorials

Letter to the Editor at The Targum:

To Whom It May Concern:

There are around 400 students within the animal science program. These students choose the major for their love of animals. Many classes are offered at Rutgers to teach these students the technical and scientific workings of animals. However, sometime in the near future there will be a new class called Companion Animal Behavior. The class will be like Animal Behavior; however, it will focus on the animals that are almost always by our sides. What is even better about this class is students will get the chance to use the training skills they have learned and the reasons why cats and dogs behave the way they do.

Students will be able to enter into an internship with SPIN in accordance with local animal shelters. Animal shelters are overcrowded; the ASPCA estimates that five to seven million animals are relinquished to animal shelters every year which leads to more animals being euthanized for no fault of their own. The Rutgers animal science students will be able to make a difference with local animal shelters. They will have the opportunity to socialize with the dogs and teach them basic obedience; this will improve the dogs' chances of being adopted and make room for more dogs.

Students can start volunteering now. Many shelters are looking for volunteers to help socialize
the animals. Volunteers make living in a shelter bearable and it also does not hurt to have a furry friend by your side after taking one of those science many exams.

**Letter to the Editor Sent to The Star Ledger:**

(SC)

To Whom It May Concern,

Each year millions of animals end up in shelters and many of them are put down. One of the biggest reasons is simply due to behavioral problems. Many people get dogs are don’t know how to train them and when they become too much to handle they end up in shelters.

Animal shelters do not have the time and space to deal with problem animals and shelters that aren’t no-kill generally end up putting down animals before they even have a chance to find new homes. Of the animals that do find homes, some of them end up being returned to the shelter.

Since animal shelters are overcrowded and understaffed, they do not have the ability to take the time to teach the dogs obedience. This is why shelters desperately need the help of volunteers. Many dogs can benefit from simple obedience training. If shelters implemented a training program that allows volunteers to come in and spend time socializing and teaching basic obedience to their dogs, it would be very beneficial. Dogs that know basic obedience are more attractive to a potential adopter. A dog that knows how to behave properly is much easier to handle then one that doesn’t.