

AKC Canine Clubs-Community Dogs: Week 2The Basics - Shaping and Timing

- An introduction to clicker use and timing.
  - As students walk in, click for being quiet or sitting down. Reward with candy (or goldfish or other snack). (2 min)
  
- Shaping example with the dog. (10min)
  - Explain shaping behavior. I want to get the dog to do a behavior that the dog doesn't know yet. An example: let's say I want the dog to do a "chipmunk" (often called "beg," the dog is sitting on his hind legs with his front legs held up). I reward the dog for lifting his right paw in the air. Then I stop rewarding the dog. The dog is trying to figure out what I want, so eventually he lifts his left leg. Then I reward for lifting his left leg. The dog keeps lifting his leg and then I stop rewarding. Now the dog raises his paws interchangeably. I can reward that to let the dog know he's on the right track. Then I stop and let him think about what to do next. Now he lifts up both paws and I reward a lot for that. Then I stop rewarding and reward only after he holds up both paws for a second long. Now the dog has done the behavior I want without me even saying anything. I have shaped a behavior using different steps to get the dog to perform the skill that was my final goal.
  
- Then ask students to reflect on how the class started with clicker/marker training and what they noticed when you were shaping a behavior in the dog. Then do the shaping behavior again, but you narrate this time. Show students how to use a clicker or the marker word "yes." Students can choose which one they like better.
  - Pavlov/Classical Conditioning: The dog learns to associate the clicker (a neutral stimulus that becomes a conditioned stimulus) with food (an unconditioned stimulus).
  - Marker Word: "yes." Just like the dog has been trained to associate the clicker with a reward, the dog has also been trained to associate the word "yes" to a food reward. The marker word can be used in place of the clicker.
  - Operant Conditioning: Dog learns to associate a behavior with a reward. E.g. dog sits and dog gets a reward. Then the dog will be more likely to do this behavior again.
  
- Students complete clicker/marker exercise on shaping. (10min) Stress that every student is a trainer in this class. Students pair up. Student A is the "trainer" and has a clicker/marker. Student B is the dog and the listener. Tell student A behavior (e.g. jumping jacks or push-ups) they have to get student B to act out. Student A and B cannot communicate except through the clicker. This is the hands-on experience of the shaping behavior demonstrated above.

- Basic Commands. (15 min) demonstrate each command then students practice. Pair command word with hand signal. Don't repeat the word. Make sure you have dog's attention first.
  - First: How to praise and reward. How to deliver a treat to the dog.
  - Sit
  - Down
  - Touch
  - Heel
  - Stay
  - Come. Orient students in a circle. Have students take turns asking the dog to come. Similar to the game of "popcorn," a student calls the dog, feeds and praises him, and then says the name of classmate who then asks the dog to come and feeds the dog and praises him. Repeat.
  
- Relay race of commands. (8 min) Students are timed, but it's important not to rush. Otherwise the dog will not listen to you as well.
  
- Take-Home Sheet