

A STUDY OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR OLDER DOGS

By

Joseph P. Fisher, B.S.

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APPROVED:

LuAnn Piccard, M.S., PMP, Committee Chair

Roger Hull, B.S., PMP, Committee Member

Jim Bates, M.S., PMP, Committee Member

LuAnn Piccard, M.S., PMP, Chair

*Department of Project Management*

Kenrick Mock, PhD., Dean

*College of Engineering*

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## **Abstract**

The importance of a good training program for dogs especially older dogs is that the program consists of both verbal and physical communication with the dog. With many older dogs being deaf or hard of hearing physical communication must be done. Also, dogs communicate through both body signals and movements as well as verbal. Incorporating hand signals with the verbal commands are essential to a good training program for older dogs. This will help the dog and the trainer to communicate with accuracy and precision.

The use of the distinct aspects and methodologies of project management enabled this project to successfully accomplish its goals in the short amount of time. Training a dog may take years depending on the level of training and the type of training done with the dog. In this study the focus was on the beginner stage of dog training and how it can be done.

## **Keywords**

Training Programs

Older Dogs

Behavior

## **A Study of Training Programs for Older Dogs**

### **Introduction**

The ability to communicate well with the dog is essential. The training program is about training the dog as well as the person doing the training. The person doing the training needs the knowledge of how to communicate to the dog in ways that the dog can understand what the person wants it to do. It is important to have both the verbal and physical techniques in communication established to further the training with the dog especially in older dogs.

In the arena of dog training, it is known to be competitive and have risks that until you have trained a dog before may not know. When beginning to train a dog especially an older dog or a rescued dog, it is important to start from the most basic commands to ensure the dog has a comprehensive learning of these commands before moving on to harder commands. It is like building a house, you want to start with the foundation and make sure the foundation is done correctly before moving on with the framing of the home. In dog training you need to build a solid foundation and build a bond with the dog so that it understands the trainer and that communication from the trainer is executed by the dog quickly and accurately.

Whenever a different type of training activity is performed without the establishment of the basic commands ingrained into the dog it will be harder and longer for the dog to perform other commands without hesitation or mistakes. Building upon a solid foundation is key before moving on to more intermediate level training. This type of approach to training may be slower overall but will help the trainer and the dog build a better ability to communicate and thus have a greater chance at success with a training program.

To lessen the need to mostly rely on in-class training sessions with an official dog trainer, the dog may need extra out of class training sessions at home. For instance, the dog used for this study needed extra time learning the 'focus' command. He would maintain his focus on the trainer but would break it before given the command to break the focus. This led to training two times at home instead of once a day. The success rate of the training command 'focus' was a focal point during this study. Training indoors and at home had a much higher success rate than outside at the park where there were many distractions.

Training an older dog comes with its own set of risks and more risks since it is an older dog versus a younger dog that does not have unhealthy habits or behaviors yet. This could lead to longer overall time to train the dog successfully. Breaking unpleasant habits and behaviors can take time and depending on the stubbornness of the dog and intelligence, it may take a lot longer to train the dog than foreseen. This is one of the biggest risks when undertaking the task of training an older dog. There are other risks associated with the project of training an older dog. The methodology primarily used in the

training of the dog in this project was the 'Better Companion' method. The secondary methodology used in the training was David Taylor's method. Both are different in some ways but alike in other areas that make the two methodologies bring together a combination of similar styles and ways to communicate with the dog a lot easier.

Both methodologies have been used for over two decades and were created by veterinarians. The establishment of such methodologies derives from years of experience each veterinarian had training dogs. This translates into a method of training that has been thought out carefully and methodically. With both veterinarians learning what best works when training a dog, especially an older dog.

Additional factors into making a successful method of training are both veterinarian's knowledge of dog behavior and life cycles. And this has led to both methods to use certain similar types of training techniques, like hand signals. When training older dogs, the need to train it with hand signals are important so that the trainer can communicate with the dog if or when the dog becomes hard of hearing or becomes deaf. The dog may already be hard of hearing or deaf in which case using hand signals are the only way to train the dog. Another similar technique is the use of positive reinforcement only, with an emphasis on zero negative reinforcement.

Claudia Sihler and David Taylor are the veterinarians that developed their own methodology to training dogs. Claudia Sihler's and David Taylor's experience and knowledge of dog behaviors and responsiveness to certain types of stimuli have led both veterinarians to make the conclusion that negative reinforcement, actually has a negative effect on training but also has a negative effect on the whole dog. The combination of hand signals and verbal communication is developed into both veterinarian's methodology. The amount of additional time spent training with both types of training were minimal. The trainer will be using both verbal and hand signals at the same time this will enable dog to learn both ways to communicate at the same time when training the dog. The approach to both methodologies when training is to take small steps and gradually build upon these steps until the goal has been achieved.

Additional external influences on the veterinarian's training methods were where the training is taking place. The influence of different smells and distractions that may keep the dog from performing correctly during the training. Separate places other than the dog's home will also play a factor into training success. Another influence is the dog's personality if the dog is lazy. The dog may not want to train if this is the case. If the dog is eager to please its trainer, then it may be easier to train, and progression may speed up significantly. There are other dog personality traits that may factor in the training development and how the veterinarians created their specific methodology for training dogs. Dog personalities are more of a risk but the veterinarians that developed these programs did take the possibility of different dog personalities into account. When explaining in the manual how to progress the training and how to adjust the training from different external factors that may affect the training progression.

The various influences on training method development in these programs are considered carefully. An ordinary dog owner may not think of these factors which is why they are added to the manual. Careful design of these programs is to have a broader range of being able to help dog owners train themselves and their dog. The manual was written so anyone could pick up the book and read it then execute the program. From a detailed idea of what they need to do and what to help the dog with

Another type of influence is intelligence. There are three forms of canine intelligence (Taylor, D., 2006, p.37). They are adaptive, working or obedience, and instinctive intelligence. When David Taylor developed his program; he considered these types of intelligence in the way the dog may train. When Claudia Sihler from Better Companion dog training program went about developing her program, she used a similar approach to knowing how dogs think and their behaviors.

All these influences and the variety of behaviors are all risks to be considered when selecting a program that will help the dog trainer achieve their goals. With the risk of all the unknowns it may be easier to pick a program that best fits the way the trainer wants to train. Such as negative and positive reinforcement styles of training may both work on different dogs, but they both come with a unique set of risks associated with them. Although, the positive reinforcement is more humane and statistically has better results than negative reinforcement, it also helps build a stronger bond between the dog's trainer and dog. According to the American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior (Todd, Z., 2020, para 1) positive reinforcement training is effective and does not have negative risks on animal welfare. Reward-based training works better than training with or without a shock collar by trainers who would normally use a shock collar. To eliminate the risk of slower or no results when training it is clearly best to stay with positive reinforcement.

The development and execution of a project to produce a manual with procedures on how to train an older dog or other types of dogs, needed to incorporate risk planning and management, quality management, and scope management. Moving forward with this project the realization of more complexity and risks engaged in a project of this type. Developing a risk management plan that was flexible and accurate to incorporate additional risks to be added as the project progressed was needed to foresee delays in the overall project. The quality management plan needed to be a focus to ensure that the manual produced from this project was written in a way that was simple enough for anyone to read it and could execute the instructions, but also have an elevated level of attention to detail and accuracy. Scope management was needed to ensure that the project did not create scope creep and or go further into the training process than the original scope statement says. And that is that the main deliverable for this project is a manual for training an older dog from the basic beginner stage to intermediate stage.



## **Project Scope and Overview**

The project performance was done by one Project Manager, who was responsible for all stages of the entire life cycle of the project. Funding was provided privately and was primarily for dog training at a dog training facility and dog treats.

The planned scope of the project included:

- Researching dog training programs that specialized in training older dogs.
- Develop a way to incorporate methods found into an easy-to-use manual for dog owners.
- Take the chosen programs and analyzed the similarities and differences.
- Prepare a risk register and risk management plan that identify risks identified in project reviews.
- Create a working risk register and procedural instructions to be applied during all project stages.
- Build a process of developing a guideline for evaluating training programs.

Understandability for use by trainers to have the abilities to both physically and logically execute the training outlined. Easy to use instructions and illustrations that will help guide dog trainers in the execution of the training with their dog. Outline the plan within two phases that will each be six to eight weeks, walking a dog trainer through the methodology to train their dog. Give information on causes of variation that may affect training and cause a training phase duration variance. Give a description of each exercise that may be used in the training program for a better understanding of the purpose of each exercise.

## **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS:**

Create a manual that can be used by anyone to execute a beginner level training program. Keep descriptions and purpose of each training exercise to a level to keep the reader's attention. Meanwhile give the best understandable description and purpose of each exercise. Give brief and to the point details of why and how to train a dog with each command. The network diagram lists specifications of the project scope statement. The work breakdown structure was used to create a pathway that flows between tasks. The use of expert judgement by the project manager gave the project a degree of flexibility. There was no need for variation by the network diagram because of the scope management plan enabled the project to have defined objectives.

## **Project Constraints**

Do not go into details that are not needed for the trainer to have the ability to give instruction to their dog.

- Privately funded project – limiting financial resources
- Time limit – Entire project lifecycle is eight months
- Amount of information resources pertaining to project

- Subject matter experts on the topic of training older dogs

An initial search for research material on the topic of training programs for older dogs produced scant findings. This was surprising due to the number of training guides on the market for dog trainers.

### Metrics

The identification of metrics in this project was done by analyzing what was that dog trainers were looking for when picking a program to use to train their dog and how successful a method is over other methods. Getting the asked for requests by dog owners on what dog trainers were requesting from training programs through the American Kennel Club. Through analysis of this information, it was concluded that there were criteria that dog trainers wanted to see. Dog trainers wanted to see positive reinforcement style training over negative reinforcement, so this was one metric in the manual. The use of positive reinforcement is proven to have a higher success rate than negative reinforcement. The use of positive reinforcement in the program and how it was used to reward the dog for performing correctly. A measurement of success from performing the training program, was data that was input into a spreadsheet depicted in graphs and charts for dog trainers. The need for training devices in the program and how they are used and why became another metric. One key performance indicator was how the breakdown of dog training commands affected the sessions outcome.

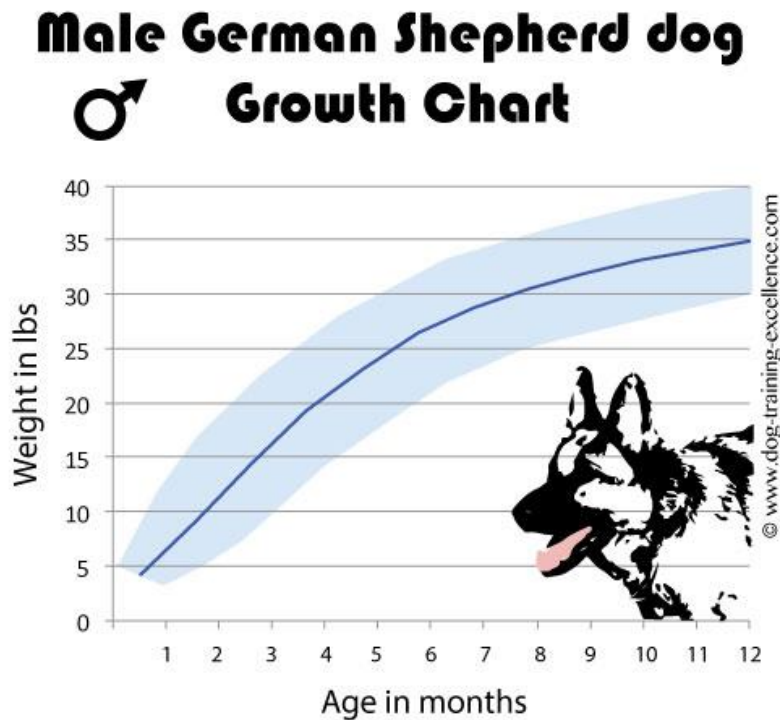


Exhibit 1 Growth Chart

Exhibit 1: Growth Chart shows the growth of male German Shepherds, which was the example dog of this study. This shows how they continue to grow and need extra attention to collars and other training devices used with the dog to ensure the safety of the dog to avoid choking or cutting off the air way. Other training devices such as muzzles or harnesses should fit snug around the dog where it is not tight nor loose on the dog

### **Project Approach**

During the beginning phase there was an analysis of different dog training methodologies that specialized in training older dogs and gain knowledge of traits within a methodology that trainers would most likely prefer over other methods. The review of each methodology was done during phase I of the project. A local dog trainer that had high reviews and had a program that caters to training older dogs was chosen. Better Companion by Claudia Sihler gave a stronger delivery of design for all dog ages and gave a format for training older dogs. Beginning with Better Companion's methods since it was the primary source contributor for the project. It was the methodology for in-person training classes done with the example dog regarding this project. From the reviews, information was gathered and the formatting of the of the training program on the example dog begun. Next, a selection from the numerous dog training authors was done. David Taylor's methods gave stronger traits of a program that people would use to identify troubling issues with their dog and that it used positive reinforcement.

Each training session was documented. Data from the spreadsheet was captured and put into charts and graphs for manual readers. This would give stats of the example dogs training outcome for each day training occurred. The data collected on the training sessions were an indication of how the dog was doing in the training program. Having knowledge of potential dog trainers that may need variance in dog training from the different circumstances around each dog's situation. Potential dog trainers that use the information provided in the main deliverable for this project can see an example set of training stats and may expect comparable results. The comparison of data when using David Taylor's methods versus Better Companion's methods can be studied on the graph in the manual. This shows how diverse types of training, although similar in style, may have different outcomes. Various locations are used to show a change in outcomes from the training sessions. Training commands may differ from session to session depending on what needed to have worked on. Once a week training session was done at the training facility of Better Companion. This was the opportunity for the project manager to work on specific needs. Research successful training programs: ones that have scientific data or subject matter expert.

- American Kennel Club Better
- Companion's methodology by Claudia Sihler
- David Taylor's methodology, Old Dog, New Tricks

The above list has subject matter experts or scientific data to back up training programs. David Taylor’s methodology is backed by his degree in veterinary medicine and his decades of experience with training dogs of all types. His system of training older dogs has been carefully created by the experience collected over his decades of training dogs. In 2006 he published a book called ‘Old Dog, New Tricks’ this was his combination of knowledge put into a book to enable dog trainers to overcome most challenges that they may face when training an older dog. Better Companion’s methodology was primarily created by Claudia Sihler who is a veterinarian and a dog trainer with over two decades of experience. Her knowledge of dog behaviors and their different challenges during each life stage in a dog’s life has made her use the current method studied. With an understanding of conceptual style of positive reinforcement and how different tools may be used in conjunction to help the dog along with its training.

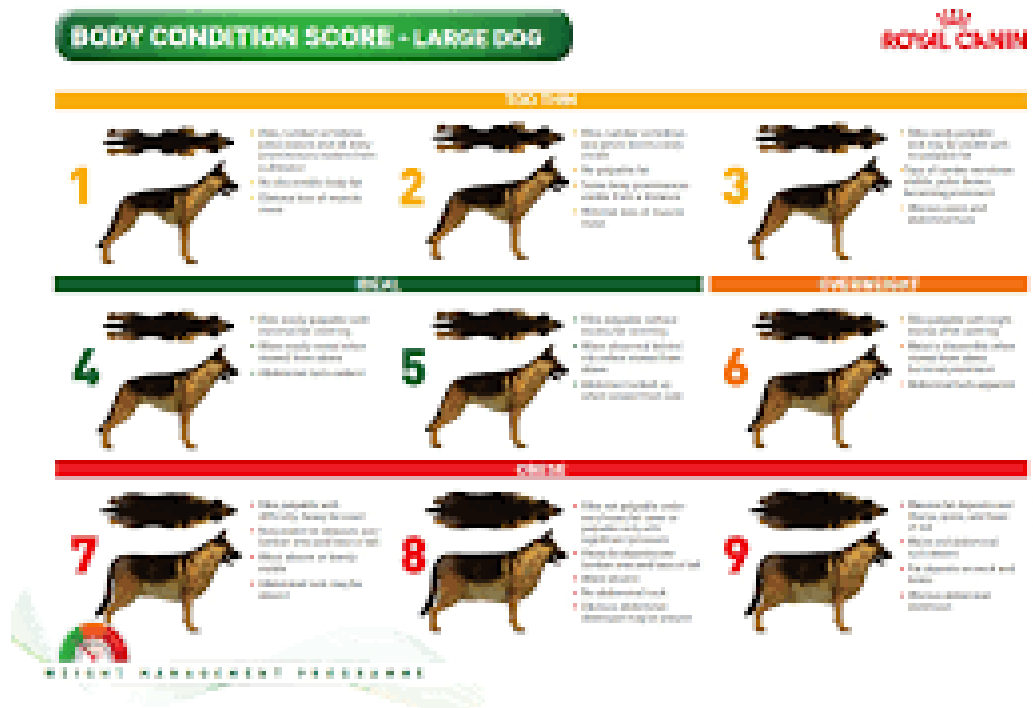


Exhibit 2 Body Condition Score

Exhibit 2 on body condition score the purpose of this chart is to compare the body condition of the dog to be trained. This is taken into consideration when starting a training program. This will have a part that will impact the frequency of training and how rigorous the training can be. The body condition of the dog that is to be trained may have a direct effect on the training.

The American Kennel Club has an archive of documents written by experienced dog handlers and trainers on different guidelines on how to train an older dog. Specifically, the article ‘The Importance of Training Your Senior Dog’ details reasons for training an older dog. This article may give a better

understanding of why a dog owner may spend time training an older dog. Going through these documents' information was found that backed up the theory of the way this project approached the various sources. The approach to these varied sources was to scan them for exact topics that dealt with training older dogs.

### **Research Identification**

Created a clearly defined set of information parameters that guided the project accordingly to the scope statement. A concise format would be the most help to the reader of the manual. This was done by doing research on topics that are more likely to be of greater concern to dog trainers when considering starting dog training. Identification of topics to be used in the manual was done by reviewing forums on the American Kennel Club website and reading needs of posters and readers on reasons for dog training topics about which they wanted information on. Information on the topics also came from David Taylor's book 'Old Dog, New Tricks.' In his book he talks about many of the topics brought up on the AKC website. David Taylor being an expert in dog behaviors and training the use of his knowledge adds credibility to construction of manual chapters. Another source used was the Bet Co's manuals on dog training. Although short they do provide an expert level of knowledge to the topics chosen for the main deliverable of this project. Learning slight variations to commands was gained. Slight changes to a command serves a purpose and is a tool in gaining control over the dog. Identifying the purpose to such variations was a topic of research for this project and provided essential content for the manual. Analysis of these variations in commands took place during project phase I. As later analysis indicated that the purpose of variations is to train the dog in multiple variations in commands so the dog can do what the trainer wants it to do. Techniques for using each individual command properly were crucial in getting correct information to readers of the manual. This led to an understanding that enabled the manual to be more informative and useful for readers.

The topic of why even bother with training an older dog when it may die, and that time spent training is lost was one of the biggest reasons why not to train an older dog. There are good reasons to why training an older dog is a promising idea. These reasons were researched, and information was gathered on these topics to provide dog trainers. The information was added to the manual in the forms of different chapters, each specializing in a topic that was found to be of concern during research.

### **Research Analysis**

Methodologies that used a positive reinforcement approach to training was what was looked for in the methodologies to be used in the study. During phase I of the project, it was determined that an inclusive analysis on the diverse types of training. Which begins with the reinforcement of the training, it was determined that positive reinforcement was the best way to go about training an older dog because it produced the best results over time. It also is the more humane way to go about training an animal.

The specific type of analysis done was trending analysis. The forecasting of trends in training programs created a stronger case. There is some risk involved in this type of analysis with a degree of variance that could occur. To have the exact knowledge on what the general stakeholders wanted, which are the people that are doing the training, the project needed to look at past requests and requirements for a good training methodology. Next, the project had to forecast what the general stakeholder would have a need for in the manual created by this project. Organizing the combined research together created a format for what had a greater need of training style and the factors that play a part in the reason for training an older dog.

Besides the positive reinforcement parameter of a methodology that would be eventually used in this project. Flexibility and communication style were factors in how each methodology was chosen for this project. Lastly, was the expertise of each author of the two methodologies. Each author is a veterinarian and have over two decades experience in training dogs. These were the main factors for choosing these two methodologies, there was a small factor which was the reviews and overall opinions of people that have used these methodologies in the past and how they felt about them. Both methods scored high in the reviews. Here are the links to the review for Better Companion: [The Better Companion | Facebook](#) . Here is the link to David Taylor's book 'Old dog, New Tricks' [Old Dog, New Tricks: Understanding and Retraining Older and Rescued Dogs by David Taylor \(goodreads.com\)](#). The use of these reviews was not to get expert opinions on the facts of these methodologies, but to get opinions of common people that are more likely to use a training manual to help them with training. When the methodologies were chosen for the specified reasons. A breakdown of the instructions both verbally and physically were the next step. When it came down to the physical communication part of each methodology it was David Taylor's method that did a better job of describing the way to perform physical communication with a dog. Looking at the verbal communication it was both that gave an excellent description of the instructions. Best variety of commands were Better Companion's method. The way variety was judged was by the usefulness of the commands taught and number of different commands. In David Taylor's method his variety of commands were considerably basic and simplistic. Even though all the commands in both methodologies are beginner level training commands; David Taylor does not provide commands that address behavioral issues or reasons for training a dog. Commands that give reason for training would be 'touch-lid' or loose-leash walking, these commands give a reason for training. All commands in both methods have purpose, but in the Better Companion method they give better examples of reasons for training.

Next part of analysis was the types of tools used in the training process. Tools in this instance are physical objects instead of physical hand signals used in communication. These physical tools come in the form of clickers, collars, or leashes. Both methodologies give the okay to use several types of collars

and leashes. Only Better Companion has the use of a clicker during the first part of the training program. These can be helpful in establishing a secondary means of positive reinforcement by clicking the clicker, the dog then begins to associate the clicking noise as something it is doing positive. The two methodologies used in this study provide the ability to improve the training process and experience for the dog and the trainer. The thorough review of all material pertaining to each methodology has given insight into a recommended way to training an older dog. The proven history of both methodologies being used during a period of two decades each, shows their credibility and success.

### **Knowledge Areas of Focus**

Specified areas of project management that were focused on and to be elaborated on during the project. These knowledge areas were emphasized because of the greatest amount of the influence, they would have on the project. The project needed to meet stakeholder expectations and approval by meeting a quality and detail standard. The three knowledge areas that provided the most relevance to the success of this project is risk management, scope management, and quality management. The scope and quality management plans were selected by the Project Manager for the reason of stakeholder expectations, but also to ensure that the main deliverable had the most information in a compact manual. Quality management was applied to the project to ensure the readability and understandability of the manual for anyone to pick up and execute the training program. The risk management area of focus was selected when the foresight of the project that there were many more risks than originally calculated. Scope management was a focus since the topic of dog training is very extensive and can take many years to accomplish all levels of training. With time constraints, scope management was chosen as a focus in on because of the amount of the dog training programs for older dogs out on the open market.

With the three knowledge areas used for this report, a focus on all aspects of project management were applied. The use of specific tools gave the project the edge to succeed. The three knowledge areas that were focused in on were crucial to the project success.

### **Knowledge Area: Risk Management**

How the process for deciphering what was a risk for this project, it was looked at what could affect the project directly then indirectly. With a thorough risk analysis, it was determined that the risk management plan built from the analysis would need to be a focus due to the many risks pertaining to this project. Initially, not many risks were determined. As the project moved from initiating phase to execution phase that more risks became known. These risks were identified and inputted into the risk management plan. Building a contingency plan for each risk took the risk management plan to being a complex living document.

Risk Management documented procedures for identifying and handling caused project variation. Risk is the possibility of suffering a negative impact to the project in most cases. This could result in a

loss of quality, increase in cost, delay in the schedule, or project failure. The risk management plan included the identification and handling of impacts to the project. One risk that is present today but was not present a couple of years ago is the coronavirus and the possibility of getting COVID and being sick for an extended time. This risk did directly affect the project. Having a plan for in case the project manager in this project got Covid a contingency amount of float that was allotted into the schedule gave the project the flexibility to easily recover from this event.

Another aspect of the risk management for this project was considering all the possible risks involved with using a dog in this project. Realizing that there are many risks involved with a dependence on a dog, a working risk management plan was built to input any new risks that may come up as the project progresses. This was further developed during project execution when certain unforeseen risks occurred and delayed the project. The delay was on the development of the main deliverable for this project. Time was allocated from other tasks and given to the task of development of the main deliverable. This time was spent on catching up to the respective timeline in the schedule.

#### **Knowledge Area: Scope Management**

Scope management for this project consisted of identifying the need and purpose of creating a manual about training an older dog. There was a time constraint on the life of the project due to the two semesters used to work on the project. With this time constraint in consideration, project sponsors and stakeholders made the recommendation to the project manager to limit the scope of the project to keep the project on schedule and on time. The emphasis on the main deliverable for the project is a manual about dog training of older dogs, the manual is a beginner's guide to dog training with no specialty work in the scope of the project or manual. The amount of time needed to execute the training programs to be analyzed was enough time to conduct beginner level training with the example dog and be able to collect data on progress with the dog that shows the development of skill the dog acquires over time. The data collected would be used to show the progress of training an older dog with the two methodologies.

Analysis of the data from the training of the project was used to show the success rate with the dog. During the analysis certain tasks of the project were concluded that for the project to meet its goals and deliverables, the project needed to clarify in detail the two methodologies used in this study. The project needed to show the relevancy of the two methodologies chosen for the study of dog training. With information from Todd, Z. (2020) that shows the higher success rate of training an older dog comes from positive reinforcement techniques. Todd, Z., (2020) was a source used to back the techniques used by the two authors of the methodologies used in this study. This will provide the readers with a reason to use the methods in the main deliverable of this project. A primary method of research involving the reviews of persons that have used the two methods to train their older dog. This was limited to a few reviews to stay on schedule with project phase I.



Use of the methodologies for this study and to record the daily information into a spreadsheet. The data from the daily training sessions were to be analyzed and put into charts or graphs for ease of understanding by readers of the manual. Show the differences or similarities between the two methodologies. By using the two techniques in various locations or in different scenarios that may affect the outcome of the training success was to be recorded and analyzed. This will help create a rate of success between the two methodologies and a better statistical showing of success rate of the dog. Primary goal of this study is to understand the outcomes of using different methodologies and in various locations to assess dog's performance progression.

### **Knowledge Area: Quality Management**

The quality of the deliverables for this study was crucial for the project to be a success. The manual produced needed to be understandable by anyone but also minimal in size. The focus of detailed information without going on about non-essential information on the topic that was written about needed to keep the attention of the reader but also give them the detailed information for anyone to be able to execute the training with little to no other guidance.

Quality for the main deliverable of this project comes from the ability to explain the instructions of execution process of each individual command. Simplistic approach had to be used to ensure understandability for anyone that may read the manual but at the same time giving enough detail so anyone reading the manual could see the benefit of using that training command. Keeping the project within the boundaries without going into details of intermediate or advanced level training.

For the overall project, the quality needed to be accurate and precise and of the highest standards for a broad audience for the manuals delivery to meet the expectations of the stakeholders. It was decided that the quality came from the precise and accurate details of the training commands but also, some of the factors of why bother with training an older dog. Quality within the project was a factor in the management of the project. This was done through keeping a close watch on the schedule and analyzing tasks on the schedule and on the Gantt chart to see any potential problems. This was done according to the foreseen problems in the risk analysis, but problems did arise during the execution of the project which caused a delay.

When it came to writing the manual and the amount of time spent doing this project, the resource allocation during the whole duration of the project was to not over-extend resources at any time. This was my strategy for the production of a quality product. By slowly moving forward with the writing each day during the semester I achieved a more thoughtful deliverable that could be handed off and have anyone be able to use the manual to execute a training program.

### **Schedule Management**

During the initial phase of the project the scope of the project was still being defined. This led to a schedule that did not have all the tasks that it needed to have during the execution. The lack of a more defined scope statement would have increased the likelihood that the schedule would have had the needed tasks already inputted into it, instead of entering the execution phase of the project and still adding and changing tasks to the schedule more than it should have been.

Down scoping the project earlier on would have relieved the project manager of wasted time. Re-scoping the project to better fit the time available for the project so that the project could be completed within the time limit. This would lead to a more completed schedule at execution. After changes were made to the schedule the project ran smoother over the course of the project execution, monitor, and control phases.

During the construction of the schedule a critical path was built that would allow the project to accomplish the key deliverables. The establishment of this path gave the project manager a tool in which to follow to ensure that the project met expectations. The management of resources was not a complicated process for this project since most of the work was done by the project manager. Under the monitor and control phase of this project the fast-tracking technique was used to get the project back on schedule after it had fallen behind for six weeks. During the project, crashing a task was not needed. A project network analysis was done to see which tasks were directly affected by the setback. During the analysis it was found that an adjustment in lag times was needed. The lessons learned from this project has made the project manager aware of the need to build the project with a stronger foundation. The analysis of the project should have been greater and more in depth. Getting more feedback from stakeholders about defining the project with the amount of time for the project.

### **Cost Management**

Cost management was not an over developed document for this project due to the small number of items that needed money to be spent on. This project was privately funded. The project manager used his expert judgement to utilize three-point estimating to figure the needed budget for the project. Going with a most likely approach to the budget planning, it was later determined that a pessimistic approach to the budget would have suited the project better in the planning phase. Even with the small number of expenses on the project, the project still managed to go over budget by twenty-seven dollars. Doing another cost forecast in the initiation phase of the project may have saved time correcting the cost difference. Overall, the cost management was not a main focus area, but it could have been done better in the forecasting of the total costs for the project.

## Manual Development

Introduction of the methodologies to be used in the manual. The next few following chapters are about the factors that may be a deciding factor for training an older dog such as dog psychology. Explaining to the reader the things that may affect training and how to work through any problem areas. The manual also gives instructions on the basic commands needed to achieve a level of discipline and obedience from the dog. The use of the information and data gathered during the project would be put into the manual in the form of graphs and charts.

A condensed form of the procedures for each individual command will be put into the manual to explain the purpose, use, and the execution of the command being read. In the manual there will be charts and graphs showing the results of the testing of each command and methodology. The breakdown of these charts will give the reader an easier understanding of what they may expect with their own use of the manual. The procedures for each individual command will come with illustrations showing the proper way to execute the command. A visual aid showing the dog performing the command and, in most cases, the hand signal associated with the verbal command. Although, BetCo does not use hand signals with its verbal commands, David Taylor's methods do use hand signals. The addition of hand signals is important for several reasons. When dealing with an older dog they may have hearing difficulties. The AKC also suggests using hand signals at an age when the dog can hear well so they can associate the verbal command with the correct hand signal. This will build a two-way communication path between the dog and the trainer by giving both the dog and trainer a way to communicate in later years when hearing may become an issue. The use of the quality management plan during the writing of the manual was to ensure that the manual met the lofty standards of a published document. That the manual was going to deliver the key points within the scope statement. These were all factors in the development of the manual and how it was written. Using the information gathered from the two training methods; the information gave factual proof of a legitimate training guide for beginner dog trainers. The last source of information and data were the spreadsheet that was created for the purpose of recording data during the study of this project. The data was then used to create charts and graphs that would be easy to decipher into the manual. These charts and graphs show the progression and the amount of each methodology used during this study. This gives the reader a visual aid in deciphering what their own results may be. The end of the manual are the graphs and charts that will be there to show the results and data from the training of the example dog. The charts have been simplified to be easier to read and understand. Lastly, there will be references to the material used in the manual and where to go to find the documents for reference. The study of training programs for older dogs gives a simpler way for dog trainers to start the beginner stage of training an older dog.

## **Conclusions**

This project delivered the intended deliverables but with cost overruns and unforeseen risks during the project's lifecycle, this project was not a complete success. Having experience of one specific reason for delay in the project. It would not have been an issue a couple of years ago, but the current pandemic had a direct effect on the project. The project did meet its deadline and was successful in delivering the deliverables that was clarified in the scope of the project.

The analysis of the two methodologies used in this study gave insight in the many ways a dog could be trained. The combination of the two methodologies created a Zen like affect to dog training. Combining the good methods and ideas into one gave the project a fresh look on how a dog can be trained. Results of the training during the project was successful and met the level intended to be achieved. This project does not provide clarity on how successful each individual will be that uses the manual. It does explain how positive type of reinforcement with dogs has better results than negative types of reinforcement.

Utilization of all aspects of project management were used in the entirety of the project. The project management tools were successful used to accomplish and deliver the deliverables on time. With an emphasis on risk management, scope management, and quality management the project produced exactly what was in the scope statement for the project and is how everything came together. With scope management being one of the most important for this project, since dog training can be in depth and complex at times. A fleshed-out scope statement was needed to keep the project narrow enough to be accomplishable in the amount of time of the two semesters and to keep the project on a set track. Without the manual becoming inflated with subjects that were not in the scope statement.

Cost management could have been one of the primary foci because of the budget issue. Cost overruns that occurred during project execution may have been avoided. Since this project was privately funded through its entirety it was on a budget cap. Researching the cost of dog training at the BetCo facility for the training classes would be the primary cost of the project with dog treats being another high-cost item. It was underestimated the amount of dog treats that would be needed for the training. The expense of dog treats was double the amount originally budgeted.

Additionally, the start of the project needed to have a greater amount of analytical data created from different source materials, so more tasks could have been thought of then created and inputted into the schedule during the initiating phase of the project rather than adding more tasks during the execution and control phase of the project. This would have made the project progress smoother and would have made less additional work during the execution and control phase which was caused by re-scoping the project. This did not result in the need for additional time for completion of tasks being performed during execution and control phases. Utilizing time management was a key part of getting back on schedule

when the project fell behind during the execution and control phase. With increased focus on scope and schedule management, the project was able to get back on schedule and with no additional costs. Careful consideration was given to applying additional resources to tasks during the period where the project was behind schedule. Additional resources were allocated to the tasks that were behind on the schedule which led to the project correcting schedule variances for the current tasks at that point during execution. The precise time management of the project manager during the time the project was behind schedule was due to resource allocation to get the project back on schedule. The execution of these tasks by the project manager made the use of the time management plan.

The manual can be executed to fulfill the needs of dog owners that need information on how to train their older dogs. The manual did stay within the parameters of the scope statement even with the time constraints. With additional time, additional methodologies could have been analyzed in order to better enhance training development of the manual. Lastly, the manual does provide an overview of how different methodologies and locations can affect dog training outcomes and how there is not a strict progression path to training success. This is because each individual dog will progress at their own pace for a variety of reasons.

The ending of this project has created a greater understanding of the complexity of project management and why every tool has a use during all phases of a project lifecycle. This project has brought all the pieces together to create a complete understanding of all the moving parts of project management and how to use them most effectively. With the closing of this project, a greater clarity of project management concepts has been accomplished.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix A

### **Scope Statement**

This project is about training techniques that are used to train older dogs. By gathering data that backs up the training of an older dog through a set of status reports of the data collected each week. The training illustrated within the manual developed from the research data from this project will show two techniques to train an older dog. This project will have a direct approach to the information and data collected in the creation of the manual. The objectives within the project emphasis' a type of training that will create an obedient well-trained dog that can walk on a leash and listen to basic commands. The second objective of this project is to develop a manual based off the training that was used to train the dog of this project that will compare the type of training used to train the dog versus other types of training for older dogs. The data from each training session will be part of the development of the manual so other dog owners that would like their dog to become more obedient with an emphasis on the ability to walk on a leash and to listen to commands. Among the direct data created from the training sessions, the use of data and information from other sources will be used in the comparison with the type of training used on the example dog to build a manual that shows the comparison and proof of the variations of types of training, and which one is recommended.



Appendix B

A Study of Training Programs for Older Dogs

By

Joe Fisher

University of Alaska Anchorage

Anchorage, Alaska

May 2022

**List of Exhibits**

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## **Abstract**

This is a manual of techniques that can be used in training an older dog for desired results. With research done by the project manager of this project there is data of progression with results of weekly training sessions plus at-home training and exercises. There is also a comparison between the chosen training methodology and another type of methodology that is introduced in the manual. The comparison methodologies are between Better Companion and David Taylor's methodologies. These two methodologies have similar principles and techniques. But differ in other ways such as beginning training. This manual is about how to effectively train and teach an older dog basic commands and an ability to walk on a leash. The reason for training an older dog is to break them of unpleasant habits, dominance, or behaviors that are not desired.

This is a tool designed to give a novice dog trainer to a tool to begin the training process to accomplish goals with their dog. With the results varying, with different circumstances, this may not be the ideal training program for all dog trainers. It will show variances between two methodologies used in this study. By using each methodology on different days, places, and type of training done.

## **Chapter 1: Intelligence and temperament**

The intelligence of a dog can determine the extent of training needed to complete the goals of the training program for the dog. With certain dog breeds being more intelligent than others, some breeds may take longer to train. With the varying level of intelligence of dog breeds, there cannot be a set time for a specific dog without doing extra training sessions with the dog to meet a deadline. Intelligence of the dog in training can translate into how quickly each command is ingrained into the dog which can keep you on track to meet the rough time period of the training program in use.

Temperament of the dog has a secondary effect on the success of the training. The temperament of the dog in training may affect the speed of the training and affect the person doing the training by being stubborn or aggressive. Aggressive behavior can impede the process of training, while stubbornness can completely cause the dog to not learn the commands or the desired results from a certain action. These behaviors can slow the process of training and make it difficult to accomplish. One reason for training an older dog may be to break them of these behavior traits and instead have a more friendly obedient dog that can be around people and other animals.

Knowing the intelligence and temperament of the dog you are about to start training influences the amount and duration of the training. With many other dog traits and behaviors having the potential to affect the outcome of training, it is important to notice the type of personality your dog has before starting a training program. We could go into more depth regarding dog psychology, but that is out of scope for this manual.

## **Chapter 2: Positivity**

Positivity is key when training a dog. Dogs can notice the emotional state of the trainer. The way you speak to the way you move your body will affect the dog directly. How the dog trainer enforces the dog's behavior is done through positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is a way you can interact with the dog. Positive reinforcement can be by giving the dog rewards when they perform the desired action and not punishing the dog when it does not perform the action requested. It can be the tone of voice used with the dog and/or the use of toys or a game as a reward. Many methodologies use positive reinforcement as a basis for the training program. In this manual the used methodology and the comparison methodology both use positive reinforcement. The use of positive reinforcement has been proven by many other dog trainers and veterinarians as the best way to go about training a dog for the best results. Punishment or negative reinforcement should never be used when training a dog.

A form of positive reinforcement is the use of a clicker when the dog performs correctly. In a later chapter we will demonstrate how a clicker could be used as a helpful tool when training. Keeping a cheerful outlook on the training program used to train your dog will help the training to stick and the dog to maintain discipline. Anything rewarding for the dog is positive reinforcement. So, if the dog is food motivated then dog treats would be a good positive reinforcement if the dog likes playing fetch over food motivation, then throwing a ball for the dog is a positive reinforcement tool.

Always, remember to use positive reinforcement and have a positive attitude when training a dog will have greater benefits and rewards than negative reinforcement would have regardless of how frustrating the training may be. Both methodologies used in this study provide an in-depth guide on the different forms of positive reinforcement and how to use them.

### **Chapter 3: Training Devices**

There are several types of training devices that can be used to aid in the process of training. These devices serve different purposes and can help accomplish training goals. Training devices can be used in positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, or secondary reinforcement. Training devices in a positive reinforcement role could be a dog treat or dog cookie used to reward the dog for doing something good. Training devices in a negative reinforcement role could be a water bottle used to spray the dog when they do something bad. A secondary reinforcement training device could be a clicker that produces a sound that tells the dog they are doing something correct and to continue doing what they are doing.

Each type of reinforcement serves a different purpose. I personally do not believe in negative reinforcement. The training methodology used by Better Companions and the comparison methodology by David Taylor both do not use negative reinforcement citing research has proven that negative reinforcement has negative effects on the dog in ways not seen immediately. So, within this manual we will not discuss negative reinforcement or its use.

Positive reinforcement is the most customary practice because it yields the best results. When performing positive reinforcement with your dog through the use of dog treats or cookies, breaking up the cookie into smaller chunks is doable so your dog does not gain unnecessary weight from too many cookies. The reason for most dog training programs using positive reinforcement is because through scientific research it has been proven that dogs respond better to positive reinforcement rather than negative reinforcement.

The use of training devices has been used for centuries; many devices vary in the purpose of their use. The most common device is a collar, these serve as a control mechanism which the dog handler can control the dog more easily. There are a variety of collars and even harnesses. Harnesses are good for control but also for when the dog is pulling something. These devices spread out the weight of the load on the body of the dog rather on the throat and trachea of the dog. Another control device is the gentle leader which is a harness that goes around the dog's muzzle and attaches to the collar the dog is wearing, its purpose is better control over the dog during activities such

as walking. The gentle leader is a more humane way of getting better control over your dog rather than some of the other devices out on the market that cause the dog pain or discomfort. In my years of owning dog's, I have found a standard collar or harness to work but recently was introduced to the gentle leader by the dog trainer at Better Companion. It has increased control over my 105-pound German Shepherd (Rogan).

Remember, when training that the training device be used in a positive way. This will prevent any type of fear or aggression towards the device(s). During the training phase of this project, I used a clicker device in the beginning but later stopped using it after my dog had learned the commands both verbally and physically. The effect of the device was to encourage the dog in continuing with the motion that they started with until the end. Primary reason I stopped using a clicker was that my German Shepherd is more praise motivated. So, if I praised him for what he was doing he would continue.

## Chapter 4: Problems

There are many reasons why your dog has a problem(s). Most of these problems are anxiety based. Some of these problems can be easily fixed, yet some can be serious problems and take a long time to fix. One primary reason to train your dog is to fix a problem, even a minor problem. So, in the later chapters I will go over specific ways that may fix certain problems. Figuring out what problems your dog may have been the beginning of the journey to fixing them and helping your dog in becoming a canine good citizen if this is your goal with your dog. The canine good citizen program and certificate was established in 1989 by the American Kennel Club. This program was started to help dog owners with dog handling and for the dog to be well trained and be well-mannered. If you would like more information on this program you can contact the American Kennel Club at [Canine Good Citizen \(CGC\) – American Kennel Club \(akc.org\)](http://www.akc.org/canine-good-citizen) .

When helping your dog fix a problem they have, the key is to not use negative reinforcement with the training. Instead, remain on the positive reinforcement path that will encourage your dog to perform better. Dogs love pleasing their people. Part of the process of fixing a problem that your dog may have, is to educate the dog handler and learning how to communicate to the dog what you want them to do and how. In many different training programs, I have read and/or used have been about educating the dog handler in the ways they train their dog. Most of these programs were for all ages of dogs, so, when I was thinking I found a shortage of programs for older dogs or rescued dogs. These two categories of dogs usually have problems if they have not been professionally trained. With a focus on older dogs, remember that they may need additional time when performing commands.



## Chapter 5: The First Steps Begin

Basic commands are the beginning to a more obedient dog. The ability to get your dog's attention and have them focus on you. An effective way to do this is by letting part of a dog treat and put it in your hand and raise your hand to your face so the dog knows you want its attention.

### 1. Focus



Exhibit 1 (Dreamtime, 2022)

Once you have the dog's attention you can start with the command "sit." Once the dog performs the command immediately give the dog the treat and you may also praise the dog with words or physically by petting the dog. Do this a few times and each time the dog performs the sit action give the dog a treat immediately afterwards.

### 2. Sit

The next command we will analysis and then work on is the command "lie down." For the first couple weeks this command should be performed from the sitting position.

Once the dog has this down, you may begin training the dog to perform this action from the standing position.

3. Lie Down (from sitting position)
4. Lie Down (from standing position)



Exhibit 2 (Dreamtime, 2022)

From the sitting or lying position the next command to work on is “stay.” This command is to keep the dog in the same place for any amount of time. To release the dog the second command “come” can be used. This command is to have the dog break the stay position and come straight to you.

1. Stay (from sitting position)
2. Stay (from standing position)
3. Stay (from lying down position)

The beginning of training with the command “stay” the duration should be short, just a couple seconds. After a while you may lengthen the duration of the “stay” command in keeping the dog in the same place. Keeping a treat in your hand to reward the dog for doing the command correctly upon release. The command is performed correctly when the dog is put into a “stay” position and stays in the position until the

release command is given. More advanced stages of this command are when you put the dog into stays and you walk out of sight of the dog. This may be difficult at first because your dog wants to keep its eyes on you, so by not allowing them to see you it may be stressful.

From the lying position you can train your dog to roll over. It is helpful for the dog if you use your hand to slowly trace a circle in the direction you want your dog to roll over. Even if the dog does not complete to full 360 motion of rolling over completely around you still want to reward the dog for the effect they put into the action.

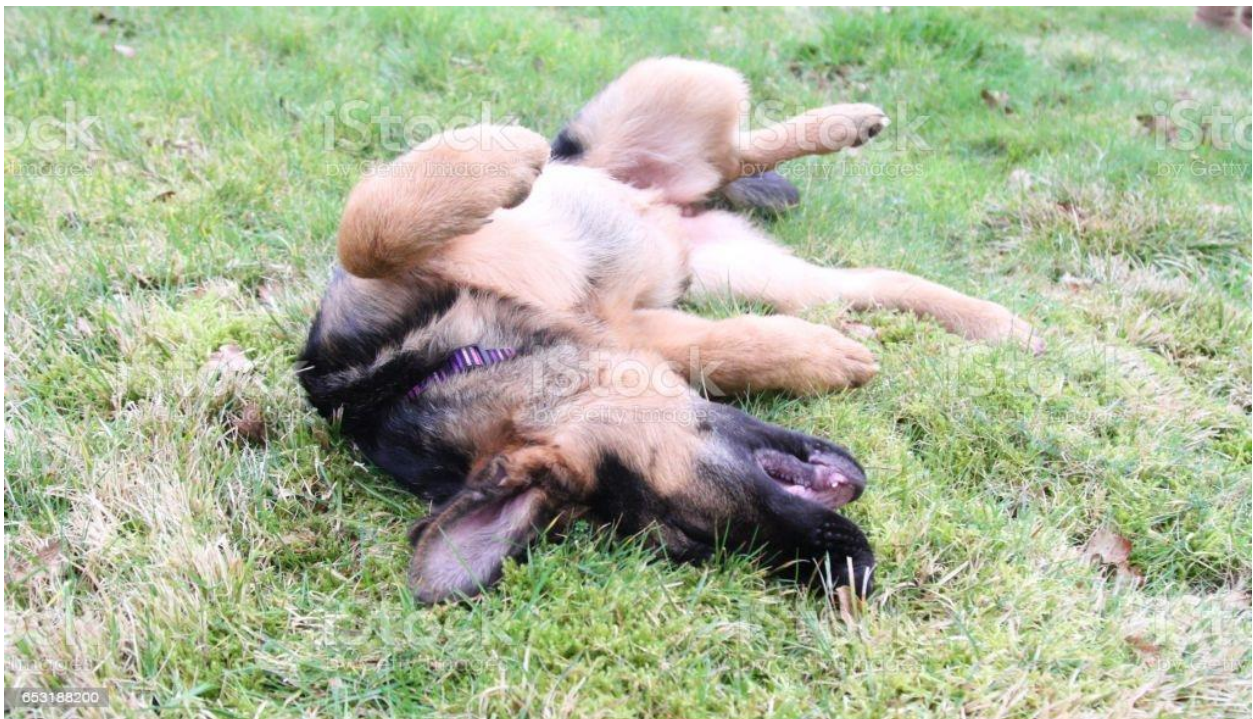


Exhibit 3 (Dreamtime, 2022)

- Roll over

This is a good command for building trust with your dog which strengthens your bond. Building a strong bond with your dog is essential for it to trust you and with that trust comes the willingness to obey. Progression in this program is dependent on the dog trusting you. As the trainer and/or owner of the dog you do not need to show dominance over the dog. Dominance over a dog has been proven to be false. With newer studies done on human and dog interactions and bonds a human does not need

to be dominant over the dog. You may still show your authority in ways without being dominant.

- Come

Come can be used from the sitting or standing positions and is a good command to have trained to maintain control over your dog. This is a first step towards the recall command.

- Focus

A command given if you want your dog's attention for a longer period and get keep the dog from getting distracted.

- Go-to Spot

A good command for training your dog to go somewhere specific and stay.

- Hand-Touch

This command is for the dog to touch your hand on command as a way of keeping the dog's attention on you.

- Look

A command for getting the dogs attention by looking up at you and to wait for further instructions.

- Play dead

A fun trick for your dog to learn is playing dead. The "play dead" trick can be a fun thing for you and your dog to learn to do. This is not an essential command and thus, will not be fully discussed in this manual.

- Recall

This command is used when the dog is not focused on the trainer and to get the dog to come back to the handler. Can be used while playing or fetching something and you want the dog to come back.

- Touch-lid

A command for after they have Go-to Spot learned they can begin learning to touch a specific object. This command is good for training your dog to retrieve something, whether it is a bird or a stick.

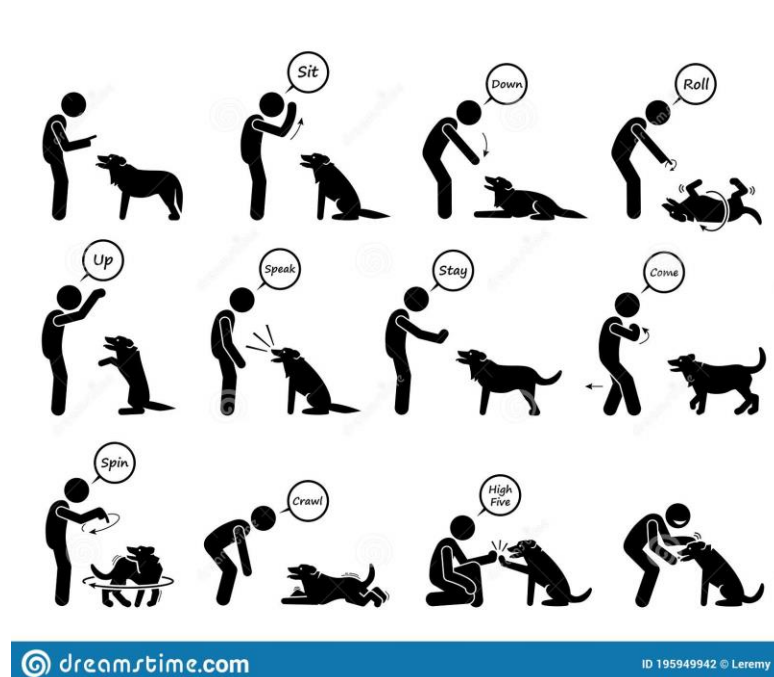
- Zen-muzzle

This is a handling and trust building exercise. Gently grab the dog's nose and guide it towards you so the dog is looking at you. This is the precursor to the command 'look.' Saying the command 'look' as you guide the dogs head towards you may help when working on the command 'look' without the Zen-muzzle.

## Chapter 6: Communication

Within a couple of weeks, you should have developed a communication style that works best for you and your dog. So that your dog can easily understand what you want them to do. Both Better Companion and David Taylor do not go in depth on the topic of communication. They do however say that you do need to establish a good line of communication between yourself and the dog in training. And they both talk about the optional use of hand signals to communicate with your dog. During my own experiences working on this study, I found the use of hand signals with my German Shepherd to be extremely useful and he responds well to them. Most of the time I do not have to even speak the command. Once I get the dogs attention, I can perform a hand signal and he will automatically conduct the command given to him. Once this level has been achieved you may work on not giving a treat every time the dog performs a command as an option.

Examples of hand signals:



Hand signals are used in multiple different dog training programs throughout America, especially ones for older dogs. Hand signals allow you to communicate with your dog as it gets older and has a challenging time hearing or may eventually become deaf. This way you still have a way to communicate with your older dog and not have to worry they will not understand you.

During the training sessions I found it immensely helpful to use hand signals and they helped my dog to better understand what I wanted him to do. A lot of times I do not have to speak a command because I quickly use a hand signal and immediately get a response from my dog in the form of the action requested by the visual signal, I just gave him. In an earlier chapter we talked about reinforcement types. The clicker which is used as a communication device that signals something positive, this type of communication can encourage your dog as they perform a task. In the beginning of my Better Companion training with my dog we used a clicker to train the dog when they did something good. The clicker could be used during the task performance or at the completion of the task, or even during and after the task. With other types of devices that can be used to communicate to your dog. Please remember to do so in a positive manner with your dog to get the best results.

## Chapter 7: Habits

Habits can be why you are spending the time to train your older dog is to break them of unpleasant habits. Some habits are destructive, some are anxiety based, while other are just disgusting. Take for instance my German Shepherd that I have been training. He has a disgusting habit of eating his own feces. I have talked to my veterinarian about this problem and was wondering if it was because of a medical issue or a lack of food. But I have seen him do it right after he eats a meal. It is just a nasty habit said my veterinarian. So, I have set off on a journey to break my German Shepherd of this nasty habit in hopes he will not continue. After phase one of training so far, I have been unsuccessful in breaking him of such a nasty habit.

An example of a good habit that my German Shepherd has formed is when it is time to eat, he automatically sits and waits for me to release him to eat. This is wonderful so I do not have a dog crowding me while trying to prepare his food. Another good habit that my German Shepherd has is when we get ready to go through a door, he will back up from the door and let me go through first. This one took some work and time.

My female German Shepherd has the habit of licking her feet all the time. This is based on anxiety and is self-soothing. There are many different habits that dogs may have, and they are caused by varied reasons. Breaking unpleasant habits will take patience and time and continual working with the dog to remove the bad habit from their routine. Since dogs are routine focused right under humans it will take work to ride the dog of habits that are undesirable. Another reason for training an older dog could be to get rid of habits that are annoying or unwanted. Back to the case of my female German Shepherd and her constant habit of licking her own feet, I had to put her on medication which helped a lot. I am still collaborating with the veterinarian and with the dog trainer and using training to help rid her of this habit. The reason she has so much anxiety is she came with a lot of anxiety when I rescued her from an abusive household. Positive reinforcement has helped her establish a new personality when it was obvious that the previous owners used negative reinforcement with her. She is still a work in-progress at



this point but with patience and consistency I will have her on the right track and able to live a less anxious life with less habits.

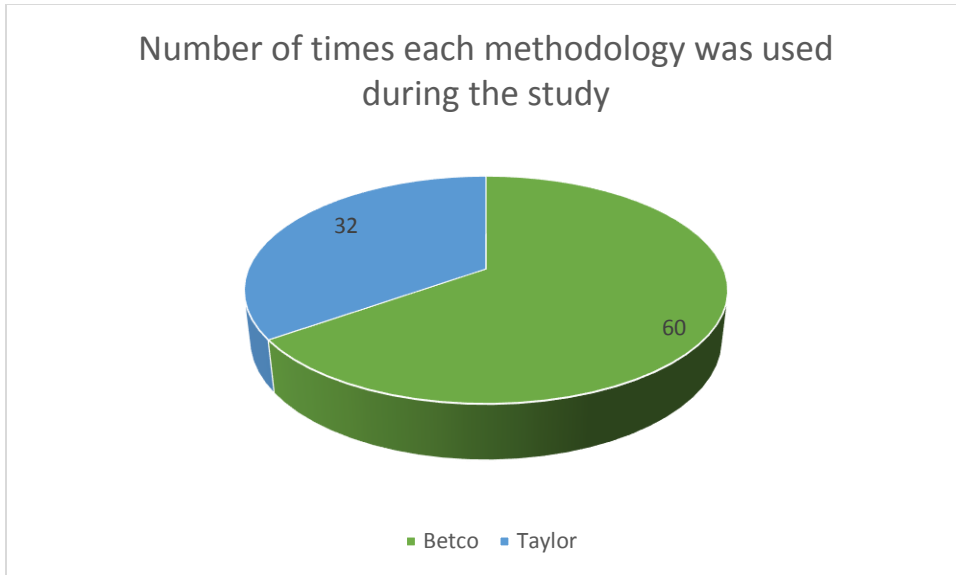
## Chapter 8: Progression

This chapter focuses on the data and comparison of training methodologies and how effective the training sessions were with Rogan my male German Shepherd. Concentrating on the training methodologies from Better Companion versus David Taylor's methods. Earlier in this manual it was mentioned that both methodologies were in fact similar in style. The style is that of positive reinforcement and your interaction with the dog. One of the differences between the two methodologies are the use of "clickers" as a training device to help train the dog. Better Companion's method has the use of a "clicker" as a positive reinforcement tool to help train the dog that it is doing something correct. David Taylor's method does not actively have the use of any training devices in the program, but he does suggest the use of training devices if the dog handler sees fit to use one.

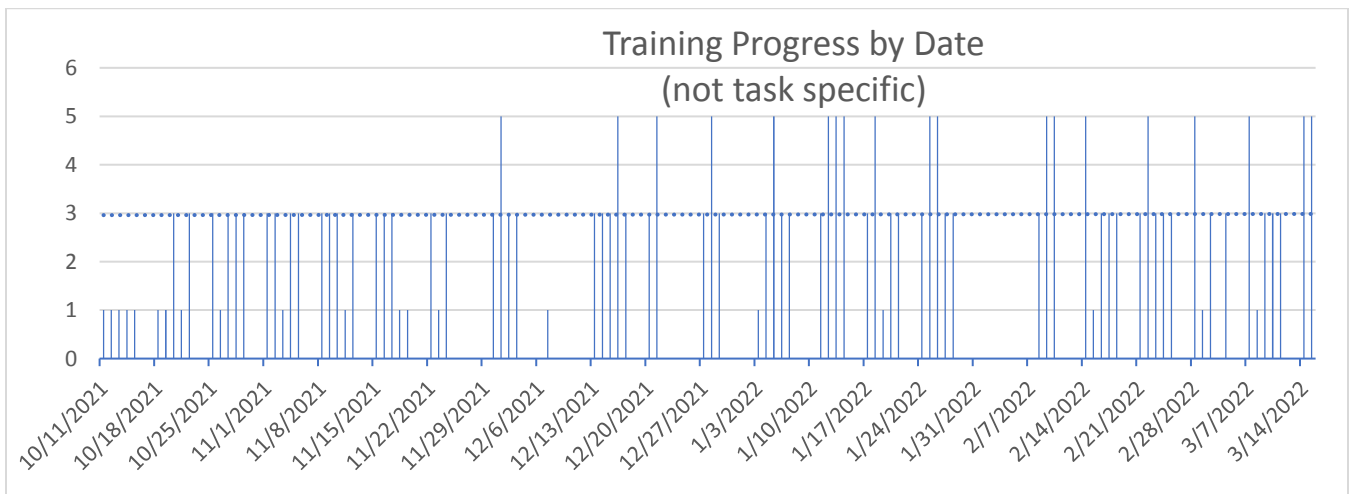
I cannot say with certainty that the clicker had any positive impact on the training. Rogan was more than eager to do what I asked him to do without the use of the clicker. Training sessions at home lasted 10 minutes, and later I started to do two training sessions some days where both training sessions did not exceed 10 minutes. The reason for this is going by the Better Companion's dog psychology that a dog's attention span is limited to around 5 to 10 minutes. The trainer I have worked with is the owner of Better Companions and is a veterinarian with 30 years of dog training experience.

In the spreadsheet with the data gathered during this project, I broke the data down into topics that would be considered by someone training a dog. The first column being the 'date of training.' Second column is the 'Amount of Time Spent Training.' This is important to show the amount of time I spent training my dog. During the project I did not train during weekends or holidays. If I felt that Rogan need extra training, I would do two ten-minute sessions in one day. But this was a rare occasion for us to have to do. The third column was the 'Commands Taught,' this was put in to give readers the heads up of what commands were taught and how frequently. The 'Place of Training' was important to show that training in unknown places to the dog that the training was not performed optimally. The 'Methodology Used' column shows the method used for that training session. The next column is 'Progression,' this is essential

information to track the training outcomes of each day and to show any improvements over time. Last column is 'Training Progression' this column shows the progression in a numerical format used for tracking.



This chart shows the performance of during the project.



There was variation in the performance of the dog during the progression cycle. When training a dog that may or may not want to train on a particular day can be challenging

and unrewarding. Most of the time when training was done at a park it was not performed as well as at home or the training facility. This was expected but was recorded for the purpose to show the different circumstances had on the training outcome for a particular day.

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