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ISM 1

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Which Training Methods Will Provide The Best Outcomes?

Assessment 9- Interview

Name of professional: Alex Roark

Title: Operations Manager

Company: Off-Leash K9 Training

Work Cited: Roark, Alex, and Maggie Cammack. "E-Collar and Positive Reinforcement Training." 16 Oct. 2018

Assessment:

Former Trainer and current operations manager at Off-Leash K9 Training Alex Roark gave an interesting perspective about how training has evolved since she began training dogs as a child. Using a mixture of her own personal experience and knowledge from research Roark taught me about how she uses E-Collar training on her dogs in order to ensure the best, long-lasting results. It was interesting to be able to hear from someone with such a wealth of knowledge in training, and how she continues to use her skills to run the company's operations.

Dog training techniques are always changing as more research is conducted regarding that success that a dog has when learning basic commands. A technique that is quite popular is clicker training. A clicker is used to enforce positive behaviors. Every time the dog completes the command the clicker is clicked and a treat is given. I do not see long-term results with this

method of training, because it is food motivated the dog and they learn to only do things because they are going to get a treat, not because it is the correct behavior to do. If more research should be done on clicker training, conducting an experiment comparing dogs are taught behaviors with the click and food rewards verse a dog who is given a vocal cue (such as “yes” or “good”) and no food reward and compare the dogs' ability to process the commands without reward or cue. This will determine which method is best a teaching the dog commands for long-term results. Vocal cue training seems like better methods of training because the animal is not expecting a food reward for completing a behavior that they are supposed to. As explained by Roark, you should not have to carry a treat bag around everywhere you go in order to get your dogs attention. In the future, I want to train dogs using positive vocal cues rather than treats to avoid the reliance on food. This is something that is important especially in the area of service dog training because the dog should be helping their owner and should not expect rewards in return for doing behaviors that impact the owners' ability to live independently

A new method of training that is valuable in teaching dogs without food rewards in E-collar training. An E-collar is a type of stimulation collar that applies slight pressure on the dog similar to a tug on a leash. This is something that should be used more because not only does it get the dogs attention, it does not hurt the dog like choke collars and electric collars would, but it should be done predominantly on adult dogs because puppies need time to learn commands before they are negatively reinforced. Keeping the dog safe and happy is the main focus so using only the most effective/gentle training techniques is important. Alex is a firm believer in only using the E-collar in certain situations, because it is showing the dog that they are misbehaving, and that positive reinforcement should still be used in order to teach the dog commands.

Although this E-collar seem to be a good training tool, experimentation should be done on the physical and mental benefits of using E-collar so that more dog owners are aware of other training methods available.

In service dog training the puppy is taught an abundance of commands in a short amount of time. A puppy usually become a fully certified service dog by the time they are a year old, so being able to teach commands effectively is one of the most important aspects to training, other than the dog's overall demeanor and behavior. When these dogs are trained, it would be best to include a mixture of different methods, such as vocal cues for both positive and negative behavior. Using the E-collar would most likely not be a productive teaching method for a puppy training to become a service dog because the can become frightened by the physical negative reaction when they do something. This method would most like work better as teaching an adult dog who struggles with more basic commands. The overall goal would be to use this information to aid me in my training as well as use it as a catalyzed to conduct more research on new training methods and their overall impact- both physical and mental-on the dog.