The Behavioral Applications Regarding Canines (BARC) program was designed to provide an opportunity for psychology students with an interest in behavior analysis to apply the behavioral principles learned in the classroom while at the same time giving back to the Eau Claire community. The program began in 2001 and ran through 2005, and due to student interest/demand was re-established in the summer of 2007 under the supervision of Dan Holt (Psychology). BARC currently includes eight behavioral students (trainers) who typically serve a total of three to four dogs. The student trainers spend between 10 and 20 hours per week training canines, reading relevant literature, conducting research and presenting information to the BARC team.

**Program Overview**

The initial step in selecting a dog to train is to get a recommendation from an Eau Claire County Humane Association staff member. Once a dog is identified, a skills assessment is conducted. The goal of the assessment is to identify present skill level as well as any behavior deficits and excesses. Following assessment, the BARC trainers tailor training programs to address the problematic behaviors. Each training program has explicit goals, specific steps to completing the goals, information on data collection, and specific notes about the particular dog (e.g., excitability around other dogs, responds well to social praise).

Shaping is a commonly used procedure in training new skills. Shaping consists of reinforcing desirable behaviors (with treats and praise) that are acceptable approximations to the target skill, while extinguishing all other behaviors. Data are collected during each training session as to whether specific trials are completed correctly, if a prompt was required, or if an error occurred. Each trainer presents their dog’s training data at a weekly meeting to determine treatment direction.

Trainers also have an opportunity to conduct directed or independent research. Research is currently being conducted on prompt-to-probe ratio procedures and the effects of established attending on rate of skill acquisition.

**Example Program Outline**

Sitting on command is a commonly taught skill. Here is an example of a sit program and the data collection tool:

The program specifies the steps needed to teach the skill to this particular dog. Although most procedures are very similar, some dogs have more or fewer skills than others, and therefore require different levels of prompting for skill acquisition.

The data collection method used is referred to as a C-P-E sheet and is used to record whether each trial is "correct", "prompted", or an "error". Here is an example of prompting the dog to demonstrate the skill several times before the skill starts to emerge independently.

**Dogs in Happy Homes**

**Tango**  
Breed: Staffordshire Terrier Mix  
Sex: Male  
Presenting problems: Energetic, Poor Attending  
Programs: Responds to Name, Sit, Walking  
Status: Adopted

**Buck**  
Breed: Shepherd Mix  
Sex: Male  
Presenting problems: Mouthy Treat Taking, Poor Leash Walking  
Programs: Take Treat, Nicey, Appropriate Leash Walking  
Status: Adopted

**Jewel**  
Breed: Lab Mix  
Sex: Female  
Presenting problems: Poor Leash Walking, Kennel Jumping  
Programs: Appropriate Leash Walking, Jump on Command  
Status: Adopted

**Buddy**  
Breed: Beagle  
Sex: Male  
Presenting problems: Poor Leash Walking, Kennel Barking  
Programs: Appropriate Leash Walking, Shake, Play Dead  
Status: Adopted

Special thanks go to ECCHA Director Lauren Evans, and the rest of the ECCHA team, the UWEC ORSP, and Psychology Department Chair, Dr. Lori Bica for their continued support and assistance with this project.
Sit Program

**Behavior:** Roger will sit in the presence of the SD within 3 seconds.

**Goal of Behavior:**
1. Improve Roger's skill level.
2. Improve Roger's level of compliance.
3. Establish versatile "building block" behavior under stimulus control.

**Final Approximation:** When Roger is told to sit he will sit within 3 seconds in the presence of several people.

**Approximations Planned:**
1. Roger will sit when prompted.
   *Prompt is a raised fist held toward the dog while the trainer steps toward the dog and gives the SD ("sit").*
2. Roger will independently sit within 3 seconds of SD.
3. Roger will sit independently for 5 people within 3 seconds of SD.

**Data Recording & Measurement:**
E: If Roger does not sit within 3 seconds of SD delivery and/or prompt.
C: Roger sits when SD is delivered without prompt.
P: Roger sits within 3 seconds when trainer prompts.

Plan Specific Instructions: Reinforce with hot dogs, praise, and excitement. If Roger errors prompt him to sit and delay verbal SD until he is about to sit. Animal Specific Comments: Roger is a large dog. He is generally compliant, but can get excited in the presence of other dogs.

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**Reviews:**

After completing a baseline assessment on a potential dog, the team will use a specific, goal-driven treatment plan to determine how to teach a skill if there is a deficit. Each program has goals, specific steps to completing the goals, information on data collection, and specific notes about the particular dog (e.g. excitability around other dogs, responds well to social praise, etc.) Here we will include a written program, data sheets and example data for either a real or fictional dog. Maybe we could even provide a photo if we use a real dog, but obviously it would be an incredibly attractive dog (e.g. Roger, Tango, Renata, Norm, Kenzie...). Another idea is to include photos of the various approximations involved in teaching a skill such as sit with the descriptions of the approximations below the pictures. I'm leaning toward Roger's sit... or perhaps a shake program...