# Training with the K-9 BSD-2 "Behavior Shaping Device"

| Focus and drive any given dog has available for learning |
|:---:|

| **Minus** Focus drive used trying to read handler | **Minus** Focus and drive used to anticipate the when and where of reward | **Minus** Focus and drive used on other environmental distractions |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
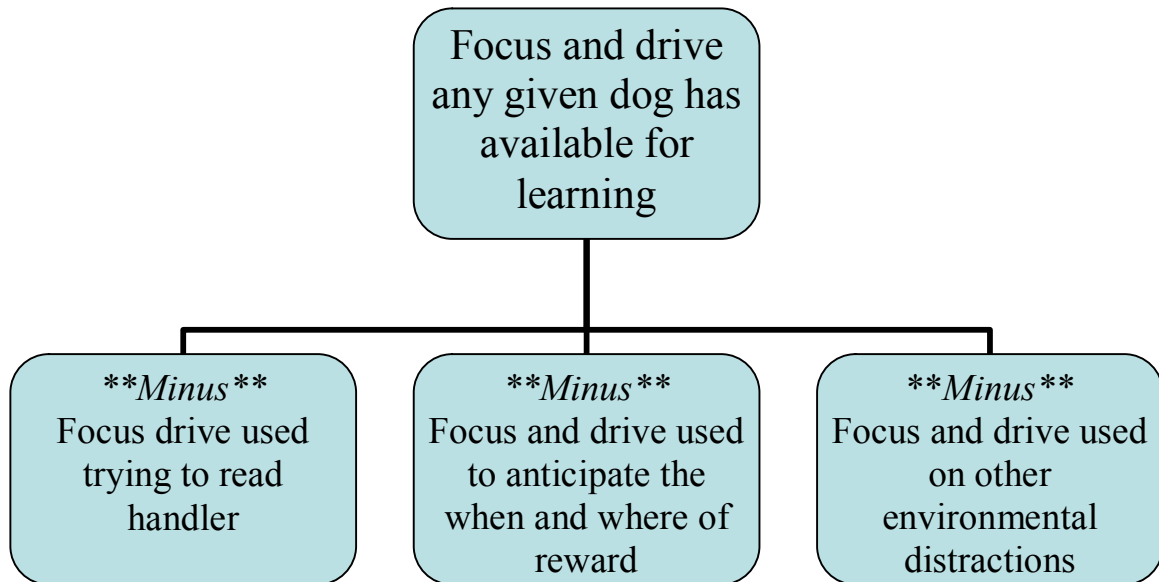
## *The K-9 BSD benefits that simplify animal learning.*

Rapid learning with split second timing of reinforcement
More drive with active (remote) reward
Eliminates drive and focus lost trying to read handler

The active reward also keeps dog in place without handler input or luring allowing ease of adding secondary or conditioned stimuli such as a ***"verbal release cue"*** with device.  This allows training to proceed with timely reinforcement and a form of clear communication with animal when device is faded. The reward direct from odor source coupled with use of release cue eliminates the drive and focus loss anticipating the where and when.

Dog selection is critical. Selection should be based on testing that behavior can be controlled with ball or Kong in a variety of different environments. The dog should also display active sniffing and endurance in searching. The active (remote) reward of the K-9 BSD generates more drive and focus on properly selected dogs reducing the impact of environmental distractions.

# Clear Communication with the odor detection dog.

**Animal Learning Theory**
Why should animal trainers be bothered with learning theory behind how animals learn? Many excellent trainers have no formal schooling or organized understanding of how their training is effective, it just works. But training is both an art and a science. More and more trainers are finding that understanding of learning theory helps understand their animal's behaviors better, and plan training accordingly.

**Operant Conditioning** forms an association between a behavior and a consequence**.** Consequences have to be instant or clearly linked to behavior. The consequence needs to happen in less than 1 second to be effective during learning, after a couple of seconds effectiveness fades quickly.

**ABC's of operant conditioning.**

Antecedent: what cues or triggers behavior**,** such as scent, verbal cue, environment, or some other form of stimuli.

Behavior: what is shaped by a consequence

Consequence: positive or negative**,** this is what animal trainers have to control instantly to have effective training. Timing is everything in animal behavior training!.

**Classical Conditioning** is very important to animal trainers, because it is difficult to supply an animal with one of the things it naturally likes (or dislikes) in time for it to be an important consequence of behavior. So trainers will associate something that's easier to "deliver" such as a verbal cue with something the animal wants through classical conditioning. Some trainers call this a *bridge* (because it bridges the time between when animal performs desired behavior and when it gets reward). Marine mammal trainers use whistles, other trainers use clickers. Stimuli that animals react to only after learning about them are called *secondary* or *conditioned stimuli.* These are stimuli that have been associated with a primary stimulus.

**The odor detection dog should be conditioned to the four following verbal cues while training the initial odor and alert behavior foundation.  NRM (no reward marker) KGS (keep going signal) CP (conditioned punisher) and above all a RC (release cue)**

**This will create clear communication for more advanced training, and makes timely and accurate reinforcement possible when device is faded.**

**Verbal NRM (no reward marker)**
Use of a verbal no reward marker <u>teaches the animal that its behavior will not gain reward.</u> A lot of trainers use "*Uh-Uh*", "*Nope*", or "*Too Bad*" as the NRM. The purpose of the NRM is to get the animal to try something different. <u>It is not a condition punisher</u> and should not be used when animal does something you don't want it to ever do. It is used when behavior might be correct in different circumstance, but not now.

Example: The dog's first day on multiple boxes.The dog sits at wrong box, use a NRM such as "*Uh-Uh*". You would not want to correct with a conditioned punisher such as "*No*" as you may be correcting the sit not the wrong box.

---

**Verbal KGS (keep going signal)**
Use of a KGS such as <u>using or adding</u> the word "*good*" during searching or "*show me*" at odor source to tell the animal its behavior is correct and leading to a reward and release.

Example: Beginning to lengthen time on a passive alert stare, the dog knows to sit and stare at odor source but you want to lengthen time of stare. We want to work up to 10 seconds; you don't want him to offer new behavior at 5 seconds so you would give him a calming "*Good Show Me*" to let him know he is on correct path to release & reward. (reduce adrenaline).

Note: "*show me*" is only used when dog is at odor source indication. The cue word "*search*" should be used as the KGS for continued searching (different behavior).

---

**Verbal CP (conditioned punisher)**   <u>Note: rarely used during learning phase!!!</u>
Use of a conditioned punisher is for behaviors we do not want. Most trainers use "*No*" and allow animal only a few seconds to comply before some type of punishment will be applied. It is best not use if you can not enforce immediately, or are not prepared too i.e. any correction or E-collar on animal. The conditioned punisher is best taught away from regular training environment. This way when used in training the word "*No*" will not require the actual correction, and the dog does not relate bad things to his training environment.

---

**Verbal RC (release cue)**
It is essential to train and use a verbal RC (release cue) such as "*yes*", "*ok*" etc. to mark correct behavior. It is a signal (marker) for correct behavior to dog and that you are <u>released and reward is unconditionally available</u> at odor source. The RC (secondary reinforcer) is a bridge, a stimulus that closes the gap in time between marker (cue) and presentation of (primary reinforcer) ball, Kong etc.

The purpose of the RC (release cue) is that it allows time for the handler to present reward at odor source, while maintaining alert and proper timing. A second benefit is, that the dog can stay focused on odor indication, without trying to anticipate when and where reward will become available. <u>Properly trained passive alert dog will never leave the sit and stare point until he hears the RC.</u> This eliminates the common problem seen in odor detection dogs moving to and from alert to a learned source of reward.