

AAB; Applied Research

Cooperative Animal Care Using Response Contingent Stimulus Presentation

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Eva Bertilsson has a master's degree in behavior analysis and a passion for all things related to behavior, learning and animal welfare. Together with business partner Emelie Johnson Vegh, Eva runs their collaboration Carpe Momentum, teaching seminars on the general principles of behavior and learning, and coaching trainers in the art of structuring great training sessions regardless of the venue or the species. Eva is a board member of the Swedish Association for Behavior Analysis, a faculty member of Clicker Expo, and an enthusiastic disseminator of ethical practices based in behavioral science. In addition to her own teaching, she has also been instrumental in introducing TAGteach™ and Fear Free to the Scandinavian audience.

Abstract: Animal welfare is a growing concern in our society, and the principles and procedures from applied behavior analysis are widely used by animal caretakers in their effort to deliver the best possible care. Service providers in the animal care sector are continually evolving their procedures and protocols, with a growing focus on enhancing the non-human individual's control over its situation. We cannot gain informed consent in its true sense from our animal participants, but we can strive in that direction. Strategies using response contingent stimulus presentation (sometimes referred to as “start button behaviors”) are one example of this effort, allowing the animal to direct the pace and progress of the procedure. This presentation provides variety of examples where response contingent stimulus presentation has been used in settings as diverse as service dog training, noise desensitization and cooperative veterinary care. Training protocols are described, and foundations are provided for further reflections and scientific inquiries.