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Puppy training: A Tedious Research Process

Elizabeth López

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Research Process

HOW do you make research less boring? Puppies! The perfect way to make this essay interesting, for me and you, is to write about the cutest, four-legged pets mankind has ever known. As a first-time dog owner I have had my share of headaches caused by my puppy's disobedience, therefore I decided this research would be super beneficial to puppy owners like myself. But before I can provide you with actual information, I'll need to educate myself about the genres related to puppy training. Let me do all the hard work for you, and you can just sit back and watch my tedious process.

PetSmart Classes: For kinesthetic learners

As a first-time dog owner, I immediately rushed to PetSmart with my list of questions: She's biting too much, how can she stop? What food does she need to eat? She doesn't listen to me, what can I do about that? Luckily, I asked the right person. Denise is the dog trainer for my local PetSmart and offers many different classes, such as puppy training classes. This genre of class provided tons of information for a newbie like myself, so I purchased the 6 weeks of training and bought tons of other things Denise recommended, such as a "Kong" (a biting toy used to reduce puppy nipping). After my shopping I got home and checked my bank account, which had taken quite the hit. However I knew it was for a good cause because my puppy would improve her behavior. After a week of waiting, I remember attending the classes and constantly learning new information regarding training. I learned about bite inhibition, potty training, basic commands, and the importance of positive reinforcement training. When my puppy "graduated" from the course, I saw a huge improvement in her behavior; but even after the classes I still had a list of questions. Where to next? Google!



Figure 1: My puppy, Luna, graduating from the PetSmart training class. She learned many useful skills, but still needs improvement

Google Search: My Best Friend

What's a researcher's best friend? Google, of course. I wanted to know what genre of training was the best; PetSmart only focused on positive reinforcement training, and even though I saw great results I still wanted to explore my options. I googled "dog training techniques" and browsed through many different pages. As I read, I saw the different methods of dog training such as: negative reinforcement training, clicker training, and positive reinforcement training. I didn't really like the other methods of training because to me they seemed complicated and harsh; and since my puppy was already accustomed to positive reinforcement training, I wanted to explore what types of treats would

most benefit this training. This led me to look up “best treats for positive reinforcement training” in order to see which genres google would provide. I then stumbled upon the Canine Journal, written by Kimberly Alt which provided me with a variety of treat options that my puppy would find tasty. I looked through the different options and realized that they were all quite affordable. This journal also provided evidence to support the method of positive reinforcement training. I wanted to learn more about positive reinforcement, so I decided to expand my research on this topic. I needed a site I could rely on for useful information, so I tried CSUMB’s library search.

CSUMB Library Search: Accurate and Professional Search Tool

I have never used this search site, and oh my god I had trouble even typing what I needed to search; this was really frustrating for me because I had no prior experience using this but I’m glad I did. It provided tons of information and I think it’s going to be my new “google.”

First I tried searching “positive reinforcement training,” and changed the settings to “read text online” and “peer review.” I found an article titled, “Training Methods and Dog-Owner Interaction as a Public Health Risk Factor for Dog Bites” written by P Súilleabháin. I read the abstract and realized this article would provide some great information, however I couldn’t open it because I was having trouble finding the volume it was under. This was so overwhelming and almost made me mad; but at last, I downloaded the PDF and read the short letter to the editor. This one page gave me information I never knew, and after reading the article I was excited to learn more about the benefits of training puppies.

I searched up “puppy training benefits” and tried to look for the best articles, but since there aren’t millions of articles like basic google, I had to click each article to see if it was beneficial to my research. I found an article titled, “Importance of Puppy Training For Future Behavior of the Dog” written by Ai Kutsumi, Miho Nagasawa, Mitsuaki Ohta, and Nobuyo Ohtani. This time, I was a bit more experienced, but I was still confronted by complications. Again, I could not find the volume the article was under and I spent about half an hour searching for the article. Once I found the volume number I got to work; I saw all the graphs provided by the articles and almost clicked the “x” on the left-hand corner (I hate anything related to math), but I decide to give it a chance

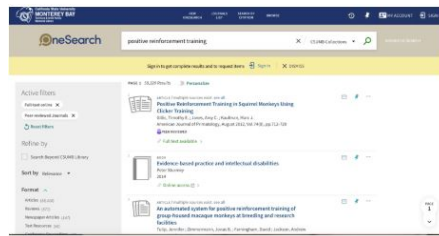


Figure 2: CSUMB Library Search Tool

and damn, I was amazed. This piece had provided the best information thus far. It compared many different training classes such as puppy parties, puppy classes, adult classes, and no classes. They compared all four and collected the results from each class. The information I found from these two articles really made me realize the the importance of a peer reviewed article on a scholarly journal. I wanted to search more articles, but I was very limited and simply did not want to waste my time reading over, lengthy articles (ain't nobody got time for that). Also, I am not an expert on searching articles on this library search and still struggle finding information that is useful to me. I still needed more information, but on a site that I was more familiar with.

YouTube: A Tool for Visual Learners

I use YouTube every day because I am a visual learner. I use it for makeup tutorials, DIYs, and math tutorials, so why not use YouTube for my research? YouTube is my favorite because it is a simple site for visual learners to grasp information and it provides many genres regarding puppies for example– dog hacks, reviews on dog supplies, and much more. I decided to search up “puppy” but accidentally misspelled it and typed “uppy”. Despite my error YouTube knew I meant puppy and provided all the videos that had the word “puppy” as its title. The video I decided to watch was a video by Zak George titled “3 Easy Things to Teach your NEW PUPPY!” It was interesting and quite funny because at times it seemed like he couldn't control the puppy. Nevertheless, the video gave beneficial information for new puppy owners.

What I learned from the research process

Research is useful but sometimes one doesn't take the consideration of the process that research requires. The research this genre required was fun, but still tedious. It was extremely beneficial to me as a new puppy owner because I was able to apply my research to my puppy and see the results. Now, I want to research specifically on positive reinforcement training. I am currently using this genre of training on my puppy and I have seen a huge improvement, however I am not an expert and therefore have to do more research. I want to use my own experience with my puppy to expand my research on this type of training.

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