

FREE
E-BOOK



SOCIAL COGNITIVE LEARNING



**5 Reasons why it's the best
behavioral approach for
your family's dog**

LECA™



Introduction

A dog can bring incredible joy to our everyday home and professional lives, but it is challenging to meet all of the dog's needs, especially in the modern, urbanized lifestyle.

Today, our family dogs face new challenges as they **struggle to cope with a lifestyle** that does not meet their psychological, physical, and social needs. **To develop a positive, lasting, and effective relationship with dogs**, it is essential for pet owners, handlers, and trainers to **understand and satisfy needs and inclinations of dogs**.

Social Cognitive Training, or SCT, **offers an approach for the modern dog that is aligned with your dog's natural instincts** and satisfies physical, psychological, and social needs.

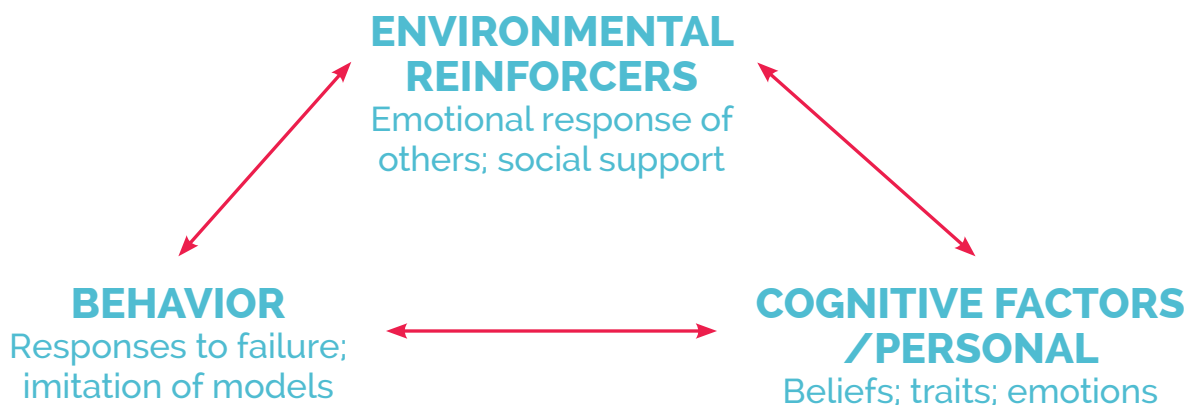
What is Social Cognitive Learning?

Social Cognitive Learning gained traction in the 1970's, when social-cognitive psychologist Albert Bandura proved that children learn by observation.

SCT states that behavior is motivated by psychological needs and that learning is best accomplished when learners can observe models. For dogs, this translates that **dogs learn more easily when they are in the correct psychological and environmental conditions**, and when they have the opportunity to **observe trusted models**.

When all three conditions are met, dogs internalize the learnings and are able to use it in different situations. Dr. Bandura used a triangle to represent these conditions.

BANDURA'S DETERMINISM MODEL





Many studies support the capacity of dogs to **learn by observing people and other dogs** and point to practical applications in training.

- Dogs completed a puzzle significantly more quickly when they watched a human do it first, whether that human was their owner or a stranger ([Pongracz 2001](#)).
- German Shepherd pups training in narcotic detection were separated from their mothers at either six weeks or three months. Pups that stayed longer and were allowed to observe their mother during training performed significantly better at training tasks than the control group when tested at six months of age ([Slabbert and Rasa 1997](#)).
- Mini dachshund puppies mastered a task more quickly when they had observed a littermate perform the activity ([Adler 1977](#)).
- Labradors learned better after watching another dog do the activity first, a tendency which increased with age ([Scandurra 2015](#)).
- Puppies learned better after observing both humans and other dogs than on their own. ([Fugazza 2018](#)).

REASON #1

Modern Approach For Modern Challenges

Social Cognitive Theory states that **dogs can learn productive and positive behavior more easily** and recall best when they are in the correct psychological and environmental conditions, and when they have the opportunity to observe trusted models demonstrating behaviors.

Training that incorporates Social Cognitive Learning Theory is **three times more effective than popular positive reinforcement techniques** like clicker training. Integrating SCT with training and relationship building significantly reduces inappropriate and destructive behaviors.

Many dogs today lack a proper outlet for their instinctive and natural inclinations. **It is very common today for destructive and anti-social behaviors to develop.** SCT offers an opportunity to teach, not train dogs, proper outlets and help them thrive instead of stifling their needs.

REASON #2

Develop Resilience

Resilience is **the capacity to recover quickly from difficult situations** ([Dufresne-Cyr 2014](#)). The family home and an urbanized environment can be a loud, unpredictable, and sometimes scary place for your dogs.

An insecure dog may associate a difficult moment with a negative, lasting emotion and develop lasting phobias that can be very hard to eliminate.

A dog who has had the opportunity to build resilience will be **able to bounce back quickly from minor scares and mishaps and less likely to internalize a scary or stressful situation.**

Gaby Dufresne-Cyr is a curriculum director at LECA. She is the founder, teacher, dog trainer, dog behavior consultant, and exotic animal trainer at the Dogue Shop in Montreal. Gaby travels internationally to speak about the science of animal behaviour management, training, social learning, and exotic animal-assisted therapy as a means of enrichment, training, and conservation.



READ MORE
ABOUT GABY >

REASON #3

Better Recall

Recall is your **dog's capacity to remember what she has learned**, even when the environment and conditions change.

Just because a dog understands the relationship between a cue and a behavior in the classroom doesn't mean that she will translate the association into any other environment.

Dogs that learn behaviors via SCT-based methods retain more and have enhanced memory and generalization between verbal cue and action, meaning that **these dogs are able to more easily take behaviors out of the training session** ([Fugazza 2015](#)).

Dr. Claudia Fugazza developed a training method called Do as I Do (named after Hayes & Hayes 1952 and Topál et al. 2006), which relies on dog's imitative skills and is currently using it as paradigm to study dogs' cognition. In 2011, Dr. Fugazza published a book on the use of social learning in dog training, "DO AS I DO Using Social Learning to Train Dogs" which has been translated into 5 languages. Due to its effectiveness, this method has received widespread adoption in the dog training.



**MORE ABOUT
DR. FUGAZZA** >

Dr. Fugazza obtained her PhD in Ethology at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest) conducting research on social learning and imitation in dogs.

REASON #4

The Focus Is On the Dogs, Not the Owners

Unfortunately, today's busy families and pet-care providers do not provide the mental, physical, and social stimulation that dogs require. At dog daycares dogs are left to interact with minimal supervision or interaction from human handlers in noisy, crowded conditions. Employees are **responsible for too many dogs and are focused on crowd control**. Dogs are injured without explanation, become heat exhausted, or learn bad habits from other dogs.

Dog walkers are **often inexperienced in dog behavior** and are likely to walk more than one dog at a time. While a good pack walk can help stretch your dog's legs it doesn't do much to provide exercise, stimulation, or behavior reinforcement.

Trainers can be great at modifying problem behaviors, but **dogs have a difficult time transferring behaviors out of the training session**. To compensate, many trainers focus on teaching the owner to train their own dog, as opposed to actively working to teach the dog and help it adopt and thrive in the world.

SCT, on the other hand, gives us insights into the dog's mind and **helps to engage them and teach**, not train, them, to **become an engaged, responsive, and capable member of our families and communities**.

REASON #5

Learning is Fun

Social Cognitive Learning theories and techniques give us key insights about how dogs learn best. Like people, **learning comes from solving puzzles, playing games, socializing**, and others. Learning is not training, it is **fun, engaging, and self-reinforcing**.

The human-dog bond is a key dimension of SCT. As it deepens, dogs become more engaged with their owners, handlers, and surroundings.

Incorporating SCT into dogs' everyday lives, means focusing on learning, not training. **Learning through observation develops confidence and translates more effectively** between contexts.

Dogs trained with SCT want to learn and participate not only willingly but enthusiastically. After all, having fun is one thing that motivates every dog.



WHY CHOOSE LECA?

THE HALF-DAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FOR YOUR FAMILY'S BEST FRIEND



1. Most family dogs don't get enough stimulation, attention, and training.

2. We exercise, play with, and enrich dogs' every day



3. Our curriculum is developed by leading canine behavior researchers and validated by dog trainers, veterinarians, and happy pooches.



4. For the price of a daily walk, our certified trainers will help your dog be a happy, capable, and healthy member of your family.

The LECA Program

We offer a daily experience for family dogs to provide the consistency, exercise, and enrichment that dogs need to thrive and remain secure. The LECA curriculum incorporates the scientifically proven principles of Social Cognitive Learning to offer your dog and family more.

The LECA curriculum was designed from the ground up to enrich the daily lives of family dogs. While many programs focus on the owners, our trainers provide the kind of engagement, enrichment, and consistency your dog needs to thrive and remain secure as families concentrate on their own daily lives and responsibilities.



We incorporate **structured play through enrichment and brain games, exercise, training by our certified staff, and social play** into every day of the program.

As your dog advances through the orientation, core, sports, working, and social curriculums, **they experience varied, challenging, and fun trials that include obedience training, agility, rally, nose work, field work, enrichment and brain games, and pack work.**



Conclusion

Social Cognitive Learning builds the character of the whole dog rather than focusing on shaping individual behaviors.

Dogs whose handlers emphasize respect, communication, and trust develop confidence and resilience.

Pooches enjoy learning since it challenges them without overwhelming them. **Behaviors are more likely to transfer out of the training session** and dogs become a much more engaged and responsive members of our families and communities..

1

Modern approach for modern challenges

2

Develop resilience

3

Better recall

4

Focuses on the dog, not the owner

5

Learning is fun

LECA is the first daily enrichment program for family dogs based on a scientifically proven curriculum. **It is based on methodologies that are 3x more effective** than traditional training. Instruction is based on enrichment and fun, not bossing around or 'dominating' dogs into appropriate behavior.

Our talented trainers work with your dog in small groups to do more than shape behaviors or pass the time. Dogs are kept engaged and actively develop social bonds with dogs and trainers throughout their learning experience

LECA OFFERS AN EXPERIENCE FOR FAMILY DOGS THAT:

1. Establishes social skills with people and other dogs.
2. Develops confidence and resilience.
3. Integrates structured play, trials, exercise, socialization, and learning

Our focus on enrichment and a strong social bond between humans and dogs provides an enriching, stimulating, and fun experience that is **drastically different from trainers, dog walkers, and dog daycare centers.**



To experience Social
Cognitive Learning,
SIGN UP TODAY.

DOWNLOAD OUR WHITE PAPER ON SCT

LEARN MORE ABOUT LECA ACADEMY

