

## Swiss TAGteach Article

Here is the English version of the article...  
Thanks for the translation Doris Vaterlaus!

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### Erfolg mit akustischen Signalen Success with acoustical signals

In May a seminar about TAGteach will be held in Balmberg. This American learning approach includes the use/application of acoustical signals. This seminar addresses persons who educate people and also animals.

Doris Vaterlaus is holding a sheet in front of her dog Stella, where you can read in big letters "SITZ" (sit). After some seconds Stella does sit. Vaterlaus is marking this behavior with an acoustical signal – a click – and she rewards her dog with a biscuit. The same works with the cues "PLATZ" (down) and "STEH" (stand). Doris Vaterlaus explains that, of course Stella does not really read. Her dog has learned which cue belongs to which 'picture'. We have trained this trick for fun with clicker training.

### Also for people

What works with dogs, also works for other animals. Doris Vaterlaus has worked with parrots, cats, horses, goats, chickens, alpacas and people (a student with dyscalculia). The topic here is about the TAGteach teaching and learning approach, which has its roots in the U.S.A. TAG means Teaching with Acoustical Guidance. Intermediate goals are marked with a previously defined signal when they are reached by the student/learner. Afterwards, the execution is rewarded usually just by the sound which signals success. While the acoustical signal with animals is mostly a click or a tongue sound, with people it is any special sound that has no meaning in everyday's life. "It is important, that mutual agreement about this sound is made before training", says Doris Vaterlaus, who has offered clicker training for dogs since 1994.

For the first time she is organizing a seminar in Switzerland covering the topic TAGteach. This seminar will take place at the beginning of May in Balmberg near Solothurn. She invited Theresa McKeon to present the training. (See box).

### Positives are marked

TAGteach proves to be very motivating for the student, Doris Vaterlaus explains. "There is a promised reward and the method emphasizes the positive instead of the negative in the learning process," she explains. Mistakes are not the focus as it is more important that the goal be reached. I don't reinforce undesired behavior but try to train and reinforce an alternate behavior".

"Although wrong answers are not focused on, we also don't let them continue", she points out, "In these cases, the teacher goes one step back and continues on the already learned level with a new step in another/new way. Vaterlaus knows one form of correction "I am taking away attention" she is explaining. She is turning her back towards the dog or even leaves him.

The success of the TAGteach method cannot only be explained with the high self-motivation of the students. "The acoustical signal is a very important contribution," she explains. "The sound is unique, simple and can be earned/heard only if the agreed upon goal has been reached. It goes directly to the limbic system, into the emotional centre of the brain. It is always very astonishing, how fast learning can take place" pinpoints Doris Vaterlaus as another advantage of the method.

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[www.clicker.ch](http://www.clicker.ch)

## TAGTEACH

### Learning in three steps

TAGteach comes from the U.S.A. and means Teaching and learning with Acoustical Guidance. The Learning and teaching process contains three steps.

In the first step, teacher and student agree together on the desired behavior, the TAG-point.

In the second step the reached goal will be clearly defined and marked. The sound means exactly "yes, goal reached".

The third step is rewarding the execution. The acoustic sound means success, which is very rewarding and highly motivating. This reward is very motivating and leads to a high self-motivated learning preparedness for the student.

On May 9 and 10 there will be the first introductory seminar in the Balmberg.

It is addressed to educators, teachers for adults and children, dog and animal trainers, gymnastic teachers, physiotherapists, educational people (Pedagogy), educational staff for disabled people.

Presenter of the Balmberg is Theresa McKeon, Vice president of TAGteach International. The attendees will receive a certificate after a successful test.

There are some spots still available

Information/registration at Doris Vaterlaus 032 672 45 76

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