



Training Internship at Dolphin Quest O'ahu

Principal student involved:

Jennifer Schultz, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Project advisors:

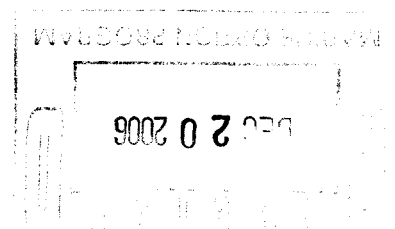
Tammy Rach – Education Supervisor, Dolphin Quest O'ahu

Jeff Kuwabara – University of Hawai'i Marine Option Program Coordinator

Date of Submission:

October 31, 2006

Course: IS 400, 4 credits



Abstract

Training any animal comes only through experience. At Dolphin Quest O'ahu, the method of training used is called positive reinforcement, in which the animal is rewarded for choosing to exhibit the behavior that is asked. During my three month summer internship, I shadowed other trainers to learn the techniques of dolphin training, attended seminars once a week to learn the aspects of training, and was able to apply these techniques to training other animals such as stingrays, sea turtles, and blue finned jacks. I learned how to maintain the fish kitchen where all the food is prepared, and I learned how to prepare all the food for the animals. Other important skills I obtained were flexibility in scheduling, teamwork, and improvement in my Japanese speaking ability.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	Page i
Introduction	Page 1
Methods and Materials	Page 4
Discussion	Page 8
Evaluation of Learning	Page 10
Acknowledgements	Page 12
References	Page 12

List of Figures

Figure 1	Dolphin Quest O'ahu summer interns of 2006 with some trainers and Kolohe the dolphin	Page 1
Figure 2	Sorting and weighing fish in the fish kitchen	Page 5
Figure 3	Makana the sea turtle, approximately one year old	Page 6
Figure 4	Puakenikeni and me during a training session	Page 6
Figure 5	My mentor, Clarissa Black, teaching me how to set up dolphin photo sessions with guests	Page 7
Figure 6	Me teaching the children's program in Japanese during the introduction section	Page 7
Figure 7	Illustrations of the old and new stingray targets	Page 8
Figure 8	Future guest photo option with stingray	Page 8
Figure 9	Illustration of the future jack training program	Page 9

Figure 10 Illustration of Liho the dolphin learning how to do Page 9
the hula

Figure 11 Nai Noa the dolphin and me Page 10

Introduction



Figure 1: From left to right – Holly Pitcher, Jessica Aschettino, Brienne Bridges, Courtney Hubela, Jan Czaja, Jennifer Schultz, Brittany Martabar, Corinne Ruppert, and Kolohe in the middle

Dolphin Quest was started in 1988 by marine mammal veterinarians Dr. Jay Sweeney and Dr. Rae Stone (Dolphin Quest c, 2006). Its mission is “to touch hearts and minds through fun, innovative experiences that create a connection to nature and a passion to learn more” (Dolphin Quest b, 2006). Hands-on education is the key to achieving such a goal. By giving guests the opportunity to experience personal encounters with dolphins, sea turtles, sting rays, and a vast array of other marine life, the connection and interest can be made to take part in conservation and learn more outside of the Dolphin Quest programs. My job as an intern was to help educate people of all ages and to build their connection to the marine world through hands-on activities using models, skulls, animal interactions, animal observations, and many other tools. I also helped the staff at Dolphin Quest build guests’ connections to the sea by doing lots of behind the scenes work. This included food preparation for all the animals, cleaning, running errands for supplies around the facility, and more.

Fulfilling the goal of creating public awareness regarding dolphin conservation is extremely important. Dolphins are thought to be among the most intelligent of animals. One method of possibly determining the intelligence of an animal is by the gyration index (GI), or “the ratio of total perimeter to exposed perimeter of cerebral cortex” (Reynolds and Rommel, 1999). The more folds, the greater the surface area is of the brain, which indicates a higher intelligence. Humans have a GI between 2 and 3, while odontocetes,

of which bottlenose dolphins are a part, can have GIs of 4 or more (Reynolds and Rommel, 1999). An example of dolphin intelligence that can be observed in the wild and in human care is as follows. Dolphins have been known to learn through imitation and to have complex communication abilities (Dor, 2004). For example, within the first two years of its life, a bottlenose dolphin calf will develop a signature whistle (Reynolds and Rommel, 1999). This whistle can be used as a way for the mother and offspring to locate each other easily (Dor, 2004). However, as the calves grow older, the use of their signature whistle doesn't lessen. Adult males whistle just as much as adult females that are trying to keep in touch with their calves (Reynolds and Rommel, 1999). Males typically adopt their mothers' signature whistles, while females' whistles are different from their mothers'. It is thought that this is to help prevent inbreeding, as a female dolphin will recognize her mother's signature whistle if used by a male (Reynolds, Wells, and Eide, 2000).

Instilling a passion for these intelligent creatures can lead one to value greatly other marine organisms as well. By incorporating organisms such as sting rays, sea turtles, marine invertebrates, and others into the programs that are taught at Dolphin Quest, one is able to gain a great appreciation for these animals, as well. Dolphin Quest also strives to use this appreciation as a tool to get people involved in conservation, especially recycling. In the children's program, children are taught how long certain items take to disintegrate and which items can be recycled, reused, or avoided.

There is a huge controversy of keeping dolphins in human care. Many people argue that keeping them in marine parks and other such facilities is cruel to the animals. However, in at least one case, when given the choice of living in open waters or under human care, a pair of dolphins from the Oceanic Institute in Hawaii chose living in a facility. These dolphins were enclosed in a pen which they easily had the ability to leave and go to the open ocean. They would spend their days loose, but by each evening, they returned at their own will to the enclosure. When any dangers such as sharks lurked the area, the dolphins would immediately retreat back to their pen (Pryor and Norris, 1991).

Bottlenose dolphins, whether they are wild or aquarium animals, have an average lifespan of 18 to 20 years, but some facility dolphins are still active and breeding in their twenties and thirties. Statistics have shown that animals at aquarium facilities exhibit very healthy behaviors, form complex bonds with other dolphins, are physically healthy, and are successfully breeding. At Dolphin Quest, dolphins are used in education programs on a limited basis, as the health of the animal is the first priority (Dolphin Quest a, 2006). By participating in ensuring the wellbeing of these dolphins and the other animals at Dolphin Quest, I contributed to maintaining the continuing education of the public.

There are many different methods that can be used to train animals. The most common method used at marine parks, Dolphin Quest included, is training through positive reinforcement. The most basic definition of training is teaching, and training animals in human care is extremely important for a variety of reasons. These include the stimulation of physical and mental exercise, medical and husbandry purposes, education, research, and entertainment. However, before training can begin, the trainer must know everything about the individual animal and the animal's species. This ranges from diet and things

that may spook the animal to the kind of environment in which it must live (Ramirez, 1999).

Once everything is known about the animal, the next step is to gain its trust. In the positive reinforcement method of training, this is done by the trainer paring himself with food. Once this has been accomplished, the trainer can begin pairing reinforcement with a whistle, which can be used to shape, terminate, and encourage behaviors. Eventually, the whistle becomes what's called a bridge stimulus, bridging the gap between the time that the behavior was performed correctly to the time when the animal is reinforced, and reinforcement will not necessarily immediately have to follow the bridge stimulus. Some kind of a target, which can be anything from the trainer's hand to a pole with a buoy on its end, can be implemented to shape behaviors. The animal is trained to follow this target, and it and the bridge stimulus are the major tools used by trainers to teach animals new behaviors (Ramirez, 1999).

Training, however, doesn't happen overnight. Once the animal understands the purpose of the target and bridge stimulus, successive approximations, or little baby steps, must be used to train behaviors successfully. After all, when people learn new things, it typically takes practice and training to master the task. Training in this way may take anywhere from weeks to months depending on the animal and the behavior it is trying to learn, but this is a very sure method for training. As the animal becomes more and more comfortable with the new behavior, a hand signal, also called the discriminative stimulus, is added to the equation to initiate the execution of the behavior. Over time, the target can be faded out of the behavior, and the animal will understand that it is supposed to execute the behavior by seeing the discriminative stimulus. If in the future the animal begins to regress and not execute the behavior properly, the trainer can back up and use previous successive approximations to remind the animal how to do the behavior properly (Ramirez, 1999).

Some new behaviors are difficult to train, though, and can not always be shaped with a target or bridge stimulus. An example is when something new is added to the animal's environment. When incorporating a new kind of stimulus with the animal, the animal must first be desensitized to it, which basically means that it must become used to the stimulus. This can be accomplished through active desensitization, such as pairing the stimulus with reinforcement, or through passive desensitization, which is exposing the animal to the stimulus gradually until there is no reaction to it by the animal (Ramirez, 1999).

One of the most mentally stimulating aspects of training for the trainer is discovering new ways to motivate the animal and ensuring that it is finding things as enriching as possible. As food can become boring, it is imperative that trainers learn new things to keep the animal motivated. Things such as toys, spending time with another animal, or being given free time to do anything can be extremely motivating and enriching (Ramirez, 1999).

Even the most experienced of trainers still have some difficulties, though. Aggression, if not controlled, can become a problem. Aggression is usually a way for the animal to deal with fear, dominance, or nervousness. Trainers who know the individual animal well can avoid aggression by recognizing the signs the animal gives prior to aggressing and then taking measures to avoid it. Acts of aggression that are habitual and predictable can even have a hand signal put to them. This is extremely effective as the trainer can ask for the behavior repeatedly without reinforcing it, thus eventually extinguishing the animal's motivation to execute the behavior (Ramirez, 1999).

All of these aspects of training are imperative for a trainer not only to understand, but to use and practice to become a skilled trainer. Practice makes perfect, and these aspects are what I was taught as an intern through lectures and usage.

My main objectives for interning at Dolphin Quest included:

- learning training techniques used with the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)
- learning practical public interaction involved with hands-on learning associated with marine mammal education and marine wildlife conservation
- learning methods of animal husbandry associated with the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (*truncatus*), the Hawaiian brown sting ray (*Dasyatis lata*), and the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), as well as various reef fishes found in the Hawaiian waters

Methods and Materials

In the very beginning of the internship, we interns were taught the basics of the tasks we were to do. We also attended training seminars once a week to learn the aspects of training previously outlined. Because of the effective methods of teaching by our trainers, by the end of the internship, I felt empowered enough to make my own decisions about things, and I discovered that my best tool for getting a task done was my brain. Aside from explanations and empowered thinking, the best technique for learning tasks was simply doing them. Some of the things best learned through execution were food preparation, animal training, and educating. The supplies used to do these tasks included food; scales and rulers for measuring food; animal targets such as hand stationing and special targets designed for specific animals; models and games for hands-on educating; and my brain. I had lots of help and advice from other people, as well. The trainers were very skilled at teaching me about training animals. My supervisor, Tammy Rach, taught us the basics of everything, but she was especially helpful in teaching me how to educate the young guests in the children's program. The aquarist, Erica Cushing, taught me about lagoon maintenance. Also, the interns doing the program before me, as well as my fellow interns, gave me lots of basic advice about effective methods of getting tasks completed.

I began interning at Dolphin Quest on June 5, 2006, and completed the internship on September 3. I worked nine hours a day for five days a week and attended training lectures once a week after work. At the beginning of these training lectures, I took a quiz

on the information from the previous lecture. On July 24 through July 30, I had my mid-intern review, where my supervisors gave me an evaluation on how well I was doing, including advice on how to improve, which was very helpful. On September 2, I took my final exam. I also handed in progress reports to Marine Option Program every two weeks to give updates on how the internship was going. Once school began on August 21, I was only able to be at Dolphin Quest on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Because of this, I stayed a day longer than the other interns to complete the internship.



Figure 2: Fish Kitchen

Everyday, I was assigned a specific position for the day. Two days out of the week, I was assigned to work in the fish kitchen preparing food for the dolphins, stingrays, and jacks. On these days, I would arrive at Dolphin Quest at seven in the morning. The first thing people on fish kitchen must do is record the temperature readings from the refrigerator and the freezer. This is very important as there was a problem with the freezer at one point and we were able to measure exactly when its temperature began to fluctuate incorrectly. The next process involved removing all items from the fridge and cleaning it. I was taught a specific process so that no soap would come in contact with any food or items to be returned to the fridge. Fish that had been left over from the previous day and stored on ice was used with frozen fish that had thawed in the fridge overnight for the animals' food. The specific amount of food each individual animal received had to be meticulously measured on a scale. For the dolphins, we would measure capelin, squid, and herring for each dolphin. Although the total amount of food for each dolphin was the same every day, depending on which programs or training sessions in which the dolphin was to be a part affected how its food was divided. Each day, a trainer was assigned to be the planner for the day, and she determined how much food each dolphin received at which program time. For the morning, we would prepare two coolers full of food for each dolphin, and the rest of that dolphin's food would go into an iced bucket in the refrigerator. When preparing these coolers, we had to sort each fish to ensure that there were no cuts, abrasions, or discoloration to the flesh because these areas can be sites for harmful bacteria. Any bad capelin that was sorted out would be set aside for the jacks, but the rest would be discarded. After lunch, we would divide the remainder of the dolphin food into two more coolers to be used in the afternoon. Each time we prepared a cooler, we measured the amount of food to ensure that our measurements were correct. Another afternoon duty included pulling out more blocks of frozen fish and transferring them from the freezer to the refrigerator to thaw overnight. In addition to preparing dolphin and jack food, we prepared food for the stingrays. Each stingray, like the dolphins, received a specific amount of squid, capelin, and anchovies. These would be measured according to length.

One of the first animals I learned to work with at Dolphin Quest was the sea turtles. At the time of the internship, these two turtles were about a year old. Each turtle is trained to come to a specific place to be fed. To initiate the feeding session, I was taught to

smack my open hand against the surface of the water to get the turtle's attention. Once it came to its appropriate station, I would hold an open hand above the turtle's head to indicate to the turtle that the feeding session was in progress. My hand would act as a target for the turtle. With my other hand, I would feed it a special gel made up of turtle pellets, lettuce, and other nutrients. If the turtles were to station incorrectly, break away from the station during the session, or cease to follow some other protocol, both turtle trainers were to step out of the water until the turtles would display the appropriate behaviors. I was also taught to use my target hand in trouble shooting. For example, if my turtle stations correctly, but the other turtle also tries to station in my turtle's station, I could use my hand to guide the mistaken turtle away. The other trainer would then use his hand as a target to guide his turtle to its correct station.

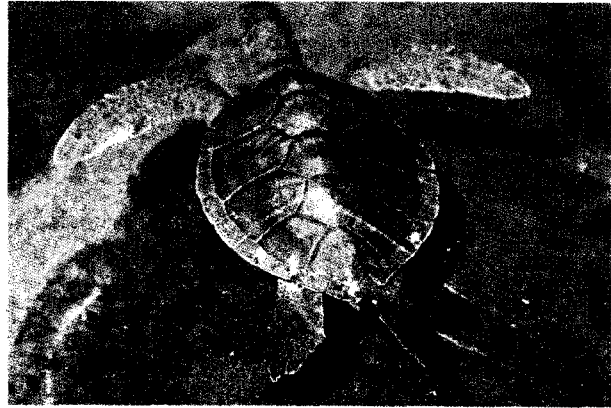


Figure 3: Makana the sea turtle



Figure 4: Puakenikeni the stingray and me

These basic principles of turtle training were extremely effective in training the next and more complicated animal, the stingray. The stingray feeding sessions are much more involved than the turtle sessions. For this reason, all the interns began learning these sessions on land through practiced simulations. Once our trainers believed that we understood the basic concepts on land, we did simulations in the water. From there, we moved on to the real session. There are two stingrays at Dolphin Quest, and like the turtles, they

are fed at different locations in their lagoon. To begin each session, we would click a two pairs of tongs simultaneously at each ray's station. Each ray is trained to go to its perspective station and is trained to follow a target designed specifically for that ray. Using the target, the trainer can bring the stingray on a desired path around the lagoon and feed when the ray shows proper criteria, such as not pushing on the target, making sharp movements, or biting the target. The feeding session for each ray must last the same amount of time so that one ray does not finish before the other. This prevents aggression. Two training sessions are held a day, one during the morning children's program and the other in the afternoon.

Once a week, each intern was able to shadow a dolphin trainer and put the things we learned in our lectures to use. We were assigned a mentor who we would follow and from whom we would learn. My mentor was Clarissa Black. Each week, we would focus on some new aspect of training. The first things I learned were opening gates to

move dolphins from one lagoon to another and keeping records for each dolphin. I

shadowed trainers who were on recall, which provides the dolphin a place to go during the dolphin programs away from the guests. Closer to the end of my internship, I took over the position of recall. I also helped conduct the Wee Program, a program designed for very young children. This involved taking the child and his or her parent around the facility and showing them all of the animals. I would let the children help me feed the jacks and give lettuce to the sea turtles. The guests would also have the

opportunity to touch pincushion stars (*Culcita* sp.), and we would also look at the stingrays. Finally, the child and parent were brought out to the docks in the dolphin lagoons. I would demonstrate some of a dolphin's behaviors and the guests were able to have their pictures taken with a dolphin that would beach itself onto the dock. Sometimes this was very traumatizing for these small children, but mostly they really seemed to enjoy it.



Figure 5: My mentor, Clarissa Black, teaching me how to set up dolphin photos



Figure 6: Me teaching the children's program

One of the most important parts of interning at Dolphin Quest was conducting the children's program. In the beginning, all of us new interns shadowed the previous interns and then gradually took over different sections of the program. When we were able to do the entire program independently, we were evaluated by our trainers. One intern is always assigned to be the props person. This person retrieves all the items used

for teaching the programs, takes children to the restroom if need be, and takes care of any emergencies that could possibly occur during the program. There are many different sections of the children's program. We discuss what kinds of characteristics make a mammal to determine whether or not a dolphin is a mammal. There are games to introduce the children to all different kinds of whales and skulls to teach about the dolphin senses. The children also get to witness the stingray training session and learn

about how stingrays and sharks are related. Other activities include feeding lettuce to the sea turtles, learning out on the beach about predators of baby sea turtles, a game about conservation, and of course, time in the water with the dolphins. The program is two hours long.

At the end of each day, all the interns and trainers would work together to clean the office floors and countertops, scrub the fish kitchen from ceiling to floor, put all props and dolphin toys away, and lock everything up.

Discussion

Every aspect of Dolphin Quest has changed drastically over the years. One of the people interning part time had done the full time internship two years ago. She was able to tell us everything that was different and everything that had improved. In fact, during our orientation, we were introduced to the general manager of Dolphin Quest O'ahu, and one of the first things he asked us was for our ideas of what kinds of things could be improved as we progressed in our internship. Although I only worked at Dolphin Quest for three months, I bore witness to the kinds of changes that occurred during that time.

One thing that proved to be a challenge was the targets used for training the stingrays. In the beginning, the trainers in charge realized that the targets we were to use were problematic. When feeding the ray, the pieces of food have to be brought up to the ray's mouth under the body. Unfortunately, this leaves the trainer's fingers vulnerable to getting bitten, which did happen on a number of occasions. The targets were redesigned to be slightly larger with a hole at the edge. A funnel is attached to this hole, and the ray is to keep its mouth over it to receive food (Figure 7). Another addition to the complication of training the rays is the guest touches. During the children's program, the young guests are given the opportunity to feel the rays. This is very meticulous, as the children are instructed to keep their hands stationary and the trainer is to bring the

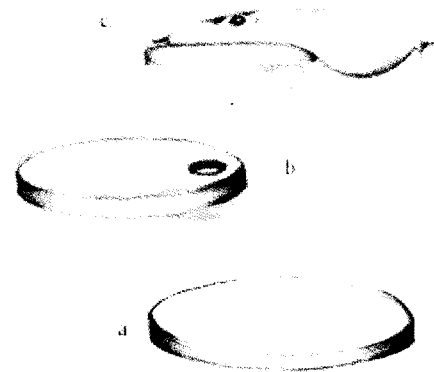


Figure 7: The different stingray targets: "a" represents the original target, "b" is the new target, and "c" is the stingray positioned on the new target



Figure 8: Me kissing Puakenikeni

ray over the children's hands. The rays would go through periods of doing this successfully, but there would also be times when they would show very poor criteria when coming in contact with the children. We were able to troubleshoot this by simulating touches with other interns and by feeding during the touching as reinforcement. This is very crucial in preparation for some of the future objectives with guest and stingray interaction. Eventually, Dolphin Quest would like to be able to have guests in the water feeding the rays and

have stingray photo sessions as is done with the dolphins. I was able to participate in some of the initial stages of training for photo sessions with the stingrays. One of the sessions would be kissing the stingray, just as is done with the dolphins (See Figure 8).

Something that was very interesting to me was being a part of a new training program. There is a large school of blue finned jacks (*Caranx melampygus*) in one of the lagoons at Dolphin Quest, and one of the future goals is to train the jacks to jump. As these fish had never been trained, we interns were assigned the task of designing a method to train them. The idea started out as training them to leap over a rope, but it was decided that this would be very difficult because we weren't reinforcing just one animal but an entire school of animals at once. The plan then changed to using a pole with a clip at the end of it. Food in the form of capelin is attached to the clip and is held out toward the middle of the lagoon (Figure 9).

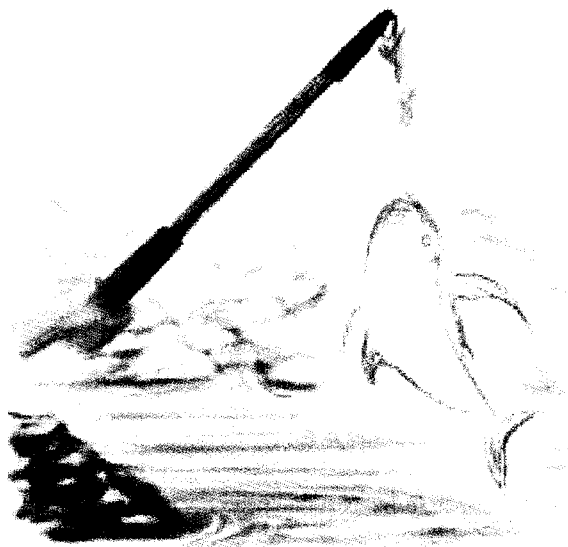


Figure 9: Jack training program

Through the use of successive approximations, the idea is that the fish will eventually leap for the food. As with the turtles, the sign indicating the beginning of the session is the open-hand slap on the surface of the water. The very first step in training the jacks was desensitizing them to the pole. Through active desensitization, the fish gradually understood that they had to grab the food from the clip in order to retrieve it. The next step was to bring the food further and further out of the water. By the end of the internship, the jack training had gotten far enough that only the very tip of the head of the capelin had to touch the water for the jacks to retrieve it.

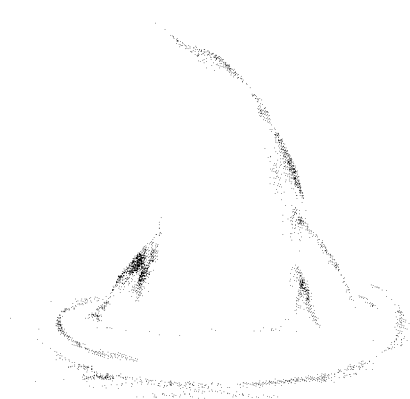


Figure 10: Liho learning the hula

Through the training of the other animals, we were able to learn the aspects of training that applied to the dolphins. Most of the training was witnessed. Toward the end of the internship, I was a bit more involved and was allowed to give specific hand signals and even conducted the program for very small children. I assisted a little bit with teaching new behaviors, but mostly I witnessed the shaping of them. One example was when my mentor, Clarissa Black, showed me how she was training one of the dolphins, Liho, to do the hula. The object was to place a hula-hoop around him and he would spin around in the water. He was already

desensitized to the hoop and new the behavior of spinning, but he hadn't learned how to put the two together. Clarissa had taught him how to station properly and have the hoop placed around him. She would then give him the signal to spin around, and he would be reinforced. Gradually, she faded out the signal to spin and he was able to exhibit the behavior only by having the hoop placed around him.

It was very evident that the children's program was extremely effective. There were many times when a child who had participated in the children's program sought me out afterwards to give me a big hug or to ask about the animals. This indicated to me that I had made a big impression on the child and that I was doing my job. One of the things that could possibly be a benefit for the future would be to have two different children's programs. There are enough Japanese guests that having a program specifically for which they could sign up would be much easier for the interns. This program would be exactly the same as the English program, but it would be taught by a Japanese speaker permanently hired on the staff, and Japanese guests would be registered for that program. I speak some Japanese and often taught the entire children's program in Japanese. However, there were times when it was very difficult to filter out all the Japanese children to be with me.

Evaluation of Learning

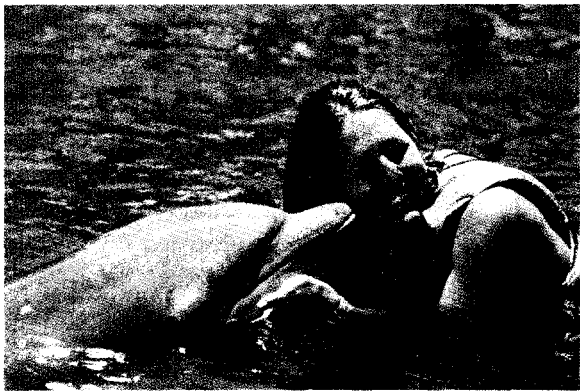


Figure 11: Nai Noa and me

Ever since I was very young, I had always wanted to train dolphins. Interning at Dolphin Quest was therefore a career tester for me. However, I discovered that it wasn't just a career tester for training dolphins. While learning to train dolphins was incredible, and I believe that I could do it as a career, I also learned how much I love teaching. During the school year, I work at a tutoring center, and I learned there that I really enjoy teaching, but this was reinforced through my experience at Dolphin Quest. In addition, I learned of a new place to use Japanese. Prior to

interning at Dolphin Quest, I had had some vague idea of using Japanese in some marine setting, such as conducting international relations between aquaria between the United States and Japan. This was the first time that I was able to put some semblance of that idea into practice.

Something else that I learned was the value of teamwork. Many times through group projects, working in teams can be very difficult, especially when not all the members are on the same page. At Dolphin Quest, however, we were taught to work as a team and were expected to mend any problems that could arise among members of the group. At a place such as Dolphin Quest, a lot of planning goes on, but in most instances things don't go according to that plan. This taught me flexibility and it also taught me just how important members of the team are. If an extra body was needed to do some emergency

task, we all learned how to shuffle our duties to make the accommodation for that person who had to go and do that task. As a team, we were also greatly affected by each other's moods. As it is policy at Dolphin Quest to smile all the time, this became very habitual and infectious. I feel as though I became a better and happier person for smiling all the time.

When I first started at Dolphin Quest, it had been almost a month since I had spoken in Japanese. For someone who is still struggling to become fluent, this is a very long time. Because of this and my lack of confidence in my abilities, I didn't think there was any way that I could conduct any portion of the children's program in Japanese. At our orientation, we were given a list of important Japanese vocabulary and were told that we would have to use it. However, my confidence soared when we were observing one of our first children's programs. We were told that we had to use any means necessary to include all the children, regardless of what language they spoke, in the program. During this particular program, there was one little girl who spoke no English and only knew Japanese. The staff member who was teaching hardly even looked at her. Although this was one of my first days at Dolphin Quest, I was incredibly embarrassed by this staff member, and when it became clear that the girl was no longer impressed with the models and couldn't understand what was happening with the games, I stepped in and began teaching. This was the first time I had taught any portion of the program much less in Japanese. I translated as best as I could, though my Japanese was so rusty that I still wonder if the girl understood the concepts that I was trying to get across. In any case, it broke the ice, and pretty soon, I was taking on more children than one intern is suppose to have just so they could experience the program in their own language of Japanese. I improved quickly just through usage, but also I learned a lot from the children. They would reword things for me in a way that made more sense to them, and I would use those new usages for future programs. In addition to giving the children an opportunity truly to understand what was happening, the parents were also thrilled.

Before this internship, I had always thought of myself as only a leader. I think that I'm kind of a stubborn person who can't take much instruction from my peers, but through Dolphin Quest, I learned that this isn't really the case. I found myself easily complying with the advice and instruction of my fellow interns, which is the way I need to be in any job. I also discovered that I can easily be empowered to make my own decisions about a task once I have learned the basics of that task from my mentors. I feel confident in my abilities to get a task done without supervision. One of the other very important things that I learned is the value of flexibility. This is a skill that I can use in any situation be it at school or work. Things rarely go according to plan, and it's good to have the ability to go with those changes. I had known this before, but it was reinforced during my internship that working hands-on is the best way for me to learn. All of the tasks assigned to me at Dolphin Quest I couldn't have done through instruction alone. I had to do them to learn how to do them.

Acknowledgements

All of the staff at Dolphin Quest contributed advice and insights to everything that I had to do. I would especially like to recognize Clarissa Black who was my mentor in dolphin training. Once a week, on my dolphin training day, I would shadow her in everything she did. She was very good at giving detailed instructions and explaining scenarios to me. Also, Erica Cushing, the aquarist, was very patient and thorough in her explanations regarding all the animals other than the dolphins. Tammy Rach was the master at giving all the interns educating techniques as well as keeping us highly motivated. However, the person who gave me the idea to intern at Dolphin Quest in the first place was Sherwood Maynard at Marine Option Program. Dolphin Quest was the first place he suggested when I asked him about working with dolphins.

References

- Dolphin Quest (2006) a. Animal Welfare Information [Online]. Available: <http://dolphinsquest.org/getthefacts/welfare/> [June 12, 2006].
- Dolphin Quest (2006) b. Dolphin Quest Mission [Online]. Available: <http://dolphinsquest.org/aboutus/mission/> [June 11, 2006].
- Dolphin Quest (2006) c. Our Story [Online]. Available: <http://dolphinsquest.org/aboutus/ourstory/> [June 11, 2006].
- Dor, G. 2004. *Dolphins: their natural history, behavior, and unique relationship with human beings*. Astrolog Publishing House, Hod HaSharon. 192 pages.
- Pryor, K. and Norris, K. 1991. *Dolphin societies: discoveries and puzzles*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 397 pages.
- Ramirez, Ken. 1999. *Animal training: successful animal management through positive reinforcement*. Shedd Aquarium Society, Chicago. 578 pages.
- Reynolds, J. and Rommel, S. 1999. *Biology of marine mammals*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington. 578 pages.