



## **CARAT Certification**

### **Clothier Animal Response Assessment Tool**

*“finding the gem in every individual”*

#### **What Is CARAT?**

The Clothier Animal Response Assessment Tool (CARAT) was developed in 2007 by Suzanne Clothier as an assessment system that categorizes behavior in multiple components that are intuitive and practical. CARAT takes a detailed view of the individual dog as a unique combination of many factors working together to influence, exacerbate, mitigate and enhance each other. Taken as a whole, the CARAT profile offers a richly detailed view of an individual dog in terms of functional behavior and adaptability.

Currently in use at Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB), one of the world's largest guide dog schools, CARAT is used to evaluate the GEB puppies (between 400-500 yearly), breeding stock candidates and all dogs coming in to the GEB Training School for guide training. CARAT is proving its value as a strongly predictive assessment tool.

*“CARAT provides a common language to describe and understand temperament at Guiding Eyes for the Blind and with other organizations. We are delighted that the analysis of CARAT scores done on adult dogs entering our training program has identified multiple traits that were predictive and heritable. These temperament measures can be used in our selective breeding program to improve the genetic quality of our dogs’ temperament. It was exciting to be in on the ground floor of the development of this tool.”*

Jane Russenberger  
Senior Director, Canine Development Center & Genetics  
Guiding Eyes for the Blind

CARAT will continue to prove its value for temperament and behavior assessment for trainers, veterinarians, behaviorists, animal shelter and rescue personnel, caretakers and breeders.

#### **Why Become A Certified CARAT Assessor?**

For the serious animal professional, pursuing CARAT certification offers several advantages:

- Development of exceptional observation skills
- Cutting edge approach to behavior assessment
- An understanding of “the ethology of the individual”
- More humane and effective training
- Skill in developing behavior modification & training plans tailored to the individual
- Improvement in matching individual dogs to the best possible home
- Ability to define and focus on appropriate selection of desired traits for specific jobs and/or within a breeding program

#### **Mission of CARAT Certification Program**

The mission of the CARAT Certification Program is three fold:

1. Promote deeper understanding of animal behavior as a whole
2. Promote deeper understanding of & respect for individual animals as complex and dynamic beings
3. Promote humane, effective training and quality of life appropriate to the individual animal’s abilities and needs



## CARAT Certification

### **Objective of CARAT Certification Program**

The goal of the CARAT Certification Program is the development of assessors highly skilled in the use of CARAT in a wide variety of applications and fields: dog training, animal shelters and rescue organizations, veterinary applications, service dog organizations, breeding programs. At all times, applications of CARAT will be used to deepen understanding of the individual animal.

Specifically, CARAT will assist in identifying an animal's unique abilities, limits and needs, and the specific placement regarding lifestyle, task(s), and/or handler to insure best possible quality of life for that animal. CARAT assessors should be notable for their compassionate and detailed approach to the individual animal.

### **Why Become Certified?**

Certification is aimed at promoting a high level of expertise in assessing dogs using CARAT. Mastering CARAT requires considerable dedication and practice. Certification serves to recognize the study and effort put forth by the certified assessor in developing their skills and to ensure that the individual demonstrates proficiency in both the theoretical and practical applications of CARAT.

### **What Are the Benefits of Certification?**

All certified CARAT assessors will be provided with continued support by Suzanne Clothier and other certified CARAT educators. This support will be in the form of a dedicated online forum, webinars, videos, research projects, events and other materials available only to certified CARAT assessors. They will have the right to market themselves as certified CARAT assessors and be listed on Suzanne Clothier's website as long as their certification remains valid.

### **RE-CERTIFICATION**

There will be requirements for regular recertification at the highest level achieved. This will help insure that all certified CARAT assessors are up-to-date on CARAT research, current practices, and that the assessor's skills remain strong. Certification will be valid for 2 years. Prior to the end of that 2 year term, you will need to re-certify to keep your certification valid. We anticipate that re-certification will be done in person with a designated CARAT professional.

### **IN DEVELOPMENT**

Please be aware that CARAT is a program in development, and changes and improvements in this program are inevitable. We anticipate on-going refinements and improvements, and possible changes to the information provided here.

### **QUESTIONS? Please contact us for more information:**

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## CARAT Certification Curriculum

### Level 1.1 INTRO TO CARAT (3 days)

#### LEVEL 1 Objectives

*Level 1 Assessors will be able to apply the Level 1 CARAT traits and score sheet to evaluate dogs in individual settings. The assessor will be able to accurately interpret and translate the CARAT profile into a well rounded assessment of the individual.*

*They will develop skills in matching the correct dog with the appropriate lifestyle, home or task; to provide owners with valuable insights on how to create high quality environments that meet the needs of an individual animal; to develop training plans that best support the individual animal; to identify potentially difficult animals based on their CARAT profiles.*

#### BASIC CONCEPTS

- Terminology/glossary
- The Individual Animal
  - an “ethology of the individual”
  - temperament as
    - patterns of response
    - genetic + experiential
- Function & Adaptability
  - what is functional behavior?
  - niche behavior vs. dysfunction
- Bi-Directional Scoring
  - the exponential failure curve
  - balanced, left & right shift

#### CARAT Traits

- based on observable behaviors
- behavior specific, not breed specific
- CORE – Energy, Arousal, Resilience
- SOCIAL
  - Sociability – People
  - Social Tolerance – People
  - Social Use of Space – People
- INTERACTIVE
  - Biddability – Familiar, Unfamiliar
  - Patience
- AWARENESS - VAKO
- PERSISTENCE - VAKO, Predatory/Chase
- CONFIDENCE – Environmental, Social/People
- SELF MODULATION

#### FOR EACH TRAIT

- Observation
- Using the carat rubrics
- Factors affecting accurate observation

#### OBSERVATION SKILLS

- Building observation skills
- Video in real time
- Observations vs. interpretation

### Level 1.2 (2 days)

*Builds on Level 1.1 information & skills*

#### INTERACTIONS

- No trait in a vacuum
- Important dyads & triads

#### PROFILES

- Understanding the Level 1 Profile
- Profiles vs. breed standards
- Profiles for specific tasks/lifestyles

#### REVERSE ENGINEERING

- Profiles and a given scenario: predicting behavior
- Identify the dog: matching profiles and videos
- Task/lifestyle: design acceptable dog(s) & defend behaviorally

#### OBSERVATION SKILLS

- Building further observation skills
- CARAT in formal and informal settings
- Video & live dogs in real time

#### INTERPRETATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Observations vs. interpretation
- Cognitive errors
- Defensible narrative built on observations

#### HUMANE ASSESSMENTS

- Training vs. testing
- Formal vs. informal assessments
- Provoking & evoking behaviors



## **Level 1.3 (3 days)**

*Builds on Level 1.1 & 1.2 information & skills*

### PROFILES

- Understanding the Level 1 Profile
- Profiles vs. breed standards
- Profiles for specific tasks/lifestyles

### REVERSE ENGINEERING

- Profiles and a given scenario: predicting behavior
- Identify the dog: matching profiles and videos
- Potential ranges, interactions, cautions

### OBSERVATION SKILLS

- Rapid assessment
- “cream to the top” scoring approach
- Using other assessments for CARAT scoring
- Video & live dogs in real time

### INTERPRETATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Defensible narrative built on observations
- From score sheets to interpretation
- From interpretation to recommendations

### HUMANE ASSESSMENTS

- Asking the questions
  - environment, time & space
  - humane provocations
  - abort points
  - iterations
- Recognizing the answers
  - patterns vs. fluke
  - replicability
- “Follow-up questions”
- Additional testing

## **LEVEL 1 Requirements**

- Attend all CARAT Level I workshops
- Provide videotape of five dogs of the candidate’s choice with corresponding CARAT scores and a written assessment for each dog as an individual
- At least 2 of the 5 dogs should be shelter/rescue dogs prior to placement, with the assessment to include suitable/unsuitable placement(s) for each dog
- Review and score five dogs provided by CARAT Educators, and provide a written assessment for each dog as an individual, and further assessment of suitable/unsuitable placement(s) for each dog
- Pass a written examination

A certified CARAT assessor will be able to:

- Assess dogs using Level 1 traits
- Work with shelter/rescues to do basic assessments
- Identify dogs suitable for a specific lifestyle or task
- Help clients define desirable CARAT profile for specific lifestyle or task
- Give brief 1.5-2 hour “CARAT Intro” presentations to 25 or less people (based on materials provided)

A certified CARAT Level 1 assessor:

- *Is not* qualified to make dog/dog CARAT assessments, administer the Clothier Puppy Test or the Clothier IFT/Broodstock Evaluation
- *should not* select breeding stock, make life or death decisions for any animal and/or select or recommend any animal for high performance or specialized competitive or service dog training unless such decisions are based on knowledge, skills & experience existent prior to CARAT training

*Expected time frame: approximately one year*

### **NEED:**

- video camera
- basic video editing software & skills
- a computer capable of video editing
- Internet access for email, forum group, and online study materials (including video).
- to purchase reference books & materials that support understanding of CARAT at this level.

Materials will be presented in English.



## **Level 2**

*Builds on Level 1 information & skills*

### **LEVEL 2 Objectives**

*Level 2 assessors will incorporate additional CARAT traits into their understanding, including the dog-to-dog behaviors. They will have greater, more nuanced understanding of the relationships and interactions between traits. They will be able to readily recognize the patterns that reflect the profiles of dogs well suited to specific tasks. Additionally, they will be able to create a profile with acceptable ranges for a specific task. They will be expected to assess dog-to-dog interactions in individual and group settings, including within shelter and rescue settings.*

*Level 2 assessors will be expected to demonstrate a foundational understanding of humane testing and assessment. They will be able to demonstrate a proficiency in multiple ways to provoke and evoke specific responses for specialized or specific evaluations.*

#### **ADDITIONAL TRAITS:**

- SOCIAL
  - Sociability – Dogs
  - Social Tolerance – Dogs
  - Social Use of Space – Dogs
- PERSISTENCE - Location, Object, Social
- REACTIVITY – Speed - VAKO, Object, Dog
- REACTIVITY – Effect - VAKO, Object, Dog
- CONFIDENCE - Social – Dogs

For each trait

- specifics of observing for the trait(s)
- using the CARAT Rubrics
- factors affecting accurate observation or assessment
- what may be confused with this trait, why & how to distinguish

#### **INTERACTIONS**

- Mitigation & exacerbation
- Important dyads/triads

#### **PROFILES**

- Profiles for specific tasks/lifestyles
- Defining template for specific purpose/task
- Defining acceptable ranges for given task/lifestyle
- Prioritizing the profile

#### **REVERSE ENGINEERING**

- Profiles and scenarios: predicting behavior
- Identify the dog: matching profiles and videos
- Task/lifestyle: design acceptable dog(s) & defend behaviorally

#### **REAL TIME ASSESSMENTS**

- Video & live dogs in real time

#### **INTERPRETATION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Defensible narrative built on observations
- From score sheets to interpretation
- From interpretation to recommendations

#### **HUMANE ASSESSMENTS**

- Asking the questions
  - use of environment, time & space
  - humane provocations & abort points
  - safety & target dogs
- Recognizing the answers
  - patterns, replicability & iterations
- Follow-up questions
- Additional testing

*You will need to purchase a few reference books & materials that support understanding of CARAT at this level.*

#### **LEVEL 2 Requirements**

- CARAT Level 1 certification
- Attend CARAT Level 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 workshops.
- Provide videotape of five dogs of the candidate's choice with corresponding CARAT scores and a written assessment for each dog
- Live assessment of five dogs provided by CARAT Educators, provide CARAT scoring and a written assessment for each dog
- References from three clients where CARAT was used to assess dogs.
- Pass a written examination.

*Expected time frame: approximately one year*

A Level 2 certified CARAT assessor will be able to:

- Assess dogs using the Level 2 traits in formal or informal settings
- Assess dog/dog interactions
- Assess dogs in individual and group settings
- Create CARAT profile for specific lifestyle or task
- Use a variety of techniques for testing and evaluating, with multiple ways of provoking a given behavior or trait



### **Level 3**

*Builds on Level 1 & Level 2 information & skills*

#### **LEVEL 3 Objectives**

*Level 3 assessors are expected to have a profound understanding of how to evaluate dogs in every setting and situation, including being able to customize an assessment suitable to that situation, that dog and what needs to be evaluated. Level 3 assessors will learn to administer the Clothier Puppy Test and the Clothier IFT/Broodstock Test. It is expected that Level 3 assessors will be able to assess entire litters, select breeding stock and performance dogs.*

*Level 3 assessors are eligible to attend further courses to become CARAT educators who can teach CARAT Level 1 workshops using approved CARAT materials and programs.*

LEVEL 3 incorporates all of the information of Level 1 and Level 2. At this level, it is expected that the student will be fluent in observation, scoring, interpretation, and can work with multiple dog assessments in real time. There should be considerable skill in both written and oral interpretations and recommendations.

Additionally, certification at Level 3 will prepare the student for becoming an instructor of Level 1.1.

- Able to teach key points for each Level 1 trait
- Specifics of the underlying structures:
  - neurological
  - behavioral
  - neuromuscular
  - social
  - developmental

#### **REAL TIME ASSESSMENTS**

- Live dogs in real time
- Multiple dog groups & entire litters
- Demonstrable skills in humanely provoking & evoking specific traits or behaviors in variable ways
- Administering Clothier Puppy, IFT/Adult tests

#### **INTERPRETATION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Defensible narrative built on observations
- From score sheets to interpretation
- From interpretation to recommendations

- Demonstrated (via written & video) longitudinal results of observations, interpretations & recommendations implemented

#### **THE PHYSICAL DOG**

- Recognizing physical conditions that impact behavior & performance
  - Conformation
  - Common structural defects
  - Gait analysis
  - Functional movement
- Basic health parameters
- Physiological parameters (respiration, heart rate, motor movements, temperature)

*You will need to purchase reference books & materials that support understanding of CARAT at this level.*

#### **Level 3 Requirements**

- CARAT Level 1 and 2 certifications
- Attend 3 multiple-day Level 3 CARAT workshops
- Serve as a mentor to Level 2 students
- Provide videotape of minimum one litter assessment (5 puppies), CARAT profiles, with written assessments and recommendations for each puppy.
- Demonstrating proficiency in administering the Clothier Puppy Test
- Provide longitudinal follow-up CARAT scores for these puppies at age 6-18 months of age
- Pass a written examination
- Pass an oral examination with 3 dogs assessed in-person with the CARAT educators, with verbal reasoning presented for the profiles and recommendations for each individual

*Expected time frame: approximately one year*

At Level 3, a certified CARAT assessor will be able to:

- Assess dogs in formal or informal settings
- Assess dog/dog interactions
- Assess dogs in individual and group settings
- Apply the Clothier Puppy Test and IFT/Adult Test
- Assess litters and provide written recommendations for appropriate placement(s) of each puppy
- Select breeding stock & performance animals based on specific criteria
- Work as a mentor for CARAT Level 1 students
- Prepare to become a CARAT Level 1 Instructor



## CARAT CERTIFICATION - FEES

For all levels:

- Fees do not include any seminar fees or expenses related to attending the required seminars, such as travel, lodging, meals, etc. The fees listed below for all levels relate to the printed and online study materials and support provided, and to the costs of testing and certification. It is not possible to certify in CARAT based solely on seminar participation.
- Payment plans are available for all participants.
- All fees are non-refundable. In the event that the student needs to temporarily suspend their studies, they must inform us in writing of this need for a 3 month extension to the study period.
- **Non-profit pricing:** 15% discount for 2 or more students enrolled at the same time by the hosting non-profit. CARAT students do not have to be employees of the non-profit, but must be active volunteers. Please contact us for further details & requirements.

**LEVEL 1 FEES:** \$1800.00, payable as

- \$800.00 for Level 1.2 online study materials (forum, email support, self-paced modules, quizzes, video & tests). Materials will be available for 9 months. Must pass the 1.2 test\* to continue on to 1.3 seminar & materials.  
*\*This test may be taken 3x before a repeat of Level 1.2 is required.*
- \$600.00 for Level 1.3 online study materials, which will be available for 9 months.
- \$400.00 for final written tests, video review & certification.

**LEVEL 2 FEES:** \$1800.00, payable as

- \$800.00 payable prior to attendance at Level 2.1 seminar. This provides access to online study materials (forum, email support, self-paced modules, quizzes, video & tests, webinars). Level 2 participants will have a private discussion forum open only to certified CARAT assessors. Materials will be available for 9 months. An individual mentor will be assigned to each Level 2 participant.
- \$600.00 payable prior to attendance at Level 2.2 seminar for access to Level 2.2 online study materials & mentoring, which will be available for 9 months.
- \$400.00 for final written tests, video review & certification.

**LEVEL 3 FEES:** \$1800.00, payable as

- \$600.00 payable prior to attendance at Level 3.1 seminar. Provides access to online study materials (forum, email support, self-paced modules, quizzes, video & tests, webinars). Level 3 participants will have a private discussion forum open only to Level 2 or higher certified CARAT assessors. Materials will be available for 9 months. An individual mentor will be assigned to each Level 2 participant.
- \$600.00 payable prior to attendance at Level 3.2 seminar for access to Level 3.2 online study materials & mentoring, which will be available for 9 months.
- \$600.00 for final written tests, video review & certification.