

International Society for Equitation Science Conference in Canada

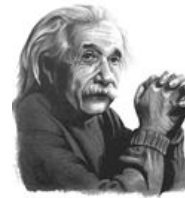
By Marilee Moss

I had the pleasure of attending the 2015 International Society for Equitation Science (ISES) Conference held in Vancouver, BC this August. This was the first time Canada played host to this international body and proved a fantastic conference. The theme was “Ethical Equitation for all Equestrian Disciplines: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges”. It was filled with thought provoking academic presentations, poster presentations, as well as, a practical day.

You may be wondering what is Equitation Science? ISES was founded in 2007 by a group of scientists, psychologists, veterinarians, and animal behaviourists united in their devotion to competitive equestrian sport and their collective desire to promote equine well-being. Equitation Science uses an evidence-based, scientific approach to explain horse training and to ensure that techniques are effective and do not compromise horse welfare.

Having attended a previous conference held at Michigan State University in 2007, I was excited to see the evolving research in different areas of equine welfare. Some presentations that stood out in my mind were;

- Revisiting the Equitation Science Training Principles. *Andrew McLean & Paul McGreevy*
There are 10 principles; I highly recommend all equestrians look at these in detail on the website:
<http://www.equitation-science.com/learning-theory-in-equitation>
- Subjective scoring of rideability by professional riders – is it linked to rein tension and occurrence of conflict behaviour? *Janne Winther Christensen et al*
- The understanding of equine learning theory by equine Veterinarians. *Gemma Pearson et al*
- When I look into your eyes... What eye wrinkles in horses tell us about their emotional state. *Sara Hintze et al*



“Insanity:
doing the same thing
over and over again
and expecting
different results.”
Albert Einstein

The proceedings from the conference are posted here for those interested in more detail:

http://www.equitation-science.com/documents/Conferences/2015/ISES_Conference_Proceedings_2015.pdf

The practical day was held at the beautiful Southlands Equestrian Park. It stirred fond memories from my competitive days there! The four disciplines presented were; dressage, jumping, western and para dressage. All sessions put learning theory into practice, including the correct use of positive and negative reinforcement and classical conditioning. On occasion, negative reinforcement can be misunderstood to be a negative way of training, when in actual fact it is a scientific term meaning the removal of pressure when the correct response occurs.

One of the presenters, New Zealand Grand Prix dressage rider Jody Hartstone, impressed the crowd with her demonstration in foundation training. She has an amazing ability to present a large amount of vital information in a condensed amount of time. I was lucky enough to have met and trained with Jody during my time spent in NZ from 2006 to 2012 and continue our friendship and knowledge sharing to this day.

ISES conferences are held annually all around the world, the next being France 2016.

About Marilee Moss – FEI Dressage competitor with international coaching experience. Living in Stonewall with her young family, offers lessons as a freelance instructor. She enjoys working with all levels and all disciplines. Simple, straightforward dressage, perfect the basics and enjoy the results.



Figure 1 Practical Day Presenters



Figure 2 De-sensitising techniques in foundation training.