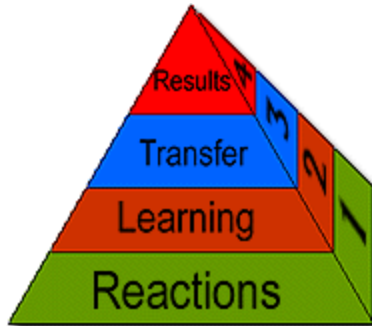


Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation

Overview | [Level 1: Reaction](#) | [Level 2: Learning](#) | [Level 3: Transfer](#) | [Level 4: Results](#) | [Limitations](#) |



Overview

Donald Kirkpatrick became interested in evaluating training programs in 1952 as he wrote his PhD dissertation--"Evaluating a Human Relations Training Program for Foremen and Supervisors." In a series of articles published in 1959, he described a four-stage model for evaluating training programs. Del Grazio and others elaborated on Kirkpatrick's model and began referring to Kirkpatrick's stages as levels. In 1994, Kirkpatrick published *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*. He considers this book his main contribution to the field and has published subsequent books and articles about evaluation.

Kirkpatrick cites the following reasons for evaluating training programs:

- To decide whether to continue offering a particular training program
- To improve future programs
- To validate your existence and job as a training professional

The purpose of this web site is to provide an overview of and implementation guidelines for the following four levels of evaluation as described by Kirkpatrick: [Level 1: Reaction](#), [Level 2: Learning](#), [Level 3: Behavior](#), and [Level 4: Results](#). The complexity of evaluation increases as the levels progress from 1 to 4. Kirkpatrick urges evaluators to proceed through all four levels to determine a training program's value.

Resource: Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1998). Another look at evaluating training programs. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

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Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation



[Overview](#)

Level 1: Reaction

Level 1: Reaction

Level 1 of Kirkpatrick's four-level model measures the reaction of trainees to the training program. The purpose of measuring reaction is to ensure that trainees are motivated and interested in learning.

[Level 2: Learning](#)

Implementation guidelines:

[Level 3: Behavior](#)

[Level 4: Results](#)

[Limitations](#)

- Determine what you want to find out.
- Design a form that will quantify reactions.
- Encourage written comments and suggestions.
- Attain an immediate response rate of 100%.
- Seek honest reactions.
- Develop acceptable standards.
- Measure reactions against the standards and take appropriate action.
- Communicate the reactions as appropriate.

Resource: Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1998). Another look at evaluating training programs. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

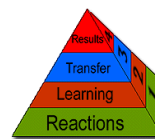
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Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation



Overview Level 2: Learning

Level 1: Reaction

Level 2 of Kirkpatrick's four-level model measures the knowledge acquired, skills improved, or attitudes changed as a result of the training. Application of the new knowledge, skills, or attitudes is not measured at this level.

Level 2: Learning

Implementation guidelines:

Level 3: Behavior

- Use a control group, if feasible.
- Evaluate knowledge, skills, or attitudes (KSAs) both before and after training. Use a paper and pencil test to measure knowledge and skills. Use a performance test to measure attitudes.
- Attain a response rate of 100%.
- Use the results of the evaluation to take appropriate action.

Level 4: Results

Limitations

Resource: Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1998). Another look at evaluating training programs. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

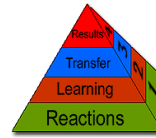
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Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation



Overview **Level 3: Behavior**

Level 1: Reaction

Level 3 of Kirkpatrick's four-level model measures the transfer of training or if trainees are applying new knowledge, skills, or attitudes on the job.

Level 2: Learning

Implementation guidelines:

Level 3: Behavior

- Use a control group, if feasible.
- Allow enough time for a change in behavior to take place.
- Survey or interview one or more of the following groups: trainees, their bosses, their subordinates, and others who often observe trainees' behavior on the job.
- Choose 100 trainees or an appropriate sampling.
- Repeat the evaluation at appropriate times.
- Consider the cost of evaluation versus the potential benefits.

Level 4: Results

Limitations

Resource: Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1998). Another look at evaluating training programs. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

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Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation



Overview Level 4: Results

Level 1: Reaction

Level 4 of Kirkpatrick's four-level model measures the result of training as it relates to factors such as sales, productivity, profit, costs, employee turnover, and product/service quality.

Level 2: Learning

Implementation guidelines:

Level 3: Behavior

- Use a control group, if feasible.
- Allow enough time for results to be achieved.
- Measure both before and after training, if feasible.
- Repeat the measurement at appropriate times.
- Consider the cost of evaluation versus the potential benefits.
- Be satisfied with the evidence if absolute proof isn't possible to attain.

Level 4: Results

Limitations

Resource: Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1998). Another look at evaluating training programs. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training & Development.

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Kirkpatrick's Levels of Evaluation



[Overview](#) **Limitations**

[Level 1: Reaction](#)

Levels 1 & 2

Reeves and Hedberg (2003) criticize Kirkpatrick's approach as overly simplistic for the following reasons:

[Level 2: Learning](#)

[Level 3: Behavior](#)

- Control groups are rarely feasible in education or training contexts
- Paper-and-pencil tests lack reliability and validity in measuring KSAs
- 100% response rate is unrealistic
- Evaluation results are not the only input to decision-making within an organization

[Level 4: Results](#)

Levels 3 & 4

Limitations

Levels 3 and 4 of Kirkpatrick's model fit within Impact evaluation in the Reeves and Hedberg model (2003). Reeves and Hedberg do not separate behavior from results. In their experience, results are often influenced by many factors other than training. They advise against concentrating too much effort in one evaluation strategy and advocate collecting data from multiple sources using multiple methods.

Resource: Reeves, T.C. & Hedberg, J.G. (2003). Interactive learning systems evaluation. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

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