WORK-LEARNING RESEARCH

Donald Kirkpatrick was NOT the Originator of the Four-Level Model of Learning Evaluation

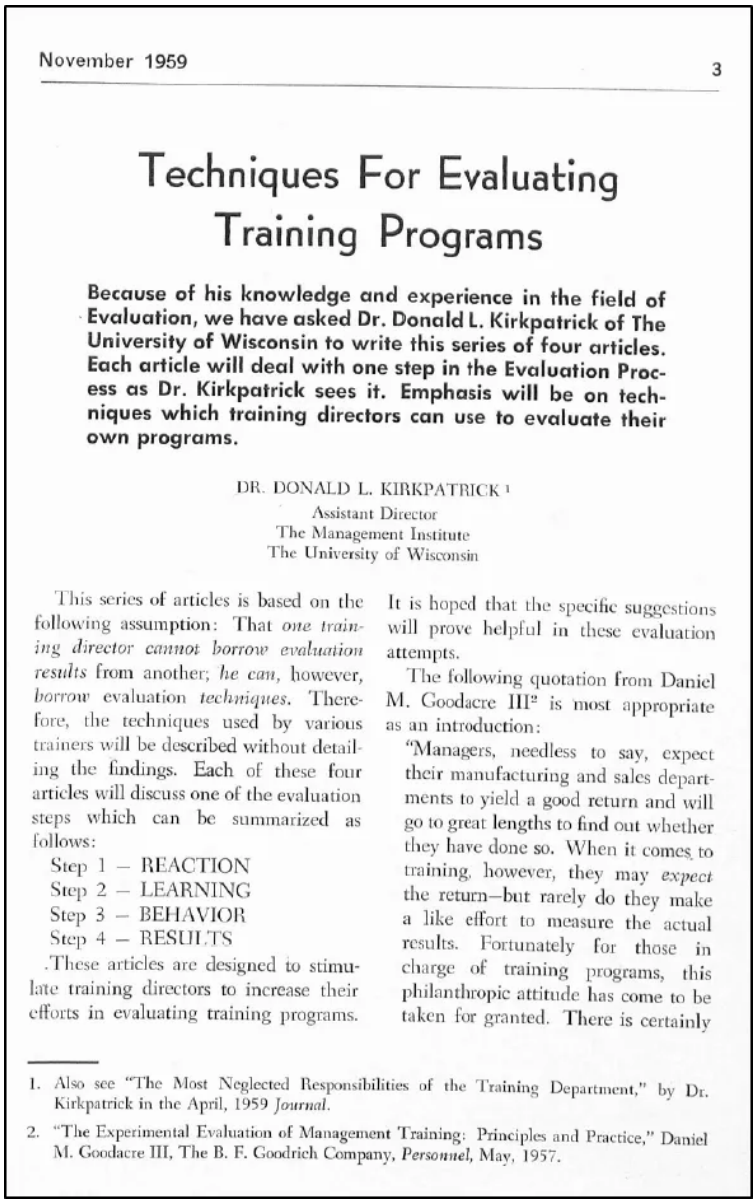
LEARNING INDUSTRY, LEARNING MEASUREMENT, MYTHS AND WORSE, NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS, PEOPLE

Donald Kirkpatrick (1924-2014) was a giant in the workplace learning and development field, widely known for creating the four-level model of learning evaluation. Evidence however contradicts this creation myth and points to Raymond Katzell, a distinguished industrial-organizational psychologist, as the true originator. This, of course, does not diminish Don Kirkpatrick's contribution to framing and popularizing the four-level framework of learning evaluation.

The Four-Levels Creation Myth

The four-level model is traditionally traced back to a series of four articles Donald Kirkpatrick wrote in 1959 and 1960, each article covering one of the four levels, Reaction, Learning, Behavior, Results. These articles were published in the magazine of ASTD (then called the American Society of

Training Directors). Here's a picture of the first page of the first article:



November 1959 3

Techniques For Evaluating Training Programs

Because of his knowledge and experience in the field of Evaluation, we have asked Dr. Donald L. Kirkpatrick of The University of Wisconsin to write this series of four articles. Each article will deal with one step in the Evaluation Process as Dr. Kirkpatrick sees it. Emphasis will be on techniques which training directors can use to evaluate their own programs.

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This series of articles is based on the following assumption: That *one training director cannot borrow evaluation results* from another; *he can*, however, *borrow* evaluation *techniques*. Therefore, the techniques used by various trainers will be described without detailing the findings. Each of these four articles will discuss one of the evaluation steps which can be summarized as follows:

Step 1 – REACTION
Step 2 – LEARNING
Step 3 – BEHAVIOR
Step 4 – RESULTS

These articles are designed to stimulate training directors to increase their efforts in evaluating training programs. It is hoped that the specific suggestions will prove helpful in these evaluation attempts.

The following quotation from Daniel M. Goodacre III[2] is most appropriate as an introduction:

"Managers, needless to say, expect their manufacturing and sales departments to yield a good return and will go to great lengths to find out whether they have done so. When it comes to training, however, they may *expect* the return—but rarely do they make a like effort to measure the actual results. Fortunately for those in charge of training programs, this philanthropic attitude has come to be taken for granted. There is certainly

1. Also see "The Most Neglected Responsibilities of the Training Department," by Dr. Kirkpatrick in the April, 1959 *Journal*.
2. "The Experimental Evaluation of Management Training: Principles and Practice," Daniel M. Goodacre III, The B. F. Goodrich Company, *Personnel*, May, 1957.

In June of 1977, ASTD (known by then as the American Society of Training and Development, now ATD, the Association for Talent Development) reissued Kirkpatrick's original four articles, combining them into one article in the Training and Development Journal. The story has always been that it was those four articles that introduced the world to the four-level model of training evaluation.

In 1994, in the first edition of his book, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*, Donald Kirkpatrick wrote:

> *"In 1959, I wrote a series of four articles called 'Techniques for Evaluating Training Programs,' published in* Training and Development*, the journal of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The articles described the four levels of evaluation that I had formulated. I am not sure where I got the idea for this model, but the concept originated with work on my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, Madison."* (p. xiii). [Will's Note: Kirkpatrick was slightly inaccurate here. At the time of his four articles, the initials ASTD stood for the American Society of Training Directors and the four articles were published in the *Journal of the American Society of Training Directors*. This doesn't diminish Kirkpatrick's central point: that he was the person who formulated the four levels of learning evaluation].

In 2011, in a tribute to Dr. Kirkpatrick, he is asked about how he came up with the four levels. This is what he said in that video tribute [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WRkHYuzXQI] :

> *"[after I finished my dissertation in 1954], between 54 and 59 I did some research on behavior and results. I went into companies. I*

> *found out are you using what you learned and if so what can you show any evidence of productivity or quality or more sales or anything from it. So I did some research and then in 1959 Bob Craig, editor of the ASTD journal, called me and said, 'Don, I understand you've done some research on evaluation would you write an article?' I said, 'Bob, I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll write four articles, one on reaction, one on learning, one on behavior, and one on results.'"*

In 2014, when asked to reminisce on his legacy, Dr. Kirkpatrick said this:

> *"When I developed the four levels in the 1950s, I had no idea that they would turn into my legacy. I simply needed a way to determine if the programs I had developed for managers and supervisors were successful in helping them perform better on the job. No models available at that time quite fit the bill, so I created something that I thought was useful, implemented it, and wrote my dissertation about it."* (Quote from blog post [https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Blog/Legacy-Will-You-Leave] published January 22, 2014).

As recently as this month (January 2018 [https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/About-Us/Don-Kirkpatrick]), on the Kirkpatrick Partners website, the following is written:

> *"Don was the creator of the Kirkpatrick Model, the most recognized and widely used training evaluation model in the world. The four levels were developed in the writing of his Ph.D. dissertation,* Evaluating a Human Relations Training Program for Supervisors.*"*

Despite these public pronouncements, Kirkpatrick's legendary 1959-1960 articles were not the first published evidence of a four-level evaluation approach.

Raymond Katzell's Four-Step Framework of Evaluation

In an article written by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1956, the following "steps" were laid out and were attributed to "*Raymond Katzell, a well known authority in the field [of training evaluation]*."

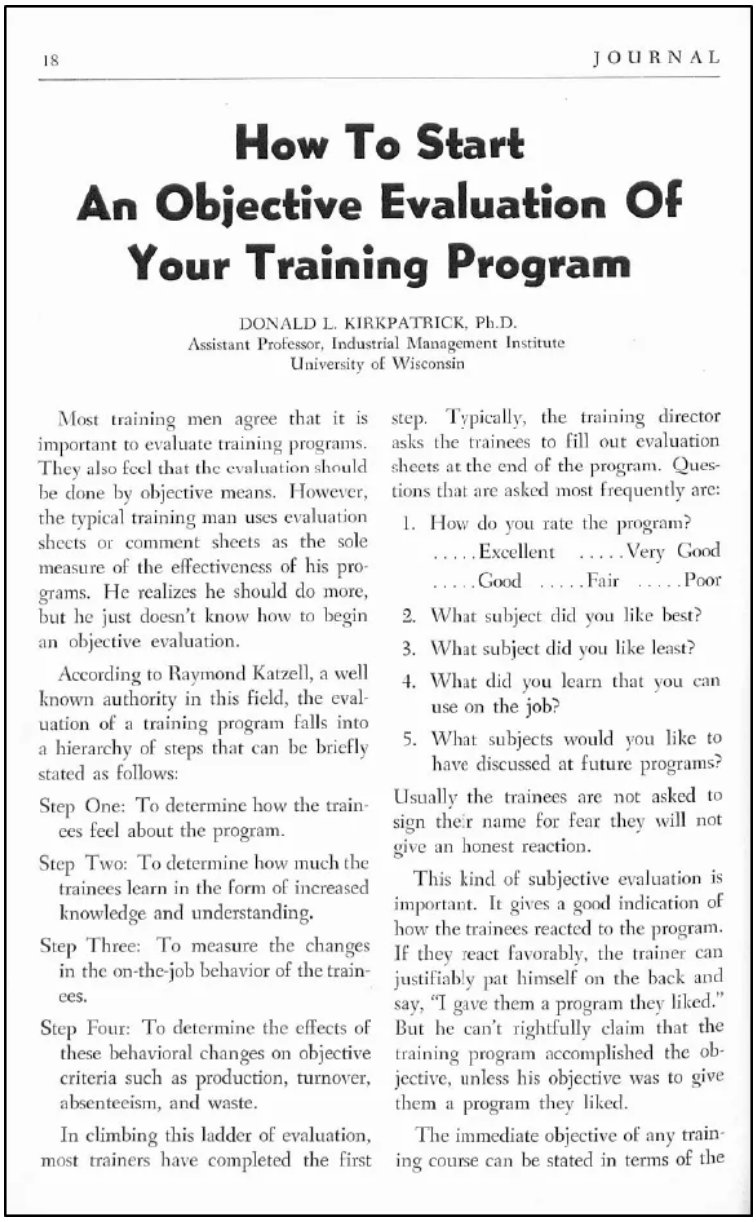
1. *To determine how the trainees feel about the program.*
2. *To determine how much the trainees learn in the form of increased knowledge and understanding.*
3. *To measure the changes in the on-the-job behavior of the trainees.*
4. *To determine the effects of these behavioral changes on objective criteria such as production, turnover, absenteeism, and waste.*

These four steps are the same as Kirkpatrick's four levels, except there are no labels.

Raymond Katzell went on to a long and distinguished career as an industrial-organizational psychologist, even winning the Society for Industrial and Organizational Performance's Distinguished Scientific Contributions award.

Raymond Katzell. Picture used by SIOP (Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology) when they talk about The Raymond A. Katzell Media Award in I-O Psychology.

The first page of Kirkpatrick's 1956 article—written three years *before* his famous 1959 introduction to the four levels—is pictured below:



18 JOURNAL

How To Start An Objective Evaluation Of Your Training Program

DONALD L. KIRKPATRICK, Ph.D.
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Most training men agree that it is important to evaluate training programs. They also feel that the evaluation should be done by objective means. However, the typical training man uses evaluation sheets or comment sheets as the sole measure of the effectiveness of his programs. He realizes he should do more, but he just doesn't know how to begin an objective evaluation.

According to Raymond Katzell, a well known authority in this field, the evaluation of a training program falls into a hierarchy of steps that can be briefly stated as follows:

Step One: To determine how the trainees feel about the program.

Step Two: To determine how much the trainees learn in the form of increased knowledge and understanding.

Step Three: To measure the changes in the on-the-job behavior of the trainees.

Step Four: To determine the effects of these behavioral changes on objective criteria such as production, turnover, absenteeism, and waste.

In climbing this ladder of evaluation, most trainers have completed the first step. Typically, the training director asks the trainees to fill out evaluation sheets at the end of the program. Questions that are asked most frequently are:

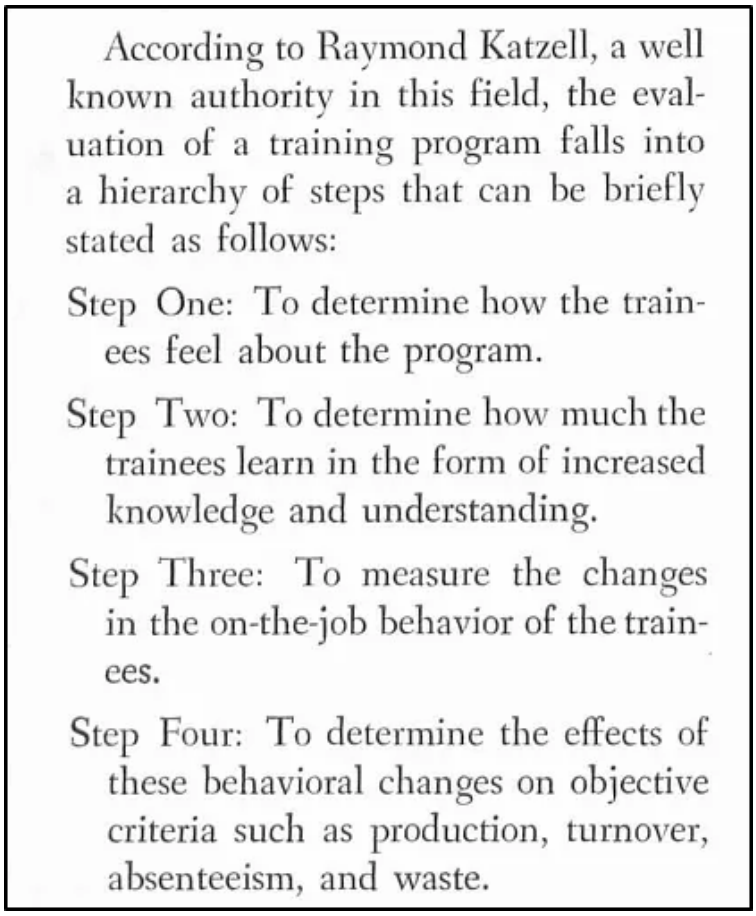
1. How do you rate the program?
   .....Excellent .....Very Good
   .....Good .....Fair .....Poor
2. What subject did you like best?
3. What subject did you like least?
4. What did you learn that you can use on the job?
5. What subjects would you like to have discussed at future programs?

Usually the trainees are not asked to sign their name for fear they will not give an honest reaction.

This kind of subjective evaluation is important. It gives a good indication of how the trainees reacted to the program. If they react favorably, the trainer can justifiably pat himself on the back and say, "I gave them a program they liked." But he can't rightfully claim that the training program accomplished the objective, unless his objective was to give them a program they liked.

The immediate objective of any training course can be stated in terms of the

And here is a higher-resolution view of the quote from that front page, regarding Katzell's contribution:



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Step Four: To determine the effects of these behavioral changes on objective criteria such as production, turnover, absenteeism, and waste.

So Donald Kirkpatrick mentions Katzell's four-step model in 1956, but not in 1959 when he—Kirkpatrick—introduces the four labels in his classic set of four articles.

It Appears that Kirkpatrick Never Mentions Katzell's Four Steps Again

As far I can tell, after searching for and examining many publications, Donald Kirkpatrick never mentioned Katzell's four steps after his 1956 article.

Three years after the 1956 article, Kirkpatrick did *not* mention Katzell's taxonomy when he wrote his four famous articles in 1959. He *did* mention an unrelated article where Katzell was a co-author (Merrihue & Katzell, 1955), but he did *not* mention Katzell's four steps.

Neither did Kirkpatrick mention Katzell in his 1994 book, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*.

Nor did Kirkpatrick mention Katzell in the third edition of the book, written with Jim Kirkpatrick, his son.

Nor was Katzell mentioned in a later version of the book written by Jim and Wendy Kirkpatrick in 2016. I spoke with Jim and Wendy recently (January 2018), and they seemed as surprised as I was about the 1956 article and about Raymond Katzell.

Nor did Donald Kirkpatrick mention Katzell in any of the interviews he did to mark the many anniversaries of his original 1959-1960 articles.

To summarize, Katzell, despite coming up with the four-step taxonomy of learning evaluation, was only given credit by Kirkpatrick once, in the 1956 article, three years prior to the articles that introduced the world to the Kirkpatrick Model's four labels.

Kirkpatrick's Dissertation

Kirkpatrick did *not* introduce the four-levels in his 1954 dissertation. There is not even a hint at a four-level framework.

In his dissertation, Kirkpatrick cited two publications by Katzell. The first, was an article from 1948, "Testing a Training Program in Human Relations." That article studies the effect of leadership training, but makes no mention of Katzell's four steps. It does, however, hint at the value of measuring on-the-job performance, in this case the value of leadership behaviors. Katzell writes, "*Ideally, a training program of this sort [a leadership training program] should be evaluated*

in terms of the on-the-job behavior of those with whom the trainees come in contact."

The second Katzell article cited by Kirkpatrick in his dissertation was an article entitled, "*Can We Evaluate Training?*" from 1952. Unfortunately, it was a mimeographed article published by the Industrial Management Institute at the University of Wisconsin, and seems to be lost to history. Even after several weeks of effort (in late 2017), the University of Wisconsin Archives could not locate the article. Interestingly, in a 1955 publication entitled, "Monthly Checklist of State Publications https://books.google.com/books?id=c8QyAAAAIAAJ&q=%22can+we+evaluate+training%228" a subtitle was added to Katzell's *Can We Evaluate Training? The subtitle was:* "*A summary of a one day Conference for Training Managers*" from April 23, 1952.

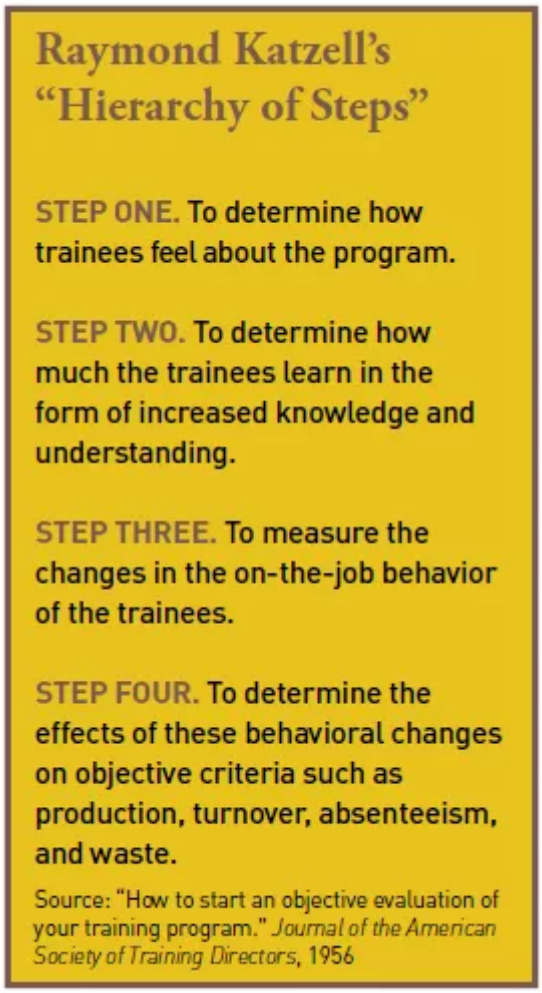
To be clear, Kirkpatrick did *not* mention the four levels in his 1954 dissertation. The four levels notion came later.

How I Learned about Katzell's Contribution

I've spent the last several years studying learning evaluation, and as part of these efforts, I decided to find Kirkpatrick's original four articles and reread them. ATD (The Association for Talent Development) in 2017 had a wonderful archive of the articles it had published over the years. As I searched for "Kirkpatrick," several other articles—besides the famous four—came up, including the 1956 article. I was absolutely freaking stunned when I read it. Donald Kirkpatrick had cited Katzell as the originator of the four level notion!!!

I immediately began searching for more information on the Kirkpatrick-Katzell connection

and found that I wasn't the first person to uncover the connection. I found an article by Stephen Smith who acknowledged Kazell's contribution in 2008, also in an ASTD publication. I communicated with Smith recently (December 2017) and he had nothing but kind words to say about Donald Kirkpatrick, who he said coached him on training evaluations. Here is a graphic taken directly from Smith's 2008 article:



Smith's article was not focused on Katzell's contribution to the four levels, which is probably why it wasn't more widely cited. In 2011, Cynthia Lewis wrote a dissertation [http://sdsu-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.10/1424/Le\ and directly compared the Katzell and Kirkpatrick formulations. She appears to have learned about Katzell's contribution from Smith's 2008 article. Lewis's (2011) comparison chart is reproduced below:

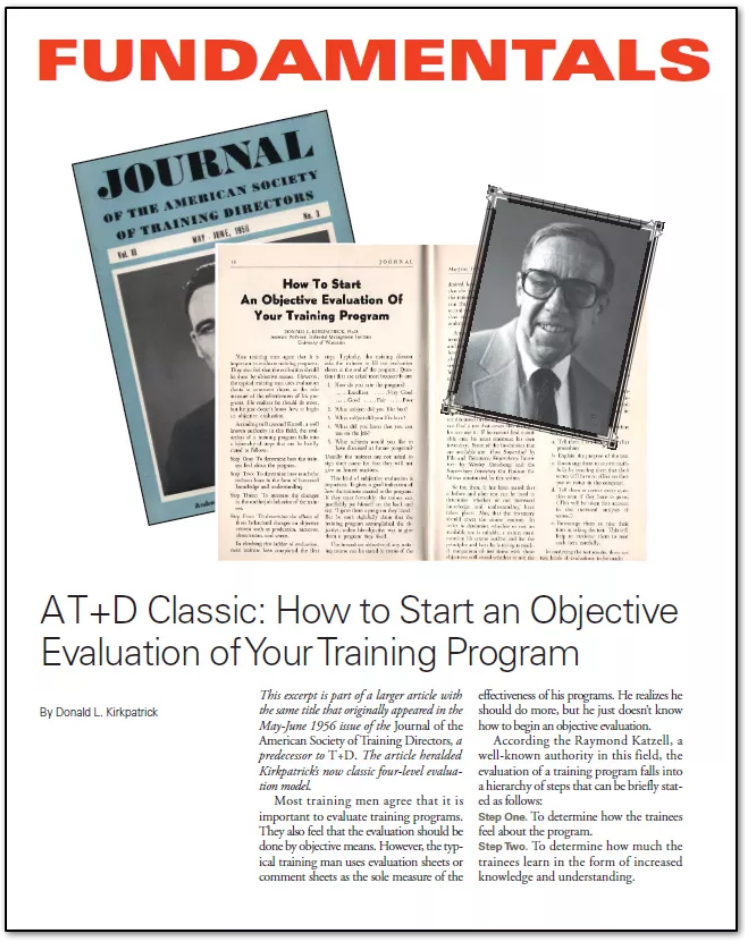
Donald L. Kirkpatrick is best known for creating a four-level model for training evaluation. Kirkpatrick's ideas were first published in 1959, in a series of articles in the US Training and Development Journal but are better known from a book he published in 1975 entitled, *Evaluating Training Programs.* Kirkpatrick's four-levels of evaluation work is based on the 1956 Hierarchy of Steps work produced by Raymond Katzell, Professor Emeritus of NYU (Smith, 2008). Table 5 provides a quick at-a-glance comparison of the two models.

Table 5. Comparison of Katzell's and Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Models

Donald Kirkpatrick's - 1959 **Four Levels of Evaluation Model**	Raymond Katzell's - 1956 **Hierarchy of Steps Model**
Level 1: Reactions – How well they liked the training.	Step One. To determine how trainees feel about the program
Level 2: Learning – How much they learned.	Step Two. To determine how much the trainees learn in the form of increased knowledge and understanding.
Level 3: Behavior – How well they applied the learning to work.	Step Three. To measure the changes in the on-the-job behavior of the trainees.
Level 4: Results – What return the training investment yielded.	Step Four. To determine the effects of these behavioral changes an objective criteria such as production, turnover, absenteeism, and waste.

Source: Smith, S. (2008). Why follow levels when you can build bridges? *Training + Development*, *62*(9), 58-62; Parry, S. (1997). *Evaluating the impact of training.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press.

In 2004, four years before Smith wrote his article with the Katzell sidebar, ASTD republished Kirkpatrick's 1956 article—the one in which Kirkpatrick acknowledges Katzell's four steps. Here is the front page of that article:



FUNDAMENTALS

JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF TRAINING DIRECTORS

How To Start An Objective Evaluation Of Your Training Program

AT+D Classic: How to Start an Objective Evaluation of Your Training Program

By Donald L. Kirkpatrick

This excerpt is part of a larger article with the same title that originally appeared in the May-June 1956 issue of the Journal of the American Society of Training Directors, *a predecessor to* T+D. *The article heralded Kirkpatrick's now classic four-level evaluation model.*

Most training men agree that it is important to evaluate training programs. They also feel that the evaluation should be done by objective means. However, the typical training man uses evaluation sheets or comment sheets as the sole measure of the effectiveness of his programs. He realizes he should do more, but he just doesn't know how to begin an objective evaluation.

According the Raymond Katzell, a well-known authority in this field, the evaluation of a training program falls into a hierarchy of steps that can be briefly stated as follows:

Step One. To determine how the trainees feel about the program.

Step Two. To determine how much the trainees learn in the form of increased knowledge and understanding.

In 2016, an academic article appeared in a book that referred to the Katzell-Kirkpatrick connection.

The book is only available in French and the article appears to have had little impact in the English-speaking learning field. Whereas neither Kirkpatrick's 2004 reprint nor Smith's 2008 article offered commentary about Katzell's contribution except to acknowledge it, Bouteiller, Cossette, & Bleau (2016) were clear in stating that Katzell deserves to be known as the person who conceptualized the four levels of training evaluation, while Kirkpatrick should get credit for popularizing it. The authors also lamented that Kirkpatrick, who himself recognized Katzell as the father of the four-level model of evaluation in his 1956 article, completely ignored Katzell for the next 55 years and declared himself in all his books and on his website as the sole inventor of the model. I accessed their chapter through Google Scholar and used Google Translate to make sense of it. I also followed up with two of the authors (Bouteiller and Cossette in January 2018) to confirm I was understanding their messaging clearly.

Is There Evidence of a Transgression?

Raymond Katzell seems to be the true originator of the four-level framework of learning evaluation and yet Donald Kirkpatrick on multiple occasions claimed to be the creator of the four-level model.

Of course, we can never know the full story. Kirkpatrick and Katzell are dead. Perhaps Katzell willingly gave his work away. Perhaps Kirkpatrick asked Katzell if he could use it. Perhaps Kirkpatrick cited Katzell because he wanted to bolster the credibility of a framework he developed himself. Perhaps Kirkpatrick simply forgot Katzell's four steps when he went on to write his now-legendary 1959-1960 articles. This

last explanation may seem a bit forced given that Kirkpatrick referred to the Merrihue and Katzell work in the last of his four articles—and we might expect that the name "Katzell" would trigger memories of Katzell's four steps, especially given that Katzell was cited by Kirkpatrick as a "well known authority." This forgetting hypothesis also doesn't explain why Kirkpatrick would continue to fail to acknowledge Katzell's contribution after ASTD republished Kirkpatrick's 1956 article in 2004 or after Steven Smith's 2008 article showed Katzell's four steps. Smith was well-known to Kirkpatrick and is likely to have at least mentioned his article to Kirkpatrick.

We can't know for certain what transpired, but we can analyze the possibilities. Plagiarism means that we take another person's work and claim it as our own. Plagiarism, then, has two essential features (see this article for details [https://www.plagiarismtoday.com/2015/04/29/the-challenge-of-proving-plagiarism/]). First, an idea or creation is copied in some way. Second, no attribution is offered. That is, no credit is given to the originator. Kirkpatrick had clear contact with the essential features of Katzell's four-level framework. He wrote about them in 1956! This doesn't guarantee that he copied them intentionally. He could have generated the four levels subconsciously, without knowing that Katzell's ideas were influencing his thinking. Alternatively, he could have spontaneously created them without any influence from Katzell's ideas. People often generate similar ideas when the stimuli they encounter are similar. How many people claim that they invented the term, "email?" Plagiarism does not require intent, but intentional plagiarism is generally considered a higher-level transgression than sloppy scholarship.

A personal example of how easy it is to think you invented something: In the 1990's or early 2000's, I searched for just the right words to explain a concept. I wrangled on it for several weeks. Finally, I came up with the perfect wording, with just the right connotation. "Retrieval Practice." It was better than the prevailing terminology at the time—the testing effect—because people could retrieve without being tested. Eureka I thought! Brilliant I thought! It was several years later, rereading Robert Bjork's 1988 article, *"Retrieval practice and the maintenance of knowledge,"* that I realized that my label was not original to me, and that even if I did generate it without consciously thinking of Bjork's work, that my previous contact with the term "retrieval practice" almost certainly influenced my creative construction.

The second requirement for plagiarism is that the original creator is not given credit. This is evident in the case of the four levels of learning evaluation. Donald Kirkpatrick never mentioned Katzell after 1956. He certainly never mentioned Katzell when it would have been most appropriate, for example when he first wrote about the four levels in 1959, when he first published a book on the four levels in 1994, and when he received awards for the four levels.

Finally, one comment may be telling, Kirkpatrick's statement from his 1994 book: "*I am not sure where I got the idea for this model, but the concept originated with work on my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.*" The statement seems to suggest that Kirkpatrick recognized that there was a source for the four-level model—a source that was not Kirkpatrick himself.

Here is the critical timeline:

- Katzell was doing work on learning evaluation as early at 1948.
- Kirkpatrick's 1954 dissertation offers no trace of a four-part learning-evaluation framework.
- In 1956, the first reference to a four-part learning evaluation framework was offered by Kirkpatrick and attributed to Raymond Katzell.
- In 1959, the first mention of the Kirkpatrick terminology (i.e., Reaction, Learning, Behavior, Results) was published, but Katzell was *not* credited.
- In 1994, Kirkpatrick published his book on the four levels, saying specifically that he formulated the four levels. He did *not* mention Katzell's contribution.
- In 2004, Kirkpatrick's 1956 article was republished, repeating Kirkpatrick's acknowledgement that Katzell invented the four-part framework of learning evaluation.
- In 2008, Smith published the article where he cited Katzell's contribution.
- In 2014, Kirkpatrick claimed to have developed the four levels in the 1950s.
- As far as I've been able to tell—corroborated by Bouteiller, Cossette, & Bleau (2016)—Donald Kirkpatrick never mentioned Katzell's four-step formulation after 1956.

Judge Not Too Quickly

I have struggled writing this article, and have rewritten it dozens of times. I shared an earlier version with four trusted colleagues in the learning field and asked them if I was being fair. I've searched exhaustively for source documents. I reached out to key players to see if I was missing something.

It is not a trifle to curate evidence that impacts other people's reputations. It is a sacred responsibility. I as the writer have the most responsibility, but you as a reader have a responsibility too to weigh the evidence and make your own judgments.

First we should not be too quick to judge. We simply don't know why Donald Kirkpatrick never mentioned Katzell after the original 1956 article. Indeed, perhaps he did mention Katzell in his workshops and teachings. We just don't know.

Here are some distinct possibilities:

> - Perhaps Katzell and Kirkpatrick had an agreement that Kirkpatrick could write about the four levels. Let's remember the 1959-1960 articles were not written to boost Kirkpatrick's business interests. He didn't have any business interests at that time—he was an employee—and his writing seemed aimed specifically at helping others do better evaluation.
> - Perhaps Kirkpatrick, being a young man without much of résumé in 1956, had developed a four-level framework but felt he needed to cite Katzell in 1956 to add credibility to his own ideas. Perhaps later in 1959 he dropped this false attribution to give himself the credit he deserved.

- Perhaps Kirkpatrick felt that citing Katzell once was enough. Where many academics and researchers see plagiarism as one of the deadly sins, others have not been acculturated into the strongest form of this ethos. Let's remember that in 1959 Kirkpatrick was not intending to create a legendary meme, he was just writing some articles. Perhaps at the time it didn't seem important to acknowledge Katzell's contribution. I don't mean to dismiss this lightly. All of us are raised to believe in fairness and giving credit where credit is due. Indeed, research suggests that even the youngest infants have a sense of fairness. Kirkpatrick earned his doctorate at a prestigious research university. He should have been aware of the ethic of attribution, but perhaps because the 1959-1960 articles seemed so insignificant at the time, it didn't seem important to site Katzell.
- Perhaps Kirkpatrick intended to cite Katzell's contribution in his 1959-1960 articles but the journal editor talked him out of it or disallowed it.
- Perhaps Kirkpatrick realized that Katzell's four steps were simply

> not resonant enough to be important. Let's admit that Kirkpatrick's framing of the four levels into the four labels was a brilliant marketing masterstroke. If Kirkpatrick believed this, he might have seen Katzell's contribution as minimal and not deserving of acknowledgement.
>
> - Perhaps Kirkpatrick completely forget Katzell's four-step taxonomy. Perhaps it didn't influence him when he created his four labels, that he didn't think of Katzell's contribution when he wrote about Katzell's article with Merrihue, that for the rest of his life he never remembered Katzell's formulation, that he never saw the 2004 reprinting of his 1956 article, that he never saw Smith's 2008 article, and that he never talked with Smith about Katzell's work even though Smith has claimed a working relationship. Admittedly, this last possibility seems unlikely.

Let us also not judge Jim and Wendy Kirkpatrick, proprietors of Kirkpatrick Partners, a global provider of learning-evaluation workshops and consulting. None of this is on them! They were genuinely surprised to hear the news when I told them. They seemed to have no idea about Katzell

or his contribution. What is past is past, and Jim and Wendy bear no responsibility for the history recounted here. What they do henceforth is their responsibility. Already, since we spoke last week, they have updated their website to acknowledge Katzell's contribution!

Article Update (two days after original publication of this article): Yesterday, on the 31st of January 2018, Jim and Wendy Kirkpatrick posted a blog entry [https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Blog/ID/843/The-Surprising-Evolution-of-the-Four-Levels-by-Jim-and-Wendy-Kirkpatrick] (copied here for the historic record [https://www.worklearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Kirkpatrick-Partners-Response-to-Expose-from-Website.png]) that admitted Katzell's contribution but ignored Donald Kirkpatrick's failure to acknowledge Katzell's contribution as the originator of the four-level concept.

What about our trade associations and their responsibilities? It seems that ASTD bears a responsibility for their actions over the years, not only as the American Society of Training Directors who published the 1959-1960 articles without insisting that Katzell be acknowledged even though they themselves had published the 1956 articles where Katzell's four-step framework was included on the first page; but also as the American Society of Training and Development who republished Kirkpatrick's 1956 article in 2004 and republished the 1959-1960 articles in 1977. Recently rebranded as ATD (Association for Talent Development), the organization should now make amends. Other trade associations should also help set the record straight by acknowledging Katzell's contribution to the four-level model of learning evaluation.

Donald Kirkpatrick's Enduring Contribution

Regardless of who invented the four-level model of evaluation, it was Donald Kirkpatrick who framed it to perfection with the four labels and popularized it, helping it spread worldwide throughout the workplace learning and performance field.

As I have communicated elsewhere [https://www.worklearning.com/2015/03/25/kirkpatrick-model-good-or-bad-the-epic-mega-battle/] , I think the four-level model has issues—that it sends messages about learning evaluation that are not helpful.

On the other hand, the four-level model has been instrumental in pushing the field toward a focus on performance improvement. This shift—away from training as our sole responsibility, toward a focus on how to improve on-the-job performance—is one of the most important paradigm shifts in the long history of workplace learning. Kirkpatrick's popularization of the four levels enabled us—indeed, it pushed us—to see the importance of focusing on work outcomes. For this, we owe Donald Kirkpatrick a debt of gratitude.

And we owe Raymond Katzell our gratitude as well. Not only did he originate the four levels, but he also put forth the idea that it was valuable to measure the impact learners have on their organizations.

What Should We Do Now?

What now is our responsibility as workplace learning professionals? What is ethical? The preponderance of the evidence points to Katzell

as the originator of the four levels and Donald Kirkpatrick as the creator of the four labels (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, Results) and the person responsible for the popularization of the four levels. Kirkpatrick himself in 1956 acknowledged Katzell's contribution, so it seems appropriate that we acknowledge it too.

Should we call them Katzell's Four Levels of Evaluation? Or, the Katzell-Kirkpatrick Four Levels? I can't answer this question for you, but it seems that we should acknowledge that Katzell was the first to consider a four-part taxonomy for learning evaluation.

For me, for the foreseeable future, I will either call it the Kirkpatrick Model and then explain that Raymond Katzell was the originator of the four levels, or I'll simply call it the Kirkpatrick-Katzell Model.

Indeed, I think in fairness to both men—Kirkpatrick for the powerful framing of his four labels and his exhaustive efforts to popularize the model and Katzell for the original formulation—I recommend that we call it the Kirkpatrick-Katzell Four-Level Model of Training Evaluation. Or simply, the Kirkpatrick-Katzell Model.

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