

# Research Summary

## Improving Indigent Defense: An Evaluation of Program Effectiveness for the California Defense Investigators Association's Defense Investigator Training Academy

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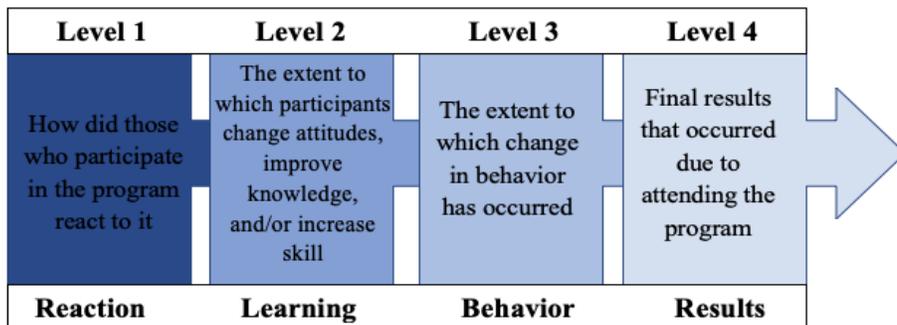
### PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a significant discrepancy regarding the training mandated and received by prosecution-oriented and defense-oriented investigators. In respect to training, investigators who work for the prosecution are required to complete the California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST); however, there is no minimum training requirements for a defense investigator. Training serves as a tool in that it can provide valuable skills to increase work performance. The discrepancy in training requirements for these similar professions results in an imbalance within the criminal justice system. An evaluation of California Defense Investigators Association (DIA) Defense Investigator Training Academy's (DITA) effectiveness is crucial to the profession of criminal defense, as it is one of the only academy trainings for defense investigators in California and throughout the nation. The present research explored the effectiveness of the DITA program.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the effectiveness of the California Defense Investigators Association's Defense Investigator Training Academy?

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



The Kirkpatrick evaluation model served as the theoretical framework for this study. Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model outlines four levels of training level outcomes: reaction, learning, behavior and results. The first level, Reaction, includes the trainee's reaction to the program. The second level, Learning, measures the extent to which a trainee learned the material they

were intended to learn. The third level, Behavior, refers to the knowledge or skills learned and if the trainee was able to transfer it to their job. Level four, Results, refers to the overall results that occurred because a trainee participated in the program.

### METHODS

**Variables.** The independent variables are Kirkpatrick's levels one through three: Reaction, Learning, and Behavior. The dependent variable was program effectiveness.

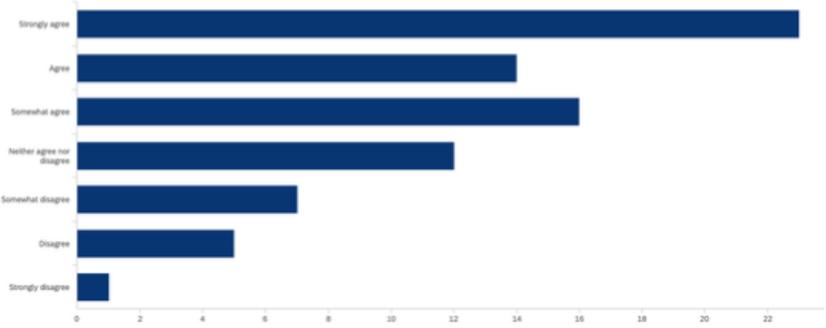
**Data and Sample.** A questionnaire was comprised of 28 multiple choice and four open ended questions. The questionnaire was administered through Qualtrics, an online survey tool. The questionnaire was sent to 458 members of the DIA, which was obtained from the 2017 DIA Directory. The total sample size was 82 (N=82), which is a 20.5% response rate.

**Design.** For purposes of this research, three ordinary least square (OLS) regressions, a multiple regression, and a stepwise regression (to serve as a robustness check) were conducted. The regression analyses determined the best linear associated between trainee's reaction, learning, and behavior in order to predict DITA's program effectiveness. All analyses were conducted through statistical analysis software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## RESULTS

- OLS Regression 1 includes the independent variable Reaction and was statistically significant, ( $F(6,75) = 29.236, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .700. Reaction accounts for 70.0% of the variance in program effectiveness.
- OLS Regression 2 includes the independent variable Learning and was statistically significant, ( $F(6,75) = 23.327, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .757. Learning accounts for 75.7% of the variance in program effectiveness.
- OLS Regression 3 includes the independent variable Behavior and was statistically significant, ( $F(6,75) = 11.609, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .377. Behavior accounts for 37.7% of the variance in program effectiveness.
- A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict program effectiveness on participants' reported reaction, learning, and behavior. A significant regression was found ( $F(8,73) = 42.224, p < .000$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .822. The model explains 82.2% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.
- 36.58% of respondents indicated a higher response on whether they learned what was intended versus if they applied what they learned to their work. These results were driven by age and experience.

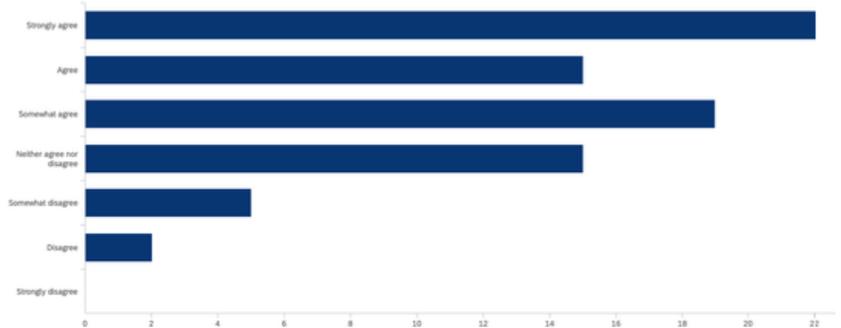
### Participation in this training enhanced my skills as a criminal defense investigator.



### Overall, I was satisfied with this training program.



### I am able to apply the knowledge I learned to my everyday work.



## ANALYSIS

The objective of this research was to determine if a trainee's reaction to the program, belief they learned what was intended for them to learn, and ability to apply their new knowledge or skills to their job is correlated with an improvement in their work. A participant's reaction, learning, and behavior regarding DITA contributed significantly to the prediction of training effectiveness. Trainees reported they overall enjoyed the DITA trainings, learned the material that was intended, were able to apply the new knowledge and skills learned to their job, and ultimately felt that their work improved. In light of the statistically significant results of the regression analyses, one can conclude the DITA program is effective.

## CONCLUSION

There is a reported positive relationship between DITA's training activities and employee performance. Many organizations do not meet employee demands in regard to training. Training programs, such as DITA, have been designed according to the specific needs of the profession and organization. This study indicated the DITA program provides employees with knowledge and skills to help them grow as investigators.