



MODULE 3 VIDEO 2 INTERVIEWS FOR COST DATA COLLECTION

Hello and welcome to Module 3 Video 2: Interviews for Cost Data Collection. In Video 1, we discussed the four pieces of information you need to collect for each program ingredient:

Type

Quantity

Percentage of use

And price.

I also mentioned that there are multiple ways to collect your cost data. In this video, I will focus on interviews.

Specifically, we will explore a template for an interview protocol, some recommended practices, and present part of a mock interview to demonstrate the types of questions you could ask, how and when you might need to probe, and how to use the interview data as cost data.

The CAP Project created a template for cost analysis interview protocols. The template is designed to support the data collection process and provide guidance about the interview. It includes:

An overview of the template and how you can adapt it for your own study. How to conduct the interview, and what to do with the interview data after you conduct the interview.

The interview protocol template includes 7 sections of interview questions that you could adapt for your interview. The sections are:

General Information

Program Activities

Personnel, which includes training and questions about any time contributed by family members or guardians

Facilities

Equipment and Materials

Other Miscellaneous

Additional or Follow-up Questions.

There are more tips and recommendations in the template, but I will highlight a few here. These suggestions align with general recommended practices for research interviews.

Try to interview someone from each personnel group that is considered key or critical to the implementation of the program. These personnel could be teachers, developers, coaches, or program participants.

As with other research interviews, consider asking the interviewee to sign an informed consent form even if it is not required for your study by your Institutional Review Board. Ask for permission to record the interview. Recording is useful as it will allow you to go back to capture details you may miss in the moment, but you need the participant's permission to record.

The template is just that, a template. Be sure to customize it and adapt it so the questions are appropriate for the program you are studying and to incorporate any information you have learned in advance.

A common question we get is "what does an interview to collect cost data look like." To help answer this question, we are going to do a very short mock interview with a few example questions from the template. Spoiler alert, we won't be going through any budget files and spreadsheets.

We will, however, use three questions from the personnel section of the interview template to demonstrate how to probe when needed. Interviewees may not be used to answering questions with the level of precision that cost analysts need, so you may need to ask follow-up questions to get the information you are looking for.

Before we jump into the mock interview, let's revisit some details about our running example, Reading Recovery.

It is a one-on-one reading intervention for struggling first grade readers.

A trained Reading Recovery teacher pulls each student from class 4 times a week for 30 mins each time.

For our example, schools had 1-3 Reading Recovery teachers, and each served 8 students on average.

First grade teachers are involved with the implementation of Reading Recovery, but it is very limited with required activities being:

Ranking students from lowest to highest, based on their literacy development, to identify students in the bottom 20% of the class.

Coordinating with the Reading Recovery teacher for a few minutes each day.

It will be helpful to keep these details in mind as you listen to the questions and probes.

For the mock interview, I will interview a fictional Reading Recovery teacher. This is a snippet from the middle of the interview. The Reading Recovery teacher just shared that first-grade teachers are a part of implementing Reading Recovery.

To follow-up on this information, there are 3 questions from the template that we include in the mock interview:

The first question adapted from the template is “How many first-grade teachers are involved in Reading Recovery?” This question specifically asks for the quantity of this type of personnel needed to implement the program in question.

The second and third questions adapted from the template tie back to percentage of use/time. To determine the percentage of time a person spent on the program, you need to know how much time they spent on the program and how much time they work in total so you can divide the former by the latter.

Question 2 is “How many hours do first-grade teachers spend on Reading Recovery in a typical week?” This question helps identify the amount of time first-grade teachers dedicate to Reading Recovery.

Question 3 is “How many days per year do first-grade teachers work?” This question will help you determine the total number of hours the first-grade teachers work per year so you can estimate the proportion of the teacher’s overall work time that is required by Reading Recovery.

The questions are at the top of each slide as a reminder as the interviewer starts to probe. Let's listen in on the interview.

How many first-grade teachers are involved in Reading Recovery at this school?

Both of our first-grade teachers are involved with Reading Recovery.

Question 1 debrief: This was a relatively simple question and the answer from the participant was clear. Now I know the number of first-grade teachers helping to implement Reading Recovery. Next, I need to find out how much time each of them spends on the program.

How many hours does each first-grade teacher spend on Reading Recovery in a typical week?

Hmmm, well I see them every day. Maybe an hour a week for each of them.

An hour or 60 minutes, so does that mean each teacher spends about 12 minutes each day on Reading Recovery?

Hmm, that seems like a lot. I only see them for a few minutes to coordinate. I would say maybe 5 minutes each day that kids are in school.

What else do first-grade teachers spend time on to help implement Reading Recovery other than coordinating with you?

Oh, I forgot to mention the time they spend ranking the students by reading ability to help us identify which ones to support with Reading Recovery. It's not much time though. I would say about 30 minutes near the beginning of each semester.

Question 2 debrief: What happened here is not uncommon. You will be asking people to give you estimates and often they unintentionally underestimate or overestimate. For the interviewee, 1 hour a week probably seemed like a reasonable estimate to convey that the first-grade teachers don't need to allocate a lot of time to the program. When the interviewer probed to confirm the average amount of time per day, the Reading Recovery teacher realized that even an hour a week was an overestimate. Her follow-up response gave an answer that totaled less than half her original estimate!

Participants can also omit information so asking whether there are additional activities requiring someone's time is good practice. Without that probe, we may not have known how much time first-grade teachers spend ranking students in addition to coordinating with Reading Recovery teachers. The interviewer learned that an additional hour of time was needed from each first-grade teacher: half of this near the beginning of each semester.

It may seem like we're asking a lot of questions about very small amounts of time, but remember that across all sites in a study, there may be many more first grade teachers, so it can add up to be quite substantial.

Now we need to establish how much time first grade teachers work per year.

How many days per year do first-grade teachers work at your school?

They are contracted for 187 seven-hour workdays per year.

And are all 187 workdays also instructional days?

Oh no. We have some days set aside for professional development and time to prepare for the beginning and end of the school year.

On how many days are the kids in school meaning you would be coordinating with the first-grade teachers?

Let me see. I know that students are required to attend school for 174 days.

This question needed a little more probing but, with a few follow-up questions, the participant shared the information about the hours and days worked that we needed. It seems the first-grade teachers are paid to work on 187 seven-hour days but kids are only in school for 174 of these.

So, what do you do with this information?

The information from the interview can help us estimate the total time each first-grade teacher spends on Reading Recovery, and the total work time for each first-grade teacher. Then we can use these two numbers to calculate the percentage of each first-grade teacher's time dedicated to Reading Recovery.

Based on what the Reading Recovery teacher shared, we know that:

There are 174 instructional days in the school year - that's when students are in school.

First grade teachers at this school get paid to work a total of 187 days each year.

The first-grade teachers each spend 5 minutes a day coordinating with the Reading Recovery teacher and, two times a year, each first-grade teacher spends 30 minutes ranking students.

With this information, we can estimate the total time required of a first-grade teacher to help implement Reading Recovery.

Total time is the 1 hour for ranking plus the 5 minutes a day for coordination during the 174 days.

174 days times 5 minutes equals 870 minutes or 14.5 hours.

So, the total time required of first grade teachers is the 1 hour for ranking plus the 14.5 hours for coordination or a total of 15.5 hours per year.

But what does the 15.5 hours mean for the percentage of time? We need to know the teacher's total number of hours of work for the year. To estimate that we multiply the 187 work days by 7 hours which equals 1,309 hours for the year.

Using these hourly totals, we can estimate the percentage of time by dividing 15.5 hours by 1,309 which is 1.18%. So first-grade teachers spend slightly more than 1 percent of their time implementing Reading Recovery.

The CAPCAT template allows you to enter relevant information from the interview and will do these calculations for you. You can see the hours worked annually, time spent on Reading Recovery, and the percentage of time this represents. Fiona will share more about how to enter ingredients data in the CAPCAT template in Videos 6 through 9.

Interviews can be a great resource for getting a wide range of information about the intervention and each ingredient including the critical pieces of type, quantity, percentage of use, and even price. That said, they still are one tool for collecting cost data. Check out the other videos in Module 3 to learn more about other data collection templates you can use.