CAP Project

MODULE 5 VIDEO 2 REPORTING SECTIONS AND EXAMPLES

Hello and welcome to Video 2 for Module 5, Reporting Sections and Examples. In this video, I will share recommendations for topics to include when reporting your cost analysis, considerations around the audience, and examples of the different reporting approaches you may take.

As you make a plan for reporting your results, it is important to think about the audience and the type of format that would be most useful for that audience. If the audience will be education decision-makers such as program directors/supervisors, state education agency personnel, district office leaders, or principals, a presentation via slides or a spreadsheet may be the most useful format. For a policy audience, it may be a policy brief. For an academic audience, you could consider a journal article, presentation such as those at a conference, or a poster. If the results are for a funder, a report or presentation may be the most useful format with a report allowing for a very detailed presentation of the results.

With the audience in mind, you can turn to the reporting sections. The core categories for reporting your cost analysis are similar to other research reporting and apply to most of the mediums I shared previously.

Whether it is a presentation, brief, article, or report, you likely will include

- Some type of summary such as an abstract or executive summary
- An introduction and background
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion and/or a Conclusion, including recommendations and an Appendix if needed

The CAP Project Cost Analysis Standards & Guidelines includes a checklist for reporting that is adapted from the Standards for the Economic Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs. The checklist includes items that address the study motivation and context. Descriptive information about the program and study design considerations. The full checklist is in Box 1 of the guidelines.

If you want to refresh your memory about what these items are, we discussed each item in Module 2 Videos 2 and 3 when Fiona used the checklist for planning the Reading Recovery vs Fast ForWord Reading CEA that we use as an example throughout the modules.

As I provide examples for each reporting section such as the “Introduction,” I will highlight items from the checklist that can be included in that section. In some cases, we suggest an item could be placed in more than one section and you can use your judgment to determine the best location for your particular study, for example, whether a detail belongs in the Introduction or the Methods section.

One additional note: I will share elements for each reporting section that may sound obvious to some when it comes to what you could include in a section. We do this for two reasons: one to situate the cost reporting elements in the overall context for the section and, two, in case it is helpful for some viewers to hear the elements combined with the cost elements. In the end, you know your study and audience the best, so use your judgement on what to include.

The abstract or executive summary will provide a brief overview of what you are studying and what you found. You can include a little background on the program and the purpose of the study, the setting and sample for the evaluation, a summary of the methods, a preview of your main findings, and key conclusions and recommendations.

In this module, we included an annotated version of the elements for reporting checklist noting which items could be included in each reporting section.

The items highlighted here can be included in the Abstract, depending on the word limit. Let’s take a look at two examples of abstracts.

They come from two reporting documents that I will use throughout this video.

The first is a journal article in *Prevention Science* called The Costs and Effects of School-Based Licensed Practical Nurses on Elementary Student Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism, and the other is a research report called REACH Cost Analysis Report. The journal article is one of the recommended readings in

Module 4 and the research report is listed in the Additional Resources section of Module 5.

First, let's look at the abstract in the journal article where the audience is mainly a mix of academics and practitioners.

It includes the rationale for the study, the program being studied, the type of economic evaluation, information on the setting and the sample, a brief description of the methods used, main findings, and a summary of the recommendations.

The REACH Cost Analysis Report was prepared for education decision-makers and stakeholders, specifically program developers/leaders, funders, educational researchers, and policymakers.

The abstract includes: the name of the program being studied and a description of what it is and how it works, information on the setting, the type of economic evaluation and how the information provided can be useful, the method including data sources, a preview of the findings, and a recommendation for further study of the program to investigate effects.

The next reporting section is the Introduction, which is where you describe the topic for the study, why it is important to address, what is already known about the topic, and what gaps remain in our knowledge.

The amount of information included in the introduction will vary depending on the medium. A slide presentation may dedicate 2 to 5 slides on introduction and background, while a journal article may dedicate 2 to 3 pages, and a report may have many more pages setting the background and overview of the study.

These are the items from the checklist that could go into the Introduction. You may decide that some or all of these items are better placed in the Methods section rather than in the Introduction, but just be sure that they are in one or the other.

For some items, such as the scale of implementation; the characteristics of the population served; and whether the intervention is stand-alone, supplementing, replacing, or partially substituting an existing program; it may make sense for the Introduction to address the issue as the program is generally implemented, and then provide more specific details in the Methods section about the particular instance you are studying.

Let's take a look at a conference poster summarizing the study of the school nurse program that was published in *Prevention Science*.

This medium provides the least space, requiring the authors to be very selective in what they include. Module 5 has a section with model publications and includes a link to this poster. Take a look to see what they include in the poster version of the Introduction and the other sections.

The next reporting section is Methods, which will include a description of your approach to data collection, estimating costs, and analysis.

This is also where you should describe your sources of data, whether you use national or local prices, and key assumptions and formulas used in your analysis.

You should also describe the sensitivity analyses you conducted and why they were necessary, for example, if you had incomplete or missing data and needed to account for the resulting uncertainty in your results.

Again, the checklist includes items that you should consider including in the Methods section.

There are many items from the checklist that could be included in the Methods section but, when space is limited for your dissemination medium, you can put some of these items in an appendix or an online repository for supplementary material related to your study.

The Findings section is where you will share a summary of the resources or ingredients used to implement the program and, for multi-site studies, how they vary across sites. You will also include relevant cost breakdowns and summary metrics such as total program costs, average costs per participant, the range of costs per site, and the results of your sensitivity analyses.

The Findings section is a great place to incorporate tables, graphs, and charts that let the reader easily digest the results. This is particularly important for stakeholders who may not have time to read a full report closely.

There are only a few items in the checklist to include in the Findings section. In this example table from the REACH report, the authors capture two breakdowns in one table: costs by site and costs per ingredient category. They list the resources needed to implement the program by ingredient category. For example, in the top row of data, you can see OSCP Staff listed in the Personnel category.

The last column of the table shows the total cost of each ingredient across all sites. They also show the cost for each ingredient by school so that adds a cost by site breakdown. You can see the total cost per site in the bottom row.

The bottom right cell in the table shows one of the key summary metrics: total costs of the program across all sites.

In video 4, Fiona shares how CAPCAT 1.2 Plus creates summary metrics and cost breakdowns for reporting like those here.

The REACH report has some additional examples of cost breakdowns such as the costs by perspective in Table 6 where the study team lists the costs to the participating schools versus the costs to the university partner (TC).

Table 7 breaks out expenditures per school from in-kind contributions.

There are other summaries and cost breakdowns that you can include such as stage of implementation (like start-up vs ongoing costs) or costs by year for multiyear programs.

The decision on which ones to report should depend on the audience and what is useful to them.

The CAP Project Guidelines include more examples of summary metrics and breakdowns and the cost analysis templates, the CAPCATs, automatically calculate most of these for you, which means you just need to decide which ones to share with your audience.

One of the Methods notes in Module 5 describes some table templates that the CAP Project provides to facilitate reporting. The Costs per Site Table is useful when your study includes a small number of sites and where costs differ enough to make it worthwhile showing how they vary across the sites.

And the Lo Mean Hi Costs Table provides an alternative format for cost analysis results which may be more useful when you have more sites than you can include in a table.

If you are doing a CEA, you could also include a cost-effectiveness plane in your findings section like the one shown here in this CAP Project resource. It is a visual way of representing and comparing the costs and effects of multiple programs or of multiple sites implementing the same program.

You may also be able to calculate a CE ratio based on your results. Rob describes how to do this in Video 3.

Remember to include the results of a reference case analysis in your findings section if you can. We introduced this idea back in Module 2 Video 3 so you may recall that this involves taking a societal perspective, using national average prices, and, if you need a discount rate, using 3%. The school nurse article does include this reporting.

The discussion and conclusion section should include a summary of the study and cost findings.

It may be helpful to discuss the possible consequences of variations in resource use across sites and what this says about fidelity of implementation. If the cost study is part of a CEA or CBA, you may be able to comment in the discussion section on any apparent relationship between costs and outcomes.

You should address the implications of your sensitivity analysis results, for example, whether they would lead to different conclusions about the program or different recommendations to decision-makers.

You should address whether and how your results are applicable or generalizable in other contexts. Remember that using national prices alone does not mean that the results are generalizable – you need to consider whether your data captures likely variations in resource use in other contexts.

Wherever possible, you should compare your results with those of existing studies of similar interventions, or even different interventions that aim to achieve similar outcomes.

Last, you can include limitations and recommendations where appropriate.

Box 2 in the CAP Project Cost Analysis Standards and Guidelines provides guidance on how to find studies against which to compare the results of a CEA you have conducted. It also lists things you can do to re-analyze the cost data from an existing study to make it more comparable to your own.

In the Limitations section, you could discuss the extent to which your study meets the Standards for the Economic Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs. The CAP Project provides a CASP Standards Template to facilitate this for the cost analysis portion of an economic evaluation. See the Methods note about this in Module 5. Remember, no single study is likely to meet every standard, often for good reasons.

Appendices or supplementary online materials can be very helpful for a cost analysis especially when the cost analysis is part of a CEA or CBA and there is limited reporting space. You can include an ingredients list, de-identified spreadsheets showing your data and analysis, data sources, a list of assumptions and key parameters, and data collection instruments in your appendix.

For example, the REACH report appendix includes a description of the ingredients, a table of data sources, sources of national prices, assumptions, and an interview protocol.

The school nurse article uses links to share supplementary materials. One is a document with technical information on the effectiveness study. The second item is the entire cost analysis in one of the CAP Project's cost analysis templates, CAPCAT 1.3 Advanced.

If you are not using one of the CAPCATs, you can follow the guidance in Exhibit 2.5 of the Standards for the Economic Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs as to what data is useful to share in cost tables and spreadsheets.

Whew, that was a long overview, but you will have a lot to report after you complete the analysis. In Video 3, Rob will discuss cost-effectiveness ratios and, in Video 4, Fiona will demonstrate how CAPCAT 1.2 Plus can assist with the reporting.