CAP Project

DISSEMINATING ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

This document provides a few suggestions about how to disseminate the results of cost analysis and other types of economic evaluations in ways that may appeal to a variety of audiences. It also lists potential venues for such work.

Challenges of Disseminating Economic Evaluations

Publishing the cost component of economic evaluations can be challenging because cost analysis is a relatively new method for many editors and reviewers in the social sciences. The emphasis for evaluations of educational programs has historically been on student or educator outcomes, with less attention to the resources required to achieve the observed effects or benefits. Including information on implementation and/or effectiveness of the educational program(s), as well as on resource requirements and their costs, may improve audience receptivity to cost analysis results and increase the value of the information for decision-making about the programs.

A further challenge to successful dissemination of results is that analytical strategies used in economic evaluations differ to some extent across social service areas, making it hard to meet the expectations of cost experts in another field. For example, in health and medicine, fixed costs may be excluded from the analysis. In addition, treatments are almost always to individuals such that it is feasible to accurately estimate costs per person. In education, treatments are often at the classroom or school level and individual student dosage is either uniform or undocumented making it possible to provide only average costs per student. The recently established *Standards for the Economic Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs* (Cost Analysis Standards Project, 2021) should help to standardize methods across the social sciences but some differences are likely to remain.

What to Include in Your Report or Publication

The CAP Project Guidelines 1.1 provides suggestions for background information, study design features, analytical choices, and cost metrics to include in your report (see checklist on p.10, and pp. 27-28) and additional detailed guidance can be found in the *Standards for the Economic Evaluation of Educational and Social Programs* (Cost Analysis Standards Project, 2021). Here we provide some audience-specific suggestions for framing your results:

For practitioners such as education administrators and educators, you can emphasize implementation issues such as what resources are needed, what amount of training and ongoing support and monitoring is required, how the program/practice might fit with existing programs and practices, and whether the program/practice under study makes life easier (or harder) for teachers, administrators, students, and families.

It may also be helpful if you can address how to implement a program or practice at scale and how to think about sustainability issues. Organizations such as such Regional Education Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and Technical Assistance Centers may help in disseminating such information to their constituents via webinars or briefs.

- **Researchers** may prefer to see effectiveness results along with the cost results - although journal articles rarely give you enough room to do both in sufficient detail. At a minimum, you could summarize the effectiveness results or refer readers to them if they are published elsewhere. To help establish the credibility of your analysis for editors, reviewers, and readers, it may be helpful to discuss the extent to which your study meets the *Standards for the Economic Evaluation of*

Educational and Social Programs. CAP Project provides a CASP Standards Template to facilitate this for the cost analysis portion of an economic evaluation. In the limitations section of your manuscript or report, you can address how well you met the standards overall and why you were not able to meet others.

- **For both these audiences, and for policymakers,** it may also be helpful to compare the results of your economic evaluations with those produced for other interventions that target the same outcome. For example, even if you only produce one cost-effectiveness ratio in your study, you can compare your costs and effects with costs and effects of other interventions targeting the same outcome. If none are available, you can discuss your results in the context of interventions targeting different outcomes but for which costs, effects, or economic benefits have been estimated. Many of the journal articles listed below include cost results that could be useful against which to compare yours.

VENUES FOR PUBLISHING RESULTS OF COST ANALYSIS AND EXAMPLE ARTICLES

Conferences

Conferences that may accept cost-related work: AERA, AEFP, SREE, Society for Benefit-Cost Analysis, IES PI conference.

Blogs

Inside IES Research has been publishing a series of blogs from grantees about their economic evaluations. Talk to your IES Program Officer and see if this would be a possibility for your work.

Journals That Have Published Articles on Economic Evaluation

The list below provides examples of education, public policy, or children and youth research journals that publish work related to economic evaluation in education. In addition to the listed journals, implementation science journals may also publish economic evaluations of education interventions. If you are a journal editor/author and would like your journal/article added to this list, email us at helpdesk@capproject.org.

Administration & Society

Rice, J. K. (2001). The cost of working together: A framework for estimating the costs of comprehensive support systems for children. *Administration & Society*, *33*(4), 455-479.

American Journal of Evaluation

Bowden, A. B., Shand, R., Belfield, C. R., Wang, A., & Levin, H. M. (2017). Evaluating educational interventions that induce service receipt: A case study application of City Connects. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *38*(3), 405-419.

Behavioral Disorders

Bradshaw, C. P., Debnam, K. J., Player, D., Bowden, B., & Lindstrom Johnson, S. (2020). A mixed-methods approach for embedding cost analysis within fidelity assessment in school-based programs. *Behavioral Disorders*, DOI: 0198742920944850

Children and Youth Services Review

Jones, D. E., Bierman, K. L., Crowley, D. M., Welsh, J. A., & Gest, J. (2019). Important issues in estimating costs of early childhood educational interventions: An example from the REDI program. *Children and Youth Services Review, 107*.

Early Childhood Research Quarterly (ECRQ)

Muroga, A., Escueta, M., Rodriguez, V., & Bowden, A. B. (2023). An analysis of the costs to provide high-quality and individualized emergent literacy support in pre-K classrooms. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *62*, 206-216. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200622000849

Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis

Belfield, C., Crosta, P., & Jenkins, D. (2014). Can community colleges afford to improve completion? Measuring the cost and efficiency consequences of reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 36*(3), 327-345.

Harris, D. N. (2009). Toward policy-relevant benchmarks for interpreting effect sizes: combining effects with costs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *31*(1), 3–29.

Hollands, F. M., Bowden, A. B., Levin, H. M., Belfield, C. R., Cheng, H., Shand, R., Pan, Y., & Hanisch-Cerda, B. (2014). Cost-effectiveness analysis in practice: interventions to improve high school completion. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 36*(3), 307-326.

Rice, J. K. (1997). Cost analysis in education: Paradox and possibility. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *19*(4), 309-317.

Tsang, M. C. (1997). Cost analysis for improved educational policymaking and evaluation. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 19*(4), 318-324.

Educational Researcher

Hollands, F., Pan, Y. & Escueta, M. (2019). What is the potential for applying cost-utility analysis to facilitate evidence-based decision-making in schools? *Educational Researcher, 48*(5), 287-295.

Kraft, M. A. (2020). Interpreting effect sizes of education interventions. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(4), 241-253.

Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis

Bowden, A. B., & Belfield, C. (2015). Evaluating the Talent Search TRIO program: A benefit-cost analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, *6*(3), 572.

Karoly, L. A. (2012). Toward standardization of benefit-cost analysis of early childhood interventions. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis, 3*(1), 1-45.

Journal of Development Effectiveness

Tulloch, C. (2019). Taking intervention costs seriously: A new, old toolbox for inference about costs. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, DOI: 10.1080/19439342.2019.1684342.

Journal of Education Finance

Knight, D. S. (2012). Assessing the cost of instructional coaching. *Journal of Education Finance 38*(1), 52-80.

Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions

Blonigen, B. A., Harbaugh, W. T., Singell, L. D., Horner, R. H., Irvin, L. K., & Smolkowski, K. S. (2008). Application of economic analysis to school-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) programs. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 10*(1), 5-19.

Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness

Diazgranados Ferráns, S., Lee, J., Ohanyido, C., Hoyer, K., & Miheretu, A. (2022). The cost-effectiveness of an accelerated learning program on the literacy, numeracy and social-emotional learning outcomes of out-of-school children in northeast Nigeria: Evidence from a mixed methods randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 1-32.

Hollands, F. M., Kieffer, M. J., Shand, R., Pan, Y., & Cheng, H. (2016). Cost-effectiveness analysis of early reading programs: a demonstration with recommendations for future research. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 23*(1), 30-53.

Jacob, R., Armstrong, C., Bowden, A. B., & Pan, Y. (2016). Leveraging volunteers: An experimental evaluation of a tutoring program for struggling readers. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *9*(sup1), 67-92.

Kabay, S., Weiland, C., & Yoshikawa, H. (2020). Costs of the Boston Public Prekindergarten Program. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *13*(4), 574-600.

Levin, H. M., & Belfield, C. (2015). Guiding the development and use of cost-effectiveness analysis in education. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *8*(3), 400-418.

Shand, R., & Bowden, A. B. (2021). Empirical support for establishing common assumptions in cost research in education. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*. DOI: 10.1080/19345747.2021.1938315

Zick, C. D., Tippetts, M., & Davis, B. (2022). Money well spent? The cost-effectiveness of a texting intervention targeting college persistence. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 1-19. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19345747.2021.1992813

Journal of School Psychology

Barrett, C. A., & Van Der Heyden, A. M. (2020). A cost-effectiveness analysis of classwide math intervention. *Journal of School Psychology, 80*, 54-65.

Hollands, F.M., Leach, S.M., Shand, R., Head, L., Wang, Y., Dosset, D., Chang, F., Yan, B., Martin, M., Pan, Y., Hensel, S. (2022). Restorative Practices: Using local evidence on costs and student outcomes to inform school district decisions about behavioral interventions. *Journal of School Psychology 92,*188-208.

Matta, M., Keller-Margulis, M. A., & Mercer, S. H. (2022). Cost analysis and cost-effectiveness of hand-scored and automated approaches to writing screening. *Journal of School Psychology*, *92*, 80-95.

Paly, B. J., Klingbeil, D. A., Clemens, N. H., & Osman, D. J. (2022). A cost-effectiveness analysis of four approaches to universal screening for reading risk in upper elementary and middle school. *Journal of School Psychology*, *92*, 246-264.

Pas, E. T., Kaihoi, C. A., Debnam, K. J., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2022). Is it more effective or efficient to coach teachers in pairs or individually? A comparison of teacher and student outcomes and coaching costs. *Journal of School Psychology*, *92*, 346-359.

Middle Grades Review

Hollands, F. M., & Pan, Y. (2018). Evaluating digital math tools in the field. *Middle Grades Review*, *4*(1), 8.

New Directions for Evaluation

Levin, H. (2001). Waiting for Godot: cost-effectiveness analysis in education. *New Directions for Evaluation, 2001*(90), 55-68.

Prevention Science

Bowden, A. B., Shand, R., Levin, H. M., Muroga, A., & Wang, A. (2020). An economic evaluation of the costs and benefits of providing comprehensive supports to students in elementary school. *Prevention Science, 21*(8), 1126-1135.

Crowley, D. M., Dodge, K. A., Barnett, W. S., Corso, P., Duffy, S., Graham, P., ... & Karoly, L. A. (2018). Standards of evidence for conducting and reporting economic evaluations in prevention science. *Prevention Science, 19*(3), 366-390.

Leach, S. M., Hollands, F. M., Stone, E., Shand, R., Head, L., Wang, Y., ... & Pan, Y. (2023). Costs and effects of school-based licensed practical nurses on elementary student attendance and chronic absenteeism. *Prevention Science*, *24*(1), 94-104. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11121-022-01459-0

School Psychology

Cil, G., Chaparro, E. A., Dennis, C., & Smolkowski, K. (2023). The cost-effectiveness of an English language curriculum for middle school English learners. *School Psychology*. *38*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000515

School Psychology Quarterly

Hunter, L. J., DiPerna, J. C., Hart, S. C., & Crowley, M. (2018). At what cost? Examining the cost effectiveness of a universal social–emotional learning program. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *33*(1), 147.

School Psychology Review

Lindstrom Johnson, S., Alfonso, Y. N., Pas, E. T., Debnam, K. J., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2020). Scaling up Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Costs and their distribution across state, districts, and schools. *School Psychology Review, 49*(4), 399-414.

Scammacca, N., Swanson, E., Vaughn, S., & Roberts, G. (2020). Cost-effectiveness of a Grade 8 intensive reading and content learning intervention. *School Psychology Review*, *49*(4), 374-385.

Pre-prints

Barrett, C. A., Johnson, L. J., Truckenmiller, A., & VanDerHeyden, A. (2022, May 4). Comparing the cost-accuracy ratios of multiple approaches to reading screening in elementary schools. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/2q7sm

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