

# Recommendations, References, and Study Tips for The PRAXIS II Exam in School Psychology



**NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS**

*This document is intended to provide a peer-developed study resource for NASP members who are preparing for the PRAXIS II. **This document is not an official study guide or a NASP position statement.** Neither has it been reviewed by the publishers of the PRAXIS II (ETS) nor is it intended to replace official study guides from other sources, including ETS. NASP does not guarantee the concordance of this document with the ETS PRAXIS II and cannot guarantee that its use will improve test scores. Several “references” are listed, but NASP makes no claim that the listed references are of better quality than other references.*

## Introduction

NASP-approved graduate programs in school psychology typically require graduate students to take the PRAXIS II National School Psychology Test (test code 0401), administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). State departments of education and other state credentialing agencies may also require the PRAXIS II test for certification/credentialing purposes. The administration of the new version of the PRAXIS-II School Psychologist test began on September 1, 2008. A passing score of 165 (*as of 8/13/08*) on the PRAXIS II is required for certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP). For more information on the new test scoring see [www.ets.org/praxis/nasp](http://www.ets.org/praxis/nasp).

Potential PRAXIS II test takers should begin by referring to the following ETS website, which contains content outlines, sample questions with rationale for the best answers, and test-taking strategies for the new School Psychology Test: [www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0401.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0401.pdf).

## Suggested General Resources

- ❑ National Association of School Psychologists. (2008). *Best practices in School Psychology*. V. Bethesda, MD: Author. Available at [www.nasponline.org/publications/booksproducts/BP5.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/publications/booksproducts/BP5.aspx).
- ❑ NASP Position papers, available at [www.nasponline.org/about\\_nasp/position\\_paper.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/about_nasp/position_paper.aspx).
- ❑ Williams B. B., & Mennuti, R. B. (2010). *PASS: Prepare, assist, survive, and succeed - a guide to passing the praxis exam in school psychology*. NY: Routledge.
- ❑ DBL Partners & Chan, T. (2010). iPhone app: praxis II psychology exam prep. Available at <http://appshopper.com/education/praxis-ii-psychology-exam-prep>.

## Recommendations, References, and Study Tips

The following recommendations, while not exhaustive, are meant to assist test takers as they prepare for the PRAXIS II test. Questions are presented in multiple-choice format and often require rote memorization and/or application of principles and best practices.

When reviewing topics, consider how ETS weighs topics and allocate study time accordingly. For example, questions on “Research-Based Academic Practices” account for approximately 12% of the exam, whereas questions on “Data-Based Decision Making” account for approximately 35%. Although it is important to be familiar with all of the topics below, it is not necessary to memorize every detail. Instead, remember “best practice” principles, which will narrow down the answer choices, and focus study on areas of personal weakness.

As stated on the title page, the references and recommendations are neither comprehensive nor exclusive. Space is provided for readers to add notes on additional resources that they find useful.

# I. Data-Based Decision Making (35%)

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## Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II

### Problem Identification

- ∨ Interview strategies
- ∨ Observational strategies
- ∨ Review of background information (e.g., student records, medical records and reports, review of previous interventions, developmental history)
- ∨ Screening measures and methods

### Assessment/Problem Analysis

- ∨ Measures of intellectual/cognitive functioning
- ∨ Measures of educational achievement
- ∨ Diagnostic processing measures (e.g., memory, executive functioning, phonemic awareness)
- ∨ Measures of social skills, development, adaptive behavior
- ∨ Functional behavior assessment
- ∨ Performance-based assessment (e.g., work samples, portfolios)
- ∨ Curriculum-based assessment/curriculum-based measures
- ∨ Ecological assessment of the learning environment
  - Ⓢ Using the normal curve to convert scores
  - Ⓢ Diagnostic/processing measures
  - Ⓢ Comparing a standard score, a percentile rank, a Normal Curve Equivalent, a stanine, a deviation IQ, a T-score, a Z-score, a grade-equivalent score, etc.
  - Ⓢ Interpreting WISC scale scores
  - Ⓢ Test age ranges for the following tests: WISC, WAIS, WPSSI, Stanford-Binet, Woodcock Johnson, KABC, DAS, CAS, UNIT, Bayley, K-TEA, KAIT, WIAT, WRAT, PPVT, VMI, etc.
  - Ⓢ Definitions of mean, median, mode, range, variance, standard deviation
- ∨ Minimal requirements for assessing mental retardation
- ∨ Performance-based assessment, curriculum-based assessment, and curriculum-based measurement
- ∨ Interpretation of assessment data and selection of intervention
- ∨ Interpretation of achievement test data
- ∨ Culturally competent assessment practices (Tip: visit NASP's Culturally Competent Practice site at [www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/index.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/culturalcompetence/index.aspx))
- ∨ Second language acquisition (e.g., BICS and CALP)

### Assessment Considerations for Special Populations

- ∨ IDEA disability categories: description, diagnostic criteria, possible manifestations, possible accommodations/modifications
  - Ⓢ Infant and early childhood/preschool
  - Ⓢ English as second language/English language learners (e.g., the appropriate use of translators/interpreters, measurement selection, language of assessment)

- ⊗ Low incidence exceptionalities (e.g., chronic health impairment, severe physical disabilities, autism, sensory impairment)
- ⊗ Gifted and talented
- ⊗ Cultural, racial, and diverse populations
- ∨ Methods for assessing problem behaviors

Research, Statistics and Program evaluation

- ∨ Evaluating research
- ∨ Translating research into practice
- ∨ Understanding research design and statistics
- ∨ Program evaluation models and methods

*Suggested Resources:*

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV-TR)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Godber, Y. (2008). Best practices in program evaluation. In A. Thomas & Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp.2193-2206). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Kamphaus, R. (2005). *Clinical assessment of child and adolescent intelligence* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

McLean, M., Wolery, M., & Bailey, D. B. (2004). *Assessing infants and preschoolers with special needs* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Reynolds, C.R., & Kamphaus, R.W. (2003). *Handbook of psychological and educational assessment of children: Personality, behavior, and context* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Rhodes, R. L., Ochoa, S. H., Ortiz, S. O. (2005). *Assessing culturally and linguistically diverse students: a practical guide*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Salvia, J. & Ysseldyke, J. (2007). *Assessment in special and inclusive education (10th edition)*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Sattler, J. M. (2008). *Assessment of children: Cognitive applications (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. La Mesa, CA: Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

Sattler, J. M., & Hoge, R. D. (2006). *Assessment of children: Behavioral, social and clinical foundations (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. La Mesa, CA: Jerome M. Sattler, Publisher, Inc.

Tilly III, W. D. (2008). The evolution of school psychology to science-based practice: Problem solving and the three-tiered model. In A. Thomas & Grimes (eds.), *Best Practices in school psychology V* (pp.17-36). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

*Additional Resources:*

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## II. Research-Based Academic Practices (12%)

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### Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II

#### Effective Instruction

- ∨ Instructional strategies (e.g., cooperative learning, flexible grouping, differentiated instruction, engagement time, scaffolding, study skills, metacognition)
- ∨ Curriculum accommodations and modifications (e.g., assistive technology, specially designed instruction)

#### Issues Related to Academic Success/Failure

- ∨ Factors related to academic progress (e.g., school/classroom climate, family involvement, motivation, SES, language competency, programming for ELL)
- ∨ Educational policies/practices (e.g., social promotion, high stakes testing, retention, tracking, zero tolerance, corporal punishment)

#### Academic Interventions

- ∨ Designing and implementing interventions
- ∨ Monitoring interventions (outcomes and treatment fidelity/integrity)
- ∨ Evaluating learning outcomes

#### Cognitive and Behavioral Prevention and Intervention

- ∨ Behavioral modification and applied behavioral analysis techniques
  - ⊗ Different behavioral observation and recording methods and their pros and cons (e.g., continuous recording, time sample recording, etc.)
  - ⊗ How to apply reinforcement, punishment, and extinction procedures.
  - ⊗ Identification of the correct behavioral technique given a variety of real-life situations
- ∨ Cognitive-behavioral/rational emotive strategies
- ∨ Major research studies related to the outcomes of cognitive-behavioral intervention

#### *Suggested Resources:*

- Algozzine, B., Ysseldyke, J. E., & Elliott, J. (2000). *Strategies and tactics for effective instruction*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.
- Brown-Chidsey, R., Steege, M.W., & Mace, F.C. (2008). Best practices in evaluating the effectiveness of interventions using case study data. In A. Thomas & Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 2177-2192). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Fuchs, L.S., & Fuchs, D. (2008). Best practices in progress monitoring reading and mathematics at the elementary grades. In A. Thomas & Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 2147-2164). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Hixson, M., Christ, T.J., & Bradley-Johnson, S. (2008). Best practices in the analysis of progress-monitoring data and decision making. In A. Thomas & Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 2133-2146). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Joseph, L.M. (2007). *Understanding, assessing, and intervening on reading problems*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Joyce, B. R., Weil, M., & Calhoun, E. (2003). *Models of teaching*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

*Additional Resources:*

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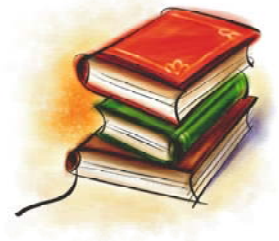
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### **III. Research-Based Behavioral and Mental Health Practices (16%)**

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#### **Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II**

##### Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Preventative Strategies

- ∨ School/system-wide (e.g., promoting safe school environments, positive behavioral support, bullying prevention, school climate assessment, policy development)
- ∨ Classroom organization and management (e.g., time management, classroom rules, physical environment)
- ∨ Individual and small group (e.g., social skills training, conflict resolution)

##### School-based Intervention Skills/Techniques

- ∨ Counseling (e.g., individual, group)
- ∨ Applied behavioral analysis and intervention
- ∨ Developmentally appropriate intervention techniques
- ∨ Stress management techniques

##### Crisis Prevention/Intervention/Response

- ∨ Crisis prevention techniques
- ∨ School/district-wide crisis management planning and response

##### Child and Adolescent Psychopathology

- ∨ Symptom recognition
- ∨ Educational impact
- ∨ Support and Interventions
- ∨ Basic knowledge of psychopharmacology
- ∨ Signs and symptoms of substance abuse

##### *Suggested Resources:*

- Brock, S. E. & Davis J. (2008). Best practices in school crisis prevention. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 781-798). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Kazdin, A. E., & Weisz, J. R. (2003). *Evidence based psychotherapies for children and adolescents*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Mastropieri, M. A., Scruggs, T. E., & Scruggs, T. (2006). *Inclusive classroom strategies for effective instruction (3<sup>rd</sup> ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall
- Miltenberger, R. G. (2007). *Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Pacific Grove, CA: Wadsworth.
- Osher, D., Dwyer, K., & Jackson, S. (2003). *Safe, supportive, and successful schools: Step by step*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West, Inc.
- Shapiro, E. S. (2004). *Academic skills problems: Direct assessment and intervention (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Shinn, M. R., & Walker, H. M. (2010). *Interventions for achievement and behavior problems in a three-tiered model including RTI*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

*Additional Resources:*

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## IV. Consultation and Collaboration (12%)

### Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II

#### Models and Methods of Consultation

- √ Models of Consultation
  - Ⓢ Behavioral
  - Ⓢ Consultee-centered
  - Ⓢ Instructional
  - Ⓢ Mental Health
  - Ⓢ Multicultural/cross-cultural
- √ School system and organization and policy development
- √ Home/school/community collaboration
  - Ⓢ Working with families
    - Recognizing and responding to the needs of families (e.g., working with diverse families, family member with mental health issues, facilitating access to appropriate services)
    - Facilitating family involvement in schools
    - Assisting parents and other adult caregivers in facilitating the educational, social, and emotional development of their children
  - Ⓢ Teaming with school personnel and utilization of resources
  - Ⓢ Interagency collaboration
    - Transition services (e.g., birth to age three, preschool to school-age and school-age to adult, hospital to school, juvenile justice system to school)
    - Linking with community resources

#### *Suggested Resources:*

- Sheridan, S. M., & Kratochwill, T.R. (2009). *Conjoint behavioral consultation Promoting family school relationships and intervention*. New York: Springer.
- Kratochwill, T.R. (2008). Best practices in school-based problem-solving consultation: Applications in prevention and intervention systems. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1673-1688). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Rosenfield, S. (2008). Best practices in instructional consultation and instructional consultation teams. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1645-1660). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Watson, T.S., & Sterling-Turner, H. (2008). Best practices in direct behavioral consultation. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 1661-1672). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

#### *Additional Resources:*

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## V. Applied Psychological Foundations (13%)

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### Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II

#### Knowledge of General Psychological Principles, Theories, and Major Research Findings

- ∨ Biological bases of behavior (e.g., parasympathetic vs. sympathetic nervous system)
- ∨ Child and adolescent psychopathology
- ∨ Effects of commonly prescribed medications
- ∨ Signs and symptoms of substance abuse in the schools
- ∨ Principles, theories, and major findings in abnormal, human learning, personality, and social psychology
  - Ⓢ Piaget's cognitive development stage theory
  - Ⓢ Kohlberg's stages of moral development
  - Ⓢ The halo effect and Bandura's social learning theory
  - Ⓢ Seligman's approach (e.g., The Optimistic Child)
  - Ⓢ Erikson's and Freud's development stages
  - Ⓢ Maslow's needs
  - Ⓢ The Premack Principle
- ∨ Human learning
- ∨ Child and adolescent development
- ∨ Motivation, cognition, and language development
- ∨ Theories of intelligence
  - Ⓢ CHC theory and structural and hierarchical theories of intelligence (e.g., Spearman)
- ∨ Language development

#### Knowledge of Measurement Theory and Principles

- ∨ Types of test scores and norms
- ∨ Strengths and limitations of various assessment procedures (e.g., multiple-choice tests, interviews, self-report inventories)
- ∨ Reliability and validity of measurement
- ∨ Personal, social, linguistic, environmental, racial, and cultural factors that may influence test performance
- ∨ Test fairness concepts

#### *Suggested Resources:*

Berk, L.E. (2004). *Infants, children, and adolescents* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Publications.  
Feldman, R. S. (2007). *Development across the life span* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.  
Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

#### *Additional Resources:*

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## VI. Ethical, Legal, and Professional Foundations (12%)

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### Potential topics covered by PRAXIS-II

#### Ethical Principles and Standards for Practice

- ✓ NASP ([www.nasponline.org/standards/ProfessionalCond.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/standards/ProfessionalCond.pdf)) and APA ethical principles and professional standards ([www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.pdf](http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.pdf)), including:
  - Ⓢ Test use and misuse
  - Ⓢ Confidentiality
  - Ⓢ Supervision standards
  - Ⓢ Private practice standards
  - Ⓢ How NASP handles complaints about a member or nonmember
  - Ⓢ Responsibilities related to the reporting of abuse
  - Ⓢ Differences between direct and indirect service models
- ✓ Professional standards in the practice of school psychology as set forth in the NASP professional conduct manual
- ✓ APA, AERA, and NCME standards for educational and psychological tests
- ✓ Considerations in the use of technology (e.g., Report writing software, confidentiality, electronic data storage and transmission)

#### Legal Issues Related to the Practice of School Psychology

- ✓ Laws, codes, and regulations governing the practice of school psychology and the education of students with disabilities, including the rights of students, freedom of information, and rights of access to student records
- ✓ Rights of students (e.g., informed consent, aversive procedures, discipline, least restrictive environment, Free Appropriate Public Education, discipline)
- ✓ Government laws, regulations, and guidelines dealing with education of students with disabilities
  - Ⓢ IDEA 2004, including the following principles: Zero Reject Principle, Nondiscriminatory Evaluation, Free and Appropriate Education, Least Restrictive Environment, Procedural Due Process, and Parental and Student Participation (Tip: visit NASP's IDEA Information site: [www.nasponline.org/advocacy/IDEAinformation.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/IDEAinformation.aspx), and OSEP's IDEA 2004 website: <http://idea.ed.gov/>)
  - Ⓢ Section 504, IDEA 2004, Pub.L. 108-446, ADA, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and Hatch Amendment of 1978
- ✓ Legal liability of school psychologists (e.g., malpractice, negligence, supervision)
- ✓ Legislation dealing with freedom of information and rights to gain access to students' records
  - Ⓢ FERPA, Buckley Amendment, evaluation requirements, placement decisions, procedural safeguards, and complaints, compliance, and monitoring procedures.
- ✓ Court cases that affect practice and the legal liability of school psychologists (e.g., malpractice, negligence, supervision)
  - Ⓢ Know the impact of relevant court cases, including:
    - *Brown v. Board of Education*

- *Debra P. v. Turlington*
- *Diana v. State Board of Education*
- *Guadalupe Organization, Inc. v. Tempe Elementary School District*
- *Hobson v. Hanson*
- *Larry P. v. Riles*
- *Mills v. Board of Education of District of Columbia*
- *Parents in Action in Special Education (P.A.S.E.) v. Hannon*
- *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (P.A.R.C.) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*
- *Pesce v. J. Sterling Morton High School*
- *Rowley v. Board of Education*
- *Tarasoff v. The Regents of the University of California*
- *Tatro v. Irving Independent School District*

Professional Foundations

- ✓ Timeline of major events in the field (Tip: See Fagan & Wise’s Timeline of School Psychology History:
  - Ⓢ Contributions of the following individuals: Anastasi, Bergan, Binet, Caplan, Cattell, Galton, Gessell, Jenson, McCarthy, Simon, Spearman, Terman, Thurstone, Vernon, Wechsler, Witmer, Wundt, etc.)
- ✓ Advocating for children and their families (e.g., related to issues such as disproportionality, poverty, access, and equity)
- ✓ Continued Professional Development

*Suggested Resources:*

Fagan, T. K., & Wise, P.S. (2007). *School psychology: Past, present, and future* (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Jacob, S. & Hartshorne, T. S. (2006). *Ethics and law for school psychologists* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). NY, New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Williams, B. B., Armistead, L., & Jacob, S. (2008). *Professional ethics for school psychologists: A problem-solving model casebook*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

*Additional Resources:*

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## General Study and Test-Taking Tips

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- ☑ Consider taking the PRAXIS II in January or over the summer, when graduate school workloads tend to be lighter.
- ☑ Register early to get your preferred testing site and minimize driving time the morning of the test.
- ☑ Prepare an organized and realistic study plan with scheduled study sessions early to avoid cramming at the last minute.
- ☑ Use local student organization (e.g., SASP, SPA) or program funds to purchase necessary study references, or check campus libraries for copies of suggested references.
- ☑ Review ETS's "Test at a Glance" pamphlet, at: [www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0401.pdf](http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/pdf/0401.pdf).
- ☑ Study with your classmates! Study group members can divide up the relevant resources and provide concise summaries of the material for each other.
- ☑ Create an optimal environment for studying, including a comfortable temperature and a workspace that is free from distractions. Don't forget to take regular breaks!
- ☑ Keep in mind effective study techniques, such as distributed practice, active engagement with reading material, and use of mnemonic techniques.
- ☑ Ask your professors to conduct a group review of topics and strategies for the PRAXIS II.
- ☑ NASP members can use the Online Student Communities to connect with others who have recently taken the PRAXIS II and who may be able to provide additional information!
- ☑ Keep in mind that test versions vary across sessions and participants, so it is better not to rely on one individual's experience with the test.
- ☑ Read questions carefully, underlining key words. When in doubt, go with your first instinct.
- ☑ Answer questions you are confident about first, and mark ones about which you are unsure. If you have time at the end, you can go back and spend additional time on these items.
- ☑ RELAX! Have confidence that you know the material and go into the testing session with a "can do" attitude. Take a deep breath, remember that many of your colleagues have passed this exam, and have confidence that you will, too!

*This study guide was initially developed by Arlene Silva while she was a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, and working as a NASP Graduate Assistant. This resource was last updated in March 2010.*