

CASE STUDY RUBRIC

The National School Psychology Certification Board (NSPCB) of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) developed the following rubric to help guide applicants in structuring an effective case study. Additionally, the NSPCB utilizes the rubric as part of the evaluation process for NCSP candidates from graduate programs without NASP approval/accreditation.

We encourage all school psychology graduate preparation programs to disseminate the rubric among students and utilize this resource in relevant courses.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Eric Rossen, NCSP, NASP Director of Professional Development and Standards, at erossen@naspweb.org.

The determination of an effective/needs development case study is guided by whether it is both data driven and makes logical sense, rather than how many isolated elements are found to be effective.

Section 1: Elements of an Effective Case Study

	Effective	Needs Development
1.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Demographics of the case are adequately described (e.g., age, type of class/school, grade, SES, disability).	<input type="checkbox"/> Demographic information does not include sufficient information.
1.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment, intervention, and/or consultation practices consider unique individual characteristics.	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment, intervention, and/or consultation practices do not consider unique individual characteristics.
1.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with relevant stakeholders (e.g., parents, teachers, and other professionals) is evident throughout the process.	<input type="checkbox"/> Decisions regarding problem identification and intervention are made without consultation with relevant stakeholders.
1.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Steps of the problem-solving process are implemented coherently (i.e., sequential, goal directed, and flow logically based on evidence).	<input type="checkbox"/> The steps of the problem-solving process are not followed.
1.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional practices of writing style, formatting, and graphing are present in the case study (i.e., clear succinct and well written text with clearly labeled graphs).	<input type="checkbox"/> Errors in writing convention, style, and graphing interfere with readability and interpretation of data.
1.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal identifying information of the case study subject is redacted from the report.	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal identifying information is not redacted from the report.
RATING	<input type="checkbox"/> EFFECTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Comments:

Section 2: Problem Identification

	Effective	Needs Development
2.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Information is gathered from multiple sources (e.g., record review, interview, observation, and testing [RIOT]).	<input type="checkbox"/> Data are not gathered from multiple sources.
2.2	<input type="checkbox"/> The problem is operationally defined in observable, measurable terms (i.e., the referral concern is restated as an observable, measurable dependent variable).	<input type="checkbox"/> The problem is not operationally defined (e.g., it is reported as a categorical/descriptive cause such as autism, depression, ADHD; or terms such as aggression, anxiety or hyperactivity).
2.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Expectations for the identified behavior are stated based upon an appropriate source for comparison (e.g., grade level standards, peer performance, normative data).	<input type="checkbox"/> Expected performance is not based on an appropriate source for comparison or is not included. OR <input type="checkbox"/> The difference between actual and expected levels of performance is not explicitly stated.
2.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate baseline data are graphed to depict the discrepancy between the case's performance relative to an appropriate comparison.	<input type="checkbox"/> Baseline data are not graphed. OR <input type="checkbox"/> Baseline data include fewer than three data points. OR <input type="checkbox"/> Expected level of performance is not included in the graph (i.e., aim line or goal line).
RATING	<input type="checkbox"/> EFFECTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Comments:

Section 3: Problem Analysis

	Effective	Needs Development
3.1	<input type="checkbox"/> The problem behavior is hypothesized as a skill or performance deficit. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Data are used to test the hypothesis.	<input type="checkbox"/> There is no hypothesis regarding skill or performance deficit. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Data are not used to test the hypothesis.
3.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional hypotheses are formulated to address the problem across one or more of the following areas: curriculum, instruction, and environment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple hypotheses are not developed. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Hypotheses are untestable.
3.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Each hypothesis is stated in observable/measurable terms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hypotheses are not stated in observable/measurable terms.
3.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed hypotheses are empirically tested and/or other sources of data are used to confirm or reject each hypothesis.	<input type="checkbox"/> Hypotheses are not tested, or appropriate sources of data are not used to confirm or reject each hypothesis.
3.5	<input type="checkbox"/> A conclusive statement following hypothesis testing and/or data collection is provided that formally describes the cause of the problem and informs intervention(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> A conclusive statement formally describing the cause of the problem is not included. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Does not lead to a logical intervention.
RATING	<input type="checkbox"/> EFFECTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Comments:

Section 4: Intervention

	Effective	Needs Development
4.1	<input type="checkbox"/> A single evidence-based intervention is implemented and linked to preceding sections.	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention is not evidence based. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention is not linked to preceding sections. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple interventions are implemented simultaneously.
4.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptability of the intervention by relevant stakeholders (e.g., caregivers, teachers) is verified.	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptability of the intervention by one or more stakeholders is not verified.
4.3	<input type="checkbox"/> The intervention is replicable: <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention components are clearly described (i.e., independent variable) <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics are reported (e.g., who will implement, setting, duration and frequency of sessions)	<input type="checkbox"/> The intervention is not replicable: <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention components are not described (i.e., independent variable) <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics are missing (e.g., who will implement, setting, duration and frequency of sessions)
4.4	<input type="checkbox"/> A skill or performance goal is explicitly stated: <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The goal is described using the same metric as the dependent variables <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The goal is achievable based on research or other data.	<input type="checkbox"/> A skill or performance goal is not explicitly stated: <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The goal is described using a different metric as the dependent variables <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The goal is not achievable or not linked to research or other data.

Section 4: Intervention (Continued)

	Effective	Needs Development
4.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Progress is monitored and graphed for data based decision making (formative evaluation).	<input type="checkbox"/> Progress is not monitored. OR <input type="checkbox"/> Progress data are not graphed.
4.6	Treatment integrity/fidelity data are: <input type="checkbox"/> Collected and reported AND <input type="checkbox"/> Used in the interpretation of intervention efficacy.	Treatment integrity/fidelity data are not: <input type="checkbox"/> Collected or reported OR <input type="checkbox"/> Used to describe intervention efficacy.
RATING	<input type="checkbox"/> EFFECTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Comments:

Section 5: Evaluation (Summative)

	Effective	Needs Development
5.1	<input type="checkbox"/> A single graph is depicted for the target behavior and includes the following elements: <input type="checkbox"/> Baseline data <p align="center">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal/target indicator or aim line <p align="center">AND</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment/progress monitoring data with a trend line	<input type="checkbox"/> A single target behavior is presented on multiple graphs, or relevant graphs are not included. The following components are not included in the graph: <input type="checkbox"/> Baseline data <p align="center">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Goal/target indicator or aim line <p align="center">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment/progress monitoring data with a trend line
5.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Adequate intervention data (i.e., typically 7 data points) are collected to demonstrate level and/or trend under intervention conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient data are collected to meaningfully interpret the results of the intervention.
5.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual analysis of the level, trend and variability, and/or statistical analyses (e.g., effect size) demonstrate that the intervention was effective.	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual or statistical analyses were not used. <p align="center">OR</p> <input type="checkbox"/> The intervention was ineffective.
5.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for generalizing outcomes to other settings are described.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for generalizing outcomes to other settings are not described.
5.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for follow-up are developed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for follow-up are not developed.
RATING	<input type="checkbox"/> EFFECTIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> NEEDS DEVELOPMENT

Comments:

The following list of articles and books is an updated list of those resources which the NCSP Board feels are most pertinent and useful to understanding and utilizing a problem solving process. It is shared in the hopes that this will help applicants to better understand the components of an acceptable submission.

Recommended Reading

- Burns, M. K. (2010). Formative evaluation in school psychology: Fully informing the instructional process. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, 4, 22–33.
- Christ, T. J., & Arañas, Y. A. (2014). Best practices in problem analysis. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Data-based and collaborative decision making* (pp. 87–97). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Daly, III, E. J., Witt, J. C., Martens, B. K., & Dool, E. J. (1997). A model for conducting a functional analysis of academic performance problems. *School Psychology Review*, 26, 554–574.
- Eckert, T. L., Dunn, E. K., Rosenblatt, M. A., & Truckenmiller, A. J. (2008). Identifying effective school-based reading interventions: A review of the brief experimental analysis literature. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, 2, 16–28.
- Hawkins, R. O., Morrison, J. Q., Musti-Rao, S., & Hawkins, J. A. (2008). Treatment integrity for academic interventions in real world settings. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, 2, 1–15.
- Hixson, M., Christ, T. J., & Bruni, T. (2014). Best practices in the analysis of progress-monitoring data and decision making. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Foundations* (pp. 343–354). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Horner, R. H., Carr, E. G., Halle, J., McGee, G., Odom, S., & Wolery, M. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in special education. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 165–179.
- Howell, K. W., & Hosp, J. L. (2014). Best practices in curriculum-based evaluation. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Data-based and collaborative decision making* (pp. 159–170). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Hunley, S., & McNamara, K. (2010) *Tier 3 of the RTI Model Problem Solving Through a Case Study Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin and Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Jones, K. M., & Wickstrom, K. F. (2010). Using functional assessment to select behavioral interventions. In G. Peacock, R. A. Ervin, E. J. Daly III, & K. W. Merrell (Eds.), *Practical handbook of school psychology: Effective practices for the 21st century* (pp. 192–210). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kratochwill, T. R., Hitchcock, J., Horner, R. H., Levin, J. R., Odom, S. L., Rindskopf, D. M., & Shadish, W. R. (2010). Single-case designs technical documentation. Retrieved from What Works Clearinghouse website: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/wwc_scd.pdf.
- Mascolo, J. T., Alfonso, V. C., & Flanagan, D. P. (2014). *Essentials of planning, selecting, and tailoring interventions for unique learners*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Methe, S. A., & Riley-Tillman, T. C. (2008). An informed approach to selecting and designing early mathematics interventions. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice*, 2, 29–41.

- Riley-Tillman, T. C., & Walcott, C. M. (2007). Using baseline logic to maximize the value of educational interventions. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice, 1*, 87–97.
- Upah, K. R. F. (2008). Best practices in designing, implementing, and evaluating quality interventions. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology V* (pp. 209–224). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- VanDerHeyden, A. M. (2014). Best practices in can't do/won't do assessment. In P. L. Harrison & A. Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in school psychology: Data-based and collaborative decision making* (pp. 305–316). Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Zaslofsky, A. F., & Volpe, R. J. (2010). Graphing single-case data in Microsoft Excel 2007. *School Psychology Forum: Research in Practice, 4*, 15–24.