NASP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
School Psychologists

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

Comments:

Section 2: Problem Identification

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

Comments:

Section 3: Problem Analysis

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

Comments:

Section 4: Intervention

	Effective	Needs Development
4.1	☐ A single evidence-based intervention is implemented and linked to preceding sections.	☐ Intervention is not evidence based. OR ☐ Intervention is not linked to preceding sections. OR ☐ Multiple interventions are implemented simultaneously.
4.2	☐ Acceptability of the intervention by relevant stakeholders (e.g., caregivers, teachers) is verified.	☐ Acceptability of the intervention by one or more stakeholders is not verified.
4.3	☐ The intervention is replicable: ☐ Intervention components are clearly described (i.e., independent variable) AND ☐ Logistics are reported (e.g., who will implement, setting, duration and frequency of sessions)	☐ The intervention is not replicable: ☐ Intervention components are not described (i.e., independent variable) OR ☐ Logistics are missing (e.g., who will implement, setting, duration and frequency of sessions)
4.4	Skill or performance goals are: ☐ Described using the same metric as the dependent variables AND ☐ Achievable based on research or other data.	Skill or performance goals are: ☐ Described using a different metric as the dependent variables OR ☐ Not achievable or not linked to research or other data.

Section 4: Intervention (Continued)

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

Comments:

Section 5: Evaluation (Summative)

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