Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP)
Common Errors & Tips

Common Errors and Tips: Portfolio	
Common Error	**Tip for Success**
Not reviewing the guidance videos or requirements, reading the description of requirements	See the NCSP website for videos that guide you through each step of the application process. Review the description of the required evidence of skill application for each domain to make sure you are submitting the correct type of documentation.
Submitting course papers or PowerPoint presentations	Provide evidence of implementing the services described. For example, presenting on consultation models would demonstrate knowledge, yet documentation of applying those skills in a school, including documentation of impact, would demonstrate skill/ability. Submitting presentations *may* provide supplemental evidence of skill in a domain if documentation can demonstrate how that presentation contributed to overall outcomes. For example, submitting evidence of work on a violence prevention effort may include presentations to staff and families as a component, which must also include evaluation/outcome data associated with the presentation.
Submitting as many artifacts as possible in hopes that one will meet the standard	A single, high-quality artifact can often satisfy the skill requirements in a domain. Be thoughtful and ideally submit only two to three artifacts. Submitting too many artifacts, particularly if they are judged to be unsatisfactory in meeting the domain, can be more of a detriment than supportive to the overall application.
Submitting letters of reference or supervisor evaluations	These artifacts can be submitted as supplemental support but they are not considered primary evidence.
Submitting raw data reports or charts without context	Any charts, tables, or graphs should have context, including why the data were collected, who collected the data, and how. Indicate how data were used to inform decision-making at the individual, group, or school-wide levels.
Submitting illegible documentation	Make sure all of your documents are legible and correctly oriented for viewing by reviewers.
Aligning names of files submitted to the Domain Response Matrix	Make sure that the artifacts you mention in your Domain Response Matrix are appropriately titled for easy identification and remember to upload each one in your submission.
Not clearly explaining your role in creating submitted artifacts	Submitting a district's crisis plan, for example, without stating your role in either creating or implementing that plan makes it difficult to determine your skills. In some cases, getting a letter from an administrator attesting to your role can be helpful.
Loading the wrong artifacts or forgetting to load all artifacts into the NCSP online application	Ensure the artifacts you upload for your application are correct and are clearly identified by their filename. Remember to include all of the artifacts you mention in your Domain Response Matrix.
Combining articles into one large PDF.	Upload artifacts individually with appropriately named files. Do not add them all to one PDF that requires reviewers to scroll in an attempt to find an individual artifact.

Common Errors and Tips: Domain Response Matrix	
Common Error	**Tip for Success**
Being too brief/lacking detail	The *Domain Response Matrix* is the primary content of your portfolio. It guides your reviewers to understand how the artifact you are submitting meets each indicator. Consider it a road map to your entire submission.
Not addressing indicators	Indicate which artifact you believe meets each indicator in your Domain Response Matrix description.
Not indicating your role	Explain your role related to each artifact. If you lead MTSS teams, created all of the agendas and kept the data across the building; explain this. Reviewers will not know how you participated when you submit an artifact without an indication of your role in the Domain Response Matrix.
Being too brief	The more information you include in your *Domain Response Matrix* that allows reviewers to understand how your artifact meets the indicator and what you did to produce the artifact, the better.
EXAMPLE – Domain 1, Indicator 1	In the Domain Response Matrix, each indicator is stated and there is a space for you to respond, explaining what you are submitting, how it meets the indicator, and your role. Here is an example for Domain 1, Indicator 1: ▪ *Conducting assessments using varied techniques to determine and/or plan specialized services:* *Applicant Response:* I am submitting a Problem-Solving Report as evidence of my ability to use varied assessment methods including curriculum-based measures, progress monitoring, and norm-based assessment as a part of a comprehensive process of effective decision-making. I led the collection of data from the student study team that included teachers, specialists, and parents, through a problem-solving process to determine the most appropriate interventions and instructional strategies for this case. Acceptability forms were collected before and after; results are indicated. Citations for the evidence-based intervention that was utilized are indicated in my report.

Common Errors and Tips: Problem-Solving Report

Common Error	Tip for Success
Submitting a psychoeducational assessment or evaluation	The problem-solving report should highlight a case that utilizes data to drive a specific evidence-based intervention, actual implementation of that intervention, and evaluation of outcomes. Psychoeducational reports typically end with an analysis of assessments and *recommendations* of interventions rather than actual implementation and evaluation of those interventions and therefore are not judged to meet the criteria.
Submitting complicated cases	Identify and submit simple, concrete reports that highlight your ability to follow the problem-solving process. The intent is to show you can appropriately apply the steps of an effective problem-solving report. Complex or difficult cases are not viewed more favorably in the review process and often make it difficult for the applicant to clearly demonstrate their skills in following the steps.
Implementing several interventions simultaneously	Identify a single problem to address, and a single evidence-based intervention to address that problem.
Hypothesizing the problem as a disability	Hypotheses should focus on either a specific skill deficit (i.e., can't do), or a performance deficit (won't do). Avoid central hypotheses that the student has a learning disability or ADHD.
Failing to develop and empirically test multiple hypotheses.	Develop multiple hypotheses and test each one during the problem analysis stage of your report.
Not using consistent data	Use the same measurement metrics during baseline and outcome evaluations. This allows for direct comparison throughout the course of the intervention.
Graphing errors	Do not use multiple graphs. Use a single-line graph that clearly shows all of the data – baseline and monitoring – in a single graph. Make sure you show a goal line and label all data completely.
Not clearly or operationally defining the problem	The problem-solving report can easily fall apart without a clear, well-defined, and measurable concern that can be responsive to intervention.
Deciding on the problem without any rationale	The problem should be identified through a collaborative, data-driven process. Avoid simply stating the problem without any rationale for how that problem was identified or agreed upon. Additionally, avoid using interviews or team meetings as the sole source of information to define a target problem; while they represent a critical component of data gathering, additional supporting data are needed to validate those judgments.
Setting unreasonable goals or identifying goal statements that do not consider the data.	Rather than simply stating a goal, consider using expected growth trends or student and peer growth rates to set reasonable goals. For example, avoid setting a goal for a student to read on grade level following an 8-week intervention if the student is several years behind. Ideally, provide a rationale for the goal.
Not following the rubric's structure and guidelines	Follow the Problem-Solving Report rubric as a guide to ensure the highest likelihood of success. This includes sticking to the 10-page limit.