

Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board Licensed Psychology Advisory Committee

August 13, 2024

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Today's Topics

- History related to the need for the EPPP to transition into a competency- based assessment
- Discuss what is different between the EPPP Part 1-Knowledge and the Part 2-Skills
- Validation and bias prevention for the EPPP
- An overview of the resources available to those in preparation for taking the EPPP Part 2- Skills
- Some high-level performance outcomes
- Time for questions



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**History related to the
need for the EPPP to
transition into a
thorough
competency- based
assessment:
Knowledge and Skills**



Background Information

- **To protect the public**, Licensing Boards and Colleges make all efforts to ensure those who practice psychology are competent to do so, tremendous thought goes into the requirements for licensure.
- The EPPP was created in 1965 as a standardized examination to assess **foundational knowledge** of those aspiring to become licensed as psychologists. By the mid-80s, the EPPP was adopted by 65 jurisdictions.
- In addition, Licensing Boards and Colleges found it necessary to also assess the **skills** of candidates and did so via supervisor ratings, hours requirements, oral exams, all of which have reliability & validity concerns.



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Background Information

- The historical EPPP (EPPP Part 1-Knowledge) is a **foundational knowledge** exam for licensing general psychologists and has been criticized for not assessing real-world clinical **skills**.
- Many professions have moved towards competency-based exams as a **best practice** at the time of licensing, assessing integrated use of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of the profession.
- Psychology is an outlier among healthcare disciplines not having a **standardized skills** exam; the assessment of clinical skills varies widely across jurisdictions with known reliability & validity concerns.



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Seeking to Define Competence in Professional Psychology Throughout North America

- 1986 National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP) Core Competency Model
- 1996 APA CoA revises Guidelines and Principles (to include competency/codified in CoA)
- 2000 Council of Chairs of Training Councils (CCTC)-Practicum Competencies had a shift from hours of supervision to competencies expected at different stages of training - ASPPB and NR liaisons
- 2002 Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) Competency Conference (APA invitation)-Competency Model across all of psychology - ASPPB liaison



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Seeking to Define Competence in Professional Psychology Throughout North America

- 2002 APA Board of Educational Affairs (BPA) Task Force on Assessment of Competency - ASPPB liaison
- 2004 In Canada- Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) competency at credential level
- 2004 APA Task Force Assessment of Competency Professional Psychology [in Health Service Providers] (how to assess competency) - ASPPB liaison



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Seeking to Define Competence in Professional Psychology Throughout North America

- 2006 Competency Benchmarks Work Group co-sponsored by APA BPA and CCTC - liaisons from organized psychology including ASPPB
- 2006 Competency Assessment Toolkit- ASPPB liaison
- 2008 ASPPB Practice Analysis
- 2009 ASPPB Competencies Assessment Task Force (CATF)



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Seeking to Define Competence in Professional Psychology Throughout North America

- 2010 Health Service Psych Collaborative (BEA, CCTC and the Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology) - ASPPB liaison
- 2012 ASPPB Competencies Assessment Committee (CAC)
- 2017 APA CoA revised Guidelines and Standards which included an increase focus on profession wide competency - ASPPB liaison



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Paul Nelson former APA Chair of Education 2007

Article in **Training and Education in Professional Psychology 2007, Vol. 1, No. 1, 3–1**

The history of psychology's development as a licensed profession is traced over the past 60 years through the evolution of the profession's quality control practices in education and credentialing. These two essential features of a profession began at about the same time but evolved quite independent of one another for the first 30 years. Shaped by events of the 1970s and 1980s, however, there has been a gradual convergence of focus by those responsible for professional education and credentialing on how best to assess the quality of professional education programs and their graduates who apply for licensure. Although at first this focus was predominantly on the content of curriculum taught and the knowledge examined, increasingly over the past decade there has been a shift of emphasis to the broader, more complex construct of competence to practice for which examination of knowledge is a necessary but insufficient assessment. The article describes the events and structures that led to this outcome and concludes with comments about the future.



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EPPP Transformation

- The membership of ASPPB supported transformation of the EPPP to enhance their ability to evaluate candidate **competence** in professional psychology practice, a task they were struggling to do on their own.
- **Competence** is defined as the integrated and consistent use of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values of the profession.
- ASPPB has spent more than 15 years evaluating the need and methods to revise the EPPP to be a competency-based exam that includes both **foundational knowledge and skills** components.
- With 36 presentations being made before ASPPB members on topics related to competency-based assessments and the EPPP during the years of 2013-2024.



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Development of EPPP (Part 2-Skills): In Service of Assisting Jurisdictions Facing Concerns...

- Skills are not universally assessed in a standardized manner.
- Lack of standardization (and conflict of interest) in faculty and supervisor assessments across students.
- For 3 consecutive years APPIC has seen an increase in competency consultation requests.
- Worrisome potential impact on training post COVID pandemic (e.g., no in-person experience with patients until internship; APPIC students of concern reports rising).



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Concerns Cont'd...

- 77% of psychology students report problems with professional competency with peers (Furr, & Brown-Rice, 2017).
- Training Directors agree that a significant majority of candidates are not ready to practice upon receipt of the degree (Rodolfa, Ko, & Petersen, 2004).
- Training directors believe approximately 3,400 training hours needed for licensure. Yet post-doc requirements have been eliminated in several states.

Furr, S., & Brown-Rice, K. (2017). Psychology Doctoral Students Perceptions of Peers' Problems of Professional Competency. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology* 12(2), 118-124.

Rodolfa, E., Ko, S. F., & Petersen, L. (2004). Psychology training directors' views of trainees' readiness to practice independently. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 35, 397-404.



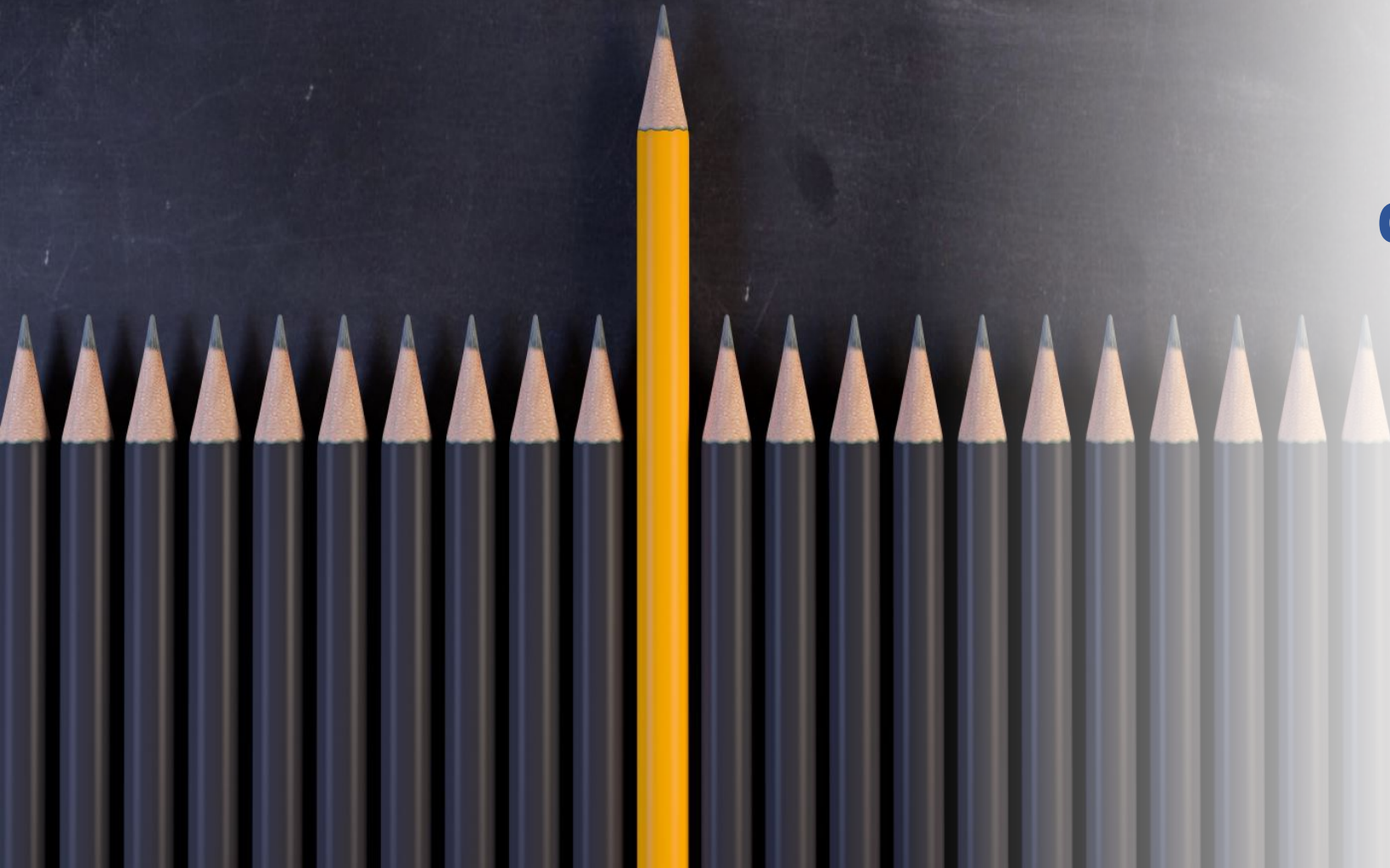
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In Conclusion

- The transformation of the EPPP (Part 1-Knowledge *and* Part 2-Skills) is based on the work of thousands of psychologist educators and practicing psychologists, in the United States and Canada, and follows the highest professional testing standards and best practices for creating a licensure exam.
- With the revised EPPP, licensing boards and colleges have available to them a **standardized, objective, and legally defensible examination** to fully assess the competence necessary for independent practice by psychologists (or supervised practice using appropriate cut score for this purpose).
- The ASPPB will continue to be a reliable partner with all jurisdictions in their utilization of the EPPP and in the **responsible licensing** of competent practitioners.



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**Discuss what is
different between
the EPPP Part 1-
Knowledge and
the Part 2-Skills**

EPPP Framework

Part 1- Theoretical Knowledge

1. Biological Bases of Behavior
2. Cognitive-Affective Bases of Behavior
3. Social and Cultural Aspects
4. Growth and Lifespan Development
5. Assessment and Diagnosis
6. Treatment, Intervention, Prevention and Supervision
7. Research and Statistics
8. Ethical/Legal/Professional Issues

Part 2- Skills

1. Scientific Orientation
2. Assessment and Intervention
3. Relational Competence
4. Professionalism
5. Ethical Practice
6. Collaboration, Consultation, Supervision



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EPPP Part 1 Knowledge Items

A young girl is asked to suggest an appropriate birthday gift for her father. She replies, "Daddy wants a dolly that talks". According to Piagetian theory, her response implies that she is demonstrating:

- A. animistic thinking.
- B. egocentric thought.
- C. horizontal décalage.
- D. transitivity.

Correct Option: B

Domain: 4

KN: KN21



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EPPP Part 1 Knowledge Items

Which type of intelligence is measured by a test that requires writing the definitions for vocabulary words?

- A. crystallized
- B. creative
- C. practical
- D. fluid

Correct Option: A

Domain: 2



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EPPP Part 2 Sample Item

In the first session with a client diagnosed with schizophrenia, the psychologist should:

- A. display empathy, convey expertise, and express optimism that therapy can be helpful.
- B. identify poor coping mechanisms, set goals and discuss medication adherence.
- C. help the client identify triggers, thoughts and behavioral responses associated with psychotic symptoms.

EPPP Part 2 Sample Item

After an initial evaluation, a psychologist diagnoses an adolescent with a disorder not covered by the client's health insurance. Which of the following is an acceptable course of action for the psychologist?

- A. Submit an insurance claim identifying the client's parent as the client.
- B. Provide the client with a referral to an affordable resource for treatment.
- C. Change the client's diagnosis to one that is reimbursable.

Sample Video Scenario



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EPPP Part 2 Sample Item

First Session

Religion

Meeting

Which of the following are the most critical considerations the psychologist needs to be aware of when treating this client?
(select 2)

- A. The length of the dating relationship
- B. The psychologist's own biases and opinions around religion
- C. The partner's family's feelings about the relationship
- D. The seriousness of the dating relationship for the client
- E. The psychologist's level of competence regarding family systems

EPPP Part 2 Sample Item

First Session

Religion

Meeting

The psychologist encounters the patient and his parents at an event at their shared place of worship. The psychologist recognizes the parents as fellow members of an upcoming fundraising committee.

What is the *best* way for the psychologist to protect client confidentiality?

- A. Pull the client aside and ask for permission to be introduced to his parents.
- B. Inform the client that you are leaving the event immediately and will discuss the situation during the next session.
- C. Meet the parents if the client decides to make the introduction.

EPPP Part 2 Sample Item

John Smith is a clinical psychology doctoral candidate who has created a business card for his current practicum placement. Click two (2) elements of the card that represent a **violation** of the APA and CPA ethics codes.

Note: Several elements of this card may be viewed as problematic. This sample is provided only to demonstrate this item format

John Smith, Ph.D. Candidate
Clinical Psychologist
Specialty: School Refusal

University of North Kingstown
Department of Psychology (APA-Accredited)
ADDRESS | 123 Main Street, North Kingstown, RI
TEL | 400.123.4567
EMAIL | jsmith@northkingstown.edu
HONOR: American Psychological Association, Member

"There is beauty in struggle"



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Established Validity

Content Validity is established through:

- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Job Task Analysis
- Test Specifications
- Multiple Levels of Content Review
- Psychometric Evaluation
- Standard Setting

Methodology complies with guidelines from APA, AERA, and NCME

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.



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Why Not Other Validation Strategies?

- Predictive validation and criterion related validation are **not** the standard or appropriate for licensure examinations
- Prediction is **not** the purpose of a licensing examination
- Purpose of the exam is to demonstrate minimal, base-line competence (Driver's license, Doctoral Comprehensive Exams)



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Criterion-related Validity is NOT Applicable

Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing: “**Criterion-related evidence is of little applicability** because credentialing examinations are **not** intended to predict individual performance but rather to provide evidence that candidates have acquired the knowledge, skills, and judgment required for effective performance.” (pp. 175-176)

American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.



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California Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) Review - 2021

In a review commissioned by the CA Board of Psychology, OPES found that:

- “The procedures used to establish and support the validity and defensibility of the...EPPP Part 1 and Part 2 appear to **meet professional guidelines and technical standards** outlined in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (2014) (*Standards*) and in California Business and Professions (B&P) Code § 139.”
- “The content of the EPPP Part 1 **assesses general knowledge required** for entry level psychologist practice in California, with the exception of California law and ethics.”



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California Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) Review - 2021

In a review commissioned by the CA Board of Psychology, OPES found that:

- “The Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) were impressed by the EPPP Part 2, both by the concept of measuring skills and by the design of the scenario-based items.”
- “SMEs concluded that **the EPPP Part 2 more thoroughly assesses skills** than those measured by the EPPP Part 1.”



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**Is the EPPP
Biased?**



Differential Performance \neq Bias

- Bias refers to construct underrepresentation or construct-irrelevant components of test scores (AERA, APA & NCME, 2014).
- Published study suggested differential performance on demographic variables (Sharpless, 2019); readers' inference contributes to the bias narrative.
- Differential performance could be from impact of many factors.
- Additional investigation is needed to determine whether bias exists (e.g., as applied to the Bar exam: Raymond et al, 2021).

- Sharpless, B.A. (2019). Are demographic variables associated with performance on the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP). *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 153(2), 161-172.
- Raymond, MR, Southwick, A., Zhang, M. (2021) The Testing Column: Ensuring Fairness in Assessment. Spring 2021 (Vol. 90, No. 1). <https://thebarexaminer.ncbex.org/article/spring-2021/the-testing-column-ensuring-fairness-in-assessment/>



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Facts and Future Research

- ASPPB data consistently show substantial performance differences between candidates who graduated from APA- or CPA-accredited doctoral programs and those from non-accredited programs.
- Demographic, social, and cultural backgrounds, as well as training and internship experiences, are correlated with each other.
- The presence of these confounding variables makes it misleading to attribute performance differences on the EPPP solely to demographic and other background factors.



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Protect Against Bias

Item Development Process

- Implicit bias training and continued discussion
- Iterative process helps different eyes catch different aspects of questions

Item Review Committee (established 2021)

- Blind review all items flagged for differential item performance
- Discuss and decide retain, retain with suggestions for revision, remove due to possible bias in content or wording



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Work Of The Item Review Committee

> 2000 items

57 flagged

removed

8

Very limited
evidence of
potential bias



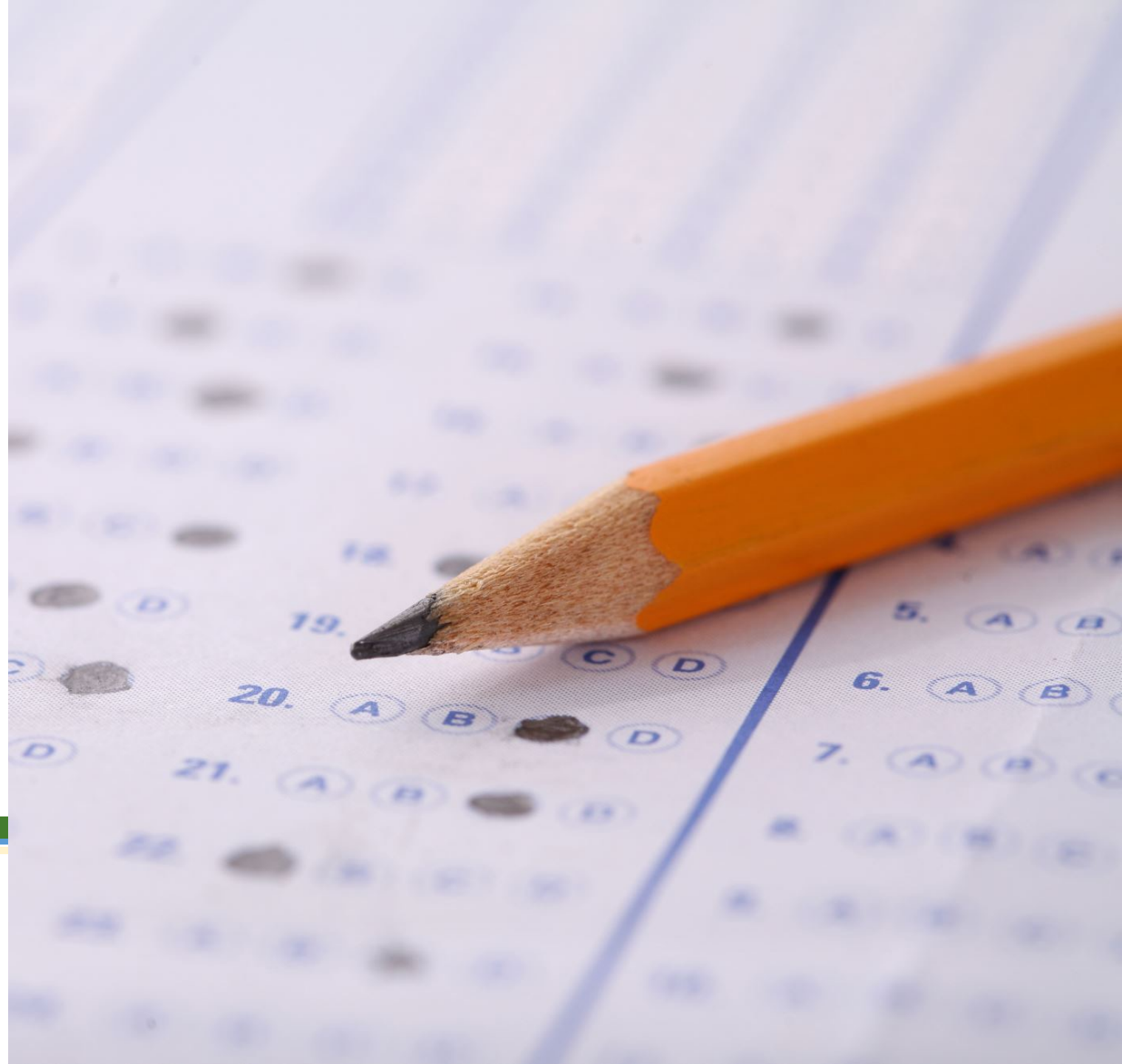
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**An overview of the
resources available
to those in
preparation for
taking the EPPP
Part 2- Skills**

EPPP-Part 2 Sample Exam

- Became available May 2023
- 65 items
- Second Sample Exam is to be published in fall of 2024:
 - To include an answer and an explanation for each question
- Costs associated with taking the Sample Exam (at-cost):
 - On-line Sample Exam: \$30
 - In-person at testing site: \$82.50



Resources External to ASPPB

From a web search there
are several companies
that offer test
preparation materials

~NOTE~

**None Have Been Endorsed
by ASPPB**



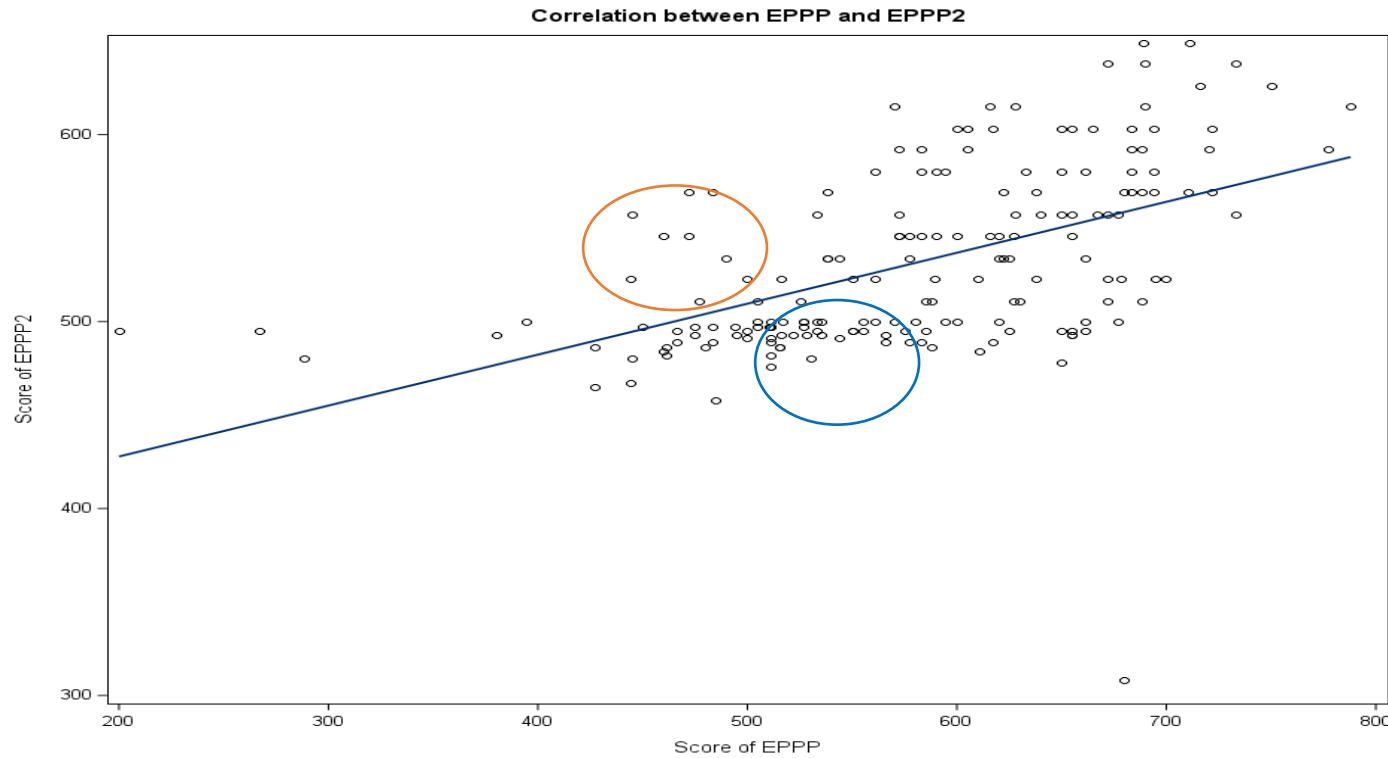
**Avoiding
the Appearance
of Conflicts of Interest**



**Some High-Level Performance
Outcomes**

How EPPP1 and EPPP2 Relate to Each Other

- EPPP1 and EPPP2 scores were moderately positive correlated: approximately 30% variance of EPPP2 scores can be explained by EPPP1 scores
- EPPP1 and EPPP2 measures **two distinct constructs**, complement each other, and together form a competency-based licensure examination



Cumulative Passing Rate for EPPP Part 2

	EPPP2 (N=309)		
Graduation Program	1st Attempt	1st_2nd Attempts	1st_2nd_3rd Attempts
Accredited	69%	80%	84%
Non-Accredited	41%	50%	59%



EPPP2 Administration and Performance

- From 2021 to March 2024, 430+ EPPP2 administrations total, slightly lower first-attempt pass rates for the EPPP2 than for the EPPP1
- EPPP2 First-Attempt Passing Rate by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Total	PASS #	Pass %
Arizona	54	34	63%
District of Columbia	28	20	71%
Georgia	153	101	66%
Manitoba	18	13	72%
Nevada	41	25	61%
Newfoundland & Labrador	15	10	67%
Total	309	203	66%



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Questions and Comments?



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