Barriers

A Qualitative Analysis of Barriers to Integrating Reading and Behavior Support Within an RtI Framework

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Master Thesis
Department Of Special Needs Education
Faculty Of Education

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY
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Abstract

Title: Barriers: A qualitative analysis of barriers to integrating reading and behavior support within an RtI framework.

Research Question: “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?”

This is a qualitative research study that investigates possible barriers to integrating reading and behavior support within a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework.

The integrated RtI framework first began in the USA. Its aim is to develop a response to intervention model that identifies learners with reading or behavior difficulties and then provide targeted support to their specific needs. Furthermore they aim to regularly measure the results of the model by the help of accurate data measurements; using data to evaluate whether the interventions are benefiting the students’ needs.

This framework is currently being tried out in four Norwegian primary schools at grades 1-4. In order to discover how an integrated RtI framework may function in a Norwegian school context, I have interviewed four school practitioners on their experiences in integrating reading and behavior support within this framework.

The informants identified barriers with using the RtI framework. It seems that the biggest barrier does not lie in integrating reading and behavior support, but in how the framework was introduced to the school context and how the informants and their colleagues have dealt with these barriers.

For this thesis I will present the barriers identified in this research project. These include such issues as: psychological, systemic and resourcing. For each barrier, we consider: what is the barrier; the reasons; when and how they occur. This helps with identifying their influence in the implementation success of the framework.
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I wish to give my salute to fellow students for cultural and educational experiences. This brings me to the lecturers who have provided exciting, humorous, serious, interesting and educational lectures since the very start of Fall 2009: I looked forward to every topic you presented, because it always ended with a discussion. That way we had the chance to share and reflect upon the topic of the day.

I would also like to thank Denese Anne Brittain, senior consultant at the faculty, for practical information.

Last, I would like to thank family and friends for love and support.
“Traveler, there are no roads…”

Wayfarer, the road
Is your footsteps, nothing else.
Wayfarer, there is no road
You open it as you walk it.
The walking opens the road
And when you turn your eyes back
You see the path you’ll never
Walk again.
Wayfarer, there is no road,
But wakes on the sea.

By Machado
(Machado & Trueblood, 1982)
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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

The motivation that led me to choose this research on Response to Intervention (RtI) and School Wide Positive Intervention Support (SWPBIS) were my personal experiences of working as a general teacher. As a former teacher in lower secondary school I found it challenging to give every learner adapted teaching in addition to learners with academic and problem behaviors. At one point I received guidance from a special needs expert that counseled me in specific ways to meet the needs of learners with problem behaviors. However, when I tried to apply them in practice I still did not manage to meet the needs of learners that were dependent on academic and problem behavior support. These experiences inspired me to apply for the Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education in order to learn ways to adapt the instructional environment to all learners, but also to learners with special needs. When the time came to choosing a topic for the master thesis I was lucky to be guided by one of my lecturers, Steinar Theie, to Anne Arnesen and Wilhelm Meek-Hansen that were doing a pilot study on an integrated RtI framework.

An integrated RtI framework is a model that can be applied to all students; but especially those with special needs in academic and/ or behavior areas. This involves: adaptive teaching, which adjusts teaching to every individual student; and also using measurable data criteria to identify success rates (McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner, 2006; Shores, 2009).

Currently there is a pilot study in progress at four Norwegian schools (2009-2011). This is trialing an integrated framework of academic and behavior intervention support using the RtI model. Within the academic domain, the pilot study focuses on development of reading skills, where they try to identify systemic and organizational factors that are important when implementing an integrated RtI framework within a multi tiered model (Arnesen & Meek-Hansen, 2010).
Significant Empirical Research

McIntosh, Brigid, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane (2008) have done research on the relation between school failure and the school environment. They have found that a struggling reader that does not receive help is at risk of developing isolating or aggressive behavior that may further affect their reading. Reverse a learner’s aggressive or isolating behavior without support for the underlying factors may leave the learner to continue falling behind in developing reading skills. Further, learners with both behavioral and academic challenges who do not receive support are at risk of not developing behavior and reading skills. The researchers suggest that academic support to all learners’ needs is important to prevent school failure at present and future stages. This gives an emphasis to a need to pick up a student’s academic and behavior needs in order to improve academic and behavior instructions.

In terms of learning to read, researchers stress the importance of providing early intervention (McIntosh, et al., 2006; McIntosh, Goodman, & Bohanon, 2010). The earlier a child is identified as having a need for academic support in reading the more likely the child would benefit from the interventions in the long term. In the work of finding suitable methods for teaching children to read, Adams (1990) says, “If children fail to progress in their reading abilities during their first years of school, the likelihood of their ever catching up is slim, even with extra funding and special programs” (p. 27).

In a course of a ten-year period SWPBIS and RtI have been successfully implemented in US schools (McIntosh, et al., 2010; Sadler, 2008). One of the factors is because educational practitioners have transformed their systems at local, district and national levels. All levels are collaborating in networks: researchers, teachers, principals, school psychologists, politicians, parents and students. Within these collaborations, data has been and still is an important facilitator for communication (McIntosh, et al., 2010; Sadler, 2008).

Norwegian schools that since 2002 have implemented SWPBIS report successful outcomes (Arnesen, Ogden, & Sørlie, 2006). The outcomes are among others successful because the model is school wide, meaning it involves all learners, staff and parents. Schools report reduction of negative behavior as a consequence of systematically collecting student
behavior data that leads to supporting students in need of behavior support (Ogden & Sørlie, 2007, 2009).

In Norwegian schools there is not a well-established system for both mapping and monitoring reading and behavioral needs. Despite the success of implementing SWPBIS the school system needs well-established tools to secure long-term success (Sorlie & Ogden, 2007). This thesis therefore aims at providing information of how some practitioners within the school system have experienced integrating reading and behavior support within an integrated RtI framework.

Implementing an integrated RtI framework seems to be complex. Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace (2005) have done research on implementation efforts and synthesized the research literature in finding good methods, but also methods that are not working well. I have decided to put emphasis on the combination of training and coaching as they found that teachers did increasingly better when the methods were combined (Fixsen et al., 2005). In terms of significant theoretical perspectives I have put weight on theories that I consider significant regarding barriers.

**Research Question**

Research question: “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?”

**Theoretical Perspectives on Special Needs Education**

There are a number of theories on special needs education; especially on how the environment influences the child; and how the child influences the environment. These theories can be used to help understand the barriers that can appear in the environment.

Ecological systems theory is used to explain elements within the instructional environment. As a holistic frame I find Bronfenbrenner’s theories (1979) on the ecological environment around the child as significant. The child influences the teachers’ behavior as well as teachers influences their students’ behavior facilitated by teachers’ instructional behavior.
General systems theory is considered significant in how it considers collaboration within an organization (1998). Teachers’ instructional behavior can be influenced by the degree of collaboration among the teachers (Owens, 1998).

Ecological systems theory and general systems theory seem to support each other and they may help understand why the system around a child needs to collaborate.

Instructional literature on how to integrate SWPBIS and RtI I mostly refer to the literature by Shores (2009). Furthermore, the instructional literature on RtI I mostly refer to Johnson, Mellard and Fuchs (2006).

Implementation is challenging. The literature I have used as main support for this thesis is by Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010), Fullan and Fullan & Hargreaves (Fullan, 1993, 2001; 1992) and Fixsen et al. (2005). In general, they state that implementation is challenging and that it requires many elements to be in place in order for implementations to go well. This thesis gives most focus to obstacles of what can go wrong due to barriers that are common during implementation processes.

**Research Design and Methodology**

The research is a qualitative research study that presents results based on an interview study. The interviews are analyzed by a combination of phenomenological and hermeneutical approach. This means that the research aims at presenting the reality voiced by the informants as they see it (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Kvale, 2007).

**Disposition of the Thesis**

Chapter 1: Introduces the background, purpose and research question.

Chapter 2: Introduces the theoretical framework of an integrated RtI approach and further addresses common barriers. The purpose of the chapter is to create coherence to chapter 4 and 5 and to function as support when answering the research question.

Chapter 3: Gives a detailed description and justification of the research design and the methodology of the research study.
Chapter 4: Highlights essential findings that bring possible answers to the research question. Imbedded within the chapter are interpretations of the results that are supported by the research design presented in chapter three.

Chapter 5: Concludes central topics presented within chapter four, it further implies limitations of the study and ends by giving suggestions for future research.
2 RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FOCUS

This chapter intends to give a review of the elements within the research question: “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?” The aim of this chapter is to give the reader a general overview of what an integrated RtI framework is, why it can be useful, how it can be integrated and which barriers may appear when doing so. ¹

The chapter is split in two parts: Part one gives focus to which models an integrated RtI framework is based on, what an integrated RtI framework intends to do and how to structure the framework within a school context. Examples that are used to explain an integrated RtI framework are practices of data, interventions and collaboration. Part two focuses on barriers that may arise during a process of implementing new ways of performing tasks.

2.1 Introduction

There may be a correlation between a child’s academic and behavior skills that may affect social skills (McIntosh, et al., 2008). McIntosh, et al., (2008) did a study on the relationship between academics and problems behavior in the transition between middle school to high school. They discovered that there may be a relation between a child’s learning and academic difficulties and that the instructional environment is important to be adapted to the needs of a child showing signs of academic and problem behavior. A lack of one of the skills (e.g. reading) may put the child at risk for developing difficulties in the other (e.g. ¹

¹ For more information about an integrated RtI framework, see Shores (2009), Sadler (2008), Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight (2006) and McIntosh, Chard, Boland, & Horner (2006).
paying attention in class), which in turn may affect a child’s social skills (e.g. not developing a respectful attitude towards others). If not being identified for needs in academic and/or behavior and not receiving adapted supports for those needs, a child may be at risk for future failures. These can be actions of negative circles such as dropping out of school, not getting a job, involving oneself in crime etc (McIntosh, et al., 2008). An integrated RtI framework aims at preventing academic and behavior difficulties by using early intervention (McIntosh, et al., 2006).

An integrated framework of RtI consists of two models, Response to Intervention (RtI) and School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SWPBIS) (Johnson, et al., 2006; McIntosh, et al., 2006). Intervention supports are offered to all learners on three levels (universal, moderate and intensive). Early intervention is given on the universal level and is adapted to learners in need of moderate and intensive support.

The framework further consists of a tool kit that identifies and monitors academic and behavior skills. Skills are measured, presented and evaluated in the form of data. This is done three times per year, and those receiving support at tier two and three are assessed more frequently (Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). Sadler & Sugai (2008) describe the ten year development and implementation on the effects of an integrated academic and behavior instructional support model that took place in an Oregon school district, US. Due to systematic monitoring of students’ academic and behavior skills the district experienced increased quality in among others how evaluations were based on responsiveness to interventions (Sadler, 2008). The aim by using data is to measure to which degree a student responds to an intervention that is given. The response may identify that the student has a behavior or reading disability or that the challenge lies within the instructional environment. By a collaborative approach the response to the intervention given provides practitioners with an objective view in how to adapt instructional practices to each learner (Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009).

2.1.1 Theoretical Framework of an Integrated RtI Framework

When reading about an integrated RtI framework for the first time it may be complex to understand, and the framework may also be challenging to implement. For this reason, the theoretical framework of an integrated RtI framework intends to function as a bridge to understand the elements of the results (chapter 4) within the research question: “What are
possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?” This is why I devote space to explain core features of an integrated RtI framework prior to the last section about innovations and barriers to implementation.

An integrated RtI framework is multitheoretical (Shores, 2009). I have decided to give focus to ecological systems theory in the way Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes the adaption of the environments around the child and Garbarino’s descriptions of the child’s microenvironments (Garbarino, 1985). Focus is also given to general system theory as it seems to compliment ecological systems theory in the way it highlights the importance of collaboration (Owens, 1998).

Ecological system theory explains the environments the child is part of and the environments surrounding the child, from the closest to the most distant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). At the macro level national school policies and laws among others influence curriculum contents and assessments. These laws and policies are again affected and thereby adjusted by national student outcomes. At local school level (the meso system) the theory further explains how the school environment affects the development of the child and in turn how the child affects the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). There has been a shared view that schools need to change their instructional environments in order to adapt the teaching to all students, and thereby reduce the number of students referred for evaluation (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, 2003; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). An integrated Response to Intervention (RtI) framework of academic and behavior support are based on evidence-based practices (McIntosh, et al., 2006; McIntosh, et al., 2010). This involves a continuous process of evidence-based reading and behavior instructions, a systematic collection and assessment of student data and evaluation of a student’s response to an intervention given (McIntosh, et al., 2006; McIntosh, et al., 2010). Within an RtI framework one further examines whether a student’s outcome is due to contextual factors (e.g. group size, instructional teaching, text material) and/ or internal factors (a learning disability and/ or a behavior disability) (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). This is a proactive approach that looks for solutions within the child’s environments.

Garbarino has analyzed factors that are positive and negative to the child’s development within the child’s microenvironments (Garbarino, 1985). A child exhibiting academic and/or behavior challenges may benefit in smaller groups with other children where the teacher can give specific instruction to their academic and behavior needs. An integrated
RtI approach represents a comprehensive, tiered framework that provides targeted support of academic and reading development. The child's development is monitored regularly and that way the teacher is able to respond to the child quickly (Gresham, 2007; McIntosh, et al., 2006). That way the size of the intervention and the instruction within the intervention may facilitate positive microenvironments.

General systems theory gives focus to collaboration among professionals within an organization (Owens, 1998). In order to build effective group processes, professionals need to be trained in order to create changes in the organizational structure. They also need to know what their colleagues are doing. This requires collaboration. Collaboration among others involves sharing of information of what one is doing (Owens, 1998). By sharing information and knowledge a school organization can improve individually and collectively as information is channeled back and forth. The ones that benefit the most by such collaboration are most likely the students (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). An integrated RtI framework that focuses on collecting student data and assessing development is dependent on trained professionals (Shores, 2009).

How professionals understand assessment processes affect how academic and behavior instruction is adapted to each child (Gresham, 2007; McIntosh, et al., 2006). Over time student data can be compared to other schools that are also using an integrated RtI framework. Professionals that understand the purpose of using data to advocate for external support (money, teacher resources, mandated support to continue with the model) can achieve political priority to an integrated RtI framework. That way school data influence how the macro system plans school interventions, number and types of teacher resources and curriculum contents. For these reasons learners depend on an educational system that collaborate. General systems theory therefore seems valid as RtI is focused on building responsive professional environments around the learners (Gresham, 2007; McIntosh, et al., 2006).

Based on the examples above, ecological and general system theories seem to shed light to one of the keys to implement an integrated RtI framework. This is because the framework is dependent on adults who understand what RtI is about and adults that are able to collaborate. An environment that collaborates is able to facilitate strengths of the child and to adjust to the needs of the child by adapting the instructional environment.
2.2 Rtl and SWPBIS within an Integrated Framework

2.2.1 Early Intervention

One of the principles of an integrated Rtl approach is the need to intervene early. Within an integrated Rtl framework the aim is to prevent and reduce academic and behavioral difficulties. At universal level the interventions for both academic and behavioral are preventive. At tier two and three the interventions serve to reduce challenges and thereby prevent further challenges (Shores, 2009). A combined academic and behavioral approach aims at adapting the instructional and contextual environment (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006; McIntosh, et al., 2010; Shores, 2009).

2.2.2 Similarities between Rtl and SWPBIS

An integrated Rtl framework consists of Response to Intervention (Rtl) and School Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SWPBIS). The frameworks separately identify students’ academic and behavior needs, give support to identified difficulties and measure response to interventions given. Rtl and SWPBIS are preventive and interventional as both frameworks provide interventions in a tiered framework (universal, moderate and intensive support). In order to decide on types of support and how the interventions have worked, both frameworks are driven by a problem-solving model (McIntosh, et al., 2006). The difference in the two frameworks is the methods used for assessing skills, and the similarity is the name of the measuring tools that are used to pick up needs and measure development (McIntosh, et al., 2006).

Rtl identifies a child’s academic skills (in this context, reading) and provides targeted instructional reading support to a child’s needs in reading. A child’s development is measured frequently in order to assess whether the intervention the child is receiving is working or not. A child’s reading difficulty may lie within the child, but the instructional environment may also influence it. Within an Rtl approach the instructional environment is emphasized as the belief is that instructional teaching must be adapted to the needs of the child (Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003).

SWPBIS identifies a child’s behavior skills and provides tiered support and instruction to appropriate and expected behaviors. That way it prevents negative behavior and intervenes
when children show signs of behavior difficulties. A child’s response to a behavior intervention is measured in a response to intervention approach. As with RtI, SWPBIS also focuses on the environments around the child.

Within RtI and SWPBIS needs and development of skills are measured and presented in the form of academic or behavior data. Measuring and reviewing academic and behavior data separately gives an idea of one of the skills, but viewing both next to each other helps the educator see the relation between the two skills (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007). Therefore researchers’ refer to the two frameworks, RtI and SWPBIS, as strongly related (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Sandomierski, et al., 2007). For this reason researchers are looking for ways to help schools integrate both frameworks into one intervention framework that support both academic and behavior support in an integrated RtI framework. If intervening in problem behaviors, focus on academic tasks can be facilitated because the child learns ways to concentrate on academic tasks. Interventions primarily focusing on academic needs may reduce behavior challenges because the child learns ways to solve strategies for learning to read. (McIntosh, et al., 2010).

2.3 Implementation Structure

As introduced in section 2.2.1, an integrated RtI framework may be challenging to understand and implement. The following describes how to implement an integrated RtI framework. My purpose is to show the complexity of implementing an integrated RtI structure, which may give meaning when reading the results about possible barriers to implementing the framework within a school context.

2.3.1 Data

The goal of an integrated RtI approach is to produce evidence for individuals and science (Fixsen, et al., 2005). An integrated RtI approach collects data to identify learners in need of academic and/ or behavior support. The goal is to having data to benefit students’ part of the approach. Educators need reliably outcome, and this is collected and shared by teachers at the local and district level (Fixsen, et al., 2005).

Three processes can exemplify the process of implementing an integrated RtI framework: Data collection, assessment of data and collaboration of data. These actions can
further be split into three categories: Data, practices and system. The goal is to use data as a function to adapt the instructional environment to the student’s needs (McIntosh, et al., 2010).

**Screening**

Within an integrated RtI framework screening begins at universal level, and all children are screened for skills three times per year. Screening aims at identifying learners at risk of having reading and/or behavior difficulties and it is used to determine whether the instructional environment is adapted to student development (Shores, 2009). Students’ reading and behavior skills are provided by curriculum-based measurements (Shores, 2009). Data scores are put into a chart that is compared to other classes and schools. If a class shows weak performance compared to other classes and schools, it might be assumed that the challenge lies in the instruction rather than in the students. Thereby instruction needs to be improved and again put to the test by making new screening (Shores, 2009).

Within the academic areas, this is an assessment approach with the purpose of screening and monitoring student progress that is done frequently to measure students’ at risk and a student’s response to the academic intervention given (Johnson, et al., 2006). A student’s reading performance is measured in the form of benchmark data. This means that it is compared to an expected level of performance at the same age or grade level. A student performing lower or higher than the expected benchmark may be in need of extra support (Johnson, et al., 2006).

In assessing behavior skills and possible needs for behavior support, students are also screened and monitored for behavior. In order to do this schools are advised to create a school-wide behavioral curriculum with expected school-wide and classroom-rules (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). When a student’s behavior is screened for social skills the learner’s behavior is evaluated for areas of success and areas for improvement. Behavior skills are compared to benchmark values defined by the school-wide behavioral curriculum (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009).

**Progress monitoring**

Progress monitoring is done to measure the response to the intervention given. This means to measure reading and behavior data for specific skills or general outcomes. Progress
monitoring data is compared to benchmark data, which determines whether the student is responding to the intervention given (Johnson, et al., 2006). Students receiving moderate support (tier 2) are monitored 1-2 times per month. This depends on their risk level (Shores, 2009). If the student continues to show a lack of response that is not due to the instructional environment, it may be a sign of a behavior or learning disability (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009; Vaughn & Fuchs, 2003). This philosophy is supported by Adams’ (1990): “Instructional principles do not change for older students; instructional practice must” (p. 7). In terms of reading support, Vaughn & Fuchs (2003) point out that “It is important to note that the purpose of the response-to-instruction focus on environment is to eliminate contextual variables as a viable explanation for academic failure” (p. 142). The same philosophy applies to behavior disabilities (McIntosh, et al., 2008).

2.3.2 Practices

RtI is a scientifically based model that provides a continuum of increasing support at three levels: universal (tier one), moderate (tier two) and severe (tier three). Within this approach a system of data collection and assessment is integrated and used at each tier of service delivery (Shores, 2009). The goal of assessing a student’s response to intervention is to evaluate whether a student is benefitting from the intervention(s). In order to be able to assess such progress (or lack of it) schools that are integrating and thereby implementing a RtI framework should continuously evaluate their capacity and development of competence for integration of behavior and academic support (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006).

Within a tiered system data drives decision making for in which tier to place a learner (screening and progress monitoring). The intent is to allow flexible movement of students back and forth among tiers regardless of disability identification (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006). Movement from one tier to another has to be based on data showing the response to intervention. The first level, universal level, is taught in the general classroom. At the second tier, moderate support is given in a smaller group outside the general classroom. At the third tier, intensive support is given to one to three learners. The content at all tiers share the same instructional strategies depending on the level of support. This is important as the teaching strategies and the support that is given follow the progress of the learners. Thereby the tiers are adapted to the individual learner by a team of professionals that monitor the learners’ response to the intervention given (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006).
A child that continues to struggle within tier 2 is considered having severe difficulties in reading. In this part of the collaboration process the special needs expert is called in for a meeting with the teachers working with the child. Based on the information gathered prior to the meeting the professionals discuss whether the child would benefit from tier 3 or whether there are still adjustments to be made within tier 2. The special needs expert then performs additional assessments that assess the learner for potential learning difficulties, which is crosschecked to RtI assessments to validate results. The results finally show i) whether the child has a learning disability and should receive support in tier 3 or ii) whether the child should continue receiving support in tier 2. If the child has a learning disability an individualized plan is made (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006).

2.3.3 System

Structuring Roles

Within an organization it is important that the workers organize themselves well in terms of deciding on roles and collaboration among roles (Owens, 1998). In order to collect and assess data, make decisions for in which interventions to place students and which teachers to give interventions, an integrated RtI framework gives suggestions for how to structure and collaborate among roles (Shores, 2009).

When implementing an integrated RtI framework it is considered important to identify practitioners with key roles for the innovation. One should select persons that have skills in creating interest for the framework and that consider themselves motivated for implementing the framework. This preparation is useful when teachers need guidance in implementing the integrated RtI framework (Shores, 2009). Furthermore, teachers with key roles should be part of the leadership (Shores, 2009).

The school leadership is further identified as having responsibility for the technical aspects of the integrated RtI framework (Shores, 2009). The leadership should function as a facilitator in providing adapted support of technical tools, which in an integrated RtI framework is a technical data system that collects and assesses data. Data is collected and presented in charts that compare reading and behavior data and help the leadership and practitioners make evaluations of students’ skills and development of skills (Shores, 2009). Thereby data becomes a facilitator during the implementation process.
**Formats for Implementation**

In order to assess and evaluate student data and thereby make decisions for type of suitable intervention and evaluate the quality of intervention given, professionals can choose between a standard protocol and problem-solving model (Shores, 2009). Both formats follow the tiered RtI framework. The formats facilitate professionals to reach decisions in which tier to provide support based on which academic and/or behavioral challenges a student might face. Also, both formats require that prior to assessing a student’s needs a tiered framework for both academic and behavioral interventions must exist (Shores, 2009).

**Standard Protocol**

A standard protocol comes with prearranged components such as: intervention, grouping, progress monitoring tools, and intervention time frame that are based on the general curriculum offered at each grade level. In each tier development is measured and compared to the curriculum’s benchmark (academic and behavior). An evidence-based text material adapted to each tier along with school-wide and classroom rules serve as instructional methods in each tier (Shores, 2009).

**Problem-Solving Approach**

In a problem-solving approach there is no predetermined format as in a standard protocol (Shores, 2009). With this approach the instructional methods and text materials are created and adapted to the individual student in each tier. One defines what the student might be struggling with, one looks for solutions to the challenges by planning an intervention, which is further evaluated (student development and quality of instruction) and ends by implementing a plan based on evaluations of student progress and quality of instruction. The approach is used repeatedly in order to keep focus on how a learner is showing progress in order to adjust the support given (Shores, 2009).

In sum, the common features of a standard protocol and a problem-solving approach is i) how learners are screened and monitored and ii) that both approaches lead to interventions in a tiered model approach (Shores, 2009). What is more, in both approaches a collaborative effort of professionals work together with the aim of providing available supports and interventions that may fit the needs of the learner (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006;
Shores, 2009). The primary aim is to find solutions to challenges to learn. This way formats are solution, process and result oriented.

**Structure of Meetings**

Meetings should consist of teams that meet regularly and that congregates with other teams at the same school (staff meetings) (Shores, 2009). In addition meetings are held in networks within the local district and with other school districts. At local school level each team is lead by key individuals with competence in providing academic and behavioral support. These key individuals represent the school in meetings held outside the school. In addition, a parent representative should also be included when performing staff meetings (Shores, 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

**Purpose of Meetings**

By setting up structured meetings at local and district level, schools get an overall overview of how integrated RtI data communicates students outcomes based on interventions offered at all schools (Shores, 2009). At local and district level schools also get a chance to exchange experiences to integrating academic and behavioral interventions, and schools that experience challenges are able to adjust the quality of service delivery. What is more, when comparing data on a regular basis, data can help predict future student needs by assessing what types of interventions appear the most (tier 2 or 3) and thereby help schools make decisions in how to organize staff resources for which tiers that need extra support (Shores, 2009).

**Content: Discussions, Feedback and Evaluations**

Meetings with focus on the integrated RtI processes are important for school improvement (Shores, 2009). These meetings should include discussions, feedback and evaluations of the interventions delivered provided by student outcomes (data). As explained above, the aim of an integrated RtI framework is to assess the quality of the intervention given provided by the student’s response in the form of data. Dynamic screening and progress monitoring that are performed three times per year and regularly during tier 2 and 3 provide professionals with academic and behavioral data that increase chances of having constructive discussions on what works well and what can be improved (Shores, 2009).
2.4 Conclusion

When aware of how the environments and the instructional teaching affect a child’s learning and behavior, integrating an RtI framework may provide schools with support to aid positive student development. Systematic collection of student data and use of data drives decision-making. Over time class and school data can be compared to other schools using integrated RtI frameworks. That way data facilitate schools in assessing the quality of the instructional environments provided in each tier (Batsche, et al., 2007; Johnson, et al., 2006; McIntosh, et al., 2010; Shores, 2009).

2.5 Innovation Theories

2.5.1 Introduction

An innovation is a planned change in process that intends to improve existing practices (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). It is a process that requires a plan, method, design that defines the purpose of what one wants to make better, how one wants to do it and who the innovation benefits. In a school context the receivers and thereby the benefiters of the innovation should be the learners (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

A project is a process that takes place to achieve an innovation. This is when one wants to put the planned improvement into action (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

A pilot study can be done to test the key improvement, which will advance existing practices. This is a specific project that is done on a small group of schools. It is composed of different phases: Pre-Project, which is the initial study on how to achieve this goal; and implementation, which is the actual work done as described in the plan. An innovation is therefore the result of the work done in the implementation (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

2.5.2 Social Interaction Approach

The root of an innovation can arise within networks. This approach may be in the form of a social interaction approach. A social interaction approach explains how innovations starts and expand within networks (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Networking can take place at social
activities that can be with friends and/or colleagues. These activities can take place while doing sports, attending a book club, conference etc. At these events people meet and among others exchange ideas and experiences.

Ideas and experiences that are perceived as interesting and positive might make people curious (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). If given the opportunity, people who have collaborated in the past and perceived the collaboration as successful might want to collaborate again. By keeping in touch within social networks it is easier for people to initiate and spread ideas within their working place. Schools that decide to take part of the same innovation process can collaborate and thereby increase their competence by expanding their knowledge. If schools in addition collaborate with educators at university or college level both functions have the chance to make the best of their resources by learning from each other. One of the benefits from taking part of networks that are part of the same innovation process is that one can compare individual school’s plans and identify common goals and visions (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). That way schools’ representatives have concrete topics to discuss and share during network meetings.

2.5.3 Exploration Stage

Exploration stage is often given little time (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). This is the key to successful implementation. This is where those suggesting the change are approaching the school, explaining the suggested change of improvement step by step. People need to understand what they are getting into and the purpose for doing it. It is also important to ask the teachers whether they are ready for change and whether they are interested in the change. It is also necessary to assess the resources needed for an innovation. If one skips the exploration stage by not making sure that the school is ready for an innovation the innovation may not succeed (Fixsen et al, 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

2.5.4 Installation Stage

When wanting to improve practices implementation does not start right away (Fixsen et al, 2005). It is important to have people engaged in training and coaching. The school also needs time to create space if there are tools needed to facilitate practices. These are installations of knowledge and practices. If the exploration face did not go well it affects the quality of the installation face. Therefore, it is important that the exploration and installation stages go well
as the real implementation begins when teachers and students start interacting differently. This shows whether the innovation has been successful or not (Fixsen et al, 2005).

2.6 Barriers to Implementation

Fixsen et al. (2005) report that:

There is a broad agreement that implementation is a decidedly complex endeavor, more complex than the policies, programs, procedures, techniques, or technologies that are the subject of the implementation efforts. Every aspect of implementation is fraught with difficulty, from system transformation to changing service provider behavior and restructuring organizational contexts. (pp. 2-3)

When about to make a change within an organization and in the field of special needs education, barriers may occur (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Barriers are a collection of challenges, set backs, frustration and resistance that influences part of the groundwork process prior to an implementation.

Although common, barriers may be challenging to spot (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). It is like fish in water: The water is everywhere and therefore difficult to see, yet easy to feel. If one does feel that something is not right, yet fails to see what may be the underlying reason for it, one may create vicarious explanations for the barrier. One might blame a resistance to change on time barriers or one may choose to ignore it (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). However, if barriers are not met, they grow bigger. And if not dealt with, they may kill an implementation, and then it does not matter how well the implementation is defined (Fullan, 1993, 2001; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

During the initiation face of a planned implementation, resistance to change is as normal as motivation and desires to change. Change demands that the active people that initiate a project communicate what the groundwork prior to an implementation means to individuals’ part of a planned project and to the remaining participants part of the organization (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The following aims at describing barriers that may arise during implementation processes: Psychological and practical barriers.
2.6.1 Psychological Barriers

Psychological barriers important to be aware of during implementation processes, because they may arise during the initial faces of an innovation and there are various reasons and effects of psychological barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). How a person responds to change is among others influenced by which degree the person feels safe within the working context, how the person’s experiences are towards past challenges, and how these challenges have been met. Past experiences shape how a person perceives change processes (Sikes, 1992; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

In order to initiate a change, someone has to voice a need for improvement by pointing to a practice that needs to be improved as a result of problems that seem to exist somewhere in the organization (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). However, in a school context there are people of different ages, knowledge and experiences and people with different tasks (Sikes, 1992). Not every one might perceive that there is need for improvement as they might be content about how practices are. These people may have their own way of doing things. Then there are professionals that agree that there is one or more practices that can be improved and thereby improve how learners learn and develop. These people may have developed skills that seem to be working well, yet they are open to a variety of methods as a way to enhance their own repertoire (Fullan, 1993; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

Psychological barriers can be conscious and subconscious within a person, which can be perceptions of dealing with change. If perceptions are perceived negative, these ideas may cause resistance to change (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). What is more, it is important to gain agreement of starting an innovation, as a lack of it may be perceived as an imposed change. This can also create resistance to change (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). A person that views challenges as a source of inspiration to learn new skills may have been supported during similar events. In contrast, a person that has experienced lack of support and encouragements when faced with challenges may view challenges as negative. Perceived experiences to support of challenging tasks may affect how a person views and acts towards change processes within the environment the person is part of (Skogen, 2004; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). A way to meet resistance to change is to acknowledge that psychological barriers can arise during change processes and to look for signs of resistance.
There are different signs of resistance, covert and overt (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). A covert form of resistance can be in the form of agreeing to suggested strategies at meetings, yet not apply them in the classroom. Another covert form of resistance can be to agree to the suggested strategies, yet criticize them to colleagues outside meetings. An overt form of resistance can be to reject the suggested change and/or suggested strategies at meetings. Both forms of resistances can be harmful to the implementation if not acknowledged by the leadership or key teachers in charge of the innovation among the teachers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

It is important to be conscious of signs of resistance to change (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The persons that have a responsibility to acknowledge psychological barriers are the ones in the leadership, and a way to deal with resistance is to talk with the ones that openly show skepticism. In order to face hidden resistance, the leadership can provide information about the intended change at staff meetings and to provide training and coaching (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010) (which will be addressed within practical barriers).

Once schools begin to adapt their plans to improve existing practices, what they are doing is gaining ownership, which is the early key to success (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Imagine a child that wants to learn how to run a bike. The parents of the child can model and instruct how to run the bike, but it is the child himself that has to manage its balance and coordination in order to have control of the bike. Driving a bike for the first time can be scary, but if the parents put supporting wheels onto the bike the child’s confidence can be strengthened and in the end the child can run the bike without supporting wheels. The child has developed ownership of the bike, just like professionals within an organization learn how to improve existing practices.

The supporting wheels to an organization can be in the form of external support in the form of one or more experts with knowledge of the intended improvement that may lead to change. At the beginning the expert(s) can model and instruct what the keys to an improvement can be (Fullan, 2001; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Thereby external support functions as a bridge to knowledge to the teachers. However it is the teachers who little by little need to develop new knowledge and faith in their skills in order to become independent of the external help (Fullan, 2001; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).
2.6.2 Practical Barriers

The purpose of the following is to address some practical barriers that can be common during implementation processes. As pointed to above, psychological barriers may arise when people take part of an innovation (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Psychological barriers may be strengthened by a lack of devotion to the planning stage of a project and preparations and development of skills among the workers in the organization. Further, psychological barriers may influence and be influenced by how the organization collaborates and shares information and experiences during the planning stage and implementation stage of an innovation process. Thereby practical and psychological barriers interact during innovation processes (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

Time Barriers

Time can be a barrier to innovations (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). It takes two to four years for an innovation to take effect (Fixsen, et al., 2005). The exploration and installation stage takes time. Time among others involves time to create a plan, clarify understanding, share information and develop competence. Time can be a barrier to innovations because time is often under estimated. Time is an important factor to take into consideration at the very beginning of an innovation. A facilitator to managing time factors is concrete and realistic plans (Fullan, 1993; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

The keys to improved practices should be defined in a plan, which influences ownership (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Goals should set the stage for the implementation process, but if goals are not precise it will be challenging for people to know what their responsibilities are, and it influences lack of ownership. Vague goals may jeopardize the implementation and may trigger teachers to making their own interpretations of the intended change (Fullan, 1993; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Unclear plans can create challenges within the system if the organization does not cater for how to organize the intended change. It also influences ownership (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

Fullan (1993) suggests that organizations often develop visions too early. Thus the process of building vision can be compared to firing a gun as described by Fullan (1993):
Ready, fire, aim is the more fruitful sequence if we want to take a linear snapshot of an organization undergoing major reform. Ready is important, there has to be some notion of direction, but it is killing to bog down the process with vision, mission, and strategic planning, before you know enough of dynamic reality. Fire is action and inquiry where skills, clarity, and learning are fostered. Aim is crystallizing new beliefs, formulating mission and vision statements and focusing strategic planning. Vision and strategic planning come later, if anything they come at step 3, not step 1. (pp. 31-32)

Fullan’s point is that premature visions and missions can make people loose sight of what they are doing at the beginning of an innovation process. Visions need to develop, mold and change along the way (Fullan, 1993).

Once a school has decided to improve an existing practice, for instance in the form of an educational model, the school administration should devote time on meetings to clarify information about the specific model the school will put in practice (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). This involves clarification of what the model is about, the purpose of the model, how the school can prepare itself for implementation and how to implement the model. In turn teachers should be given the opportunity to ask questions and thereby share their understanding of the innovation (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

The role of the leadership is important during change processes (Senge, 2000; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Heifetz (2009) defines leadership as the skill to help people in a system get through challenges. Senge (2000) defines leadership as the ability to engage in challenges. Senge (2000) further defines engagement as having the strength to acknowledge that challenges does not always come with a clear cause or solution, which is followed by facilitating the people in the system with reflective conversations in order to learn from challenges. The thoughts on positive leadership by Heifetz (2009) and Senge (2000) are supported by Fullan (2001) who suggests that problems are a natural part of educational contexts, and that teachers need to be supported and facilitated with knowledge by a strong leadership.

Further, the school needs time to identify learners that might benefit by the implementation and if possible outcomes might improve the way instruction and evaluations are performed (Fixsen et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). For this process to be efficient
the school administration can provide teachers with examples of student outcomes in other schools that have gone through the innovation process.

Lack of time to clarification, sharing and discussion of the innovation in the preplanning face of an innovation, the process and thereby the outcomes may not lead to motivation among the teachers (Fullan, 2001). Then there is a risk that teachers do not want to participate. Lack of clear goals during the planning stage may influence the later implementation face. Thus a school should devote a preparation year that involves clarifying understanding, sharing information and developing competence (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

The act of sharing reflective questions and answers is a positive way to reach awareness of individual and collective understanding. It is also a bridge to create a positive sense of belonging among teachers that might be critical to the innovation. An organization that invests time to increase understanding of the innovation process is dependent on developing knowledge resources among the school’s staff.

**Resource Barriers**

This section gives focus to the importance of developing subject expertise in terms of training and coaching. Subject expertise involves increased competence about what is going to be implemented when an organization is part of an innovation process (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Implementation means to invent a place into the innovation that intends to improve existing practices. Theoretically teachers can read the manuals and the research behind the innovation they are part of, but in practice this is where the challenges lie. In order to put the plans to the test, teachers may benefit by training and coaching (Fixsen, et al., 2005).

In the fairytale, “Alice in Wonderland”, Alice is asking strangers for direction (Carroll & Tomalin, 2008). When it comes to professional decisions it is good to know which choice to make based on knowledge. It is important that an improved approach of doing things differently produce desired outcomes and that teachers know what they are doing. This is achieved by sharing improved practices in a way that produce the same results over and over again. When teachers perform tasks the same way they can more easily assess how they are performing new tasks efficiently (Fixsen, et al., 2005). Therefore, an educational decision requires experience and competence (Fullan, 2001). In order to develop subject expertise
training and coaching are needed in order to develop competence of what one intends to put in practice.

Training involves listening to or reading theories and demonstration of practices about what is going to be implemented. Research shows that training alone is not enough in order to apply what has been read, listened to or demonstrated (Fixsen, et al., 2005). A summary of a meta-analysis that measures the effects of training and coaching on teachers’ implementation in the classroom (2005), shows that outcomes of theory and discussion alone led to the effects of 10% knowledge, 5% skill demonstration, yet 0% use in the classroom. When one added demonstration in training and practice and feedback in training, the outcomes were 60% knowledge, 60% skill demonstration, yet only 5% use in the classroom. When one added coaching, the outcomes of knowledge, skill demonstration and use in the classroom increased (Fixsen, et al., 2005).

Coaching is what follows training of new practices (Fixsen, et al., 2005). It means that teachers are given feedback to their application of knowledge and skill demonstration on meetings in the classroom and that teachers are given time to discuss their skills along with a coach after skill application. The summary of the meta-analysis of the effects of training and coaching on teachers’ implementation in the classroom, shows that the outcomes of theory and discussion, demonstration in training, practice and feedback in training and coaching in the classroom lead to an increase of 95% in the three areas of knowledge, skill demonstration and use in the classroom (Fixsen, et al., 2005).

The meta-analysis shows that training alone is not sufficient in order to apply new knowledge to practice (Fixsen, et al., 2005). Coaching is an essential component in order for the majority of the teachers to implement the intended improvement of practices. If an organization does not invest knowledge resources to develop competence for the intended change, the outcomes of the planned change are at risk at being of poor quality (Fixsen, et al., 2005).

**System Barriers**

The organizational structure can be a hinder to approaching and solving new tasks. The view is based on a belief that the reality can be split into independent pieces. These
pieces consist of specialists, individuals and groups with specific and general knowledge, which explain how systems within an organization function (Owens, 1998; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

The barrier of a bureaucratic structure can take place when an organization is going to implement a change that requires that people have to change the way they solve tasks in order to improve existing practices. They may not know how to change their behavior or that they have to change their behavior in order to achieve improvement. Acknowledging that units within a system need to change existing practices may lead to system barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

2.7 Conclusion

Innovations are challenging because they require several factors to be put in place and harmonized in order to improve practices: perceived need for change, ownership, resources, time and collaboration (Fullan, 1993; Sikes, 1992). These factors are important for the exploration and installation faces (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). If these factors are missing or not fully in place, psychological and practical barriers may arise (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).
3 METHODS

This chapter covers the research design and choice of methods for performing the fieldwork and for how to analyze the fieldwork results. For this study a qualitative research approach has been used to collect and analyze results. Phenomenology and hermeneutics have been used as glasses to view the world of four participants that have taken part of an interview investigation. In order to explain how my background has influenced my hermeneutical circle I shed light to insider and outsider epistemology. Further, a detailed course of analyzing the interviews is presented along with weight on the selection of the informants. The chapter ends by reflecting upon ethical principles and dilemmas prior, during and after an interview study.

“What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?”

3.1 Research Design

In the social sciences qualitative research gives the researcher the opportunity to acquire an in-depth understanding of social phenomena that aims at understanding types of behavior (what, when and how questions) and reasons for that behavior (why questions). Concepts of context, descriptions, and settings are the elements that describe the social phenomena. For this reason qualitative research is presented in a rich text of data (Dalen, 2004; Gall, et al., 2007). This thesis is presented as a qualitative research that looks for how educators in two school contexts have perceived specific phenomena experienced in different settings within the school settings and how these views have influenced their perspectives and behaviors towards the particular phenomena under investigation. The informants described their perceptions and behaviors during individual interview situations, and therefore I have had to rely on what have been said by the informants. The research study in the form of written results is an interchange of descriptions and interpretations of the real life context of a selection of informants together with theory and empirical research that aim at shedding light to the topics the informants have reflected upon.

Qualitative research stresses the importance of objectivity when collecting data, although qualitative research in its nature is dependent on the researcher’s ability to give
subjective interpretations (Gall, et al., 2007). The researcher steps into the environment in the search for understanding the elements, the themes and the nature of the process. The researcher becomes involved (Gall, et al., 2007; Kvale, Brinkmann, Anderssen, & Rygge, 2009). In the case of this particular research study, the aims are to investigate how teachers and principals have perceived parts of an implementation process of integrating reading and behavior support within an RtI framework, what they know about a response to intervention approach, how they have gained knowledge about the approach, what they are doing in practice and why they are doing it. Further, the study tries to detect possible barriers that may have occurred during this process. The real action of performing the qualitative interviews started when collecting the data yet began when planning the interviews and continued when analyzing the interview data. A qualitative research interview focusing on such an approach intends to go deep in trying to find the essences of the perspectives of the informants.

How subjective interpretation is portrayed depends on the viewpoint or from what angle the data is presented, meaning with which glasses I use when presenting the results. The viewpoint depends on how I intend to present the data (Gall, et al., 2007). One of the objectives of this research study is to suggest possible barriers that may have appeared during the early stages of integrating interventions of reading and behavior support, how these barriers may have influenced later stages of the process and what the reasons for this might have been. These answers will be in the form of suggestions, and in this part I use hermeneutics as a method. The presentation also describes what the informants say about their experiences of implementing an integrated RtI framework regarding their understanding of concepts and how they apply these concepts within an integrated RtI structure. Then I am using a phenomenological approach.

The aim of using qualitative methods that are presented in this chapter is to shed light on the phenomena of integrating reading and behavior support within an integrated RtI framework with focus on possible barriers that may have occurred during an implementation process. The results are presented with two sets of glasses: Phenomenological and hermeneutical.

### 3.1.1 Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl founded phenomenology as a philosophical tradition. He defined phenomenology as the examination of consciousness, or phenomena that appears to consciousness (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2006; Gall, et al., 2007). When asking questions about
someone’s life world, the interviewer is challenging the informant to examine his or her consciousness of what may be taken for granted of the phenomena under study. What might be taken for granted can be everyday experiences such as collaboration. At the same time the interviewer is paying attention to the body language of the informant while listening to what is being uttered, in which manner the words are expressed (joyfully, skeptically, confidently) and how they are reflected upon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007).

When transcribing the data, the researcher is supposed to document the data as precisely as possible without using personal interpretation. This way the researcher gets an opportunity to listen fully to what was said by the informants during the interviews (Dalen, 2004; Gall, et al., 2007). The goal, according to Husserl, is being objective in order to examine the invariant essences of the phenomena. On the other hand, Husserl also views personal experience as strength in order to understand implicit words. This enables the researcher to follow up tacit words and sensitize genuine interest in the informants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). Further, and the aim of using a phenomenological perspective is to draw attention from single case phenomena to general characteristics (more on this under “generalization from interview studies”) (Kvale, et al., 2009). The aim of this thesis is among others to learn how barriers can occur when implementing an educational model.

Phenomenology has influenced qualitative research as both traditions seek to understand and describe the subject’s life world (Gall, et al., 2007; Kvale, et al., 2009). By showing knowledge through the topics and questions related to the phenomenon, the researcher will more easily ask for further elaboration on topics (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007). Prior to the interviews I did my best to pick up the essences of theories and empirical research relating to the topics for the interview guide. This approach was helpful as it helped me asking follow-up questions towards information I was not prepared for during the interviews. Thereby the informants provided me with a basket of information and knowledge I investigated during the months after the interviews (Kvale, et al., 2009). New information and acquired knowledge supplies research with new knowledge (Gall, et al., 2007). This qualitative research study seeks to examine the professional worlds of teachers and principals. Their perceptions have influenced my understanding of their professional world, as it appears to them (Gall, et al., 2007).
3.1.2 Hermeneutics

Kvale et al. (2009) defines hermeneutics as “the study of interpretation of texts in the humanities” (p. 147). Humanistic hermeneutics has been influenced by the biblical tradition of the study of the interpretation of biblical texts and the legal science of the interpretation of laws, conventions etc, hence the reason for revision of laws, legislation and policies, (Fry, 2009). Humanistic hermeneutics is primarily referred to Gadamer (Fay, 1996). He applied hermeneutics to the Humanistic discipline where the aim was to find coherent understanding and meaning that arises from interaction between interpreter and participant (Fay, 1996; Fry, 2009), for example between an interviewer and interviewee. During the process of interpreting texts the aim is to find meaning by going back and forth between the parts and whole of the text. This is known as the hermeneutical circle (Kvale, et al., 2009).

The interpreter of the texts starts off with foreknowledge that develops into further understanding during the process that is an interchange between part and whole, which is influenced and developed by the use of methods, theory, data collection, and interpretations of how these materials may provide possible answers to the research question(s) (Fry, 2009; Kvale, et al., 2009). During the process of writing the thesis my hermeneutical circle of understanding has developed. Prior to the interviews I could only imagine how the informants had perceived the experience of how to integrate reading and behavior interventions. I among others based my foreknowledge of empirical research of other contexts that have implemented an integrated RtI framework with focus on reading and behavior. It was not until performing the interviews I could begin to grasp how the informants viewed their experiences. Right after the interviews I had a first impression on their experiences. My pre-understanding of related theories and empirical research started to mold when changing focus to my informants’ views.

My curiosity drove me to examine each interview and then all interviews over and over again. During this process the foreknowledge of theories and empirical research were maturing at the back of my mind, which made me look closer at the interviews by going back and forth. During the course of analyzing I had to decide when to end the analysis in order to present findings and possible answers to the research question. However, the hermeneutical circle never ends (Dalen, 2004; Fry, 2009; Kvale, et al., 2009). It grows, and putting “period” at the end of the result chapter was somewhat intimidating as I questioned myself: “Have I portrayed the reality of my informants as they see it or is it something I have missed? How
will my informants react when they read about themselves?” The respect for the informants, interview material and craft of interpretation has triggered my ethical awareness and curiosity.

A qualitative approach often combines the methods hermeneutic and phenomenology (Fry, 2009; Kvale, et al., 2009). When analyzing interviews, the act of using phenomenology adds meaning to the descriptions of phenomena as phenomenology describes the subject’s life world. Hermeneutics interprets meaning that arises from the informants’ descriptive thoughts assisted by theories supporting the phenomena, the writer’s foreknowledge and thereby an understanding of the whole part, the sum of the various parts that facilitate meaning. This way qualitative research is a dynamic science that adds knowledge to theories of science (Fry, 2009; Kvale, et al., 2009).

Objectivity and Subjectivity

Brian Fay (1996) asks, “Do you have to know one to be one?” (p. 27). The author discusses the doctrine of insider epistemology by reflecting upon perspectives such as having or not having shared the same experience as the person/group one portrays the realities of (Fay, 1996). If having to be one to know one, meaning having to be a member of the group one is exploring or having to lived the phenomena one is examining, that person has to share the same experience and having lived in the same cultural setting as the ones in focus. Thereby one sees what one sees based on what one consciously and sub consciously wants to see (Fay, 1996). I share a mixture of the same educational, professional and national background as some of my informants and this may have influenced them in accepting taking part of the interviews. Further, I may have over interpreted their views based on my experience. Therefore, what I see is a result of my own interpretation of the reality I think I see or how I think others see and experience it (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fay, 1996; Kvale, 2007). This may have influenced how I have interpreted data and what I have chosen to present.

On the other hand, Brian Fay (1996) points out “Knowledge consists not in the experience itself but in grasping the sense of this experience” (p. 27). Trying to understand the reality of others without sharing the same cultural or/and educational background, can be positive in grasping the meaning of it. I have some of the same educational background as the informants, but I have not lived their experiences within their working cultures. That way I can apply an outsider perspective that may detect what the informants take for granted in
trying to explain or justify perceptions of their subjective realities. In both cases the social reality that is being described is a result of interpreting the world as they see it and how I see their worlds from the outside (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Fay, 1996; Kvale, 2007). Therefore, when trying to understand someone else’s reality one does not have to know one to be one. One has to be interested in trying to make sense of the reality one observes and listens to.

The type and degree of insight and understanding of the informants’ social reality as they perceive it can be influenced by various factors: the phenomena under investigation, the time of the day of the interview, the current state of mind of the interviewer and the interviewee at the time of the interview, the chemistry between the parties, the researcher’s background, how much the informants reveal to the researcher and if they have met prior to the interview situation(s) (p. 27; Kvale, 2007). I met the majority of my informants two times prior to the interviews and we had contact by phone prior to the formal interviews. The first meeting with most of the informants was during a formal meeting conducted by the innovators. The second time was at a formal SWPBIS conference. At both occasions we shared meals during the breaks. These occasions influenced the interview situations in different ways. First, prior to the interviews we had formal and informal talks about the project, other times I observed the informants’ body language and their verbal exchanges and I also followed presentations performed by all of the informants that I later interviewed. Second, I also observed the relationship between the innovators and the informants prior to the interviews. During the first meeting the innovators introduced me to the informants by informing them about my professional background and present study. They also said that they hoped the informants would be willing to let me visit their schools by doing interviews and/or observations. Then they introduced the research question prior to letting me explain my objectives for doing the research.

### 3.1.3 Qualitative Research Interview

A qualitative research approach is helpful when studying social phenomena from the inside (Kvale, 2007). In order to acquire knowledge of change processes, a qualitative approach is practical because it allows for an inside perspective of how participants experience their professional life (Kvale, 2007). Qualitative research is influenced by phenomenology and hermeneutics (Kvale, 2007). When embarking on a research interview the researcher enters with foreknowledge of the phenomena to be studied (Dalen, 2004), in this context among
others foreknowledge of the theoretical framework of an integrated RtI framework and implementation theory. Challenging ones own consciousness by focusing on the informants’ perspectives communicated verbally and non verbally is useful prior to interpreting collected data (Dalen, 2004). In order to learn what my participants were doing and how they saw the world around them, a qualitative research approach has been useful as it allows descriptions of meaning and thereby a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Kvale, 2007)

An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose determined by the one party – the interviewer (Kvale, 2007). The purpose of the interviews in this study is to explore different perspectives of an implementation process in the view of participants with different roles and tasks in a school system. A semi-structured interview is a way of giving specific descriptive information the way the interviewee sees the world in the context of a specific phenomenon. The aim is not to generalize opinions, but to portray personal perspectives in a specific context of the lives of the participants (Kvale, 2007). In my study the aim is to unfold/describe what might be the meaning of what the participant say about the implementation process and possible barriers of this process.

The researcher is not in control of the events and contexts where the research takes place (Gall, et al., 2007). Therefore it is important that I clarify unexpected events during this chapter as these events have influenced the analyzing process, the results and the content of the other chapters. One of the lessons to be learned is how I identified the unexpected events and how I tried to solve these experiences (Gall, et al., 2007; Maxwell, 2005). For this study the initial research question was: “Which organizational and systemic factors are important for successful integration of RtI and SWPBIS in order to benefit learners’ academic and social competence?” During the interviews the interview guide’s themes and topics were influenced by this research question, yet the data of the interviews did not provide sufficient information to provide satisfactory answers to the research question. The research question needed adjustment to fully reflect what the informants seemed to point to: Challenges, or barriers (after analyzing the interviews for concepts. See “data analyzes procedures”). The informants seemed to be focusing on what they found challenging rather than encouraging regarding integration of academic support. Therefore I had to scrutinize the data in the search for information that could help me understand the what, how and why and justify that the informants did find certain elements challenging towards systemic and organizational factors
relating to an integrated RtI framework. It is the data that controls the analysis and the research question and thereby the answers to the research question (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall, et al., 2007; Maxwell, 2005). Although a novice researcher, it is my responsibility to keep focus on the various elements within the data material throughout the study in order to be able to provide answers to the research question(s) and thereby knowledge to the field of research (Gall, et al., 2007; Kvale, 2007). As the data did not provide the initial research question with answers, the research question was adjusted to focusing on possible barriers experienced by the informants so far in the integration process of an integrated RtI framework.

3.1.4 Design of Interview Guide

When designing an interview guide the content of the guide should reflect the research question of the study (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). This means to transform and break the research question apart into connected themes and questions. When designing my guide I was among others interested in the different stages (which turned into themes) of measuring and responding to reading and behavior skills, at what point in time students received support and how student data were responded to (when measuring the quality of the response to intervention given within a tiered system).

The content order of the themes and questions can go from deductive – inductive - deductive. This means that the guide begins broad (deductive), narrows down (inductive) and ends by going broad as a way to end the interview (Dalen, 2004). In order to get answers to the detailed topics (stages) I needed to structure the themes into systemic and organizational factors. I decided to start broad by asking about the informants’ working environments, then how they had heard about the project they were part of, their experiences with it and then, little by little I could ask about the assessment stages. In the end I prepared themes about how the informants looked at the project’s future and if they had anything they wanted to add. Kvale (2007) compares this process as going to the doctor: If in pain the doctor asks the patient to describe what the pain is, how it feels like and where the pain is. If and when the patient is aware of the first questions the doctor can ask why the patient thinks the pain is there. Asking why can be a sensitive endeavor, as it is asking another person to confide in you (Kvale, 2007). For this reason I tried to approach the why-questions to the middle of the interview process.
The interview guide is semi structured. It has six main themes and two additional themes in the end (see appendix) and each theme include three to six follow-up questions in the form of sub themes that are the same under each main theme. The interview guide was the same for all informants as it was interesting to discover how the informants viewed the same phenomena.

As people are different and the time of the day may lead to different perceptions of the topics and questions asked, it is wise to provide follow-up questions (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). Also, if the interviewer is nervous the interviewer might feel more relaxed by having follow-up questions. What is more, if the interviewee does not provide much information the interviewer can supply the topic with supplemental questions. Follow-up questions may also help the interviewer keep focus on each topic and for the interview as a whole (Kvale, 2007). For instance, if the interviewee elaborates extensively on each topic and proceed to topics not relevant to the main focus, the interviewer can help redirect the interviewee by using follow-up questions.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Choice of Informants and Schools

The informants were selected because they are part of a project of implementing an integrated RtI framework. Dalen (2004) advices the novice researcher to select enough informants to provide sufficient information to the research question(s), yet not too many as the analyze process is time consuming and meant to be done with quality. There are four schools that are part of the project and two of the schools were selected for supplying information to this thesis. I could have invited the four schools to take part of the interviews, but that this would have become too many interviews to analyze.

At the end of the spring of 2010 I met all the informants at a meeting with focus on the project. The school representatives worked as principals and teachers. According to Dalen (2004), selecting informants that can shed different perspectives to the same phenomena can create nuances to the interview material. I wanted to get the perspectives of the principals and the teachers in order to get an idea of how they viewed the project from a principal’s and a teacher’s point of view. However, at the meeting it seemed that the roles and views of the principals and teachers had similarities in that all were in charge of specific interventions and
they seemed to share many of the same values and opinions. That inspired me to create one interview guide for all to check for similarities and possible differences in their roles and perspectives. What is more, another reason for choosing the schools is because they were part of the same municipality; one is a primary school and the other a combined primary and lower secondary school. Some of the students from the primary school transition to the combined lower secondary school, and therefore the two schools meet regularly to discuss transitions. Two of the informants also meet each other regularly to share information about an integrated RtI framework. For these reasons it was interesting to ask how student data influenced decision-making.

3.2.2 Pilot Interview

In order to learn the craft of interviewing it is wise to perform pilot interviews prior to the interviews of the field study (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). I performed two pilot interviews of friends working as teachers in different schools. The aim was to identify their response to general themes part of the interview guide. The reactions were that I had too many questions and that they were too general. They also thought of the interviews as an interrogation, which Dalen and Kvale warns the novice researcher about (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007).

Based on the pilot interviews and the reactions by my friends I started making more specific questions related to the general topics. I also made a note of the interrogative approach with the aim of not repeating it during the official interview situations. In addition I started writing on the ethical considerations for the interview process.

3.2.3 Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were recorded by using two tape recorders. This way one of the recorders could compensate due to a possible technical error. In addition notes were taken during the interviews. The notes were in the form of follow-up questions and key words that could be useful during and right after the interviews. The notes also were comments on body language and first impressions of the informants and the context. The technical tools and the actions made due to them made me feel relaxed in terms of documentation of verbal and non-verbal communication.
Conducting interviews is a craftsmanship (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). There are many factors to be aware of, and one of them is the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Although the interviewee situation can seem as a mutual communication between two people, it is not. The situation is rather an asymmetrical power relation between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is the interviewer that has invited the informant to take part of the interview and it is the interviewer that decides in which manner to lead the conversation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007). With this knowledge in mind, I suggested to perform the interviews at the informants’ work place and let them choose a room where we could talk without interruptions. I also started each interview by explaining the purpose of the interview, the topics for the interview, that the informant was welcome to initiate topics and that the informant could choose not to give answers if unwilling. For every interview I also said that I was pleased to be able to learn about the person’s experiences. I also tried to show this in practice by applying listening skills. After each interview I thanked the informant for the opportunity to perform the interview.

During the interviews my competence (theoretical and practical) influenced the way I introduced topics, questions, follow-up questions, ability to adjust questions and topics and the way I applied communication skills. Asking too many questions to each theme may set the stage for a cross-examination (Kvale, 2007). If “pushing the interviewee” for questions the person may not be ready for, the person may take a step back to the point of answering somewhat aggressively, becoming stressed, quiet etc. Whereas showing that it is the informant that is in focus and not the interviewer, the communication runs more smoothly and the interviewer is more able to establish a trusting atmosphere (Kvale, 2007). During first half of the first interviews I discovered that the follow-up questions made the informant and me stressed, because I felt that the follow-up questions sometimes distracted the informant. This made it challenging to pay attention to the comments made by the informant. I therefore pulled my head around, gave myself a mental encouragement and decided to let the informant guide me to the follow-up questions and I made follow-up questions based on the comments. During the first interviews my focus shifted to listening to what the informants said. This seemed to make the informant more relaxed and able to talk more freely.

In order to create a comfortable atmosphere I applied listening skills such as smiling calmly, giving back-channeling by nodding, slightly gesturing a hand or fingers when wanting clarification and letting pauses come naturally. Also, I waited a bit until the informant
signaled that it was ok for a new topic. During the last interviews I felt that I was able to let the informants speak more freely and signal acceptance for long pauses. The effect was that the informants added more information than when asking too many questions.

3.3 Data Analyzes Procedures

There is not a single mode of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007). Deciding how to structure the data takes time, as there are different ways of doing it. To a novice researcher the only way to learn is putting the different methods to the test by playing with the data without forcing the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Personal experience to a topic can influence bias and assumptions about the data to be analyzed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kvale, 2007). Professional knowledge and experience of the field has enriched the understanding of some parts of the interviews (e.g. work load, instruction and teacher meetings), but the details of an integrated RtI framework components are only known through theoretical and empirical framework. Also, I have not been practicing the teacher profession in the primary school setting for a while. However, with past working experience as a teacher it was somewhat challenging being objective to the interview material. In order to distant myself from the data material I have circulated between data analyzes, reading theories and empirical framework. With time this has helped me to get some distance. On the other hand, being somewhat subjective can also have caused me to be over critical when interpreting the interviews. Therefore I am aware of possible bias when having interpreted the data and which data I have chosen when presenting the result chapter.

3.3.1 Organizing Data

While transcribing the interviews the teachers’ words were sometimes misinterpreted. When controlling the transcriptions I had written synonyms or other words, signaling subconscious assumptions and bias about what they were actually saying and thinking (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This discovery was interesting and the experience helped asking questions for what might be the meaning of the informants’ perspectives. The experience was a valuable preparation for the next steps in the process, which were levels of the coding process.
3.3.2 Levels of the Coding Process

Open Coding

Open coding means to scrutinize data for concepts that later form categories. The process is also referred to as early coding or brainstorming (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the early stages of coding I worked on the data by paying attention to natural breaks and highlighting these breaks (pauses, change of topic, not answering the question). The purpose of this face is to create a visual memory of the parts that might be interesting at later stages of the analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For instance, some of the informants seemed somewhat unsure of RtI concepts and how to perform screening. The uncertainty was uttered in the form of questions after reflecting on concepts and informing how screening was performed. Other times informants did not answer specific questions and said they did not know enough about the specific questions when the same questions were repeated. During later coding these breaks supported the intuition of that the informants lacked understanding of central principles connected to the reading part of RtI.

Another part of the early stage is to examine each section in depth. This means to break data down into manageable pieces, reflecting upon that data in memos, and conceptualizing what the data might be reflecting. In this process Corbin and Strauss (2008) advice the researcher to perform brainstorming: Questioning the data, comparing data and comments about the process of brainstorming. I put data into a cross table in order to compare quotes. Notes breaks from the previous stage were marked next to quotes in order to remember them. Also, theories with similar concepts suggested what these quotes might have been suggesting. Throughout this process the early findings were compared to the research question in order to examine to which extent the concepts could provide possible hints about possible answers to the research question. However, during this process it seemed that the original research question did not seem to fit (which used to be “Which systemic and organizational factors are viewed as important for integrating RtI and SWPBIS in order to support learners’ social and academic competence?”) to the clues given during the process of open coding. I will come back to this under “selective coding”.

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Axial Coding

Axial coding means the process of cross cutting, which is relating concepts to each other and discussing two concepts in the same memo or relating minor concepts to broader level concepts and listing sub concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this stage I scrutinized the individual interviews for concepts connected to the overall themes in the interview guide, which I did by coding concepts that appeared. Second, interview-by-interview were scrutinized for common themes and concepts by looking at the codes made in the initial steps (open coding). By cross cutting concepts main categories/themes started to appear with sub categories/sub themes.

Selective Coding

Selective coding is the process of identifying core categories and analyzing their relationships. The process is explained by saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), which can be compared to the Salomon effect: analyzing the material until there is nothing more under the sun. The goal is to find a central category or categories that best represent(s) the phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this stage I felt more confident in earlier suggestions that something was not right in terms of my original research question (see “open coding”).

One of the outcomes of the selective coding process was adjustment of the original research question to “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RtI framework?”.

3.3.3 Choice for How to Present the Data

During the interpreting process I looked for quotes Dalen suggests (2004) as the “good” quotes. These are quotes that provide essential comments and interesting insights. The reason why I found these quotes was due to a rich interview materials facilitated by outgoing informants and careful scrutinizing of the interviews (Dalen, 2004). For the main categories/themes I wanted quotes that picked up the essential of the informants’ comments that could help the reader understand what the main themes intended to communicate, and essential comments that also could provide foreshadowing of possible barriers. One thing is how I as a novice researcher introduce and interpret a quote; another is how the quote can carry itself by communicating common thoughts of the informants’ perspectives (Dalen,
For each theme I also looked for quotes that appeared to be common among the informants (Dalen, 2004), quotes that could validate the essential quotes. I also found it interesting to look for quotes that appeared seldomly (Dalen, 2004), yet communicated by others by tacit utterances (based on e.g. tone of voice, pauses, looks, change of topic). These are quotes that can communicate words that can be taboo or daring. These quotes were carefully selected in terms of ethical issues.

3.4 Quality of Interview Studies

“The qualitative research interview is not scientific, but only reflects common sense” (Kvale, 2007, p. 85). The quality of the interview investigation depends on how well the researcher is able to portray the meaning of what the informants have said and how competent the researcher is in terms of showing ethical awareness during the research process and in reporting it. Therefore, doing interviews is a craftsmanship. If done well it is a craftsmanship done with quality that reflects each step of the interview process (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). As a novice researcher I have tried to follow advice given by professional researchers, and the experience has taught me that doing a qualitative research study with focus on doing and presenting interviews is indeed a craftsmanship. The following looks at how qualitative interviews can be done and presented with quality.

3.4.1 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of this thesis deals with it's ability to be replicated by other researchers (Kvale, 2007). However, due to privacy concerns some of the raw research material will not be published. In order to replicate the results, other researchers will need to follow process and material presented in the methods (Chapter 3) and results (Chapter 4) sections.

Descriptive and interpretive reliability can be influenced by bias (Gall, et al., 2007). The content of the interview guide may be viewed as bias in how the results are presented. I am giving vast focus to barriers that may have appeared and not as much to details of the integrated framework of RtI (Gall, et al., 2007). Furthermore, my translation of comments may also strengthen bias as I am trying to give meaning to the original language in which the interviews were conducted (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).
“A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words” (Hennestad, Revang, & Strønen, 2006, p. 58). The quote is made by Ludwig Wittgenstein, which illustrates nuances and preciseness of any language (Hennestad, et al., 2006). The authors that illustrate this point have kept the original quote in English in a Norwegian book. Perhaps they have done it to prove their point as language affects reliability in the language (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). When doing interviews that will be referred to in another language than the original version, there is a risk that the authenticity of nuances and preciseness will get lost on the way. Therefore the researcher is advised to only translate quotes that provide support to key findings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The original versions of the interviews are in Norwegian, and therefore the quotes have been translated into English by focusing on making meaning. I have also looked for the “good” quotes with the intention of finding support to central findings.

Validation means to validate, confirm or approve the accuracy of something, and in research it refers to how objective the researcher has been (Gall, et al., 2007). However, when analyzing qualitative interviews one cannot be truly objective as the researcher is colored by foreknowledge of what one is analyzing (Kvale, 2007). During the interviews I was on one hand colored by earlier experiences of working as a general teacher (which challenged my objectivity) and on the other hand I had foreknowledge about the topics for the interviews (which enhanced objectivity).

During the interview situations member checking was performed. This increases validity of the raw data (Kvale, 2007). Member checking means to invite the informant to correct, add or withdraw information during or after the interviews done by explicitly asking if what they said was understood correctly (Kvale, 2007). Further, what the informants said was repeated if what was said seemed unclear or if it appeared to be significant to the topic. Further, a question was asked in different ways when the question could be interpreted differently, a question was clarified if the informant appeared not to understand, a question was clarified if the informant asked for clarification, the informant was welcomed to contact the researcher after the interview and vice versa if inquiries, the informant was informed that the person could withdraw from the interview at any point.

During analysis I saw that there was coherence between the theory and data materials part of my study. They seemed to influence each other concurrently, and that way the
theoretical and empirical chapters are the results of abduction. This means that I have used a combination of inductive and deductive approach (Dalen, 2004).

3.4.2 Generalization from Interview Studies

Corbin and Strauss (2008) point out that “generalization is not the purpose to qualitative research” (p. 319). Also, normally there are too few informants part of interview studies (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). As explained earlier, qualitative studies seek to explore the what, how, why and when about some phenomenon (Gall, et al., 2007). The verb “seeks” implies the paradigm that nothing can ever be proved (Gall, et al., 2007), which reflects that qualitative presentations of one or more phenomenon are based on perceptions by the informants and the researcher. In the case of this qualitative study the aim has been to portray the life worlds of the subjects part of the interview study. The interviews are not examples, but findings of how some professionals have experienced part of the process of implementing an integrated RtI framework. Therefore the presentation of the informants’ perceptions of the integrated RtI project cannot be generalized. However, during analysis a qualitative researcher looks for concepts that appear often and tries to find the relationship between these concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall, et al., 2007), for instance theories and empirical support that portrays examples of how a project such as an integrated RtI framework can be implemented and other qualitative research that portrays teacher perceptions’ of their experiences when implementing the framework.

It is up to the reader of the particular qualitative research to determine its importance (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). What influences the reader’s perception is how well the study is justified, presented and described (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). Although the aim of qualitative research is not to generalize, knowledge can be learned (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the case of this particular research study, the reader will observe that professionals working in separate schools have experienced different types of barriers, barriers that they have made explicit and interpretations of barriers I have identified while analyzing the interviews. If there are other schools that are interested in implementing an integrated RtI framework, they might take notes of the experience of their colleagues.

In the case of barriers, some of these concepts (practical barriers) have appeared in innovation research focusing on the field of Special Needs Education (Skogen, 2004).
However, as a novice researcher these findings were not called for. By describing and interpreting how these concepts appeared during analyzing the data for concepts and why these were uncalled for adds depth to the phenomenon and the study as a whole (Dalen, 2004). The essence of a good qualitative research study is therefore to give a holistic presentation that captures the meaning of the topic, the research question(s) and the results of the data study. This way the study may provide knowledge to the field (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### 3.5 Ethical Consideration of the Research Process

The following section presents ethical issues in planning, conducting and reporting an interview process. Ethical issues concerns asking for permission, obtaining confidentiality of the people involved, validating information and taking into account possible consequences for the informants and their environments.

#### 3.5.1 Asking for Permission

Prior to conducting the interviews it is important to gain informed consent by the informants part of the research investigation and the formal authorities (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). In this process the researcher should clarify the overall purpose of the investigation, the main features of the design and practical information about where and when the investigation intend to take place (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). I formally invited the schools to participate in the research study by sending them a formal letter that had been approved by the Norwegian Social Data Service (NSD). The letter stated the purpose for doing the interviews, the main features of the design and when and where I wished to meet the informants (see appendixes). By phone we agreed on dates for when to do the interviews. Prior to performing the interviews I repeated the content of the formal letter and asked each informant to sign the letter.

#### 3.5.2 Confidentiality

Obtained confidentiality concerns the respect for the anonymity of the people involved in terms of how the informed consent is obtained and if they despite of being made anonymous may be recognized by colleagues or others (Kvale, 2007). Prior to the interviews
the informants were among others informed that they would be referred to as teacher/principal, educator/informant 1, 2, 3, 4 (during presentation the numbers have been skipped, yet the titles have been kept). They were also informed that due to their positions their colleagues might be able to recognize their identity. The informants still agreed to take part of the interviews with this in mind. This can be a risk in terms of not knowing how the informants will react once the report is published, how other readers may view their perceptions and how they will refer to the report or use the content of the report. As the report will be published on the Internet, it will be available to anyone. The raw interview material is in my protection, which will be destructed once the thesis is submitted. In order to protect the anonymity of my informants it is my responsibility to obtain the informed consent and be aware of how I present the material in a manner that does not harm the informants.

Prior to and after the interviews the researcher should consider how much and what type of information needs to be given (Kvale, 2007). As stated earlier, the letter was repeated prior to conducting each interview. After each interview I informed the informants that the results primarily would present the informants’ shared experiences and that significant views would also be highlighted.

### 3.5.3 Consequences

The interviewer should take into account the openness and intimacy of the interview situation may be seductive and can lead subjects to disclose information they may later regret. It is likely that there will be an asymmetric relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee as it is the interviewer that directs the questions (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). Also, the interviewee is not in control of what will be presented in the research and how it will be presented. Therefore, the informant(s) relies on the generosity of the researcher to have a say once the transcriptions and the analyses are done (Dalen, 2004). After transcribing all the interviews they were given back to the informants for member checking (Kvale, 2007). The informants were informed that they could add, change or withdraw information or approve the transcription in its original form (Kvale, 2007). Member checking was also done to show respect towards the informants and to give the informants a sense of membership of the research process (Kvale, 2007). However, member checking was not done once the analysis was done due to not enough time prior to turning in the thesis.
The researcher should consider the ethical principles of possible benefits and risks the project can have to the informants (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007). Possible benefits of the interviews would be to share experiences of being part of an implementation project and that way provide information to people interested in such experiences. Also, as the informants are one of few in the Norwegian context of integrating reading and behavior support within an integrated RtI framework, their contribution to this thesis may enhance understanding of possible barriers of an integrated RtI framework. The information in this thesis may also be used as a reference when referring to the Norwegian integrated RtI project.

3.5.4 Ethical Sensitivity and Integrity

Monica Dalen reminds the novice researcher about ethical sensitivity (Dalen, 2004). This means to listen and observing with interest and this way achieve meaning of what is shared. When doing so the interviewer is showing empathy. The more familiar the researcher is to the phenomena under study, the more likely the researcher is to empathize with the informants. This is positive in terms of understanding tacit knowledge, but the researcher is also vulnerable in potential harm by not looking objectively on what the informants are revealing (Dalen, 2004; Kvale, 2007).

Ethical integrity concerns the moral of the researcher, and in terms of doing interviews it is important that the researcher among others reflects on how to present the comments made by the informants (Kvale, 2007). Ethical sensitivity and integrity seem to be related as both influence how the researcher acts during and after the interview(s) (Dalen, 2004; Fay, 1996; Kvale, 2007). When the informants reflected about their experiences of being part of the project, they also reflected about challenges that had occurred as a consequence of the project. When preparing the interview guide I was mostly concerned about which organizational and systemic factors that were important to the informants in order to implement the project, which I asked during all the interviews, but I was not prepared for the challenges they gave most emphasis. I viewed the situation as an ethical dilemma in how to present the data material, because I was worried that the information given by the informants made it difficult to view their life worlds objectively. Also, I was worried that by giving focus to challenges portrayed by the informants I could cause potential harm to the informants’ integrity as professionals and make them feel that my mission is to question their professional competence. However, the challenges that I have chosen to present are based on the literature.
on innovation and implementation research described as barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The barriers the informants identified are not unusual, but considered normal when part of an implementation project where the aim among others is to create a change in organizational behavior (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). When going through organizational change it is normal to face challenges, which the result chapter shows.

In order to view the informants’ comments about challenges they faced, I took an objective stand by learning about barriers that may occur during a change process related to implementation. That way the hinders reflected upon may help readers learn that implementation can be challenging and that when going through change resourceful and competent professionals can face barriers. The fact that the informants voiced challenges signals professional integrity in willingness to share them. As stated earlier, the informants were given the chance to object to the transcribed interviews that in print revealed everything they said during the interviews. None of them objected, they said that they looked forward to reading the results and encouraged me to ask for more information if necessary. With this in mind, having gone through a reflective process of ethical issues in how to present the informants’ perspectives along with interpretation of possible reasons for those perspectives, the results may enhance knowledge of implementation challenges.
4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings that provide answers to the research question: “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?” It seems that barriers started during the initial stages of the innovation and that the informants and their supporters failed to identify, prevent and intervene barriers from escalating. The experiences voiced through the perspectives of four informants have carefully been examined and interpreted with the aim of providing the reader a descriptive and explanatory presentation.

This chapter will cover background of the schools, informants, a list of identified barriers and my analysis of the findings.

4.1 Background of the Schools and Informants

The two schools are located in the countryside in Norway. One of the schools is a small elementary school (grades 1-7) with less than 300 students, the other a combined elementary and secondary school (grades 1-10) with less than 400 students. At graduation some of the students enter the combined elementary and secondary school. For this reason the two schools meet regularly to collaborate on maintaining common school goals and sharing information about student transitions at the end of the school year.

Since 2002 the schools have implemented School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support (SWPBIS), initiated and supported by The Norwegian Center for Child Behavioral Development. The informants consider the model an important part of the school cultures. For the current project, the schools were invited to take part by two innovators at The Norwegian Center for Child Behavioral Development. The pilot project aims at integrating a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework of reading and behavior support (during the chapter an integrated RtI framework is referred to as a model and as a framework). The principals at the schools accepted the invitation. The two schools are two of four schools that are part of the project that started in the fall of 2009 and ends in the spring of 2011. The
schools are testing the model on a small scale, which in one of the schools are grades 1-3 and in the other grades 1-4. The long-term aim is to integrate reading and behavior support.

The interviews were conducted during the fall of 2010 and the results are based on interviews with four informants: two principals and two teachers that work at two of the schools part of the project. Two of the teachers share the tasks of being in charge of running the reading component of RtI (the teacher informants will be referred to as teachers and reading coaches as they referred to themselves as both).

At the time of the interviews the informants did not view themselves ready to fully integrate reading and behavioral support within an RtI framework. One of the purposes of the interviews was to investigate how the informants integrated reading and behavior support, but during each interview the informants said they did not consider themselves ready to integrate reading and behavior support within a response to intervention model.

When asked to identify reasons of why they did not consider themselves ready, the informants listed challenges they had faced during the project. After examination of the interviews the initiation of the project appears to have caused frustrations and concerns. The initiation stage seems to have influenced later stages of the project. Therefore the results focus on barriers that are interpreted to be most significant in light of the informants’ perceptions: Psychological and practical barriers.

### 4.2 Psychological Barriers

This section focuses on how the pilot project was introduced for the innovation. There seems to have been a lack of awareness in identifying a need for the innovation and that the teachers have not understood key concepts and how to organize roles and tasks. Underlying barriers while presenting types of psychological barriers are practical barriers. I have chosen to present some results in conjunction with practical barriers to show that barriers are interrelated and often influence each other. This may be why barriers can be challenging to identify (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).
Lack of Need

The initiation process of the project seems to have influenced psychological barriers in terms of a lack of perceived need for the project. The following comment is unusual, yet considered significant for how the project was introduced. One of the reading coaches said:

*Prior to the project there were only two information meetings that included the teacher staff, and there were not any discussions of the needs of the teachers. It seemed that the teachers didn’t have the need for RtI (...).*

It appears as if other parties have imposed the project without a need expressed by the school itself for taking part in the pilot project. The expression of need is considered to be necessary and it determines the success of an innovation (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The needs of the teachers do not seem to have been considered or picked up. The following comment made by one of the reading coaches is also unusual, yet seems to support the impression of a lack of perceived need among the teachers:

*I feel that the purpose of the process was not communicated at the start, and therefore I don’t understand what we are supposed to do, how much we are supposed to do in terms of what (...). In the beginning we thought the innovators would be more specific on what they expected of us.*

The comment seems to touch upon a need for clarification of the purpose of the project (which will be further examined during time barriers). It is important to reach consensus and understanding for an innovation among the majority that are going to take part of an innovation (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). It may seem that the initiators failed to create a need, as it appears that they did not pick up that the teachers did not perceive a need for the project.

Lack of Ownership

The ideas for the project were presented by a project plan that was made by the innovators. Developing a plan when taking part of an innovation is important to gain ownership (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The following saying is an essential saying concerning the experience of receiving a ready-made plan:

*We had to read and understand the project plan prior to the project, so the teachers became very resistant, as they did not understand the plan. The teachers did not have*
a common understanding of what we were supposed to do and how to do it. The teachers said that the general language was too difficult along with unknown concepts.

During the interviews the informants referred to the plan, but when analyzing the interviews it did not seem as if they had adapted the plan to their school context. Therefore I made a call to both schools and asked if the informants had adapted the premade plan or made one of their own, which they had not. As the informants have not developed their own plan it seems that they have not gained ownership for the project and that this had influenced time, which I will come back to when presenting time barriers.

Expectations Not Met

The following quotes are viewed as being essential among the principals in terms of their current project. The first quote intends to show how the principals seem to view the task of coming up with reading materials for the current project, and the second quote suggests that the principals view the current project as lacking of quality:

*It was about expectations that were not met (...) Implementing SWPBIS was a totally different story. This time around we thought it would be the same way, but it turned out to be the opposite: We had to come up with text material, we had to make things on our own and that people were not prepared for. Neither were we, at least not according to how things were described in the project plan (...).*

**Interviewer:** Who are we?

**Informant:** The entire school staff. Because we perceived that we would put RtI to the test, not making the program from scratch, all of it. And at the school it was a lot of frustration regarding “is this good enough?” in terms of text material.

**Interviewer:** Good enough text material?

**Informant:** The motivation did not increase to the least. Because...in retrospect, I tried to communicate this very clear, that it is not we who are supposed to quality check the reading material. We are asked to be part of a developing project, the walking opens the road, and here nothing is ready made.
The comment starts off by referring to the previous project of implementing SWPBIS. The saying seems to touch upon expectations towards the current project. At a deeper look it mirrors lack of structure in clarifying purpose and deciding on roles prior to the current project. In order to implement an integrated RtI framework it is important to create structure of roles among the practitioners (McIntosh, et al., 2010). As a bridge to barriers that may appear during an innovation, Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) give advice about devoting time to clarify understanding and expectations at the beginning of an innovation, as a lack of this may cause psychological barriers. It does not seem that the informants have invested time to do clarify roles or devote time to clarify understanding and expectations to the innovation. The following looks at how the informants seem to compare the two projects:

*During SWPBIS the innovators were here once per month. We had lectures with researchers that were experts on behavior. Now we feel that we have to walk the road a lot more (...) We wish we had received visits by reading experts coming from the university...Sometimes we are not sure of what we are doing...we are working at the roots of the problems and the innovators don’t.*

Concerning the present project it seems that the informants perceive that they have been expected to come up with solutions, but they do not seem to consider themselves competent in what they are doing in practice. The comment also seems to reflect that the informants do not have faith in their own abilities in coming up with own solutions. Further, the informants say that they miss support by reading experts. In light of the saying of not being sure of what they are doing, I interpret that the informants long for support in order to become confident in the current project. Also, the informants compare the current innovation to the previous of implementing SWPBIS. This seems to have created the same expectations towards the current implementation.

**Lack of Understanding**

Lack of understanding seems to be an essential barrier that started during the initiation of the project and was strengthened due to not understanding the language of the ready made plan. Three essential concepts of RtI are screening, progress monitoring and benchmark (Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). These are concepts that new to the teachers:
To us the word “benchmark” doesn’t make sense. With time perhaps we can find a better word, something more Norwegian. Because we don’t have any experience with the word, benchmark, it doesn’t give any meaning to us (…) it is good for countries sharing the same words, but when one takes it “down” to the teacher level and apply it in practice, well, then people react negatively the minute there are words they don’t understand.

The teachers do not understand the concept benchmark, which is a score compared to the standard score at grade/ age level (Johnson, et al., 2006). It is perceived that the teachers react negatively to vocabulary they are not familiar with. One of the reasons to resistance can be a lack of perceived support and lack of time to explain new terms (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). As pointed to earlier, the teachers perceived that they were not given enough information about the integrated RtI framework. One of the reasons may be that the teachers were not included in the initiation stage, and as a result new words and concepts may be perceived with resistance. Another reason to resistance may be a lack of time to clarify new concepts and how they relate to the context of an integrated RtI framework.

A possible resistance and lack of understanding of new words seem to have influenced another key RtI concept, progress monitoring (Johnson, et al., 2006). One of the prerequisites to mastering progress monitoring is to understand the pre stage of progress monitoring, which is screening learners for reading and behavioral skills and to determine benchmark scores (Johnson, et al., 2006). The concept, progress monitoring, is said to be difficult to understand:

Reading coach: We are at deep water in applying progress monitoring.

Interviewer: -You are at the stage of learning it?

Reading coach: We tried it during the spring, too, so we have already tried it… but I just feel that we have not mastered it….

Interviewer: What do you think is necessary in order to master it?

Reading coach: I…first, it is the time factor…time. And, but I think…it doesn’t take a lot of time before we…it doesn’t, really. But it is just that…it takes time.

Both coaches address the challenges of understanding and applying progress monitoring. They seem to blame it on a lack of time, yet they also say that they do not
understand the project plan that introduces the concept. When asked if they have asked the innovators for clarification, reading coaches said:

*It can be daring to ask questions you think you should have the answers to (…) It is like ‘they know best’, ‘they come from the outside,‘ they know it all’. Then I should also know what I don’t know, and then I feel that it’s a barrier to ask them for help.*

The saying seems to reflect a psychological barrier in terms of not being comfortable in asking for support, which can be a sign of resistance and lack of positive experience of support (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The comment describes how and why asking for help is perceived as intimidating. The informants seem to view that they should know the basics of the innovation. However, they feel that since time has passed since year one, it seems “too late” to ask for clarification. Despite this, Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) state that it is never too late to request help.

As part of an innovation one of the aims is to develop competence as the innovation develops. One of the ways of doing this is by sharing and feedback (Fixsen, et al., 2005, 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). It seems that because the reading coaches are the ones learning the basics of the integrated RtI framework, they are dependent of the innovators as change agents. Yet asking for clarification is perceived as daring.

**4.2.1 Summary of Psychological Barriers**

This section has identified psychological barriers in terms of how the project was presented to the majority of the teachers.

Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) suggest that it is important that there is a need for what is introduced among the majority that is going to be part of the innovation process. The respondents who are teachers stated that most teachers did not require the innovation. This lack of need this does not seem to have been noticed by the initiators.

Moreover, it is wise to create a plan that lists the features of the innovation in order to among others clarify tasks and roles and thereby develop ownership of the innovation (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The schools received a ready-made plan by the innovators, but they have not adapted the plan to their own school contexts. The informants report that the plan was difficult to understand.
How a person views earlier experiences connected to challenges influence how the person reacts to later challenges (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The informants express positively support provided by the innovators during the previous innovation of implementing SWPBIS. Concerning the present innovation, the informants express that they did not understand what was expected of them or what to expect from the innovators. Towards the present innovation they expected the same type of support by the innovators, yet they perceive that during the present project the support has not been the same. This seems to have created disappointment among the informants and it seems that it has been challenging to combat this disappointment.

4.3 Practical Barriers

Barriers can influence each other (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010) and within an organization planning and clarification of roles and tasks are important in order to strengthen membership (Owens, 1998). How teachers collaborate influence the environments around the learners (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). However, in this present project psychological barriers seem to have influence practical barriers. It seems that there has been a lack of time to creating a need and understanding for the initiated change, which has influenced lack of ownership. This may further have influenced lack of modification to clarify division of roles and tasks among the teachers. Regarding meetings the schools do not seem to have devoted enough time to reflect and share information at staff meetings. Thereby barriers seem to have influenced each other within the schools.

4.3.1 Time

Time to Clarify Understanding

The following looks at how one of the educators recalls the initiation of the current project of integrating reading and behavior:

One thing is sitting at two meetings where information is presented and then take it down to your own level and get on with it. Then you need to be absolutely certain of what is expected and what is supposed to be done.
The quote expresses there was insufficient meetings at the initiation phase of the project. It is further expressed that the teachers did not seem to have a need for the innovation and that information was not communicated in a manner that was understood.

The following quote is an essential comment of the perceived reaction of one of the principals in describing the experience of taking part of the innovation:

*They have only seen the package, but once they started unwrapping it, they don’t understand all of it. I wish that those who started the innovation to a bigger extent supported the school out there and encouraged them.*

The principals reflect that it is perceived that the teachers did not seem to understand features of the current project. The saying seems to reflect initial challenges of the way the innovation was introduced. As shown earlier, the informants have not developed their own plan. It is considered important to develop a plan to gain ownership (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Earlier findings show that the teachers express a lack of need for the innovation, that information was not given well enough and that the teachers did not understand the project plan.

The saying also reflects a need for external support provided the same way as during the implementation of SWPBIS. According to Skogen and Sjøvoll (2010) and Fixsen et al. (2005), during a project phase it is important that the leadership understands the elements of what is going to be implemented. External support is intended to function as a facilitator to the organization (Fixsen et al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). According to Skogen & Sjøvoll (2005) at some point external support will not be as present, which is why the leadership and those with key roles (the reading coaches) have important roles during the innovation process.

The intention by presenting the following findings is related to how the informants perceive the purpose of the innovation, perceptions of what their roles are and how they perceive the roles of the innovators, which may give possible explanations to why the implementation of the integrated model has been perceived as challenging. The following looks at how the informants perceive the purpose of the innovation:

*We look at this as an innovation where the aim is to help the innovators find good ways of finding the “grey zone”*[learners receiving moderate support, tier two]*
learners, those that are not struggling to the point of receiving special needs education, but who don’t develop at the same speed as the average learner.

The saying seems to reflect what the informants’ perceive as being one of the purposes of the innovation and their roles towards the innovators: The purpose and role are to identify learners in need for moderate support. Further it is perceived that an intervention model will be put in place:

*We will also help the innovators by finding good texts and to which grade level. And when they have discovered that, then a ready-made model will be put together and this model will be used to compare both reading and behavior skills (...) But in the long run it can be something we present in relation to behavior in terms of how many and what type of learners that are struggling.*

There seems to be a perceived understanding that the innovators at a later point will introduce a ready made model of interventions that integrate reading and behavior support. This may refer back to expectations towards the innovators. The informants are not specific when they use the term ”ready made”. I interpret that ”a ready made model” may be referring to that an integrated RtI model includes assessment tools that measure reading and behavior skills in the form of data that shows the relation between reading and behavior (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009).

As the informants address the concept ”model” I further interpret that they may be referring to the integrated RtI intervention model that provides and assesses tiered support of reading and behavior (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). What is more, the quote ends by a future analysis of how to use the model of reading and behavior support. They are not specific in terms of how they will present the correlation of reading and behavior data and which actions will be taken as a consequence. Reading and behavior data should be presented in relation to each other with the aim of finding suitable interventions and to evaluate whether the interventions are of quality (Shores, 2009).

The quote also seems to imply that the informants do not consider themselves at the point of integrating reading and behavior support within a tiered framework as they are reflecting in future tense. As will be elaborated later, development of competence is pivotal in order to implement change of practices (Fixsen et.al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). In
order to measure the quality of an intervention, one needs competence and it is important to collaborate (Shores, 2009).

**Time to Share New Information**

The following saying is related to how information was communicated to the teachers. Some of the informants expressed that the start of the project was colored by unclear expectations:

*At the beginning I found it frustrating, because we perceived that we were waiting for something. We thought we would be given more than what we got of advice and help. That is why it took a lot of time to get started with the innovation. We didn’t know what to do. It was related to the information that was given. I understand that the more we are part of the process the more we gain ownership. But we have not started at the right track: The need was not picked up.*

It is important to clarify information at the start of a project (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The initiation of the innovation seems unclear in how information was communicated at the very start of the innovation. The informants were waiting for more information, yet the schools started the innovation. This may be related to how the positive experiences of implementing SWPBIS colored expectations of receiving support. What is more, the informants point to the lack of need and this seems to have become a significant reason for expectations, resistance in asking for help, clarification and gaining ownership.

**Time to Develop Competence**

Fixsen et. al. (2005) point to the value of combining training and coaching, which is supported by a meta-analysis of the effects of combining training and coaching. Both are important for the vast majority to apply new knowledge to practice (Fixsen et.al., 2005). The concepts that are referred to by the reading coaches are benchmark, screening and progress monitoring, which are pivotal tools to be able to assess learners’ skills (Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). Time to developing understanding of integrated RtI concepts and how to put them to practice, the reading coaches expressed as challenging. The reading coaches refer to themselves and their colleagues when referring to their perception of developing competence of an integrated RtI framework:
Last year we didn’t have much time to learn much. We had to start faster than what we were prepared for. Not every one understood the innovation plan made by the innovators; so regarding theory and coaching I did not have enough knowledge of neither. It was not until the end of the last school year that I knew enough, but I still don’t know enough. So I am now in the process of reading more theory and improving myself in coaching.

The reading coaches say that the schools had to start putting what they understood of the project faster than they were prepared for. As referred to earlier, it is important to dedicate time when embarking on an innovation (Fixsen et.al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The reading coaches do not consider their knowledge of RtI as satisfactory, yet in the future they aim at practicing coaching skills. However, given the meta-analysis of the importance developing competence through training and coaching (Fixsen et.al., 2005), without receiving coaching the likelihood of developing coaching skills seem slim.

The reading coaches continued by describing how they perceived their current knowledge (the second year) of RtI in terms of providing coaching and reading support. The following quote is common:

*This year my working hours for the innovation is more defined in terms of how many hours I have for giving support at different grades, and we have been given three hours per week that is dedicated to collaboration with the other teachers and the leadership. And I have more time to collaborate with the innovators (...). So now the dialogue is more direct as opposed to last year. I don’t have to get information through the leadership.*

Clarifications about who does what is important during an innovation (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The comment seems to refer to time to practice knowledge, gain new knowledge and sharing of knowledge. All are necessary factors in developing competence of assessment skills towards an integrated RtI approach. It is also important that the ones with key roles to develop competence early on (Johnson, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). However, it seems that although time is available for applying subject expertise, the saying also refers to what seemed to be lacking during the first year: Time. First, lack of time to ensure that the reading coaches along with their teacher colleagues understood what they seem to be acquiring of knowledge during the second year. Second, it is not until the second year that the
reading coaches have started a direct dialogue with the innovators. The saying implies that the reading coaches did not have a direct dialogue with the innovators during the first year, but through the leadership. This implies a lack of collaboration, which is important in any organization (Owens, 1998) as well as to integrate an integrated RtI framework (Shores, 2009). This seems to refer back to the initial phases of the project, which seem to have lacked collaboration of clarifying the intentions about the innovation.

4.3.2 Resources

Unclear Plans

As mentioned earlier, the informants had not developed their own written project plan. When the informants were asked how they intended to implement an integrated RtI framework, they expressed their requirements. These requirements were not in any formal written format, but more of an indication of their thinking. The following passage reflects such thinking:

Informant: *I think that once we have been working on RTI for one more year then the other teachers will see, “aha!” they will see that the learners have developed positively due to organizing differently.*

Interviewer: *How are they going to see it? How do you plan this?*

Informant: *We’ll do it the same way as with SWPBIS: We’ll look at the reduced need for the number of students that need extra support - And that way they’ll see that the interventions are working (...) I already see that some learners are making progress, and it is fun to tell such stories, and that is where we are now. We share positive stories (...).*

The comment seems to reflect a doubt that the majority of the teachers see the purpose of the current pilot study and that the teachers are questioning the outcomes of the innovation. Also, the perception seems to communicate visions that are not shared by the whole school staff. The following saying seems to contrast the previous perspective:

*I thought we were part of a process where the goal in the future is to see the relation between reading and behavior, but that we now are only to focus on reading. Because*
our perception is that the innovators are most focused on the reading part (...) and then we should focus on the reading part before we start looking at the relation between reading and behavior. But of course, if we had both weak readers that are also weak in behavior, then we would have started with the relation. We take it into account, but we have not integrated the two, as we will give it focus later.

The interpretation appears to reflect visions, yet they do not seem to be grounded in a written and agreed plan, which is important to gain ownership (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Also, as advised by Fullan (1993), educators should not develop visions too early. The lack of adapted plans seems to reflect back to a lack of ownership. What appears to be an element of a practical barrier seems to have been influenced by psychological barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The quotes also appear to reflect that the schools are only at the beginning of the pilot study. It seems that since they have not developed clear plans they have become dependent on being told what to do. When being told what to do they seem to build visions they do not seem to believe in, yet want to believe in. As implied earlier, they seem to be in the process of becoming acquainted with the integrated RtI framework, but the quotes also seem to reflect that they are not at the stage of integrating reading and behavior within an RtI framework.

**Structural Challenges: Time Schedule and Staff Resources**

As shown as a possible psychological barrier in terms of not having had time to develop a need and understanding of the project, the barriers at the start seem to have influenced organizational factors. The organizational factors that will be given focus are the reallocation of staff and time schedule.

As of December 2009 the schools adapted reading support within an RtI framework by reorganizing the time schedule and providing three teachers at each grade level. The principals justified the reorganization the following way: *In order to achieve early intervention we found it important to start from scratch and put the bulk of the resources on the first grades.*

The principals have decided to implement the innovation on the first grades and thereby concentration of teachers at these grades. However, the timing for when to organize
their resources and how the teachers were part of the process is not recalled as positive by one of the reading coaches:

*In the beginning it would have been nice if we ourselves could have gotten the opportunity to assess the student needs at each grade level and which needs the teachers had, but instead the time schedule was reorganized in the middle of the school year. Teachers were placed here and there, they didn’t know what to do, and since all grade levels have different needs some of the teachers felt disorganized. No one knew what to do.*

How teachers collaborate influence the environments around the learners (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The comment signals that the time scheduling was done at the middle of the year and that it was not perceived well among the teachers. During the process of reorganizing the time schedule the school staffs discussed how to share students among them in order to provide interventions:

*At the meetings the majority agreed to share students, yet once screening had been done and learners were assessed for type of intervention support, the teachers were resistant to “give away” their students.*

In order to implement an integrated RtI approach, teachers need to share assessment tasks, and it is considered important to reallocate teachers in order to provide interventions at the same time (Shores, 2009). Further, Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) point to how a lack of understanding may cause resistance to change. The saying above seems to show how lack of understanding may have caused resistance to share students. The saying seems to reflect how change of the time schedule and staff resources seem to have affected resistance to change in terms of unwillingness to share students among interventions. I interpret this behavior in terms of psychological barriers in that the teachers do not understand the purpose of the structural change based on lack of information during the initial year of RtI. If the teachers do not perceive that they or the leadership are competent in the innovation, they are resistant to the change of time and staff resources.

The principal views the experience the following way:

*I might not have responded well enough to the teachers’ frustrations (...) I felt that it might have been expected that I had more answers than I had. I tried to support the*
teachers, but I didn’t have time to be part of all of them, so sometimes I thought: Is all this frustration necessary?

The observation of the principal shows that the principal acknowledges that the teachers were frustrated, but did not have the time to support the teachers all the time. It seems that time has been a significant barrier to the informants as a whole. Further, in light of the quote that opens the result chapter, which reflects a lack of need for the innovation, it seems that the principal does not fully understand the major reason for the reaction among the teachers.

Moreover, the statement further seem to signal a lack of ability to acknowledge teachers’ frustrations and facilitate reflective discussions in combating challenges, as Senge (2000) and Heifetz (2009) describe as good leadership. At first glance it may look as the teachers were frustrated due to the change of time schedule (time and resource barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010)), but at a deeper look it may be that the biggest barrier is a psychological barrier. Even though the leadership may not identify the cause to the frustrations, together with the teachers they may reflect upon how to solve the frustrations. However, I interpret that the reaction seems to be related to initial psychological barriers in terms of the teachers not having a need for the innovation and that initial frustrations were not met. Further, initial barriers seem to have affected the reorganization of the time schedule and teacher resources.

4.3.3 System barriers

Lack of Collaboration

The reading coaches reflect on how they have faced challenges deciding on roles. The reading coaches pointed to initial difficulties developing competence of RtI and deciding on roles in terms of who does what:

Reading coach: So the situation is like, “who does what?” and that we have yet to find: deciding on roles, if I am I the one to figure out which progress-monitoring texts to use that fits all learners or if it is the general teacher who is supposed to do it or which one will follow the progress of which intervention and so on.

Interviewer: Which factors do you consider necessary for this chain to become dynamic?
Reading coach: *I wish we could have an overview of all learners’ reading level, which we are in the process of acquiring (...) so with time we can have a school-wide overview (...) which the innovators would like more (...) but we feel that since I am the only one with this position, then all my hours are devoted to this.*

The expression may be another sign of psychological and practical barriers in terms of subject expertise (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). First, the teachers have not developed enough understanding of the integrated RtI framework, and second they have not received the expected support. As pointed to earlier, it may seem that the leadership does not facilitate discussions that reflect upon how to get through difficulties, which is important in order to learn from them (Fullan, 2001; Heifetz, 2009; Senge, 2000).

The following perspective seems common among the reading coaches in their perception of assessing all learners: *But I think it has been nice, very interesting to have been able to screen all the learners (grades 1-3), because that gives me an excellent overview of all the learners.*

According to the informants the teachers and the principals prefer that the reading coaches are the first to learn the craft of screening, monitoring development and deciding types of tier support before sharing knowledge with the teachers. The principals seem to justify the reasoning the following way:

*At the beginning the reading coaches need more time: First learning the craft of RtI…the fact that the teacher knows that someone does it for them is important in terms of the stage where we are now (...). At this stage I think it is smart that the teachers only get the results from the reading coach (...) and later on together decide on types of interventions.*

Both the reading coaches and the principals seem to find it reasonable that the reading coaches learn the program first prior to passing their knowledge on to their colleagues. However, within an organization it is important to structure roles and tasks (Owens, 1998) and within an integrated RtI framework collaboration among collection, assessment and sharing of data is necessary (McIntosh, et al., 2010; Shores, 2009). The reflection therefore seems to refer to the initiation stage of the project, as understanding of how to implement the framework has not been understood.
Furthermore, the time aspect seems to be a barrier to learning the theory of the reading part of RtI and thereby applying it in practice. Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) suggest that time is often underestimated as things takes time. The signal seems to touch upon time as being underestimated as time seems to have affected lack of competence and collaboration. However, it seems that the informants have failed to grasp the importance of collaboration when collecting data. When all teachers collect data learners have the chance to be identified faster (Shores, 2009).

**Use of Data at Meetings**

Throughout the interviews the informants inform that at every staff meeting there is devoted time to discuss SWPBIS and sharing of behavior data. In terms of the current pilot study the informants say that they do not compare reading and behavior data:

*We have not focused on the coherence, at least not as I have experienced. We review SWIS [behavior] data with connection to behavior, but we have not compared reading and behavior data next to each other for comparison.*

When the informants are asked how they review and share reading and behavior data the reading coaches inform that they first review reading and behavior data by themselves:

*(...) When I review the lists on my own, I can see which students that are in need of something in relation to behavior or reading... But we have not compared the two types of data together (...) what we do is that we look at students that are in intensive behavioral support and assume that they might be in need of extra reading support. But we are rather focusing on those with intensive need of behavior support. However, when I review reading data I see that students with challenging behavior not necessarily have reading difficulties. On the other hand, if we had been comparing reading data to behavior data to really look for a correlation, then maybe. But I don’t have an overview of this.*

The comment seems to signal a lack of time to learn the philosophy of an integrated RtI framework. One of the essential philosophies of an integrated RtI framework is to examine reading and behavior data together in order to provide support to all learners, especially learners in need of tier 2 and 3 support (Shores, 2009). One of the reasons may be because the informants are not consistent in the way they view reading and behavior data. On
one hand, at staff meetings the schools do not look for coherence between reading and behavior data, but when the teachers review the data alone and together with colleagues they seem to do it based on subjective evaluation. One of the goals about using data to assess and identify learners for tiered support is to do it with an objective eye (McIntosh, et al., 2010).

Also, the informants switch between what they do individually and collectively. When the informants are asked how they share data with the other teachers they inform that they review data together with the individual grade teacher. As addressed in chapter two, teachers are advised to set up teams that either use a standard protocol or problem-solving approach (Shores, 2009). These formats are meant to help teachers collaborate and make decisions. It seems that it is a system barrier in terms of knowing how to collaborate among analyzing reading and behavior data.

**Lack of Feedback and Sharing**

The process in which the informants provide feedback in integrating reading and behavior within an RtI framework seem to be lacking. When they are asked how they share and discuss the current pilot study at staff and team meetings they say at both type of meetings they focus on behavior data as they have done since implementing SWPBIS, but that they do not share their views about the current pilot study that focus on integrating reading and behavior data. The following saying is common:

*We reflect about the present innovation when we have team meetings, but not at staff meetings. We are not at the point of reflecting about the interventions, although we can use meetings for this. This we can improve on, evaluating and reflecting.*

It appears that the informants are willing to discuss the innovation. However, there does not appear to be a structured forum for their views to be properly addressed. Due to this lack of communication plan, valuable insights are wasted (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). Therefore a lack of sharing and feedback occurs as one of the system barriers (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010).

**How Data Leads to Decisions for Individual and Collective Needs**
When asked how RtI data for reading and behavior is used to show progress among students, the informants say that at this point they are not linking academic and behavioral data. The following saying seem to be essential:

*At this point I don’t see... I don’t think the teachers see the connection. We have not set up reading and behavioral data in the same chart. The day we link them together, which eventually we are going to do, then we are going to put the reading and behavioral results in an integrated system and then the learners in a integrated system in order to look at the data on the same chart: Reading skills and behavior problems. Then people will see how the two fit together. But at this point in time SWPBIS runs the way we are working. RtI is an innovation that we are working on for the time being. I don’t think all the teachers see the connection, even though I have told them many times.*

An integrated RtI framework requires continuous feedback and team work in order to quality check interventions based on data (McIntosh, et al., 2006; Shores, 2009). The saying ends by identifying that the teachers have been informed about the relation between reading and behavior many times. It is earlier said that the informants have not devoted time to reflect about the process of implementing reading and behavior support. Together the sayings contradict each other: It seems that the principals and the teachers have two sets of perceptions of what they understand. This reflects a lack of feedback at meetings. Thereby is seems to be a connection between lack of understanding and lack of interest among the majority of the teachers, which again is connected to a lack of collaboration.

The collection, assessment and sharing of data seem to be a system barrier in terms of acquiring a shared overview and thereby understanding of the intention of an integrated RtI framework. What is more, the pilot study does not seem to achieve improvement of how the teachers use data for assessing reading and behavior skills. Thereby they are not able to decide on interventions to learners in need of support of reading and/or behavior.

As a reflection to things that were perceived as challenging towards the current pilot study, the informants said:

*Implementation work is demanding... it is demanding ... because what is demanding is what we don’t know; we are not certain where this ends (...). We are supposed to*
create something new in our school day, for instance. This is a key word. We need to have the teachers with us in order to change the school day.

Implementation among others requires teachers’ support and development of competence (Fixsen et.al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The saying may sum up the perceptions of laying the groundwork for implementation: Implementation is viewed as a challenging endeavor.

4.3.4 Summary of Practical Barriers

It is significant that it is devoted time to clarify understanding and expectations at the beginning of an innovation process (Fullan, 1993; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The interviews were performed during the second year of the project. It takes two to four years for the results of the implementation to take effect (Fixsen et.al, 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2005). As viewed during the initiation phase of the pilot project, unclear expectations and clarifications of the innovation during the initiation face seem to have been influenced by time to clarify understanding of the innovation. This also seems to have influenced how teachers have been trained for the innovation, and it seems to have been a lack of developing competence of the intended change.

In terms of resource barriers, competence for the intended change is lacking. Competence is important during change processes (Fixsen et.al., 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). In order to implement an integrated RtI framework, practitioners need skills among others to screen and monitor learners’ progress and to evaluate the correlation between a student’s reading and behavior skills. If not able to assess learners for progress monitoring, one is not able to measure the quality of the response to intervention (Shores, 2009). It does not seem that the informants at this point in time see reading and behavior in relation in the form of data. Because the informants have not gained understanding of key RtI concepts they do not have competence in providing reading and behavior support within a response to intervention model. The informants further identify challenges in assessing the relationship between reading and behavior when viewing data.

When reading and behavior data are viewed together it seems that the educators base subjective opinions about the relationship without having discussed data with each other or
shared their views with the teacher staff. When the reading coaches or the principals talk about reading and behavior data they tell positive stories, yet they do not show graphs. Thereby the teacher staff does not have access to reviewing the data that have influenced positive stories.

In terms of system barriers it is the reading coaches that collect data of learners’ reading skills because they are the only ones with competence in doing so. As it is only the reading coaches with a general overview of the collective reading levels of all learners, it becomes challenging to have a specific knowledge of each learner’s needs. This overview of data influences how the reading coaches and the general teachers are able to share knowledge of each learner’s skills as the teachers are only able to know the facts of what the data shows. This in turn influences the set up of interventions and the knowledge of the teachers in charge of each tier. If the majority of the teachers are not competent in screening and monitoring learners’ for reading development, interventions cannot be given with quality.

Furthermore, it does not seem that the schools’ leadership has been able to support the teachers’ frustrations with the change of time schedule. This may reflect a lack of ability to organize meetings that devote time to discuss and reflect upon how to solve challenges together. This way resource and system barriers seem to be interrelated.

4.4 Findings

An integrated Response to Intervention (RtI) framework seems complex to put to practice. It requires knowledge of essential concepts in order to perform screening and assess results provided by data (Shores, 2009). The framework further requires competence in knowing how to share data results and make decisions in which tiers to give reading and/ or behavior support (Shores, 2009). The results identify that the informants have not understood how to integrate an integrated RtI framework despite that they have implemented School Wide Positive Intervention Support (SWPBIS). SWPBIS consists of a response to intervention model that measures behavior and gives tier support to behavior (Shores, 2009). One might think by integrating an RtI model that measures reading skills and provides
interventions to reading difficulties; teachers would easily integrate such procedures with SWPBIS. The results show the contrary: Integrating reading and behavior intervention support is viewed as challenging, thus an integrated RtI framework seems complex to implement.

4.4.1 Psychological Barriers

Psychological barriers are common during the initial faces of innovations and need to be acknowledged and dealt with (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Psychological barriers are interpreted to be pivotal within the findings, and they seem to have appeared during the initiation of the pilot project. These are a lack of need and ownership. The most significant psychological barrier is interpreted as being a lack of need for the innovation.

Lack of Need

Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010) suggest that it is important to create a need in order for an innovation to be successful. As introduced, the initiation of the project seems to have carried seeds of frustration and concerns. The pilot project seems to be lacking of a need among the majority of the teachers. This is identified as having appeared at the initiation stage of the innovation. A lack of perceived need seems to be the root of the barriers as the informants report a lack of motivation among the teachers.

Lack of Ownership

An innovation is a planned change that requires a plan that identifies practices that can benefit the receivers; in a school context these are the learners (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). Further, a plan should state how practices can be implemented and by who practices are carried through. This creates ownership of the planned change (Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The informants report that they received a ready made plan by the innovators that invited the schools to take part of the innovation, but the informants did not adapt the plan to their contexts. I interpret that because the majority of the teachers were not in favor of the innovation, this may have influenced a lack of motivation to adapt the plan, and since they did not understand the pre-made plan they did not know how to adapt the plan to their own school settings.
Thereby the schools have not gained ownership of the change process. This may be one of the reasons why the informants have experienced barriers since the initiation of the innovation.

### 4.4.2 Practical Barriers

The informants identify barriers in planning for the innovation and developing understanding for the initiated change. Lack of time to develop understanding seems to have influenced development of competence. These barriers may be influenced by psychological barriers in a lack of need and ownership for the innovation.

#### Time Barriers: Lack of Time

The interviews were performed during the second year of the pilot project. It takes two to four years for an innovation to take effect (Fixsen et.al, 2005; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2005). During the initiation face it is important to devote time to clarify understanding and expectations for the change one wants to give life (Fullan, 1993; Skogen & Sjøvoll, 2010). The most essential time barrier is therefore interpreted as a lack of time to clarify intentions and expectations of the innovation.

#### Resource Barriers: Lack of Competence

During the interviews the informants addressed key elements of RtI they were not sure of. As time passed they did not have the courage to ask for clarification. Thereby it seems that psychological barriers and practical barriers influence each other, which again influence the quality of the innovation.

#### System Barriers: Lack of Collaboration

The informants have not devoted time to share responsibilities among the teachers, which seem to have strengthened initial psychological barriers. As there has not been devoted time to develop competence of the initiated change, this may have influenced sharing and use of data. This may again be influenced by a lack of ownership by not having adapted the ready made plan.
The role of the reading coaches seems challenging as their roles seem to be a round about among and between the teachers, leadership, network schools and the innovators. I interpret this role as a double role that has led to confusion among the reading coaches and the teachers, and this may be one of the barriers to implementing the current project.

The dialogue between the informants and the innovators does not seem to have been structured well. It is reported that it was not until the second year that the reading coaches had a direct dialogue with the innovators. This may imply a lack of understanding of the innovation as the reading coaches and the principals did not share information with each other. According to Owens, it is important that the roles within a system collaborate (Owens, 1998). In order to implement an integrated RtI framework collaboration is viewed as one of the essential tasks in order to assess learners’ skills, decide in which intervention to give support, and it is further necessary to collaborate when assessing data to measure development over time (Shores, 2009).

It seems that reading and behavior data are used inconsistently, that they are viewed separately and if viewed together data evaluation seems to be judged subjectively and individually. It does not seem that the schools staff or leadership cooperate or reflect among evaluating the relationship between reading and behavior data. This signals that the leaderships have not been able to facilitate the teachers through obstacles. The reactions of the informants seem to relate to what Fixsen et al.(2005) report to as implementation being a complex work because it is when a planned change is put to practice one discovers how challenging it is to apply.

### 4.4.3 Psychological and Practical Barriers

In the light of information about how the project was introduced to the teachers, the comment of implementation work being challenging expresses a paradox that may sum up psychological and practical barriers the informants seem to have faced: In order to do implementation work the motivation of the teachers is important, yet there is a perception that the teachers were not motivated for the project in the first place. Therefore one assumption can be that because the teachers were not motivated for the project the implementation became more demanding than it would have been if all teachers were motivated for the project.
The informants identified challenges to integrating reading and behavior supports within an RtI framework. It seems that the biggest barrier does not lie in integrating reading and behavior support, but in how the framework was introduced to the school context and how the informants and their colleagues have faced initial barriers.
5 CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research question: “What are possible barriers to integrating academic and behavior support within an RTI framework?”

5.1 Conclusion

This qualitative research study has identified a number of barriers teachers and principals in two schools may have faced when integrating reading and behavior support within an RtI framework. Teachers and principals were chosen as informants due to their earlier experiences of implementing School Wide Positive Interventions Support (SWPBIS), and because they are currently part of the pilot of the integrated framework RtI. This study is viewed as important toward having an understanding of how some educators have experienced barriers during this pilot of integrating reading and behavior support within a response to intervention framework. The future goal is to implement an integrated framework of reading and behavior support.

Teachers and principals who participated in this research provided perspectives concerning barriers of integrating an RtI framework at the primary school level. The interviews were conducted during the second and last year of the pilot study. Overall, there are two major groups of barriers: psychological and practical barriers. These barriers seem to be significant and a possible explanation why the informants report they are not ready to integrate reading and behavior support.

These results are consistent with reports by Fixsen et.al. (2005), which states that implementation work is demanding as it is filled with challenges. An implementation is the action that follows a plan, which is the result of a groundwork that happens during the initial stages of the project. An implementation among others requires competence and collaboration in order to put to practice what aims of the project (Fixsen et.al, 2005). The results also support Skogen & Sjøvoll (2010), which suggests that barriers are common during the project and that an initiation phase is crucial for successful implementation.
Significant psychological barriers include: lack of need, lack of ownership. Practical barriers are: planning has not been tailored to the schools’ specific needs; time; resourcing; lack of communication; collaboration.

Psychological and practical barriers seem to have appeared at the beginning of the project implementation and these barriers seem to have escalated as the project progressed. The barriers seem to have influenced a lack of readiness to integrate reading and behavior support within an RtI model.

The aim of integrating reading and behavior intervention support within an integrated RtI framework has been perceived as challenging. It seems to be colored by psychological and practical barriers. In terms of psychological barriers, the most essential finding seems to be related to a lack of need by the majority of the teachers part of the project. This need does not seem to have been taken into consideration by the initiators of the project to the schools. Thereby the teachers report a lack of motivation. Furthermore, the informants have not developed their own plan. Therefore they do not seem to have gained ownership of the implementation. Psychological barriers seem to have been strengthened by practical barriers in terms of a lack of time to clarify the purposes of the project: what it intends to improve and how to implement.

5.2 Limitations

The results of the current analysis of possible barriers to integrating an integrated RtI framework are limited by several factors. First, the informants were those that accepted the invitation to take part in the interviews and share their experiences and perceptions of the topics for the interviews. The extent to which the participants’ reports are representative of all schoolteachers, reading coaches and principals part of the pilot study is not known. Second, the number of participants was small and may only represent the experiences and perceptions of those parts of the pilot study during the interviews. An interview inquiry with a larger selection (principals and all teachers with roles as reading coaches in the four schools part of the pilot study) providing analysis on possible barriers to integrating an integrated RtI framework may enrich or contradict the barriers presented within this analysis. Third, the use of a qualitative analysis only measures perceptions and experiences of participants and cannot be generalized to a larger population (Kvale, 2007).
5.3 Recommendation for Further Research

This qualitative study has focused on possible barriers perceived by teachers and principals when integrating an RtI framework. Within an extended research of my research question it would have been interesting if there were a follow up interview with the same informants that took part of this present interview study. The aim could be to investigate their views of the innovation as a whole.

Another recommendation for further research would be to interview learners that have received intervention support within an integrated RtI framework. It would also be interesting to interview the parents of students receiving intervention support. The purpose could be to i) investigate how students and parents perceive the intervention support, ii) how the students value their own academic and behaviour competence and ii) how the parents value the collaboration with the school during the intervention(s) process.
Appendix

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Lise Heidi Mjølke
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Vedt: 01.09.2010
Vnr ref: 24781/1783
Generert:

KVITTERING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Viviser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, daterett 16.08.2010. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

24781
A study of systemic and organizational factors in educational change processes. A qualitative research study in Norway.

Behandlingsansvarlig
Uniservice i Oslo, mot behandlingsavtale fra 12.07.2010

Datafører
Lise Heidi Mjølke

Stedfest
Elizabeth Finnebo Eikum

Personverneombudet har vedtatt prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meddelelig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen utløser ikke kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personverneombudets vurdering fortsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i fullt med opplysningene gitt i meddelelsens, hensynsforhold med omfatter, vedlagte prosjektskjemar- kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/helseregisterloven med forskiller. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.


Personverneombudet vil ved prosjektens avslutning, 30.04.2011, rette en herrevidt utgjørende status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen

Kontaktperson: Juni Skipå Leita, tlf: 55 58 26 35
Vedlegg: Prosjektskjemar
Kopi: Elisabeth Finnebo Eikum, Gurovar Seljaasen, ven 11 J, 0485 OSLO
Forespørsel om å delta i intervju

Jeg er masterstudent i spesialpedagogikk på Universitetet i Oslo og holder nå på med den avslutende masteroppgaven. Temaet for oppgaven er en analyse av systemiske og organisatoriske faktorer viktige for å integrere PALS og RTI med mål om å styrke sosial og akademisk kompetanse blant elever. Fokuset er hvordan rektør, teamleder og lærere opplever prosessen av integreringen av programmene og hva de oppfatter som viktige systemiske og organisatoriske faktorer for å få til en vellykket innovasjon (endring). Jeg er interessert i å finne ut hvordan strukturerne (organisatoriske og systemiske) i skolen ligger til rette for et godt samarbeid mellom de ansatte, hvordan instrumentene i PALS og RTI blir integrert som ledd i undervisningen og evalueringen av eleverne, og i hvilken grad prosessen av testing og oppfølging av sosiale og akademiske ferdigheter fører til tilpasset støtte til hver enkelt elev.


Jeg ber om at du ikke oppgir personidentifiserende opplysninger om andre enn deg selv. Jeg minner i den anledningen om at du er underlagt tushespikl når det gjelder personidentifiserende opplysninger om eleve.

Spørsmålene vil dreie seg om hvordan rektør, teamleder og lærer opplever prosessen av å integrere PALS og RTI, oppfatninger av hvilke organisatoriske og systemiske faktorer som eksisterer på skolen, opplevelser av kvaliteten av disse, for eksempel hvordan de ulike leddene (rektor, teamleder, lærere) samarbeider om instrumentene i PALS og RTI, og bl.a. om oppfatningen av hvordan organisering av tid påvirker effektiviseringen av innovasjonen. Oppgaven har som mål å finne ut om det er sammenheng mellom synspunkter hos dem som blir intervjuet, og hvordan datagramm laget står i forhold til teorigrunnlaget av PALS og RTI, tillegg til hva den generelle innovasjonsteorien sier om systemiske og organisatoriske faktorer.

Jeg vil bruke båndoptakere og ta notater mens vi snakker sammen. Intervjuet vil ta omtrent en time, og vi blir samla enige om tid og sted.

Det er frivillig å være med og du har mulighet til å trekke deg når som helst underveis, uten å

Dersom du har lyst å være med på intervjuet, er det fint om du skriver under på den vedlagte samtykkeerklæringen og sender den til meg.

Hvis det er noe du lur på kan du ringe meg på 1, eller sende en e-post til . Da kan også kontakte min veileder Liv Heidi Mjelde ved institutt for Spesialpedagogikk på telefonnummer .

Studien er meldt til Personaerombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste A/S.

Med vennlig hilsen
Elisabeth Finnseth Eggum

Samtykkeerklæring:
Jeg har mottatt informasjon om intervjuprosjektet og ønsker i stille til intervju.

Signatur ........................................ Telefonnummer ........................................
The Interview Guide

1. The school culture
   - Interest for School Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBIS)
   - Interest for RtI
   - Meetings:
     o Organization of meetings:
       ▪ Content (what)
       ▪ How are they structured?
       ▪ Who is in charge?
       ▪ How is RtI integrated?
       ▪ Feedback/discussion/sharing: How do you use feedback/discussion/sharing during meetings?
     o Support (within the municipality, from the innovators)

2. Coaching
   - Is it interest for coaching?
   - Why, why not?
   - Does it support PBS and RtI?
   - Why? Yes, no?
   - Perceptions of this topic

3. RtI: Screening of reading skills
   - How is this organized?
   - Who is in charge of screening?
   - Perceptions of this experience

4. Adapting and organization of the interventions (the tiers)
   - How are the interventions/ tiers set up?
   - How are they organized?
   - Who is in charge of this?
   - How is SWPBIS integrated in this part of RtI?/ How is RtI integrated with SWPBIS?
   - Perceptions of this experience

5. Progress monitoring
   - How is this organized?
- Who is in charge?
- How is PBS integrated in this part of RtI? / How is RtI integrated with SWPBIS?
- Perceptions of this experience

### Adapting of the teaching within the tiers

6. How is this organized?
   - Who is in charge?
   - How is SWPBIS integrated in this part of RtI? / How is RtI integrated with SWPBIS?
   - Perceptions/comments of this experience

### 7. Conclusion: Integration of SWPBIS and RtI

- What is your perception of integration of SWPBIS and RtI?

### 8. Would you like to address something that has not been brought up during the interview?

Thank you for your time and for participating in the interview!
Sources


Sikes, P. J. (1992). Imposed Change and the Experienced Teacher In M. Fullan & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), Teacher development and educational change (pp. 36-55). London: Falmer Press.


