

BARRIERS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS ENCOUNTER DURING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI

Approved: __Dale Henze_____ Date: _July 29, 2016_____

Suggested content descriptor keywords:

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Secondary Education

Barriers of Response to Intervention (RtI)

BARRIERS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS ENCOUNTER DURING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF RTI

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Science

in

Education

by

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2015

Abstract

Barriers that School Districts Encounter during the Implementation of RTI

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Platteville

Successful Response to Intervention (RTI) implementation is a major obstacle within school districts across the United States of America. This study worked with school districts in Southwest Wisconsin to identify barriers and potential solutions to the successful implementation of RTI. The barriers identified were classified into four themes: systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs as define through the work of Sansoti, Telzrow, and Noltemeyer (2010). In this study, it was found that the majority of the barriers that school districts within this area of Wisconsin incurred were identified in the systems structures theme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	i
TITLE PAGE	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	
Statement of the Problem	
Definitions of Terms	
Delimitations and Limitations	
Method of Approach	
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
Research Question	
Discussion of Prior Research	
Summary Statement	
Hypotheses	
III. METHOD	9
Participants	
Materials	
Procedures	
IV. RESULTS	11
Tables and Figures	
V. DISCUSSION	16
VI. REFERENCES	22
APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter.....	23
APPENDIX B: Project Materials.....	25

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

My research attempted to identify the limitations, barriers, and potential shortcomings of implementing a Response to Intervention (RTI) system into the middle and high school setting. RTI uses student academic achievement data to quantify student learning and outcomes. The data was used to identify what interventions are needed for the student to increase academic achievement and success in the classroom.

Many research studies have been performed to identify the effects that RTI has in elementary schools, but very few have looked at implementation at the middle and high school level. More potential barriers exist at the secondary level of education due to the fact that teachers are content trained, according to Samuels (2009). Samuels identified that secondary schools are interested in RTI, but do not know what it should look like or how it should be integrated into schools. Sansoti, Telzrow, and Noltemeyer (2010) investigated the integration process by surveying school psychologists and together identified four major themes in which school districts have found boundaries. These themes included systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs.

Statement of the Problem

By exploring the perceptions of principals and teachers, my research built upon the research of Sansoti et al. (2010) and attempted to identify the major barriers that occur with RTI in school districts located in Southwest Wisconsin. Barriers were categorized along the themes from Sansoti et al. and I explored the steps that school districts used to overcome these limitations. I hypothesized that the greatest number of barriers and potential solutions identified by school districts would be categorized into the systems structures theme as described in the work of Sansoti et al.

Definition of Terms

Response to Intervention (RTI): RTI is a multi-tier approach that identifies and supports students whose needs are not adequately met within the classroom setting. The RTI process begins with high quality instruction and universal screening of all students within the general classroom setting (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2015).

Barriers: Refers to factors which impede the successful implementation of the RTI process. Barriers occur as a result of building needs, schedules, budgeting issues, and support from staff members or administration (Sansoti et al., 2010)

Intervention: Refers to an increase level of intense instruction that focuses directly on specific content and student needs. There are three tiers of intervention: Tier 1 – High quality classroom instruction, screening, and group interventions, Tier 2 – Targeted interventions, and Tier 3 – Intensive intervention and comprehensive evaluation (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2015).

Systems Characteristics: Refers to unintentional features of a district or school, which may either facilitate or impede an educational innovation such as RTI (Sansoti et al., 2010).

Systems Structures: Refers to those procedures and practices that are intentionally created and maintained, which may either facilitate or impede the implementation of educational innovations such as RTI (Sansoti et al., 2010).

Evidence-based Research: Refers to proven programs or techniques that address key components of RTI as identified in the literature (Sansoti et al., 2010).

Professional Development: Refers to topics and methods for training various educator groups and other stakeholders about components of RTI (Sansoti et al., 2010).

Delimitations and Limitations of the Research

Major delimitations to identifying the barriers that coexist with RTI implementation:

1. The survey was only sent out to 20 schools in Southwest Wisconsin. This would capture only a small sample of the school districts in Wisconsin and most likely all did not reply to the survey.
2. The survey was only completed by one administrator or one staff member at participating schools. This limited the number of responses, which may not fully complete the picture of what RTI looks like within school districts.

Major limitations to identifying the barriers that coexist with RTI implementation:

1. Size of the school district. The school districts that were selected vary in size from smaller districts with enrollments of less than 125 students at the high school level to districts with enrollments larger than 400 students at the high school.
2. Resources of the school district. Examples include, but are not limited to, location, booster funds, and local businesses, providing some districts with more resources (money, staff members, or evidence-based practices already in place) than other schools do.
3. Internal validity factors that could have limited the study included structure of the school district, scheduling, selection process of RTI focus or student intervention placement, and history of previous/current administration.

Method of Approach

Principals and teachers were surveyed in an attempt to identify the limitations, barriers, and potential shortcomings that coexist with the implementation of RTI at the secondary level and these were categorized accordingly into the four themes: systems characteristics, systems structure, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs, described in the work

of Sansoti et al. (2010). The IRB approval letter is attached as Appendix A. Project data collection materials are attached as Appendix B.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research Question

All school districts at some point in time have had to identify and overcome barriers, limitations, or potential shortcomings with different aspects of the school structure. These barriers could deal with classroom needs, teacher shortages, financial issues, or how to successfully implement new initiatives such as Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is a strategy that incorporates multi-tiered instruction strategies based on student needs and the progress monitoring of academic achievement. The main question addressed in my work was what boundaries are prohibiting school districts in Southwest Wisconsin from successful full scale implementation of the RTI system and what steps have been taken to solve help these issues.

Discussion of Prior Research

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (2015) recognizes RTI as a comprehensive approach to increasing student achievement through the use of a multi-tiered system of interventions. This system can be used for all types of learners and these interventions can be made available by teachers or specialists, like reading specialists or special education teachers. The tiered approach provides three levels of intense instruction. Tier 1 intervention occurs within the normal classroom setting. Students are provided with high-quality, whole group instruction where teachers can assess what students may need extra support. Those students who are identified as requiring more instruction are selected to be involved in a Tier 2 intervention, which embraces the use of small group teaching and is more focused on specific learning targets. If the student does not meet the requirements after a Tier 2 intervention, then the student will be further engaged into a Tier 3 intervention. Tier 3 interventions are personalized and concentrated on developing the skills necessary to meet the standard required by the curriculum, school, or state.

Johnson and Smith (2011) looked specifically at the structure of RTI models and the effectiveness of application within the middle school setting. They described successful RTI structures as “an umbrella structure under which numerous evidence-based practices can be employed to improve student learning” (p. 24). More specifically they identified that the RTI model stimulates student learning through the use of high quality teaching practices, student progress monitoring techniques, the use of research-based interventions, and system reliability checks. For districts to help eliminate barriers Johnson and Smith recognized specific circumstances that need to be met for implementation: 1) professional development of staff, 2) administrators who have a direction and are focused on the end goal, 3) a shared vision for the district, and 4) a shift in the school culture. These four circumstances align directly with the themes that this research is based on and are described in the work of Sansoti et al. (2010).

Roberts, Vaughn, Fletcher, Stuebing, and Barth (2013) investigated the direct effects of implementing a multi-tiered RTI system with middle school students who were struggling in reading. Their research revealed the progressive impact that RTI could have on learners who struggle to meet the requirements. Roberts et al. suggested that full scaled RTI systems would make progress monitoring processes easier because the model would: 1) prevent students from falling behind, 2) provide remediation for students who are struggling, and 3) identify those students who may have a learning disability. Roberts et al. also indicated that by implementing RTI, schools could shrink learning gaps and target specific skills that students need in order to be successful beyond the classroom. Therefore, having a focus like reading is going to help provide direction for the staff and administration.

Samuels (2009) took a different approach compared to the two previous studies and looks at the effects RTI has at the high school level. She noted that there was little research that applies to the implementation process, yet the state of Colorado had begun the implementation

process due to state law. While the district in her study used a tutoring center as their RTI system, the data that she collected suggested that students who visited the tutoring center more often each week received better grades compared to students who received no extra help. Within the study, Samuels also identified hurdles that high schools need to overcome that elementary schools do not. The hurdles that she identified included administrative leadership, finding the best fitting intervention for students, dealing with social and behaviors concerns, integrating science and social studies, and monitoring all stages of progress for students. All of which can be related to the four themes: systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs, described in the work of Sansoti et al. (2010).

As indicated by Samuels (2009), very few interventions are specifically designed for secondary students because there is little research on implementation of RTI at this level. Many of these research-based interventions are found at the elementary level. Moss, Chippendale, Mershon, and Carney (2012) used the intervention process in a different context by examining the effects of preparatory instruction for standardized tests like the ACT. What Moss et al. found was that participants who received ACT intervention instruction showed a significant increase in scores when compared to the control group who received no additional instruction. In addition to the intervention, the biggest factors that affected the increase in student achievement on the ACT were time, money, and preparatory materials. As Moss et al. discussed that the schedule that was in place was very detailed and this provided structure and guidance to the process, a key in successful RTI models.

While RTI has proven to be successful, Sansoti et al. (2010) identified barriers, limitations, and potential shortcomings of RTI that exist within the implementation process. As a result of their study, Sansoti et al. identified four major themes: systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs. Systems

characteristics refer to unintentional aspects that may support or inhibit the RTI process. Systems structure focused on the policies and procedures that were created by the school district to provide direction for the RTI process. Evidence-based practices identify the programs or interventions that have shown promise when implemented into school districts, like Read 180 with middle school students. Professional development is used to help the instructors understand the techniques needed for successful interventions and other aspects of RTI.

Summary Statement

Research has shown that RTI when implemented with a plan can have significant effects on student engagement and achievement. The difficulty is that many schools need to overcome barriers, limitations, and potential shortcomings to discover what works within the district and what hinders success for students and teachers. This leads to questions that many schools have: “What is the ideal way to implement RTI?” and “What barriers prevent successful implementation?” From the work of Sansoti et al. (2010) these barriers can be classified into four different themes which will allow districts to make connections and discover how schools have worked to rise above the barriers that existed. I proposed to explore the barriers faced by schools in Southwestern Wisconsin.

Hypotheses

I hypothesized that the greatest number of barriers and potential solutions identified by school districts would be categorized into the systems structures theme as described in the work of Sansoti et al. (2010).

CHAPTER III: METHOD

Participants

Research was conducted with 20 participating school districts who voluntarily responded to the survey. All of the districts were located in Southwestern Wisconsin and were selected based upon location. However, school districts varied in size as measured by student enrollment. One administrator or staff member from each district was asked to complete the Google Form survey about RTI. Of the 20 school districts asked to participate, 11 responded to the survey. The average age group of the participants was 41 - 50. Of the participants who completed the survey, seven were male and four were female.

Materials

Survey responses were collected through Google Forms after the participants submitted the survey. The barriers, limitations, and potential shortcomings that were identified were categorized and transferred to the data collection form, which was based on the work of Sansoti et al. (2010). Other data that was collected included RTI solutions, information on RTI structure, and student progress monitoring techniques.

Procedures

Research was initiated through email contact with districts located in Southwestern Wisconsin. This email explained who I was, what I was researching, and what steps needed to be taken to complete the process. (See Appendix B for a copy of email.) The survey also included a copy of the consent form. There was no penalty for districts which choose to not participate. Those districts which participated clicked on the link provided in the email, which connected participants to the survey. When the survey was complete, participants were asked to click submit. By clicking submit, the respondents provided consent to use the data set.

Data was collected during the 2015-2016 school year and provided districts with an opportunity to reflect on the RTI implementation process. Once the survey was closed, data was transferred from Google Forms to the data collection form; barriers, limitations, and potential shortcomings were then classified into the four themes of systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs. (See Appendix B for the data collection form.) Based upon the collected data, the needs of school districts were prioritized and compared to the work of Sansoti et al. (2010). Two people worked together to classify the data and reach consensus of which category each response was placed in.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The following tables outline the data found from the study of Barriers that School Districts Encounter during the Implementation of RTI. The data was qualitative in nature, so the data was summarized into tables that identified the major themes. To assess these boundaries, responses were categorized into the four different themes identified from the work of Sansoti et al. (2010) by two individuals, Matt Austin and Dr. Joan Riedle, working in tandem.

Table 1: Barrier Identification

Barrier Themes	# of Responses	# of Responders	Example Responses
1. Systems Characteristics	11	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff buy-in ➤ Increased teacher workload ➤ Staff doubtful of outcomes ➤ Difficulty reaching consensus ➤ Parental Involvement ➤ Lack of funding
2. Systems Structures	17	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Scheduling ➤ Staff/Student Ratio ➤ Enrichment Opportunities ➤ To many students not needing interventions
3. Evidence-based Practices	6	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of decent quantitative data ➤ Lack of intervention resources
4. Professional Development	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of trained interventionists ➤ Staff training opportunities

The data gathered on barrier identification through this survey supported my hypothesis that the highest number of responses and responders were found to be in *Theme 2: Systems Structures* as defined by Sansoti et al. (2010). Additionally, it should be noted that responses such as parental involvement and lack of funding were placed into *Theme 1: Systems Characteristics* because both refer to unintentional features that can facilitate or impede the RTI

process. Furthermore, responses such as enrichment opportunities and what to do with students not needing interventions were placed into *Theme 2: Systems Structures* because both are considered procedures and practices that are intentionally created, as described through the definition of the theme.

Table 2: Solutions to Barriers Identification

Barrier Themes	# of Responses	# of Responders
1. Systems Characteristics	0	0
2. Systems Structures	5	4
3. Evidence-based Practices	2	2
4. Professional Development	1	1
5. No Solution Identified	-----	7

Similar to the results found in *Table 1: Barrier Identification*, the theme in which many school districts are trying to discover solutions to first is *Theme 2: Systems Structures*. Thus, supporting the second part of my hypothesis that potential solutions identified by school districts would be categorized into the systems structures theme. It should be noted that the category with the second highest number of barriers identified was no response for potential solutions. Meanwhile, seven of the 11 school districts responded that no solutions to their school districts' barriers have been identified up to this point.

Table 3: Scheduling of RTI

Time of Day	Number of Responses
Beginning of Day	2
Middle of Day	0
End of Day	7
No Time Scheduled	2

It was found that the majority of the school districts have a scheduled RTI block of time at the end of the day. One district noted that it started with its time at the beginning of the day and quickly moved the time to the end of the day due to student attendance during the spring sporting season.

Table 4: District Definitions of RTI

1. Time provided during homeroom to work with struggling students.
2. Students in grades 7-12 are divided into groups and given a 23-minute period to complete schoolwork or get help from a teacher.
3. System of collaboration to assess students and develop plans when necessary to help them overcome learning barriers.
4. Additional help from teachers when needed.
5. Providing students with the instruction they need, including re-teaching in small group or individual settings.
6. An opportunity for students that need additional academic support and enrichment for students that may not need as much support.
7. "Lab" classes used to provide supplemental skill interventions for students whose data suggest a need for remediation.
8. Systematic response to student learning needs.
9. RTI-WIN--What I need. Try to help all students grow academically and challenge themselves.
10. Meeting the instructional needs of students.
11. Providing support for students that needs are not being met by the universal curriculum. In the areas of Reading and Math.

The survey identifies that there are many different definitions within the context of RTI that school districts use. From these responses there are two definitions, #3 and #11, that most closely correlate to the definition provided by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2015). This definition states that RTI is a multi-tier approach that identifies and supports students whose needs are not adequately met within the classroom setting. The RTI process begins with high quality instruction and universal screening of all students within the general classroom setting.

Table 5: District RTI Focus

Area	# of Responses
1. Reading	2
2. Writing	0
3. Math	0
4. Math/Reading	1
5. Reducing Failing Grades/Increasing ACT Scores	1
6. No Current Focus	7

Roberts et al. (2013) suggested that by implementing RTI, schools could shrink learning gaps and target specific skills that students need in order to be successful beyond the classroom. This research indicates that RTI should have a true focus, providing direction for staff members and students. The survey states that seven out of the 11 districts have no focus for their RTI process which creates a barrier in itself.

Table 6: Student Assessment/Progress Monitoring Tools

Type of Assessment/Progress Monitoring Tool	# of Responses
1. MAPS/STAR Assessment	5
2. Grades	3
3. Online Resources	1
4. ACT/Aspire	1
5. Teacher Observations	3

Samuels (2009) indicates that one of the key factors of successfully implementing the RTI process is using a system that monitors the progress of student learning during the use of

interventions. The data above shows that schools are using a wide variety of tools to monitor progress, with the highest number of schools using MAPS/STAR assessment data.

Table 7: RTI Personnel

RTI Coordinator		District RTI Team	
Principal Serves as Coordinator	5	District has team.	5
Other:	2	District does not have a team.	6
No Coordinator	4		

A majority of the districts pointed out that there is someone, most often the principal, specifically assigned as the RTI Coordinator. However, according to this report there is a lack of support for this individual, with many districts not having a RTI team to take care of the majority of tasks needed to be completed for successful implementation to occur.

Table 8: District Provided Professional Development Opportunities

Offered Professional Development Opportunities	# of Responses
1. Training at CESA/Outside of the District PD	4
2. Other School Visits	2
3. In-service Days/Staff PD	2
4. PLC Groups	1
5. No Training Offered	3

In response to solve potential barriers found within *Theme 1: Systems Characteristics* and *Theme 4: Professional Development*, eight of the 11 school districts have offered some type (many multiple types) of professional development for staff members to become more familiar with the processes of RTI.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Sansoti et al. (2010) identified four major themes: systems characteristics, systems structures, evidence-based practices, and professional development needs in which school districts run into issues while implementing a RTI system. The objective of this study was to address the boundaries prohibiting school districts in southwest Wisconsin from successful full scale implementation of the RTI system and what steps have been taken to help solve these issues. To assess the barriers of school districts responses were categorized into the four different themes identified above by two individuals, Matt Austin and Dr. Joan Riedle, working in tandem.

The hypothesis of the study was that the greatest number of barriers and potential solutions identified by school districts would be categorized into *Theme 2: Systems Structures*. *Table 1: Barrier Identification* shows that data from the study fully supported the hypothesis, in that the majority of responses and individual responders were considered to fit the description of this theme. According to Sansoti et al. (2010) *systems structures* refer to those procedures and practices that are *intentionally* created and maintained, which may either *facilitate or impede* the implementation of educational innovations such as RTI. The most common examples within this classification theme that school districts encountered were: scheduling issues, staff to student ratios, what to do with students who do not need interventions, and enrichment opportunities. Scheduling issues were the most often recorded issue because there is a limited amount of time within the school day for all of the processes and practices that RTI entails. Furthermore, time issues are prevalent because many students are very active in co-curricular activities, further limiting the time needed for interventions to occur. The second most common barrier was staff to student ratio for interventions. Accordingly, the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2015) suggests that using small group instruction as the best practice in order to see the greatest

gains in student achievement. The reason behind this is not to limit the number of students that staff can help in RTI but to provide students with the best opportunity to learn in a more individualized setting. The last two barriers directly fall into this category because these are procedures and practices that need to be addressed for the system to function properly.

Similar to the results found in *Table 1: Barrier Identification*, *Table 2: Solutions to Barriers Identification* shows that districts have paid the greatest amount of attention to discovering solutions to the barriers that exists within *Theme 2: Systems Structures*. By examining the definition of the *systems structures theme*, it is easy to see why districts tackle these issues. The segment of *intentionally created and maintained* means that the district preserves the rights to modify the system as it sees fit to meet the needs of the students. Along this line, the easiest modification that schools can do is change the schedule around to create more opportunities within the school day. One school stated, “We trimmed a few minutes off of each period to provide instruction time within the school day.” While another district stated, “We moved the time period to the end of the day.” Another intentional change that districts can make is discovering ways to lower the staff to student ratio. One way to achieve this is to release upper classmen who are in good standing; however, if these students are required to see a teacher there needs to be a consequence if they fail to do so. Unfortunately, many school districts have failed to identify solutions that fix the barriers their school district has incurred. Many of these limitations to discovering solutions could be due to the lack of resources, such as programs for interventions or trained staff.

With the understanding that scheduling was going to be one of the factors that schools would identify, *Table 3: Scheduling of RTI* directly recorded the time frame in which school districts slotted RTI. The majority of school districts identified that their RTI time was at the end of the day. The main reason for this period is most likely due to student attendance, especially

during the spring sporting season. Spring sports are a major factor in scheduling because of the time of day in which games are played. Baseball and softball games generally start at 4:30 p.m. 5:00 p.m., respectively, because it gets dark so early during the springtime. Track meets start earlier in the day because of the amount of time required for all the events to occur. Meanwhile, golf matches have to be held during the day because of the need to complete the match before dark. While it may seem that this would only take a small number of students away from the process and for only a select number of days, there is an increase desire to be involved in more events and students who are involved in these events not only miss RTI time but also miss class time.

According to *Table 1: Barrier Identification*, the second most common type of barrier was found in *Theme 1: Systems Characteristics*. Johnson et al. (2010) identified the need for a strong system of support. Johnson et al. (2010) found that in order to be successful school districts needed to focus on four areas: 1) professional development of staff, 2) administrators who have a direction and are focused on the end goal, 3) a shared vision for the district, and 4) a shift in the school culture. The highest number of responses within the *systems characteristics theme* was identified to be staff buy-in. In my professional opinion, schools have a lack of buy-in due to several factors such as a lack of understanding of what RTI is, a lack of direction, and a lack of professional development within the area of RTI. Results in the next several tables would agree with this opinion.

To begin the process of understanding why these three factors limit the success of RTI implementation, we examined *Table 4: District Definitions of RTI*. From this table we can gather that there is no consistent definition but rather each response hits on key factors of what RTI is. Therefore, this recognizes a general lack of understanding of what RTI is and how the process should be approached in school districts within Southwest Wisconsin. The top two

responses contained key words, such as assesses students, universal curriculum, and provides support, used in the definition supported by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (2015). Using all the responses, we could collectively define RTI as “A system which identifies student academic needs in classes through the use of common formative assessments in which time is provided for those students in need of additional support through interventions.” One suggestion that I would give to schools is that they define RTI within their district, in order for staff to understand what the goals and expectations of RTI are.

Roberts et al. (2013) suggested that by implementing RTI schools could shrink learning gaps and target specific skills that students need in order to be successful beyond the classroom. In other words, schools should develop a focus to provide direction for the staff and administration. The next three tables studied the factors that directly drive the RTI process and provide direction. *Table 5: District RTI Focus* shows that the majority of the schools lack an area in which they are focused on. The main reason behind this is mostly likely due to the vast majority of factors that contribute to how a school district is assessed by that state. This lack of direction from administration or the Dept. of Public Instruction is one of the key reasons staff members will not buy-in to the process of RTI. Another factor that contributes to staff not buying-in at the secondary level is the lack of tools needed for success, similar to Samuels (2009). One of the most important factors contributing to the successful implementation of RTI is assessment and progress monitoring. These educational tools are used as key identifiers to place students into interventions, check for learning, ensure fidelity of the programs, and to pull students out of interventions. *Table 6: Student Assessment/Progress Monitoring Tools* suggests there is no magic tool that allows schools to identify all students in all areas. The majority of schools use a combination of tools, with many using MAPS/STAR assessment tools. These assessments only include the areas of math and reading, limiting the number of skills that truly

need to be assessed. The final table that identifies issues with staff buy-in and in greater detail issues with *Theme 2: Systems Structures* is *Table 7: RTI Personnel*. Many schools indicated that they have somebody assigned as the RTI Coordinator but in turn a majority of the districts do not have a RTI team. When examining the overlying issues found within the *systems structures and systems characteristics themes*, we notice that without a true direction we cannot have the proper *intentional* procedures and practices in place for the successful implementation of RTI. The lack of support provided for individuals who serve as the RTI Coordinator is detrimental because many of these individuals wear other hats within their roles. Using a team to develop and oversee these procedures and practices would provide more ownership from staff, increase the number of ideas for potential solutions, and decrease the workload of staff.

The last table found in the Results Section identifies the different types of professional development staff members have had opportunities for from their districts. *Table 8: District Provided Professional Development Opportunities* shows that the majority of the school districts offer some type of professional development, with multiple schools offering more than one type. It is fantastic that districts are offering these opportunities, but as we continue along the path of implementation of RTI, it is imperative that staff members become more involved in learning about RTI, as well as other initiatives, because they play the most crucial roles within students' lives and their academic achievement.

In conclusion, the majority of school districts are finding issues within the *themes of systems structures and systems characteristics*. Because of the lack of understanding and direction within the RTI process, it is vital to identify key factors that may lead to more successful implementation practices. The results of this study suggest that schools should work with following checklist in order to be successful in implementing RTI:

1. Define Response to Intervention within the school district.

2. Set up expectations and goals for RTI, both for students and staff members.
3. Develop a focus for RTI, such as increasing reading scores.
4. Provide guidance for teachers through professional development opportunities.
5. Collect data and readjust protocols and procedures as needed.

CHAPTER VI: REFERENCES

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APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
PLATTEVILLE
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

8/26/2015

Matthew Austin
Sponsor: Dr. Joan E. Riedle
Department of Masters of Science - Education
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

RE: IRB Protocol #2015-16-01

Project Title: Barriers that School Districts Encounter During the
Implementation of RTI

Approval Date: 8/26/2015
Expiration Date: 8/25/2016

Your project has been approved by the University of Wisconsin-Platteville IRB via an Expedited Review. This approval is subject to the following conditions, otherwise approval may be suspended:

1. No participants may be involved in the study prior to the IRB approval date listed above or after the expiration date.
2. All unanticipated or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB.
3. All modifications to procedures, participant selection, and instruments used (surveys, consent forms, etc) must be reported to the IRB chair prior to their use.
4. If the project will continue beyond the expiration date, then the researcher must file for a continuation with the IRB at least 14 days prior to the expiration date. If the IRB approval for this project expires before approval for continuation is given, then a new protocol must be filled out and submitted. Federal guidelines allow for no exceptions to this rule. Any data collected after the expiration date cannot be used in the study.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB chair at the address below. Include your protocol # on all correspondence.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barb Barnett
Institutional Review Board Chair
Professor, Mathematics Department
Gardner 451
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
(608) 342-1942
barnetb@uwplatt.edu

APPENDIX B: PROJECT MATERIALS

Survey

1. What is the working definition of RTI in your district at the secondary level?
2. What does the structure of RTI look like at the secondary level within your district?
3. Do you have a set time during the district school day for RTI at the secondary level?
 - a. If yes, when is that time and why is RTI at the time indicated?
4. What barriers, limitations, or potential shortcomings did the district initially encounter when RTI was first implemented in your district at the secondary level? (Please list as many as you can, at least 4.)
5. Has your district found solutions to any of those initial problems?
 - a. If yes, please identify which barrier and explain the steps that your district has taken.
6. Did those solutions (5) result in any new barriers? (Please list as many as you can, at least 2.)
7. Does your district have a specific RTI focus at the secondary level? (Example: Increasing reading scores among sophomores.)
8. How does your district assign students to different interventions?
9. What does your school district use to assess or monitor student progress and collect data at the secondary level?
10. Does your district have a RTI coordinator? Or, who is the person who oversees the RTI system?
11. Does your school district have an RTI team?
 - a. If yes, how many people serve on the team and what are their discipline areas?
12. What has your district done, in the last 3 years, to train teachers or staff members involved in the RTI process?
13. How does your school district assign staff to RTI interventions and what interventions are offered to students? (Example: Content specific interventions that the teacher is responsible for providing.)
14. A large part of the RTI process is enrichment opportunities; how has your district included the implementation of enrichment interventions?
15. Has the district seen an increase in student academic achievement as a result of RTI implementation?
 - a. If yes, in what ways is the district identifying these increases? (Examples: Increased grades or increased classroom/co-curricular participation.)
16. Please identify your primary role within your school district:
 - a. ___ Superintendent
 - b. ___ Principal
 - c. ___ Other Administrator
 - d. ___ Teacher

e. ____ Other staff member

17. Demographic Question - Please select which of the following applies:

a. ____ Female

b. ____ Male

18. Demographic Question - Please select which of the following applies:

a. ____ Age 21 – 30

b. ____ Age 31 – 40

c. ____ Age 41 – 50

d. ____ Age 51+

District Consent Form for Data
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – PLATTEVILLE

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE MATERIALS USED IN THIS PROJECT. There is no need to identify yourself or the district for which you work.

1. Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine what barriers exist with the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) and the steps schools have used to address these limitations.

2. Procedure: If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out an 18 question short answer response survey. The questions will focus on RTI and the barriers that exist within your district.

Please complete the survey via Google Forms to the best of your ability. After you have completed the survey, please turn it in by clicking on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

3. Time Required: Participation is expected to take approximately 15 minutes.

4. Risks: There will be no immediate risks to participants other than the time and effort required to participate in the study. No long term risks are foreseen. No identifying information will be collected by Google Forms.

Benefits: The knowledge gained from this study could potentially contribute to the development of better RTI procedures to prevent barriers and develop new steps of action.

5. Your rights as a participant: Your participation is completely voluntary. If you decline to participate, you may do so without penalty or repercussions. The information gathered will be recorded in an anonymous form. Data or summarized results will not be released in any way that could identify you.

By submitting the survey you are giving consent to use the data as collected; no district information shall be collected.

At the end of the study, you have the right to a complete explanation (“debriefing”) of the study. If you have questions afterward, please contact:

Matthew Austin, Researcher and Teacher at Mineral Point Schools
Email: matt.austin@mp.k12.wi.us
Dr. Joan Riedle, Faculty Sponsor
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
(608) 342-1763

At the end of the semester, you may request a summary of the results by contacting the above researcher or faculty sponsor.

7. If you have any questions about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Barb Barnet, Chair, UW-Platteville IRB
(608) 342-1942
barnetb@uwplatt.edu

Again, PLEASE DO NOT IDENTIFY YOURSELF OR YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT ANYWHERE ON THE PROJECT MATERIALS.

Data Collection Forms
Barrier Identification

Classified by the themes set by Sansosti, Telzrow, Noltemeyer (2010)

Theme 1: Systems Characteristics – Refers to unintentional features of a district or school, which may either facilitate or impede an educational innovation such as RTI. Examples include: teacher participation, student grade level or student behaviors, and leadership of program from administration.

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Theme 2: Systems Structures – Refers to those procedures and practices that are intentionally created and maintained, which may either facilitate or impede the implementation of educational innovations such as RTI. Examples include: student progress monitoring procedures, forming a RTI team, and scheduling issues.

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Theme 3: Evidence-based Practices – Refers to proven programs or techniques that address key components of RTI as identified in the literature. Examples include: researched-based intervention techniques or programs like Read 180 or Kahn Academy.

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Theme 4: Professional Development – Refers to topics and methods for training various educator groups and other stakeholders about components of RTI. Examples include: trainings provided to staff members, may include video-based or on-site training or training on intervention techniques.

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Steps Districts Have Taken to Solve RTI Barriers

Classified by the themes set by Sansosti, Telzrow, Noltemeyer (2010)

Theme 1: Systems Characteristics – Refers to unintentional features of a district or school, which may either facilitate or impede an educational innovation such as RTI. Examples include: teacher participation, student grade level or student behaviors, and leadership of program from administration.

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Theme 2: Systems Structures – Refers to those procedures and practices that are intentionally created and maintained, which may either facilitate or impede the implementation of educational innovations such as RTI. Examples include: student progress monitoring procedures, forming a RTI team, and scheduling issues.

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Theme 3: Evidence-based Practices – Refers to proven programs or techniques that address key components of RTI as identified in the literature. Examples include: research-based intervention techniques or programs like Read 180 or Kahn Academy.

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Theme 4: Professional Development – Refers to topics and methods for training various educator groups and other stakeholders about components of RTI. Examples include: trainings provided to staff members, may include video-based or on-site training or training on intervention techniques.

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District RTI Focus Tally

<u>Math</u>	<u>Writing</u>	<u>Both: Math/Reading</u>
<u>Reading</u>		<u>Other:</u>

Scheduled Time for RTI

<u>Beginning of Day</u>	<u>Middle of Day</u>	<u>End of Day</u>	<u>None</u>

Staff Training Done by District

List of trainings that district has provided:

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RTI Personal

<u>District has a RTI coordinator:</u>	<u>District has a RTI team:</u>

Working Definitions of RTI

District definitions of what RTI is:

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Student Progress Monitoring Procedures

Student progress monitoring tool:

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Contact Email to Districts

Dear Participant:

My name is Matt Austin and I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Joan Riedle, Professor of Psychology, and I am conducting a survey to research Response to Intervention (RTI) at the secondary level. This project will fulfill the action-research component of my Masters in Educational Administration.

RTI is an important part of the school day and has shown to be beneficial to student academic achievement and participation. My study is an attempt to identify the major barriers secondary school districts have encountered while implementing RTI. It will also identify potential solutions, different RTI structures, student progress monitoring techniques, and the focus of RTI within school districts located in southwest Wisconsin.

Your district's participation in this study is entirely voluntary and no district identifying information will be collected. I ask that either an administrator or staff member complete the survey. The survey will be conducted via Google Forms and shall be set up so that data are collected anonymously. The consent form is attached and it should be noted that by submitting the survey you are giving consent to use the data.

If you choose to participate, please **click on the link below to answer the questions.** Please also forward the survey to one teacher. The survey is 18 questions long and should only take 15 minutes to complete. After completion please click the submit button at the end of the survey.

Your response is very important to the success of this study. If you would like a copy of the results, please contact me and I would be glad to forward them to you.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Matt Austin