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Special Education Teachers’ Views on Scaffolding Learners with Dyslexia in English Teaching

Specialpedagogers syn på stödfunktioner för elever med dyslexi i ämnet engelska i svensk skola

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Preface

The following Degree Project has been co-authored; all of the work that has contributed to its completion has been done with us both present.

- Deciding the research questions
- Conducting and analysing the research
- Structuring and writing the paper
- Active engagement throughout the length of the project

To reiterate the above: Everything has been done with both authors present. No work has been done independently.

Verified on the ……

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Abstract

Dyslexia is one of the more common disabilities in Sweden; between 5-10 per cent of the population can be considered having dyslexia. The difficulties they face in their education stems from a disability to decode written language. English poses a problem, as the building blocks in terms of orthography and phonology are seldom compatible. This paper have, using qualitative interviews with four (4) special education teachers, identified ways in which these informants support learners with dyslexia in English. The findings indicate that the advice and methods the informants use are not specific to the subject of English. Instead the informants advocate organizational measures such as close cooperation with colleagues and also compensatory learning aids (such as audio versions of books, movies and pictures). The findings have been analysed viewed through the theoretical perspectives: Sociocultural Perspective, Systems Theory and Orthographical Depth. As most of the advice given by the informants where of a general nature – the findings might indicate that there is a gap somewhere in the education of teachers in Sweden regarding how to specifically support learners with dyslexia in the English subject.

Key words: Dyslexia, English Education in Swedish Elementary School, Special Education Teachers, Reading and Writing Disabilities,
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1. Introduction

Our interest in dyslexia and language learning developed when we faced learners with diagnosed dyslexia at our practice schools (VFU), as well as when working as substitute teachers. Our experience is that the schools that we have worked at have knowledge about the needs and requirements of learners with dyslexia when dealing with subjects that are taught through the first language (Swedish). However, we have not seen how schools approach learners with dyslexia within the subject of English. This piqued our curiosity, and since the cooperation between special education teachers and regular teachers is an important factor in order to be able to aid learners with dyslexia properly, we decided to direct our focus onto special educations teachers. This study was made using qualitative interviews of special education teachers and their views on, knowledge and recommendations about dyslexia in English teaching.

Lundgren (2003) maintains that in society today we are exposed to more information than before that affects our everyday life. This flux of information that derives from the Internet, TV and other medias affects us whether we like it or not. Information comes from various institutions, political parties, companies (commercials) and individuals who, now more than ever, can present their unedited agenda through a variety of channels (2003, p.8). According to the Swedish Curriculum for the Compulsory School, the ability to sift through this flow of information is pointed out as an important ability to convey to learners:

Pupils should be able to keep their bearings in a complex reality, where there is a vast flow of information and where the rate of change is rapid. This is the reason that studying skills and methods of acquiring and using new knowledge are important. It is also necessary that pupils develop their ability to critically examine facts and relationships, and appreciate the consequences of different alternatives.

(Skolverket 2011, p. 11)

Having dyslexia or having difficulties with reading and writing affects one's ability to acquire and understand a text. If one cannot understand a text it is possible that the individual is unsuccessful with the above stated ability to sift through information, and sorting out commercial material from fact-based information.
There is no invisible supreme being that censors online opinions and content. Therefore, society and all its extremes are lifted into school and home environments. Not everything is useable, serious or reliable.

(Lundgren 2003, p. 8, our translation)

Much of the information available through different channels is in English. To the reason is that English is a de-nationalized, or international language (McKay 2009, p. 83). Having dyslexia can affect one's ability to properly acquire the English language. In terms of equality in Swedish schools, all individuals should be given the same opportunities to maximise their potential and “develop as far as possible” (SL 1 Ch. 4 § second paragraph). This includes learning English, which is required in order to, for example, be able to sieve through information (as mentioned above).

The factory worker who does not learn to programme or work the new machine is fired, and an executive position does no longer include having a secretary.

(Lundgren 2003, p. 7, our translation)

The above quote can be said to point out the new challenges that face the population in Sweden; it sets the scene of the rapid computerization of our society. Stadler talks about the “letter-packed culture” (our translation) in which we live in today and how people with dyslexia are more likely to feel or become excluded from this society when it comes to both professional (e.g. work or studies) and personal development due to the higher demands on reading and writing abilities (1994, p. 119-120). Stadler mentions the implications for people with dyslexia resulting from the rapid computerization of labour and concludes that a lot of jobs that previously could be considered “manual labour” or labour that required the absolute basic need for reading and writing, is decreasing and that this excludes people who have difficulties with more advanced reading or writing from getting a job (1994, p.120; see also Gillberg and Ödman 1994, p. 81).

Dyslexia can be considered one of the more common disabilities in Sweden; roughly it can be said that between 5 to 10 per cent of the population has dyslexia; however, this estimate is problematic as it differs depending on what level of dyslexia one is referring to, and, from what scientific field the definition originates from (Stadler 1994, p. 17; Kere and Finer 2008,
p. 31). Viewing these percentages, we can conclude that there are learners within every classroom who have dyslexia, whether it is diagnosed or not; therefore, knowledge of dyslexia is a “must have” for educators. However, Jacobsson and Nordmann’s (2008) interdisciplinary research study made in Sweden showed that individuals with dyslexia might not be receiving the aid they necessarily need. The study was based on 103 children over a period of ten years in the effort to develop and evaluate practical methods, instruments and tools for effective diagnosis and treatment of reading disability; primarily the focus was on dyslexia. The results of the study showed that the children diagnosed with dyslexia had significantly lower grades throughout their school-period compared to the control group; this mainly in the subjects Swedish, mathematics and English. Furthermore, the children themselves felt that the subject in which they had the greatest difficulties was English. The researchers connected these difficulties to a shortfall in appropriate reading and writing strategies. This shortfall itself existed because they had not been properly educated in these strategies during their time in school, and if they had, it had not been sufficient (Jacobson and Nordman 2008).

Limited reading speed places increasing demands on good learning strategies in order to acquire knowledge. The survey shows, however, that none of the learners in the weak readers group had any thought strategy for how to read the texts and teaching materials effectively. Learning strategies is apparently something that neither primary nor secondary school is teaching.

(Jacobson and Nordman 2008, p. 11)

Stadler (1994) maintains that one important way to aid learners with dyslexia to learn a new language, is a close cooperation between teachers and special education teachers (1994, p. 98). According to Specialpedagogiska Skolmyndigheten, special education teachers have a responsibility for individually educating as well as socializing learners in need of extra help due to various reasons (2012). This implies support outside of the ordinary classroom environment and also aiding teachers in how they best can cater to the needs of learners that due to various reasons need help. Since this cooperation can be of great importance, it will, along with other means of aiding learners, be the basis of our interview study.
2. Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to find out how special education teachers support learners with dyslexia when it comes to teaching the subject of English. What methods do they use in particular, and what can we as teachers learn from their views and strategies?

Research questions

- How do special education teachers support learners with dyslexia when it comes to teaching the subject English?
- What methods and practices are used specifically in teaching the English subject?
3. Literature review

This chapter aims at giving the reader an insight into reading and writing disabilities and what that encompasses. Secondly, the main focus of this chapter is to explain the term dyslexia. This knowledge is important in order to understand how and why special education teachers aid and support individuals with dyslexia. Dyslexia is a vast and constantly changing field of research with several definitions and views on causes and symptoms (Stadler 1994, p. 17; Kere and Finer 2008, p. 31). Therefore, producing a complete review of the field of dyslexia is difficult. Thus, research and theories concerning medicinal and psychological factors are not incorporated in this review.

We have chosen to view our findings in light of three theories. One of them, the Sociocultural Perspective has been used to analyse the support given to the learners with dyslexia in light of the related terms Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding. The second theory (or perspective): The System Theory has been used to provide a background when comparing the different working-environments in terms of how the schools provide holistic support and collegial cooperation. Finally, the Theory of Orthographical Depth has been used to describe the English language in terms of complexity, structure and how the building blocks and sounds differ from other languages such as Swedish.

3.1 Reading- and Writing Disabilities

Lundberg (2016) gives a definition of reading- and writing disabilities in Nationalencyklopedin where he asserts that it is the general term regarding people who have difficulties with reading and/or writing, regardless of the underlying reason. This means that reading and writing disabilities envelop several very different issues that can contribute to learning difficulties with regards to reading and writing. Some of these issues are: sight disabilities, deafness, ADHD and others that can more or less contribute to an individual having reading- and writing disabilities (Skolverket 2016). According to the Swedish Dyslexia Association, dyslexia is often used in the same context as the more general term of reading and writing disabilities. However, dyslexia is a specific subgroup within reading and writing disabilities, and therefore it is problematic to refer to it within the general term (Svenska Dyslexiföreningen 2013a).
3.2 Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a disability that can be considered fairly common in Sweden; it can roughly be said that 5 to 10 per cent of the population has dyslexia. However, this estimate depends on various factors such as how one determines the implications of dyslexia on an individual's life; or, on what field of research the data has been gathered from (Gillberg and Ödman 1994; Stadler 1994, p.17; Kere and Finer 2008, p. 31). To give an idea of how difficult it is for researchers from different fields to find a common description of dyslexia Kere et al. (2008) relates this clash of research fields to the tale of the three blind men who were to describe an elephant simply from touching it:

One of the men feels the big flat ear and tells the others about the ear. Another man describes the leg of the elephant from the touch and the third man examines the tusks of the elephant and describes the animal in accordance with what he can feel.

(Kere et al. 2008, p. 31, our translation)

Kere et al. conclude that all of these descriptions of the elephant can be valid even though they do not comply with each other. No one sees the whole elephant, which is similar to the difficulties of describing dyslexia in all its complexity (2008, p. 31). Skolverket (2016) explains dyslexia as when a hereditary disability does not affect cognitive capability or other abilities, but still affects the ability to read and write. This means that dyslexia have no relation to a person's intelligence or talent. The most predominant trait of individuals with dyslexia is the difficulties to read isolated words and to spell correctly (2016). The Swedish Dyslexia Association (2013a) further concludes that there is a biological reason behind the condition and that it generally has to do with in what way the brain stores and interprets phonemes and sound sequences that can lead to difficulties with reading and writing (2013a).

3.2.1 Aspects of Dyslexia

Two aspects of dyslexia can be found prominent in research on dyslexia: phonological and orthographic. According to Kere et al, phonological difficulties is the broader term used when talking about learners who have difficulties with separating phonologically related letters such as the Swedish letters b-p, d-t, k-g, that to some extent are pronounced similarly (2008, p. 31).
According to Gillberg and Ödman (1994), difficulties with separating or understanding the different letters are tiresome for the learners, and having this difficulty greatly affects the understanding of the text as a whole as much of the reader’s energy is used for decoding (Gillberg et al. 1994, p. 71). Kere et al. conclude that these learners also have difficulties when it comes to imitating speech and that it is usually manifested in the early years of school (2008, p. 31).

An important component to understanding the phonological aspects of dyslexia is related to working memory. Baddeley (2012) concludes that working memory is responsible for the processing and structuring of new words and sounds, which in turn enables one to learn them. This explanation of memory is based on Baddeley’s multicomponent theory, which is a theoretical model of working memory composed of several systems that all act to attain relevant information and suppress irrelevant information. One of these systems, and the one that is in focus with regard to language learning, is the phonological loop. The loop can be explained as a specialized cognitive system for the retention of verbal material over brief periods of time. Phonological information is gathered and stored after relevancy. Then a rehearsal process maintains the relevant decaying images, in other words, dated information, in the storing component in the phonological loop, which enables an individual to learn the information (Baddeley, 2012). Individuals with dyslexia have, as mentioned earlier, difficulties with the phonological processing system. According to Lundberg (2002), the phonological weakness that individuals with dyslexia suffer from makes it difficult for them via the phonological loop to attain relevant information and suppress irrelevant information. In other words: they do not see the relationship between letters and the correct sound; and therefore makes dyslexia a working-memory related disorder (2002, p. 174).

As previously mentioned about 5-10 per cent of the Swedish population have dyslexia. Stadler gives an international perspective to the frequency of dyslexia and maintains that it generally can be claimed that higher frequencies of dyslexia can be found in English-speaking countries. Stadler draws upon research made by Gjessing (1977, in Stadler 1994, p. 17), who maintains that in English-speaking countries the number of people with dyslexia is between 8-10 per cent, to be compared to German-speaking countries where the number is around 3-5 per cent. Stadler asserts that the more onomatopoetic the language is, the easier it is to acquire reading ability and that the consistency between how a sound is sounded and how it is spelled can give indications on how difficult it is to read in that language. This explanation is not,
according to Stadler, an undisputed fact as socio-cultural issues also have great effect on ability to acquire a language (1994, p. 17). Lundberg also maintains that it is difficult to compare languages; one of the basic problems with doing so is related to the fact that linguistic variation in most cases cannot be separated from cultural-historical, socioeconomic and educational factors that differ in- and between countries. “[...] These factors seem to contain as much explanatory power as the linguistic ones” (Lundberg 2002, p. 177).

3.3 The Sociocultural Perspective on Learning

The sociocultural perspective, developed by philosopher Lev Vygotsky, is built upon the notion that individuals learn through social context and interacting with others. Interaction with other individuals gives the individual an input of information that the individual in turn contextualizes and learns. The idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a way of describing this type of learning. The ZPD can be described as the zone between what the learner already knows (Zone 1) and what the learner can learn (Zone 2) with the help of others. Or:

[The ZPD] is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

(Vygotsky 1978, p. 86)

Cheyne and Tarulli maintain, in their chapter on Vygotsky and the ZPD in Daniels (2005), that the competent other is not on its own a guarantee for creating the ZPD or, “to promote individual task mastery”(2005, p.135). In an attempt to identify the most important factors that lie within the successful ZPD setting the metaphor scaffolding has emerged (Daniels, 2005). Gibbons (2009) argues that scaffolding can be described as the process in which the competent peer (or tutor) enables the child to solve a problem or complete a task, which would be beyond his or her unassisted efforts. The successful scaffolding of instruction requires that the teacher perform a number of functions, among which are the selection, organization and presentation of suitable tasks (2009, p. 29). Furthermore, these tasks must also:
[...], allow for: the teaching of emerging skills; on going evaluation of the task’s suitability to it’s purpose; the generation and maintenance of the learner’s interest in the tasks; use of modelling, questioning and explanation to clarify the goals of the task: and the presentation of approximations and appropriate approaches to the task.

(Cheyne et al., in Daniels 2005, pp. 135-136)

This paper has aimed at viewing the findings in the light of this theory because of the relevance of the support or scaffolding teachers give to learners with dyslexia when teaching English.

3.4 Systems Theory

Systems theory, also know as the *Common System Theory* (Öquist 2003, p.18) was developed by von Bertalanffy with the fundamental goal of discovering patterns and decode principles that can be determined, and applied to, all types of systems in all fields of research. Öquist describes systems theory as having a holistic approach that is characterized by looking at the different parts of or in an organization that create the whole structure of it. (2008, p. 14). Furthermore, Öquist (2003) maintains that it is important to acknowledge that systems theory is a model designed to analyse structures rather than content; in short, everything is the sum of all its parts. For example a learner needs adequate teachers, learning materials and setting which are all parts of the school organization – all are required to facilitate best possible learning. While systems theory should be considered flexible, it is not immune to criticism that mainly stems from the difficulty to discuss certain terms within the framework of the systematic thinking. For example, an individual learner might succeed even though the parts of the whole are lacking or are dysfunctional.

However, Gjems (1997) argues that conflicts between people can be discussed within the framework of a system theoretical perspective, as long as the big picture is taken into account; only when people are seen in relation to others, an adequate understanding of a social system is formed (1997). Neither the behaviour nor the actions that a person exhibits can be understood as an isolated entity cut off from the rest of interaction between people. For
example, the individual that succeeded although the parts of the teaching organization are lacking must still be viewed in relation to its surroundings. The parts are not only on organizational level, they concern friends, family, geographic and more.

3.5 Orthographical depth

In order to be able to read and write a language one must be aware of the basic building blocks, the phonemes, in other words the orthographics. According to the definition by Allén on NE.SE (2016), orthography can best be described to represent the general rules on how to write and read a language; it includes rules of spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, word breaks, emphasis, and punctuation (2016). It is difficult to compare languages in terms of orthography; however, one theory – the *theory of orthographic depth* – has been the starting point in several studies such as Goswami (2000) and Landerl, Wimmer, and Frith (1997), and systems have been developed in the effort of trying to scale languages in terms of orthographical complexity. According to the theory of orthographic depth, as presented in table 1 from Seymour, Aro and Erskine (2003, p.146), English is considered a complex and deep language. This means that the English language has, according to Frost & Katz, a more complex correspondence between sound and spelling (1992, p. 86). As determined by Lundberg (2002), individuals with dyslexia often have difficulties with the acquisition of the orthographics within a language. This due to the problems they experience with their phonological processing system (2002, p. 175). This knowledge, that English is considered a deep orthographical language, together with the assertion that individuals with dyslexia have difficulties with a language’s orthographic structure sets the scene for the predicaments that learners with dyslexia faces when learning English.

![Table 1. Hypothetical classification of participating languages relative to the dimensions of syllabic complexity (simple, complex) and orthographic depth (shallow to deep)](Seymour et al., 2003, pp. 146)
3.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has described several difficulties that individuals with dyslexia face. This chapter have also argued that English is a complex language in terms of orthography (i.e. a deep language). Viewing the fact that the rate of dyslexia is higher in deep language countries, one could claim that studying that language can make up additional difficulties for people with dyslexia. The fact that these difficulties exist and that English is a mandatory subject in Swedish schools leads us on, via the method section, to our studies of special educations teacher’s views and how they help learners with these problems.
4. Methods

This section describes the way in which the research has been conducted and the underlying theory behind the choice of research methods. As the research has a qualitative approach, our own voices are predominant in this section to be able to describe our subjective views on the different steps of the field of research.

4.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

As our choice of study has been to interview special education teachers working closely with learners with dyslexia about their subjective views on strategies for doing so, the type of research we have been doing – in accordance with, for example, Hatch (2002) and Olsson and Sörensen (2011) – is qualitative research. As opposed to quantitative research, qualitative research allows for flexible research question(s); the results can be based on a small number of individuals (micro sample) and a large number of variables; the scientist can be subjective; “the results are in-depth and contain specific aspects such as: environmental, circumstances and points in time“ (2011, p. 18). Hatch (2002) further maintains that researchers within the field of qualitative research try to “understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it” (2002, p.7). He concludes that capturing the perspectives that “actors” use as a basis for their actions in specific social settings is the aim of the qualitative study (2002, p.7). In our study, the “actors” are the special education teachers; their actions can be viewed as their methods of working with learners with dyslexia. One other difference between quantitative and qualitative research, according to Hatch (2002), is the way in which the material is gathered. In quantitative research, the results are based upon data that comes from questionnaires, tests and other “measuring devices”, whereas qualitative research collects its data from transcriptions of interviews, observations and other sources that are always processed by the researcher. In quantitative research, the results are independent of who is conducting the tests as opposed to qualitative research where the researchers are considered as an “important data gathering instrument” (2002, p. 7).
4.2 The Qualitative Interview Study

This study consists of four formal interviews with special education teachers that work with English and learners with dyslexia. Hatch (2002), maintains that formal interviews are usually constructed so that the interviewer is in charge of leading the interview; there is a set time, and, what is said is recorded (2002, p. 94). One of the special education teachers did not work with English and dyslectics, as this was the job of a specialist teacher at that particular school. We decided not to exclude this informant as the special education teacher still had experience of working with English and dyslexia and also on occasion helped learners with English during regular English lessons. The interviews have taken place at different schools in a large city in the south of Sweden. The interviewees have been found through emailing principals at different schools or special education teachers – when their email addresses have been available. We contacted approximately 50 schools out of which about 13 answered our email. Out of these 13, four showed an interest in participating in our study. The initial sampling strategy has been to get hold of five special education teachers who work with learners with dyslexia and ESL. Hatch (2002) maintains that getting access to a setting, or context, is dependent on the researcher's ability to identify important people, or “gatekeepers”, who holds the keys to letting the researcher into the research setting (2002, p. 45). These so-called “gatekeepers” we found, in many of the cases, where principals who forwarded our email to the right people and possibly also affirmed to the potential informants that they could take time (one hour) from their ordinary schedule for our project.

4.2.1 Sample Considerations

Punch considers that whenever a study is conducted, three important points must be discussed about the sample of participants:

- How big will the sample be and why?
- How will it be chosen and why?
- What claims will be made for its representativeness?

(Punch 2010, p. 103)

First of all, considering the above points made by Punch, a sample of four participants can be considered rather small (micro). The small sample was decided considering the amount of
time at disposal for the project and also considering the low rate of responses on the initial dispatch. On the second point made by Punch (2010), considering the choice of sample, we chose to rule out teachers working with learners with dyslexia in order to be able to acquire more focused sample results (only including special education teachers). If we were to incorporate teachers views on dyslexia in their classroom the results might be difficult to analyse, or contaminated, and thus affect our initial research question and possible results. As for the third point, regarding the representativeness of the sample, Hatch (2002) maintains that it is hard to find an exact number of participants that signifies if a qualitative study is valid or not. Results based on a high number of samples is considered better than those of a low sample study if one is conducting a quantitative study. However, in qualitative research there is no such guaranteed cohesion between sample size and quality of the results. Instead, the context in which the results was found should be described in detail to be able to analyse the results according to the specific context, all of which have the aim of helping the readers make their own judgements on how applicable the study is to them (2002, p. 49).

Furthermore, Hatch acknowledges the importance of balancing a low number of participants with how deep the interview aims at being. One important aspect, considering how deep the interview is, is time (2002, p. 50). Our interviews have been approximately one hour long and the timeframe was decided mostly to avoid the risk of running out of time, and on considerations that asking for more than an hour might be discouraging – which could lead to less respondents accepting.

4.2.2 The Informants

Informant one has a background as primary school teacher and has also worked at high school level. She currently works at a primary to year six school and got her degree as special education teacher in 1998; she has worked at the same school since then. She took “a few points” in English at teacher training college and has lived in Hong Kong and USA for two years each. She wrote her degree project on the subject of dyslexia and has attended several lectures on the subject. She does not feel the need at the moment to learn more about dyslexia and if she wants to take courses on the subject she believes that the principal will not endorse it due to budget reasons.
Informant two is not a special education teacher; she is a middle school teacher who works as a resource teacher at a preschool to year 5 school. She has no formal education in English. She says she keeps up to date with research concerning dyslexia through articles and occasional lectures. However, she does not feel that she has the support from her principal to take courses in daytime due to budget reasons.

Informant three works at a year six to year nine school. She took her youth worker degree in 2001 and got her special education teacher degree in 2009. She has no formal English education, however, she is certified by Skolverket to teach English from year one (1) to year six (6). Informant: 3 does not currently feel the need to develop her skills in dyslexia further as other learner disadvantages such as neuropsychiatric difficulties are currently more pressing in her work. Moreover, compensatory aids such as apps have a higher priority at the moment. However, should informant 3 feel the need for further development she has the principal's full support.

Informant four is a preschool teacher and special education teacher who has no formal education in English. He works at a preschool to year six school. He has the support of his principal if he wants to buy new material or attend courses that may help him in his work.

Furthermore, we did not inform the participants that they were going be anonymized previous to the interviews because we were unsure if their names should be relevant to the results. In the process of writing this paper we decided, looking at the advice from Vetenskapsrådet (2011), not to use their names as the expected knowledge gained from them might not weigh heavier than the possible implications for them if a quote could be considered negative against the organization at which they work. Not informing the interviewees of their anonymization previous to the interview, may have affected the results as the informants might have felt obligated to answer in accordance with their professional role and thus some of the more critical analyses may have been left out. We would therefore advice researchers to give this information before doing the interview.
4.3 The Semi-Structured Interview

There are different types of interviews used in research; one way of describing them is by the degree of structure involved. For example Minichello et al. (1990, p. 89, in Punch 2010, p. 168), produced a continuum scaling the structure of interviews (shown below):

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<tr>
<th>Structured Interviews</th>
<th>Focused or semi-structured interviews</th>
<th>Unstructured interviews</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standardized interviews</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
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<td>Survey interviews</td>
<td>Survey interviews</td>
<td>Clinical interviews</td>
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<td>Clinical history making</td>
<td>Group interviews</td>
<td>Group interviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral or life history</td>
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</table>

(Minichello et al. 1990, p. 89, in Punch 2010, p. 168)

The structure of our interviews can be argued to be in line with “structured interviews” as the questions are to some extent standardized (all of our interview subjects will be asked the same questions). At the opposite end of the continuum (unstructured interviews), Punch (2010) frequents the term flexibility as an important variable. The idea being that if the in-depth interview is successful it can produce rich and valuable data as it has many of “the characteristics of a prolonged and intimate conversation” (2010, p. 172). The interviewer therefore, needs to be flexible and willing to go where the conversation is taking him or her. Although we have produced questions which all of our interviewees have been asked, we have remained open to the fact that these questions generate different follow-up questions and discussions depending on the person we have talked to. Because of this, we see our project to be in line with the characteristics of a semi-structured interview, that can be described as a mix between structured, and unstructured interviews.
We tried to approach the subjects or interviewees in a respectful way – recognizing their possible lack of time to help us with our research. The letter we sent out to the special educations teachers: Appendix #1, can be found in the appendices section. We decided to have a schedule containing themes on which we created sub-questions to aid us during the interviews (see Appendix #2). The open-endedness of these themes and questions makes the success of the interviews very dependant on our (the interviewer's’) ability to respond and produce follow-up questions. Punch further acknowledges the need for practice and training as: “[...] this sort of interviewing does not come naturally” (Punch 2010, p. 172). Viewing this, we have found that there are several potential problems to consider when conducting an interview study. One of which is that we may have missed out on important questions and that the way in which we conducted the interviews may have changed from the first interview to the last.

4.3.1 Recording

All the interviews were recorded using a computer program called Audacity (copyright: Audacity version 2.1.0.0); this to increase the accuracy of the transcript quotations by the informants and also to enable the interview to be conducted like a flowing conversation without the risk of missing out important data. However, according to Alvehus (2013), the presence of a recording device in a interview can be discouraging for the informant; leading to the informant not being as open and forthcoming in the sharing of information (2013, p. 85). This phenomenon was observed at the start in several of the interviews.

4.4 Available Data

According to Vetenskapsrådet (2011), gathered material should be archived along with the papers that are the results of research that is to an extent funded by the Swedish government. One of the reasons why is that the material should be available for scrutiny if it should be accused of dishonesty in research and also because the material might be of interest for further research (2011, p. 70). The recorded material can be obtained for scrutiny of our paper or if it can be considered relevant to other research as mentioned by Vetenskapsrådet. However, the parts of the interviews that are not quoted or directly referred to have not been transcripted – in accordance with the requirements of this task.
4.5 Ethical Considerations

The participants were informed whenever they were quoted in the paper in order for them to be able to confirm their words and consent to our way of presenting them. We chose to do this out of respect for the participants and to avoid possible misquotations. This information was given before starting each interview in the hopes of making the informants more comfortable with sharing information. The schools in which they work are not mentioned and we decided not to use the real names of the informants as we found it irrelevant. However, as previously mentioned, we were unsure previous to the interviews if their names should be included in the results section. Therefore we did not say to the informants that they were going to be anonymized previous to the interviews. Moreover, when looking at the guidelines on confidentiality from Vetenskapsrådet (2011) we decided not to use their names, as the expected knowledge gained from them might not weigh heavier than the possible implications for them if a quote could be considered negative against the organization at which they work.
5. Results

This section presents the quotes from the interviews and also the researchers’ interpretations of what has been talked about during the interviews. The section aims at presenting the informants’ views and knowledge of English and dyslexia; the different methods, computer applications and programs that the informants have talked about during the interviews and also the special education teachers views on applying the methods in their school settings. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in Swedish and the quotes have been translated into English by the researchers with the aim of presenting them as close to the Swedish quote as possible.

On a further note, when arriving at this section the researchers initially identified five themes of importance to the results- and the concluding discussion section. Within these five themes, three were identified as closely related and therefore they were merged together. As a result, the results section ended up with three themes in total. In order to assist the reader of this section the themes are presented in the following order:

- 5.1 English and Dyslexia (theme one)
- 5.2 Special Education Teachers and Organization (theme two)
- 5.3 Methods and Strategies on Supporting Learners with Dyslexia in the English Subject (theme three)

These themes in turn have their own sub-themes and the format is congruent with how the discussion section is presented (in the discussion section however, the sub-themes are not present – instead they are analysed as part of their different main theme).

5.1 English and Dyslexia

The special education teachers that were interviewed were all in agreement that English posed a much greater challenge for learners with dyslexia than someone without dyslexia. Informant 2 said: “That [English], which is hard for other children, becomes even harder for children with dyslexia”.

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On the follow up question concerning why English is more difficult for learners with dyslexia, the answers varied. All of the informants said that the difficulties that learners with dyslexia face when learning English comes from the sounding of letters, the intonation of English being different from Swedish and therefore harder to read and that it often is a second language for the learners. This difficulty with words, letters and intonation affects the student’s ability to read and write negatively. However, the informants were not in agreement on how the differences between English and Swedish affected the learners ability to understand listening and speaking in English. Most of the informants said that the difficulties that the learners face with understanding letters, words and intonation affected their ability to speak in English.

They [learners with dyslexia] seem to have difficulties with the English intonation and then they read everything in Swedish; then you cannot speak or write it correctly.

(Informant 3)

One of the informants said that learners with dyslexia often do not have troubles with speaking. Instead the informant had experienced that it usually goes fairly well. However, when it came to reading and writing the informant agreed that reading and writing in English is still something that learners with dyslexia struggle with.

Going further in depth on why English is more difficult than Swedish the informants’ answers varied. 1) A few of the informants claimed that there were no differences to the English language other than that it is a second and different language. 2) Most of the informants said that there is something with English that makes it more difficult to learn, in particular for learners with dyslexia; this difficulty had, according to the informants, something to do with English having more complex phonetics and structure. However, no one of the informants were specific or in depth on this subject.

5.2 Special Education Teachers and Organization

The informants acknowledge that sometimes the teacher, responsible for approximately 24 learners, misses out on ways to aid learners with dyslexia. Therefore they all advocate the
need to have a close working cooperation between teachers and special education teachers. The schools we have been in touch with have different ways of dealing with this.

Aside from being responsible for issuing the “åtgärdspogram” and being the link between the school and psychologists and speech therapists, the special education teacher also have ideas on where to place learners in the classroom and similar advice that might be beneficial for the learner’s working environment.

(Informant 2)

In some of the schools that we have been in contact with this cooperation is somewhat lacking. The informants sais that they have noticed that teachers sometimes bluntly ask the special education teacher to give them material to work with or want them to take full responsibility for the learners and thus disregarding the potential that might come from having collegial cooperation. This potential, according to the informants, might include a more adaptive lesson planning that is more according to the needs and difficulties of the learner.

I would want a process of giving and taking between teachers and special education teacher instead of shuffling the learners back and forth between us.

(Informant 2)

According to the informants, the system of teacher responsibilities in Sweden is undergoing a transition. This transition concerns that teachers used to have responsibility for entire classes and the majorities of the subjects but in the new setting the teachers have one or two subjects and mentor a class. This has been the case in the Swedish high school settings for a long time and is now starting to become the praxis in middle school settings. Informant 1 considered the previous system better when it comes to aiding learners with dyslexia; this because the teacher had a much more broad picture of the learners difficulties and needs. Informant 1 further said that the new system of subject teacher puts a whole new demand on teacher’s ability to cooperate with each other in order to best aid learners. The informant further stressed that this demand on communication is a serious flaw as communication might often be lacking.

Yes, it is much harder. And that is why I believe that the previous system was better. However, it is always important to cooperate and discuss instead of doing it your own
way. The teacher teams that have close cooperation often have the best results even if they work as subject teachers.

(Informant 1)

Another factor brought up by the informants that concerned collegial cooperation in the workplace was the availability to have discussions about matters concerning aiding learners on a regular basis. This regular aiding could, according to the informants, concern planning thematically work and planning individual lessons. This issue, according to informants, was mostly related to how the school work as an organization and if there is time and room made available to have these discussions.

5.3 Methods and Strategies on Supporting Learners with Dyslexia in the English Subject

This section aims at describing the different sub-themes that has been discussed during the interviews that concern the bigger theme of different successful ways of helping or aiding learners with dyslexia in the subject of English.

5.3.1 Screenings and Discovering Dyslexia

In all of the schools but one, that was visited; obligatory screening-tests are conducted for every learner in the school. The special education teachers working in these schools maintain that these tests are vital in discovering, among other things, dyslexia.

Screenings are important so that one can find out, in an early stage, if a learner has difficulties and apply extra reading practice.

(Informant 1)

Screenings are conducted in Swedish from first grade and then once every year (some schools did not do this every year). According to the informants, having these screenings in English would be a good thing for both the learners and educators. However, the schools do not have
screenings in English because, according to the informants, there is no material available to have them.

One of the schools previously used screenings but has recently stopped doing them. This because, according to the informant at that school, the test was not obligatory and when completed the teachers felt that the learners that needed the support did not get it. This in turn caused the teachers to stop doing them as they considered them pointless. The informant is worried that the lack of obligatory tests at the school might run the risk of failing to discover learners with dyslexia and as a consequence not being able to aid them properly.

I think there might be a grey zone there that I don’t get information about. I believe there are learners with dyslexia that we miss because the policy at this school says that the mentors are responsible for reporting if they have learners in their classroom that have difficulties.

(Informant 4)

Another important method mentioned by the informants that can help teachers and special education teachers to identify learners with dyslexia is by looking at the handwriting of the learners. The availability to computers or eReaders that the schools represented in this study have was claimed by the informants to pose a potential risk of not discovering learners with dyslexia. Handwriting is, according to one of the informants, one of the best tools when it comes to identifying whether a learner has dyslexia or not and therefore should never be removed or disregarded from teaching.

5.3.2 Spelling Aids

The informants’ views on spelling aids and computer programs are positive. The programmes that the informants spoke of where: “CD-ord” (a program that sounds out the letters as you write them or reads a text out loud from either web browsers or documents), “Spell right” (a similar program) and “Into words” (reading out what you are writing and also a word predicament tool that gives suggestions of words depending on the first letters you write).

Although most informants had a positive approach towards spelling programmes they had some issues with using the spelling aids. One of the informants maintains that computers (combined with support from teachers) is a great tool for learners with dyslexia; however, she
does not think that the learners in her school (years preschool to 6th grade) are mature enough to use advanced spelling aids or programmes in English.

Our speech therapists say that the learners should have them; however, our experience tells us that it is better to wait until the learners are older and have the patience to listen and choose between different spelling suggestions.

(Informant 1)

Another issue that the informants had, when talking about using digital tools in general, was that learners often choose the pen over the digital tools due to practical reasons. According to the informants, this practical reason had to do with that the learners view picking a pen and putting it to paper as simple and easy to do in contrast to setting up a computer and starting the correct programme. The informants said that this was the case even for the learners who have great difficulties with writing by hand, such as learners with dyslexia.

Furthermore, the informants said that the learners with dyslexia sometimes do not want to use the computer in class because it makes them feel special or apart. According to the informants, the learners do not want to deviate from the rest of the class or group and the computer can sometimes be the factor that generates these negative feelings.

5.3.3 Pictures as Support

Also a recurring theme that the informants vouched for when it comes to supporting learners with dyslexia is the use of pictures to help visualize the words and using simpler books or graded readers. Informant 1 said that “learners who have great difficulties in understanding words requires combining words with pictures on their level to help them understand”.

5.3.4 ICT

Concerning ICT (technology based learning), all of the special education teachers were in agreement that if each child would have access to a computer or eReader device it would be beneficial. However their advocacy of ICT is not without hesitation as all of them could see difficulties with computerized learning.
Provided that they [learners] do not sit in front of Facebook or YouTube during class; that can be an issue but overall I see technology as something good.

(Informant 4)

Furthermore, the informants voiced that games and downloadable applications might also provide a distractions when having technology-based learning.

5.3.5 Teaching Practices and Methods

All of the four informants did clearly say that there is no one method or practice that works in every case. Instead the informants maintain that the learner’s needs should be the focus when they and the teacher plan their lessons. The informants recommend and also try to build their own material based on what motivates the specific learner and what special subject they have at hand.

I would say that the learner is the method. As you will get to know the learner you will see the individual difficulties and then you will have to be creative and find out ways to move around the difficulties.

(Informant 2)

However, informant 4, although he recognizes that there is no one method to help learners with dyslexia with everything; he maintains that the Rydaholm method or Bravkod helps learners with decoding and thereby aids learners with dyslexia somewhat more compared to other methods.

I know that some methods are better than others. I can see results with using for example the Rydaholm method or Bravkod, although one must endure and practice it regularly. It helps with decoding and finding the correct sounds, however, I do not believe that it helps with understanding texts.

(Informant 4)

Most of the informants advocated teaching the learners with dyslexia learning strategies. These strategies primarily concerned reading, writing and structural factor such as knowing what computer program to use, were to sit in the classroom, when to ask for help and more.
The informants that advocated strategies were not specific in saying what the strategies that concerned reading and writing entail; however, they mentioned that it worked best if it were individualized for each learner in context to its challenges and the specific subject at hand. Another factor for succeeding in aiding learners with dyslexia that was endorsed by the majority of the informants was having clear routines. This emphasis on routines was in the contexts of planning lessons, learner placement in the classroom, structure etc. If the routines were lacking the informants maintained that it could cause a great deal of problems for all the learners, not just those with dyslexia.

Lastly, some of the informants stressed that they focus on the oral English when they work with their learners, as it, according to the informants, should be the main focus when learning English. This standpoint the informants based upon the curriculum and that knowing how to speak and understand spoken English is, according to the informants, more beneficial in the long run for the learners.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter shows that although the researchers had an initial focus on English and dyslexia it is clear that the informants value methods that incorporate and concern all, or most, subjects in school and offer general advice to help learners with dyslexia in English.
6. Discussion

This section follows the same structure as the previous results section: three (3) themes in separate segments. However, as mentioned previously the different sub-themes that was presented in the results section have been incorporated into each corresponding main theme. The aim of this section is to link the findings gathered from the interviews to the literature and theories presented in the literature review section and offer an analysis.

Previous to reading the discussion section a quick look at the initial research questions and aim of this paper can be helpful:

Aim

The aim of this study is to find out how special education teachers support learners with dyslexia when it comes to teaching the subject of English. What methods do they use in particular, and what can we as teachers learn from their views and strategies?

Research questions

- How do special education teachers support learners with dyslexia when it comes to teaching the subject English?
- What methods and practices are used specifically in teaching the English subject?

6.1 English and Dyslexia

According to the theory of orthographic depth, English is a complex and deep language (Seymour, Aro and Erskine 2003). According to results, this was something that most informants seemed unaware of. However, although most of the informants did not draw the connection or say explicitly that orthographical depth could be the reason why English is a more challenging language – especially for learners with dyslexia – they still maintained that English does pose a greater challenge for these learners.

The informants that maintained that English poses a greater challenge to learners with dyslexia connected these challenges to phonetic difficulties such as similar sounding letters (p, d, k, in a Swedish context) and intonation. This connection drawn by the informants, is
most relevant according to Kere et al. as p, d, k and intonations pose a significant challenge to learners with dyslexia (2008, p. 31); therefore, the informants knowledge regarding the topic of orthographical depth should not be seen as non-existent. Also, one of the informants that maintained that English poses a greater challenge for learners with dyslexia, based this notion on phonological issues and also included that there were something “more” to the English language that made it more challenging. Although the informant could not specify what this “more” was, the informant mentioned that it had something to do with complexity and structure. Viewing this, the conclusion can be drawn that the informant had some knowledge of orthographical depth, however, not enough to be specific.

One of the informants maintained that there were no differences between Swedish and English. Instead the informant maintained that the difficulties that learners with dyslexia face are connected to the notion that English is an unfamiliar language and therefore more difficult to learn. This conclusion that the informant draws, cannot be considered inaccurate as learning an unfamiliar language does pose a challenge. According to Lundberg (2002), there are cultural-historical, socioeconomic and educational factors that differ between countries which all are very important when it comes to learning a language (2002). However, the conclusion made by the informant might be viewed as simple or uncomplicated if one takes into account the theory of orthographic depth (see table by Seymour et al. 2003). It explicitly states that English is a more complex language in terms of orthography and phonology than for example Swedish (Seymour et al. 2003). Looking back on Stadler (1994), one can see this in terms of how onomatopoetic a language is, or how consistent the spelling and sound is. Stadler concludes, that the less onomatopoetic the language is the more difficult it is to learn – especially for learners with dyslexia (1994). Furthermore, Lundberg (2002) also maintains that learners with dyslexia have difficulties with orthographics within a language which in turn makes the conclusion by the informant troublesome, as these specific difficulties that learners with dyslexia face when learning English might be disregarded or disowned (2002, p. 175).
6.2 Special Education Teachers and Organization

According to the systems theory, all parts of an organization should be scrutinized in order to define the successful or unsuccessful organization as a whole (Öquist 2003). All informants have highlighted different factors for successfully supporting learners with dyslexia in the English subject, and other subjects, for example: learning methods, spelling aids and computer programmes. However, one of the more predominant themes during the interviews concerned the current organization at the schools and how the special education teachers’ work situation is and how they would like to see it changed to benefit both themselves and the learners. In the discussion about organization one factor was more predominant, namely how the special education teachers viewed the collegial cooperation at their respective schools. Stadler (1994) and Specialpedagogiska Skolmyndigheten (2012) maintain that this is a key component in helping learners with dyslexia or with other reading and writing difficulties. The informants have all had different experiences concerning cooperation with colleagues at their school, both successful and unsuccessful. Which in turn affects their ability to support learners. This collegial cooperation can, viewed through systems theory (Öquist 2003), be identified as a major component. If dysfunctional it affects the entire aim of the organization (to successfully support learners both with and without dyslexia) negatively. For example, one of the informant’s experiences a great distance between itself and the rest of the staff in the school and this had a negative impact on supporting the learners. The informant said that a different system, a system where teachers and special education teacher interact and work more closely with for example planning, would be beneficial both to the learners and to the informant’s own structure, organization and working environment.

6.3 Methods and Strategies on Supporting Learners with Dyslexia in the English Subject

Continuing on the systems theory from the previous section (Öquist 2003), the informants identified other key components (other than collegial cooperation) that are beneficial to their organization and their goal to scaffold or help learners with dyslexia.

According to the informants, scaffolding, or providing support to learners in order for them to reach new levels in their learning (Gibbons 2009), should initially start with looking at the
learner and the specific difficulties that he or she faces. This aligns with Vygotsky’s theory about the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). The informants first want to identify where the learners current development level is and after that move forward and help the learner reach the level of their potential development. One method of finding the specific needs of the learners that is advocated by all of the informants is annual screenings. The screenings are conducted in the subject of Swedish and sometimes the subject of mathematics. However, no school in this study conducted screenings in the subject of English. According to the system theory (Öquist 2003), the informants have adequately identified an important key component in their organization – the screenings – that helps them see learners’ special needs. The informants have also identified the lack of screenings in English as a problem. This because they do not have the same opportunity and materials needed in order to adequately tailor an individual learner’s education in English, as they can in Swedish. Additionally, this problem could also be connected to the study made by Jacobsson et al. (2008), that suggests that learners with dyslexia are not taught appropriate learning strategies to help them acquire the English language. Subsequently, if a learner’s difficulties are not identified for example, via screenings, then knowing how to teach adequate learning strategies to that learner can be challenging. As seen in the results section, the informants maintain that learners need strategies in order to succeed. However, the informants are not explicit in what these strategies entail when it comes to the subject of English.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that most of the schools in this study use computerized spelling aid programmes; programmes that for example, orally read out what is written in a text and also eReaders. However, two of the informants voiced their concern regarding the technical difficulties that might occur, both soft- and hardware related, and that some learners find it hard to focus when a program give them suggestions on what words to write. It also concerned the issue that having a computer, which the learners with dyslexia have, might negatively differentiate the learner socially from the other learners and in some cases the learner did not want to use the computer because of this. In light of the system theory (Öquist 2003), the teachers have identified a key component that has a scaffolding function in that organization or school context – the computer. The informants have also critically analysed the way in which the component functions as well as the potential difficulties that comes with it. However, in light of the system theory learners need multiple components such as adequate teachers, learning materials and setting in order learn in the best possible way. In the case mentioned by the informant the adequate setting is a problem as the learner feels
differentiated and therefore refuses to use the computer. Thus, the setting, which is an important component within the organization or school, cancels out the possible scaffolding effects the computer and spelling programmes might have. Again, if one component is missing in the organization the possible outcomes of the other components might not function as they aim at doing (Öquist 2003).

The informants have talked about different methods such as the Rydaholm method and Bravkod. Even though some of the informants claim that they use them occasionally they all maintain that no one method works in every situation. Instead, they advocate an individual approach towards each learner and his or her difficulties. This approach towards “complete or package”-methods is endorsed by Skolverket (2016) that instead highlights the individual approach combined with some general advice. A selection of this advice that was also promoted by the informants is presented below (not in hierarchical order):

• Learners in need of help are found and assisted in an early stage (screenings),
• Computer assisted support (even though it can sometimes pose a problem),
• Repetitive reading and/or writing practise
• Compensative learning aids (such as audio versions of books and visual aid such as movies and pictures)
• Identifying learners’ strategies (negative strategies and positive ones)
• Systemizing the teacher – special education teacher working relationship

In light of systems theory (Öquist 2003), these components provide an insight into what the informants see as necessary for supporting learners with dyslexia. If one component is dysfunctional it might affect the overall aim (supporting learners with dyslexia). However, Öquist (2003) maintains that individual learners with dyslexia might still succeed even though one or more of these components are lacking. Yet, as seen in the study by Jacobson et al. (2008), the majority of learners with dyslexia will struggle and are more likely to receive lower grades than their peers if adequate individual support is lacking.
7. Conclusion

This section aims at describing the parts of our study that we find most relevant to our research questions, future research and profession. The research limitations related to this paper are also included.

7.1 Findings

The results from the interviews can be considered somewhat general when it comes to helping learners with dyslexia, as the support is not specifically targeted towards the subject of English. The informants have identified annual screenings as an important tool to pinpoint what level of development the learner is currently at, a prerequisite to move towards the learner’s zone of potential development. However, these screenings are not practiced in the English teaching context. According to the informants, this is problematic, as they do not have the same opportunity to identify where the learners struggle in the subject of English, as they have in the subject of Swedish. This can in turn be linked with the study made by Jacobsson and Nordmann (2008), which identified English as the subject that learners with dyslexia themselves found most difficult.

The informants also advocate supporting actions that has to do with ICT such as recorded material, visual support when for example reading and spelling programmes. The informants maintain that when these programmes work properly they benefit the learners strongly. However, if the technology is not working adequately the learners might get frustrated which in turn affects their learning. Utilizing computers is also described as a positive measure that helps learners succeed. However, some informants have described situations where the learner decided to not utilize the computer as the learner felt differentiated from the rest of the group. A potential scaffolding component, such as using a computer, can thus be ineffective if the environment of the school is not inclusive and other learners stigmatize learners in need of extra support.

According to the system theory (Öquist 2003) one is advised to scrutinize the different components of an organization to be able to understand the organization in a holistic way. Viewing the results of the informants’ answers through systems theory, the conclusion can be
drawn that all of the informants highlighted close cooperation with their colleagues and having a supportive and tolerant environment as the most important component for the successful teaching of learners with dyslexia. The findings suggest that the special education teachers where able to scrutinize these components and elaborate on, for example, when the cooperation works and why.

Most of these key components can also be found in the material from Skolverkets (2016) general advice for assisting learners in need of support. These results indicate that the informants have knowledge of the needs and what Skolverket (2016) recommends concerning learners in need of support. However, the informants are not specific in terms of assisting a learner with dyslexia in the subject of English; this might indicate that the informants see the subject of English within these general actions or that they do not know of any specific actions concerning English. If so, some of the informants’ self experienced lack of formal education in English (particularly English and dyslexia), as mentioned in the “informants section”, might provide an explanation.

I thought that I did not know anything about how to do this in English. On the other hand I can think that this is an area [English and dyslexia] that is not researched a lot. I myself think of how to teach, I mean, how the heck do you help those who already struggle when they are supposed to learn English too.

(Informant 4)

7.2 Research Limitations

One of the potential limitations with our study is the small number (four) of informants used to gather information. Another potential limitation is that the sample, that can be considered small, is also gathered from only one geographical area in Sweden. These limitations might be used to question the relevance, validity and generalizability of our study. However, as mentioned in the method section, Hatch (2002) maintains that in qualitative research there is no guaranteed cohesion between sample size and quality of the results (2002, p. 49). Concerning the generalizability of the study, Hatch’s (2002) previous argument of sample size and quality might not be enough. In order for a study to claim generalizability it needs to have collected data from a bigger sample source. However, the focus of this qualitative study has
been to describe a specific context that the reader in turn can relate to his or her specific context and decide how applicable it is to them (Hatch 2002, p.49).

7.2.1 Further research

As this study offers general advice, not specifically targeting at the English subject, an interesting topic for further research could concern scientifically establishing methods, teaching and organizational practises that could be beneficial for a learner with dyslexia, specifically regarding learning in the subject English. Doing this in Swedish schools and including the demographic variable would also be of interest, as this study does not incorporate any such variables.
8. Sources


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Hej!
Vi är två studenter som heter Oskar Lejonklev och Oskar Persson och vi går grundlärandutbildningen med inriktning på årskurserna 4-6 på Malmö högskola.
Vi skriver just nu vårt examensarbete på ämnet dyslexi kopplat till engelskinlärning.
Studier har visat att det engelska skriftspråket är ett särskilt svårt ämne för elever med dyslexi. Vi vill därför göra en studie baserad på intervjuer med specialpedagoger om deras reflektioner, kunskaper och arbetsmetoder inom detta ämne.
Vi undrar om du har lust att medverka i vår studie som kommer att innefatta en bandad intervju på cirka en timme. Vi ser gärna att denna intervju görs under vecka 6 och vecka 7 med vi är flexibla i fråga om datum, tid och plats. Vi är väldigt intresserade av ämnet och hoppas att du vill medverka.
Intervjun kan såklart avbrytas när som helst men också tas bort under projektets gång om ni ångrar er medverkan.
Nedan följer våra teman som våra intervjufrågor kommer att kretsa kring.

- Åsikter omkring dyslexi, diagnoser.
- Dyslexi i din vardag.
- Engelska som andraspråk och dyslexi.
- Engelska som andraspråk och dyslexi: praktiska utlärningsmetoder/material.

Mvh
Oskar & Oskar
## Appendix B: Interview-guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Åsikter omkring dyslexi, diagnoser.**    | • Vad kan en diagnos betyda för lärare, elever, föräldrar enligt dig som specialpedagog?
   • Ser du några fördelar och nackdelar med diagnos?                                                                                     | Håller du med? ja varför, nej varför?
   • Emotionellt och relationellt?
   • Diagnos som bortförklaring för elever?                                                                                                 |
| **Dyslexi i din vardag.**                  | Hur stor del utav ditt vardagsarbete rör dyslexi?                                                                                                                                                       | Har du ledningens stöd (ej som egenintresse)?                                                      |
|                                            | Fortbildar du dig inom dyslexi på arbetstid?                                                                                                                                                           |-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Engelska och dyslexi.**                 | • Känner du till några specifika svårigheter som elever med dyslexi kan ha i samband med engelskainlärning?                                                                                         | • Vilka igenkänningsmekanismer för dyslexi finns det i engelska?                                   |
| **Engelska och dyslexi: praktiska utlärningsmetoder/materi** | • Vad bör engelskalärare tänka på om undervisning för att göra den så bra som möjligt för elever med dyslexi?                                                                                       | Varför just den(de) metoden(er)?                                                                 |
|                                            | • Vilka metoder kan de använda/materi?                                                                                                                                                                 |-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | • Vilka metoder använder du dig utav?                                                                                                                                                                  |-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Faktorer inom dyslexi.**                | Vilka framgångsfaktorer finns?                                                                                                                           | Kollegialt samarbete?\n|                                            | Vilka fallgropar finns?                                                                                                                             | IKT?                                                                                               |