

Martin Hassler Hallstedt

"Maths is the most important predictor among subjects in school for later school outcome. I wanted to create equality in schools for all children by improving their maths courses."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Martin Hassler Hallstedt is a Doctor of Psychology with a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) background. His research is centered around teaching and children's learning abilities.

After finishing his master's degree Martin did some pilot studies on his own as he wanted to improve the opportunities for children to learn mathematics. However, he quickly found that he needed funding and the credibility that comes with the title of being a researcher, and he therefore initiated a PhD.

As part of the process he developed the app 'Count on me!' which is based on the CBT-method within the category of Game-Embedded Teaching: A combination of game design and science.

How Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and a gaming app can help children learn math

In Sweden, the general methods used for teaching maths in elementary schools are rigid; the tests provided are not efficient and the government does not use proper tools to measure results.

Martin created the game app 'Count on me!' with the aim to create more equal opportunities for all children in school to learn maths. The app incorporates learning moments into a game and is based on the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy method.

His goal is to make the learning experience for children fun while creating positive memorable memories. Martin has proved that using the app 15 minutes a day for 8 months significantly improves students critical maths skills.

Despite the fact that Martin and his company 'Akribian' is supported by a number of stakeholders and has received significant amounts of funding, it has proved to be a somewhat impossible task to convince the Swedish state to implement the teaching method as a general part of the maths curriculum in elementary schools. Even though 'Count on me!' As documented effects and current maths programs in schools do not, the resistance to renew programs has turned out to be a bigger challenge than expected. This has led Martin and his company to change their target group from municipalities and schools directly to the consumer market (parents and teachers).

Although Martin has had to adjust the course along the way, Akribian have entered a range of fruitful collaborations. One of the newest is with Massive Entertainment – which helps them towards making the app accessible to an even bigger crowd both in Sweden and Britain.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

& ADVICE

Market research:

Research the market early on to see where the need is. This way you can tailor your research to target that need.

Relations

Establish relations with relevant stakeholders and anyone who could be interested in your project early on. Build your network on LinkedIn!

Investor research:

Contact the people who might help you or invest. Ask what they are looking for and tailor your research to fit their needs.

Start a forum of like-minded:

Find people who have resources and who care about your area of research early in the process. Ask them to join a forum.

Policy makers should be more open to dynamically updating existing societal models and methods if research provides alternative models with a higher documented effect.