

Assisting with Assistive Technology

The project Technology Support at School gave Swedish students with cognitive difficulties the opportunity to try out assistive technology to see if it might help them in their school work. Students also received individual support and help developing strategies for utilizing the technology. Professional activities for teachers as well as cooperation with relevant activities outside school have been vital to the project.

About 15% of all students in high school have cognitive difficulties which make it harder to accomplish schoolwork. Failure may lead some young to abandon their studies prematurely. There is often a great willingness among the school staff to support students with learning difficulties, but the staff lack the knowledge of how to do this in the best way.

Previously, everything was chaos, and I was stressed and more unstructured. Now I've got a grip on everything and no longer get worked up all the time.

Student

The aim has been that the technology should provide support to students with cognitive disabilities and increase the opportunities for these students to meet established goals by a set deadline. One aim of the pilot project was to increase the teachers' skills in technology support, and to develop a model for identifying students' needs for cognitive support.

From the Evaluation

Relatively small efforts can increase the students' motivation and their achievements at school: One conclusion from the final report is that the impact of technology support along with a proper implementation yield very good results – and that fairly simple support works well and does not need to be expensive. The use of technology support meant that many students felt that they increased their academic performance and that they could handle difficult situations at school better. Absence decreased as a result of this.

The project included a socio-economic evaluation of the interventions within the project. This study showed that the individual is not the only one to benefit from using technology support. Society benefits from it as well.