



Premier Content Partner Spotlight: Help Me 2 Learn

An Interview with Dan Sheffield, Owner

At AWE Learning, we're passionate about providing fun, educational digital experiences for young learners and that means partnering with the best in the industry. One of our standout content partners is Help Me 2 Learn!

Help Me 2 Learn has a long-standing commitment to making learning enjoyable and effective for children. Founded with the goal of combining education with technology in a meaningful way, they've developed award-winning programs that teach essential reading, phonics, math, and English language skills. Their interactive, game-based learning approach is built to engage children and reinforce key concepts in a fun, memorable way.

Through our partnership, Help Me 2 Learn's dynamic content is seamlessly integrated into AWE Learning's digital platform, making it available to young learners in libraries, classrooms, and other educational settings across the country. This collaboration ensures kids have access to research-based, developmentally appropriate tools that support foundational skill development and lifelong learning.

Together, AWE Learning and Help Me 2 Learn are helping educators inspire confidence, creativity, and curiosity in every child.

1. What inspired the creation of Help Me 2 Learn, and how has your mission evolved since its inception?

The inspiration behind Help Me 2 Learn stemmed from the simple joy of music. I discovered the Twin Sisters songs and was struck by how effectively they captured children's attention and made learning fun. That sparked an idea—what if we built an entire educational experience around this kind of engaging, playful learning?

So we expanded on that foundation. We added lyrics, interactive content, games, and activities—all designed to reinforce early learning in a way that feels more like play than work. Our "Learn the Words" vocabulary builder and the Super Star Motivational and Data Tracking System became core to the experience, helping kids track progress and stay motivated.

Over time, we noticed that as students grew older, they began to outgrow the sing-along format. That led us to evolve. We introduced our Super Star Kids characters, who guide students through lessons with animated presentations. These enhancements ensure our platform continues to meet learners where they are—engaged, curious, and ready to succeed.

2. With a focus on phonics, early learning, math, and language arts, how do you ensure the content remains engaging and effective for elementary students?

While the core principles of early education haven't changed much, the ways we teach—and how students engage—definitely have. That's where Super Star by Help Me 2 Learn stands out. Our lessons are designed to be flexible and versatile. Teachers can use them for whole-class presentations, game-based competitions, or independent learning time.

What really makes our content stick is its structure. Every lesson includes a mix of multimedia: a song or animated explanation to introduce the concept, a "Learn the Words" activity for vocabulary and phonics practice, and interactive games to reinforce learning. The variety keeps students engaged, and the repetition builds mastery.

We're not here to replace teachers—we're here to support them with tools that make learning more dynamic, inclusive, and fun.

3. Can you elaborate on how Help Me 2 Learn personalizes learning experiences to cater to individual student needs?

Personalization is built into the DNA of Super Star. Each student logs in with their own account, and from that moment, their learning journey is tracked and celebrated through our Super Star Motivational and Data Tracking System.

As students complete activities, songs, and games, they earn silver or gold stars based on their performance. If they make a few mistakes, they earn a silver star, but they're always encouraged to try again for gold. This simple system not only provides immediate feedback but also creates a sense of achievement and motivation.

We've also designed flexibility into the system. Teachers can adjust difficulty levels or allow more leniency for students who need it. Some of our games even include alternative quizzes for those who might find certain activities challenging. It's all about giving each child a path to succeed—at their own pace, in their own way.

4. How does the platform support multilingual education, and what languages are currently available?

While our platform is currently available only in English, its design is incredibly supportive of multilingual learners. A standout feature is our “Learn the Words” activity, which breaks down words visually and phonetically. Students see the word, hear it pronounced, view an image of it, and explore its phonemic structure using Elkonin boxes—those familiar letter blocks that help learners connect sounds with spelling.

This interactive multisensory approach helps English language learners build vocabulary and phonics skills with minimal reliance on translation. In our higher-level courses, we expand these tools to explore syllables and full sentences, further supporting language development.

In fact, this methodology has made our program popular internationally, especially in China. With some localized adaptations, our platform has found enthusiastic audiences abroad—proof that effective teaching tools can transcend language barriers.

5. In what ways does Help Me 2 Learn accommodate students with special educational needs to ensure inclusivity?

We're incredibly proud of the positive impact our courses have had on students with special educational needs. Our system is designed to be accessible, engaging, and—perhaps most importantly—self-paced. Students can explore lessons at their own speed, without the pressure of keeping up with peers or rushing to finish.

One of the most rewarding moments was when a parent of a special needs student reached out after a technical issue disrupted their child's learning. The urgency in that call showed how meaningful the program had become to that student. Once we fixed the problem, their joy was immediate—it was a moment that reminded us of why we do what we do.

In addition to the motivational gold and silver stars, we provide alternative options—like simplified quizzes—when games may be too challenging. This flexibility helps every learner find a way to succeed. As one longtime fan (who began using Super Star as a child with special needs and is now an adult) recently shared, “Super Star kids are fun, funny, and entertaining for kids. I love Super Star Games.” That's the kind of feedback that stays with you.

6. Could you share insights into how educators can monitor student progress and utilize the provided pedagogical recommendations?

We've designed Super Star with educators in mind from the very beginning. As the platform evolved from CD-ROMs to networked school environments, we added robust teacher tools that make it easy to track progress and adapt instruction.

Teachers can access both class-wide and individual student reports, including pre- and post-tests, and adjust course settings for differentiated instruction. There are controls to manage game repetition (so students don't just replay their favorites), assign specific lessons, and adjust difficulty levels as needed.

To help teachers make the most of these features, we provide an in-depth Teacher & Admins Resources course, complete with video tutorials and written guides. Our goal is to empower educators with both insight and flexibility—so they can tailor learning to each student's needs while maximizing classroom impact.

7. What role does the “Super Star Motivational and Data Tracking System” play in enhancing the educational content and experience on the platform?

The Super Star Motivational and Data Tracking System is the heart of our learning experience. It transforms practice into progress and builds a sense of achievement that keeps students coming back.

Every activity—whether it's a song, game, or vocabulary exercise—offers immediate feedback. A few mistakes? That's a silver star. Try again and get it all right? You earn a gold star. Students can view their accumulated stars on the Super Star screen, which creates a strong visual record of their success.

And it's not just about stars—many students are highly motivated by the printable certificates of achievement they earn after completing a course. Teachers often display these certificates in classrooms, turning learning into something celebratory and visible.

Without this system, our lessons might just be another set of digital activities. But with it, we've created a motivational loop that supports growth, encourages perseverance, and makes learning feel like an accomplishment.

8. How does Help Me 2 Learn align its content with various educational curricula to support classroom learning effectively?

Aligning with educational standards can be challenging given the diversity of teaching philosophies and state requirements. However, we've worked hard to make sure our content is classroom-ready and standards-aligned.

Our lessons are aligned to Common Core standards, and those connections are clearly documented in our User Guide and Lesson Plans. This makes it easy for educators to integrate our materials into existing curriculum maps.

More recently, we've also found strong alignment with the Science of Reading approach, which emphasizes structured phonics and evidence-based literacy instruction. Many of our core components—especially our phonics lessons and “Learn the Words” activities—fit naturally within this framework.

In short, our focus has always been on building foundational skills. That hasn't changed. What has changed is how we present and support those skills to align with current best practices in education.

9. What feedback have you received from educators and parents regarding the platform's impact on student engagement and learning outcomes?

The feedback we've received over the years has been incredibly rewarding. Educators often tell us that our platform helps “wake up” reluctant learners. The mix of music, games, and interactive lessons helps capture attention and build confidence—especially in students who may struggle with traditional methods.

Parents have shared stories of kids asking to “play” our lessons at home, sometimes not even realizing they're learning because the experience feels so fun and engaging. One mom told us that our courses helped her child finally understand phonics concepts that had been elusive in the classroom. Stories like that remind us why we created Help Me 2 Learn in the first place.

We've also received several awards for educational excellence, and we regularly post testimonials from teachers, parents, and even students on our website. Their experiences continue to inspire us as we develop and refine our content.

10. How does Help Me 2 Learn incorporate gamification to make learning more interactive and enjoyable for students?

Gamification is at the core of what we do. Our courses aren't just sprinkled with games—they are built around them. Each lesson includes interactive, educational games that reinforce what's being taught. And these aren't just any games—they're thoughtfully designed to blend fun with learning.

Our games feature animation, sound effects, characters, and point systems—all the elements kids love in video games. But they also require real understanding to win. Before students jump into a game, they work through the vocabulary and concepts they'll need to succeed. That way, the gameplay feels like a reward and reinforces mastery.

One standout is our “Board Breaking Game,” where students split words into syllables in a martial-arts-themed activity. It's one of the most popular among kids—and educators love it

because it teaches while it entertains. And of course, each game offers the chance to earn a gold star, which keeps motivation high.

11. Can you discuss any partnerships or collaborations that have been instrumental in expanding Help Me 2 Learn's reach and effectiveness?

We've been fortunate to partner with organizations that share our passion for educational excellence. One of our most enduring collaborations is with AWE Learning, which has helped us bring our content to libraries across the United States. This has made our courses accessible to thousands of children beyond the traditional classroom.

Internationally, we've built a strong relationship with an English instructor and her team in China. With some custom localization, they've introduced our platform to a wide audience, selling thousands of subscriptions each month. Their students particularly enjoy our "Learn the Words" activities and syllable-splitting games.

These partnerships have not only expanded our reach but also provided valuable insights into how children learn in different cultural and linguistic contexts—insights that continue to shape our future development.

12. Looking ahead, what are your future plans for Help Me 2 Learn in terms of content development, technological advancements, or global expansion?

We've come a long way since launching our first CD-ROM, Letters and Numbers, back in 2000. Since then, we've evolved with technology—offering downloadable versions, Flash-based online learning, and now modern HTML5 content that works across devices. Currently, we're focused on converting our final few Flash-based courses into HTML5 to ensure full compatibility for today's classrooms and devices.

Internationally, we're seeing growing success in China and are eager to expand into other global markets. We're actively seeking teachers and educational partners in new countries to help us localize and scale the platform.

In terms of content, we plan to deepen our offerings in language arts and early math while continuing to innovate our motivational systems and game-based learning tools. Our mission remains the same: to make foundational learning joyful, accessible, and effective for every student, everywhere.