

Middlesex County College – An ALEKS Case Study

Maria DeLucia – Chair, Mathematics Department

At the beginning of our Fall 2007 semester we posted student pass rates of approximately 45% – 50% for both our Basic Math (MAT 010) -- the first level developmental course offered at Middlesex County College, and Elementary Algebra (MAT 090).

Approximately 900–1000 students place into Basic Math each semester while another 1000 students place into Elementary Algebra. Given the large number of students failing these courses and unable to progress to higher level math courses required for graduation, our Middlesex CC faculty was challenged to find a way to increase student pass rates and better develop student skills and understanding.

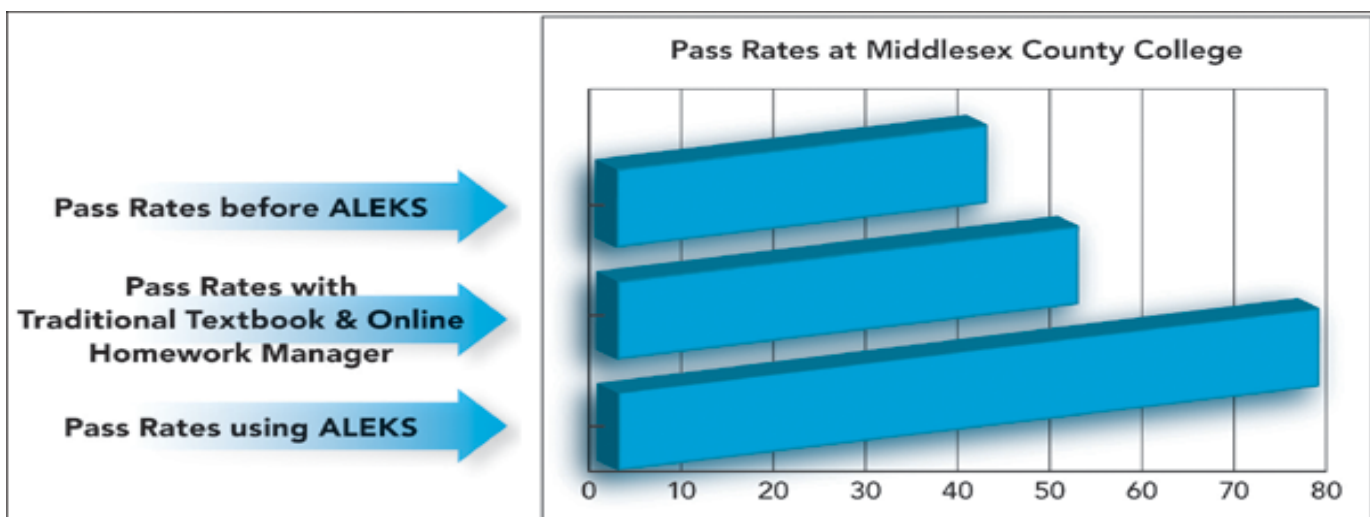
Our math department decided an alternative learning environment would be the best plan of action. We decided to implement ALEKS – utilizing the ALEKS assessment test and the ALEKS learning module to offer students an opportunity to access a tool geared towards individual remediation in an effort to help students learn and practice their basic mathematics skills.

ALEKS Pilot: Success!

In our Fall 2007 semester there were 12 sections of Basic Math taught at Middlesex CC. We determined that two of the Basic Math sections would pilot ALEKS with a total of 48 students registered for 14 weeks of access (a period of access we determined was necessary).

At the conclusion of the semester, eight students had dropped the course while 40 students were still registered. We received impressive results using ALEKS in our Basic Math course with 28 out of 40 students, roughly 70% of our students, receiving a “C” or better -- a grade enabling them to progress to the next course (Elementary Algebra). Our pass rate jumped from 41% to 75% in our first semester using ALEKS. Alternatively, the remaining ten Basic Math sections taught that semester (without ALEKS) where traditional strategies were employed, received a pass rate of only 47%.

In our Spring 2008 semester, given the success of the fall semester we decided to increase the number of sections using ALEKS for the pilot from two sections to four sections of Basic Math. Our students posted a pass rate of 79%, compared to the traditional sections with a pass rate of 49%. We also improved over the previous semester’s ALEKS pilot test by 4% (75% to 79%)!



Maria DeLucia, Chair, Middlesex County College (Edison, NJ): MDeLucia@middlesexcc.edu