Implementation Strategies

Jefferson Academy, Jefferson County Public Schools
Broomfield, CO

Grade(s): K − 12
Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access
Purpose: RtI, Credit Recovery, Summer School, Core Curriculum
ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25−30%
Time Spent in ALEKS: 2−3 hours per week, 40−60 hours per term
ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3, Pre−Algebra, Algebra 1, High School Geometry, Algebra 2, PreCalculus, Trigonometry

Mary Ferbrache, Teacher
ALEKS has become a foundational part of our math program. We use ALEKS not only to assess which math class our students should be placed in (especially for new students), but also as homework for every student in every math class. We have loved integrating ALEKS with our program!

Scenario

What challenges did the class or school face in math prior to using ALEKS?
Math scores have been a struggle in our school. We are anxiously waiting for our new Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) scores to see how our kids have improved in math since using ALEKS.

How many days per week is class time dedicated to ALEKS?
3−7 days per week.

What is the average length of a class period when ALEKS is used?
Varies.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?
We use ALEKS to support students at home. They use ALEKS for homework to get immediate feedback on their work. They also sometimes see content in ALEKS prior to seeing it in class, which is a great way for students to preview what is to come; they then have something to build on in class.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?
We direct student learning by aligning ALEKS to our textbooks, then as we cover chapters we enter those dates into the program. Also, we ask students to work in the section of their pie that corresponds to a chapter they are currently learning.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?
ALEKS is not used in the classroom; instead it's used as support at home.

How did you modify your regular teaching approach as a result of ALEKS?
We refer to ALEKS and how students learn in the program, as well as the problems that they are seeing, and use that to extend lessons in the classroom.

How often are students required or encouraged to work on ALEKS at home?
Daily.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?
We involved parents in the beginning and advised them of the expectations. Also, during our back−to−school event we educate parents about how this program will help their students improve in math.

Grading

Is ALEKS assigned to your students as all or part of their homework responsibilities? If so, what part of the total homework load is it?
ALEKS is assigned as all of the homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?
30 percent of their overall grade is based on ALEKS.

Do you require students to make regular amounts of progress in ALEKS?
Student progress is monitored by the number of topics they complete each week and that is what their grade is based upon. We also do a comprehensive assessment at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. We are moving to a system where student will not be able to move on to the next class unless they show at least 80 percent proficiency in ALEKS in their current class. For example, they would have to have at least an 80 percent in Algebra 1 before moving on to Algebra 2.

Learning Outcomes

Since using ALEKS, please describe the learning outcomes or progress you have seen.
Our students are learning the content at a much deeper level and are exposed to a wider variety of problems. ALEKS has been good for our students because it can help them to become more independent learners.

Best Practices

Are there any best practices you would like to share with other teachers implementing ALEKS?
We have found that having all students make progress at the same rate is helpful. For instance, the goal for this week may be for all students to reach 122 topics and the next week to reach 130. That way they are on the same topics (usually). This makes it easier to follow and assess. We also use the Initial Assessment to place students in a course: if they have less than 15 percent on the Initial Assessment they may be placed in a lower−level course. Alternatively, if they score over 80 percent on the Initial Assessment they will be placed in the next higher−level class. Another best practice is to measure progress in regular intervals. For example, 10 topics each week. We figure out how many topics they must complete each week so that by the end of the term they have mastered all topics.

