

Implementation Strategies

Chimacum Elementary School, Chimacum School District 49
Chimacum, WA

Grade(s): 3 – 5

Scenario: Computer Lab, One-to-One Laptop Program, Home Access

Purpose: RtI, Intervention, Summer School, Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2.5 hours per week, 10 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables)

Nancy Wyatt, Teacher

I am a 40 year veteran classroom teacher who retired, then was rehired as the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) teacher where I have taught for over 12 years. The first time I worked with students using ALEKS was when I first began my small group instruction. These multi-age students have been using it as their main math instruction, and each small group has their own laptop. These students out-performed the rest of the school in meeting state standards on last year's Measurements of Student Progress (MSP) tests. I have also utilized ALEKS in the LAP program with third through fifth graders. ALEKS is also used for remediation and intervention for students who have not met the state standards. It provides grade level instruction and practice through a wide range of topics, and can be customized by the teacher to include specific skills, state standards, quizzes, and tests. Most of our elementary teachers are using ALEKS as part of their daily instruction by creating tests and practice sheets, and using data to help them design instruction.

Scenario

How many days per week is class time dedicated to ALEKS?

4 days per week.

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

30 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I will speak for some teachers who have contained classrooms: There is whole class instruction three days a week, with two days in the computer lab for 50 minutes of ALEKS.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students have 30 minutes of ALEKS time with small group instruction and teachers help.

How did you modify your regular teaching approach as a result of ALEKS?

I have seen teachers gather the feedback data from ALEKS and modify their curriculum based on concepts not learned or needing reinforcement.

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

We encourage a minimum of 20 minutes per day, but it is not required.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We send home parent letters, as well as reminders.

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?

One class assigns ALEKS as homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I don't grade kids as a LAP teacher, but I do use information from ALEKS for progress reports and goal planning.

Do you require students to make regular amounts of progress in ALEKS?

We ask students to increase their pie daily.

Learning Outcomes

Since using ALEKS, please describe the learning outcomes or progress you have seen.

Students are motivated to fill in their pie chart and will work through problems that they might have given up on before because their progress is so well documented. Our school is working on the state standards and ALEKS provides current data that shows students are progressing. Students are engaged, interacting with the problems, learning, and practicing math, when the classroom environment doesn't always motivate them to do just that.

Best Practices

Are there any best practices you would like to share with other teachers implementing ALEKS?

First, become familiar with all components that the teacher can use to gather information from ALEKS on student performance. Second, customize the quizzes and tests per class based on student data. Third, use whole classroom instruction combined with ALEKS instruction and base the final grade on a percentage of both. Next, monitor each student's time on task as some will stare at their pie longer than they actually work on math. Fifth, assign ALEKS as homework when students are absent from school. Teachers can monitor this easily! Sixth, organize a parent information night to acquaint parents with the benefits of ALEKS and how to use it at home. Next, report progress regularly in the school newsletter, local paper, etc. Last, always make kids take paper and pencil when working in ALEKS and show their work.