

Implementation Strategies

Jacks Valley Elementary School, Douglas County School District
Carson City, NV

Grade(s): K – 6

Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access

Purpose: Enrichment/Gifted and Talented, Exit Exam, Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2.5 hours per week, 145 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3

Linda Niday, Computer Technology Teacher

We use ALEKS to help our top math students progress beyond the sixth grade curriculum. At the end of sixth grade, these students take a test to determine whether they are admitted to advance to seventh grade math. When we use ALEKS without teacher intervention, whether or not the students passed the test was determined mostly by their self-motivation. With teacher intervention, the success rate grew significantly. We also use ALEKS as summer intervention, both for students who don't pass the advanced math test but want to take advanced math, and for students who tend to lose test score points over the summer. Students who use ALEKS through the summer typically gain test score points. In addition, when we use ALEKS to help students pass the advanced math test in the fall, the students generally pass the test.

Scenario

What challenges did the class or school face in math prior to using ALEKS?

Our challenges mostly concern the teachers' abilities to address the needs of students with widely divergent math skills.

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

5 days per week.

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

30 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

As the computer lab teacher, I make the lab available to the students and assist them when they are stuck on certain concepts.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students go to the computer lab during a specified time each day.

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

I allow students to work at their own pace, assisting them when the ALEKS explanation does not work.

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

We don't assign homework, but students compare their progress and work at home when they don't feel as if they are keeping up with the rest of the class.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

The parents are thrilled to have their students in advanced math. These kids are very motivated and brag to their parents about their progress.

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?

Some classroom teachers will allow students to substitute ALEKS for their class–assigned homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I compare their ALEKS progress against our estimation of progress required to pass the seventh grade advanced math test. This progress accounts for 50 percent of the grade.

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

Based on prior years, we believe that students will pass the seventh grade advanced math test if they complete Middle School Math Course 1 and 90 percent of Middle School Math Course 2. I divide the progress evenly across our three terms. Most of the student start out understanding about 50 percent of the first course, and move to the second course with an understanding of 80 percent of that curriculum. So, I require that they be 75 percent of the way through Middle School Math Course 1 at the end of the first trimester, 100 percent through by the end of the second trimester, and over 90 percent through Middle School Math Course 2 by the end of the year.

Learning Outcomes

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

After using ALEKS over the summer, the motivated students generally show a year or more of growth. Overall, students are proud of their progress; they learn to love math and to understand the difficult concepts.