

Implementation Strategies

Fred J. Hums Elementary School, School City of Mishawaka
Mishawaka, IN

Grade(s): K – 6

Scenario: Computers in Classroom, Home Access

Purpose: Enrichment/Gifted and Talented

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2 hours per week, 18 hours per term

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

Jill Hassel, Teacher

I teach high-ability math at the fourth grade level. We use ALEKS as part of our acceleration process for high-ability students. Students have increased their skill set tremendously. I have had some students progress three grade levels on standardized assessments, like EdPerformance. When they progress through their levels, they are very proud of themselves and pleased with their progress.

Scenario

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

We needed to develop a curriculum for high-ability students that would allow them to work independently and progress at a faster rate than their peers. ALEKS is part of the solution to that puzzle.

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?

Varies.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I require students in my high-ability math class to complete 15 topics or two hours of work in ALEKS every 7–10 days. This work is in addition to classroom instruction and enrichment experiences in math.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

I just allow students to select their topics, unless we're studying a certain topic in class. Then, I ask them to choose that topic if it's available to them on ALEKS.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students are provided direct instruction, usually followed by written homework. They can choose to work on the paper homework or on ALEKS during class, depending on their needs and/or access to technology at home.

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

I spend time before and after school with students to assist them with skills that they do not understand or are having difficulty mastering. Sometimes the Explain button isn't enough.

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

I encourage my students to work on ALEKS for half an hour each day. This work can be done either at school or at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents are encouraged to help students at home if they need assistance. Parents know the students' requirements and deadlines.

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 about 40 percent of homework time.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS is graded every week to ten days. ALEKS scores are approximately one third of students' total math grade.

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

Because the topics become more difficult and require more time as the year progresses, I require 15 topics per week or two hours of work on the program. If I see in the Time and Topic Report that a student appears to not be working during the two hour time, we discuss his/her progress before a grade is determined.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students have increased their skill set tremendously. I have had some students progress three grade levels on standardized assessments, like EdPerformance. When they progress through their levels, they are very proud of themselves and pleased with their progress.

Best Practices

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

I don't think that I've touched the surface of all of the things that ALEKS can do and all the ways I can use it. I want to incorporate it even more into my math class, integrating ALEKS with other skill and enrichment lessons that we do on a daily basis.