

Implementation Strategies

Barton Elementary School, Irving Independent School District
Irving, TX

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2.5 hours per week, 45 hours per term

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

Linda Robinson, Special Education Teacher

Our experience with ALEKS has been very successful. Students love using the program and are retaining the information. They enjoy seeing their progress, as well as being able to select the order of the topics. ALEKS QuickTables has increased their math fact fluency, and they find the games fun. The longer they work on the program, the more I hear comments about how easy math is getting for them. Many of my students disliked math prior to ALEKS. Now, I even have some students who will work on their pies at home. The ability to add quizzes has given me the advantage to very quickly know what additional help my students may need on a particular topic. The visual of the pie chart is very motivating for the students. They love sharing that with teachers and other students.

Scenario

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

Most of my students who are using ALEKS are two or more grade levels behind. They have little confidence in their math abilities and find problem solving activities to be very difficult.

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?

I use ALEKS for my fourth and fifth grade special education students. They all start at Level 3, and as they progress, they will move on to Level 4.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No, I usually let the students determine the order. Occasionally, I will ask the students to select a topic from a particular area if I see they need some extra help in that area.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I use the ALEKS reports to determine which topics to teach during small group instruction. Students work on ALEKS for about 30 minutes or three topics. Then, they spend about ten minutes on QuickTables.

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

I modify my regular teaching by using the data from ALEKS to support my instruction. This is used to work with students in small groups either before or after they work on ALEKS.

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

I encourage my students to work on ALEKS at home. However, some do not have computer access or their access is so slow, they have difficulty getting ALEKS to work on their home computer.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I discuss the use of ALEKS during meetings with the parents.

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?

No, we currently have a "no homework" policy.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Grades are based on weekly quizzes created in ALEKS.

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

Students are responsible for completing three topics per day. If they have completed 12 topics by the fourth day, they get to play various math games of their choosing. They can also receive extra time on QuickTables.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have seen student confidence increase, which has led to their ability to be successful with many math topics. Considering we have not been using ALEKS for very long, it is amazing to me that several students have already completed a level and are working on the next level. Students really enjoy having the ability to choose the topics they will work on each day. Their pie charts are a source of pride; they are always excited about the progress they make and seeing their pie continue to grow.

Best Practices

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

I think using the Time and Topic report is essential when implementing ALEKS. Before I really used the report, I noticed that some students would move from topic to topic without completing anything. The report has really helped them to set their own goals and to work on any goals I set for them. They are able to click on their own Time and Topic report and know exactly what is expected of them.