

Implementation Strategies

Robert Heideman Elementary School, Tustin Unified School District
Tustin, CA

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom, Home Access

Purpose: Intervention, After-School, Special Education, Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 10–25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 16 hours per week, 288 hours per term

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

Jennifer Resendiz, Teacher

I had heard amazing stories from other schools about what a "magical" program ALEKS was for their students. We wanted and needed the same magic at our Title I school, so I tried ALEKS. I learned to navigate the program by signing the students up and using the training given to our school. The students jumped right in and began with their Initial Assessment. From that point on, the students' mathematical abilities began to soar. Their confidence grew, and they were learning concepts that had not even been taught, with comments like "I know this because I learned it in ALEKS." My students felt much more prepared for the state test. The shy students started participating in class and getting the answers correct. My Resource Specialist Program (RSP) students have been working on QuickTables and are now passing their timed tests. I was also learning from ALEKS, taking some of the math tips used in the program to teach math concepts and strategies in my classroom with great success. I recommended to the principal to get more licenses for next year and start the program at the beginning of the year. These results occurred in just two months, so I can just imagine what a full year of this amazing program can do. In addition, I have recommended this program to other schools, parents, and the Costen Foundation.

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?

10–60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I use the program for 30 minutes in the computer lab once a week, and pull-out ten minutes per day for intervention and for students who finish assignments quickly.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We have a math pacing guide that structures our teaching in the classroom.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We spend ten minutes using QuickTables and 50 minutes using ALEKS in our afterschool program.

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

I started using the strategies from ALEKS in my classroom. In addition, ALEKS students became "experts" in the classroom and would peer tutor.

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

Daily. In fact, they are rewarded for mastering an agreed upon number of topics per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Through newsletters, phone calls home, and one-on-one conferences.

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?

It is hard to have them work on it for homework because most do not have access to a computer with Internet.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I have not yet, but I intend to next year.

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

Each goal is set up per student. The students have goal sheets and the amount of topics is agreed upon. We check on a weekly basis for their progress towards goals. Most students are encouraged to complete 16–20 topics per week.

Learning Outcomes

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

Since using ALEKS, students are memorizing math facts, classroom test grades are higher, and classroom math instruction is understood more easily. Students are excited to fill their ALEKS Pie! They understand the concepts introduced in class, making them participate more. In addition, they are teaching the other students if they have mastered a particular math topic.

Best Practices

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

Set up goals with small rewards for accomplishing their goals. Also, ask students to use a notebook to do their math calculations and to record their login information. Also, ensure the students have pencils and erasers available, and are working in a quiet environment. Have it all set up before you begin!