

Implementation Strategies

Cowan Road Elementary School, Griffin–Spalding County Schools
Griffin, GA

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computer Lab, One-to-One Laptop Program, Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Intervention, Improve State Test Scores, At-Risk Students, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 60–70%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3–4 hours per week, 27 hours per term

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

Christine Ray, Teacher

I am very pleased with the progress my students have made. As an Early Intervention Program (EIP) teacher, my students are already struggling learners. ALEKS has provided a new form of learning. Students love being on the computer. ALEKS provides the students with direct feedback on their progress, and it also allows them to advance at their own pace. This has really helped my students to not only feel successful, but to also actually be successful!

Scenario

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

Prior to using ALEKS, my school saw low test scores in math across several grades. Once we implemented the program, we were able to better pinpoint the individual areas of concern and attack the issues in a more specific manner.

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

3–4 days per week.

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

60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Thankfully, ALEKS provides connections to state standards for us. It is a great way to check for understanding and to show parents and the administration what the students are learning. We have a school initiative to do well mathematically. ALEKS is a huge part of this goal.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

Not exactly. I try to focus on what the students need most. I do try to base my small group activities on the standards listed on our curriculum maps, but really, it depends on the students' needs.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We have a special lab specifically for ALEKS. We have a schedule for classes to filter through this lab. We also rotate students through QuickTables in their classroom.

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

I base many of my small groups on how the students are performing in ALEKS. It allows me to see specific students who have a deficit in a particular area.

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

Many of my students do not have computers at home. If they do, I say they can work on ALEKS only if they want to.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We do not have very much parental involvement, but when we do, I usually ask them to help with small group instruction.

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?

None, unless I print a worksheet.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

We do not use a grading scale anymore. We use a standards-based report card, so all of the standards are listed. The students can score a 1 (does not meet), 2 (meets), or 3(exceeds) on each standard. The evidence from ALEKS is used to support our findings for the specific state standards. It's great!

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

No, but I do use a goal sheet. I ask them to try and meet or exceed their daily goals. It is also helpful to do this with students in order to motivate them.

Learning Outcomes

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

The majority of my students have seen increases in their level of mastery on benchmark tests. The students are very pleased with their progress. The pie graph provides them with a visual representation of what they have learned and what they have left to master. They are so much more confident with their mathematical skills now than before we began using the ALEKS program.

Best Practices

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

I love to see students excited about their progress. It is great for them to visually see all of the standards they have mastered. Make a big deal about it too! Have a Wall of Fame listing students who have reached goals 20, 40, 60, and so on! They love it!