

Implementation Strategies

Saint Bernadette School, Archdiocese of Omaha
Omaha, NE

Grade(s): K – 8

Scenario: Computers in Classroom, Home Access

Purpose: Supplement

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1 hour per week, 8 hours per term

Betsy Harding, Teacher

I teach second grade. This is our first year trying out the ALEKS program in our school. I had one student in my class sign up for the program, and he is doing the QuickTables portion of the program. I wouldn't say that he was behind when he first began using the QuickTables program, but he has quickly become one of the fastest students when it comes to answering math problems accurately.

In my classroom, we have time when the students work on journals, read, complete math games, etc. He frequently asks if he could do ALEKS. The other students often stop what they are doing to watch him complete the problems on the screen. They want to do the program too. I know there will be many of my students from this year begging their parents to sign them up in third grade because they can see how much fun this boy is having when he is working on ALEKS in my classroom.

Scenario

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

Students are not excited about math and see it as a chore. Many students are intimidated by the subject. They are afraid to try because they know they have gotten the answers wrong so often. This program really adds a dimension to the math program that we didn't have before. If we can get all of the students on board, I think we will see huge successes.

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

3 days per week.

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

20 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I was not able to implement it into the curriculum, as I only have one student enrolled in my class this year.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We only use QuickTables in second grade, so I do not have topics to cover.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

ALEKS is used by one student during our free choice time, which is usually about 20 minutes, three times a week.

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

I continued to do everything the same this year.

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

I encourage my student who is enrolled to work on ALEKS on the days he does not do it at school, which is 3–4 times a week for 20 minutes at a time at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I talked to parents about ALEKS at parent-teacher conferences and will do so again this coming school year. With one year under my belt, I now know how much ALEKS (even the QuickTables portion) helps the students.

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.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I do not use ALEKS as part of the grade.

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

No. I know he is making progress by looking at his addition and subtraction tables. He wants to progress to get to the new games.

Learning Outcomes

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

The student in my class who uses the program is more accurate in answering the math problems that are given to him. He knows he is getting faster with his facts. He continuously challenges other students to flash card races to prove he is faster and has the correct answers. It is neat to see how excited he is about math.

My own children are also enrolled in the program this year, and I see great strides made in their ability to read problems and understand what is being asked of them. My daughter often groaned when I told her to work on math facts, but now she will work on QuickTables so she can earn her next game. She doesn't even realize the games are more math facts for her to do. My son is in third grade this year and really enjoys seeing his pie fill up. He would call me over to the computer screen to show me the colors getting filled in.