

Implementation Strategies

Unity East Elementary School, Community Unit School District 7
Philo, IL

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Intervention, At-Risk Students, Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 6–7 hours per week, 180 hours per term

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

Patricia Elliott, Special Education Resource Teacher

This is my first year using ALEKS. It is a good assessment and intervention tool. I like the clear progress reports and the alignment of content to Illinois state standards.

Scenario

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

Re-teaching and rehearsal of basic skills generally used to come from workbooks, worksheets, and teacher-made materials. For my students, ALEKS has become a non-threatening and motivating way to gain needed support for concepts initially presented in the general classroom.

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?

15 minutes

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

ALEKS helps me meet Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. It provides specific data that I can use to measure and report progress.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

I allow students to choose their topics. I monitor use of the program to insure that students are spending adequate time within any chosen topic before moving on to another topic.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I utilize ALEKS to provide independent study time for my special education students. This allows me to work one-on-one with specific students in their area of need while the other students stay actively engaged in math. I try to sit with each student periodically to monitor their work habits and progress; this is something the kids enjoy – being able to show off their newly learned skills.

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

It allows me to meet specific needs more efficiently and effectively.

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

We have not yet tried ALEKS at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

In reporting, I am able to show parents what skills their child has mastered and what skills need work. Parents like to see this, and like to have a clear listing of skills to use as reference in helping their child outside of school.

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 use ALEKS data to report on progress toward IEP goals.

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

I record percentages of mastered skill areas for reporting purposes.

Learning Outcomes

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

Anything computer based is of interest to my students. This, coupled with the frequent feedback from the pie chart, makes for a motivating program. One thing my fifth graders really like is the feeling that they are getting information that their classmates may not have been exposed to. They feel as if they have an advantage and are anxious to fill up those pie pieces. I have seen significant progress in my fifth grade students. They are able to read the instructions and lessons, and to act on what they are learning.

Best Practices

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

Computer programs are not a substitute for good teaching. Therefore, I believe it is important to sit with students on a regular basis to actually see how they are using the program. This personal contact is what gives you so much information about how a child is learning and how a teacher might build on what is learned via computer programs.