

Implementation Strategies

Tremont Elementary School, Upper Arlington City School District
Columbus, OH

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computers in Classroom, Home Access

Purpose: Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 40–50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 0.5–1 hour per week; 9–12 hours per term

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

Kathy Rekstis, Teacher

My experience with ALEKS has been very positive. I have been using ALEKS as a supplement to my district and state curriculum and it has provided my students with many opportunities of review and enrichment. The more I use it with my students, the more I familiarize myself with the endless possibilities of the ALEKS experience. My students are driven by watching their pies grow and they love setting weekly time and topic goals for themselves. I am able to provide small group and individualized help daily to my students' ALEKS questions that they have from their nightly homework. I would recommend this to any classroom teacher who wants to supplement their district curriculum. ALEKS helps me as a classroom teacher to provide more opportunities for differentiation in the classroom. It provides real data for parents that I am proud to share throughout the school year. ALEKS also has QuickTables which is a great way for students to master their facts. I love ALEKS and I can't imagine my classroom without it!

Scenario

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

There were a few challenges in the state curriculum prior to using ALEKS. Our state curriculum has many standards that are hard to cover in–depth in our school year. ALEKS provides the review and enrichment that I couldn't do alone. It is like have another teacher with my students in the evenings when they are continuing their learning. My students spend more time working on math topics than my classes before ALEKS. I love the learning that is able to continue outside the classroom. If my students hit a hard topic that is new to them, they are able to email me so I am aware of it for the next school day.

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?

Varies.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I implement ALEKS into my nightly homework with goal setting and weekly checks of time and topics. I also use ALEKS as a place for my students to review and extend their learning of math topics. Some days I am able to work with struggling math students in a small group setting while students that are not struggling can continue their math topics on their ALEKS accounts. ALEKS allows me the extra support that a teacher needs when working with students with individualized needs.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

This past school year I set up my ALEKS accounts based on the textbook we use in our school. This was very helpful and helped students stay on track.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I usually use ALEKS as an extension to my nightly homework. I also use ALEKS as part of my station work in math 1–2 times a week. This provides another opportunity for me to help students in the classroom with new topics my students have not been exposed to.

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

I love the Average Report (Pie Chart) report. I am able to form small groups based on this data that ALEKS provides.

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

I ask my students to get on ALEKS for at least 10 minutes nightly Monday–Thursday. However, I have found when students set their

own goals they are getting on ALEKS more than our class goal.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

At our Open House at the beginning of the school year I provide my parents with a little background on how ALEKS works. I also tell parents that there will be some new topics their children will be exposed to along the way and they may have questions at home. I let parents know that they may help their students, or the students do have an option to email me directly through ALEKS so I can address their learning needs in the classroom.

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?

ALEKS is assigned to my students as part of their homework responsibilities. This is maybe 50 percent of their homework responsibilities.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I do not use ALEKS as part of my grading system other than using it as a homework check.

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

I do require my students to make regular amounts of progress in ALEKS throughout the school year. It is my goal for their grade level pies to be filled by the end of the school year.

Learning Outcomes

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

Since I have used ALEKS in my classroom with my fourth grade math classes, I have seen higher success in topics learned in the classroom earlier or the first time around because my students are being exposed to the topics on ALEKS prior to whole group lessons. I am thrilled with their successes and my students feel more successful because they are understanding topics in class. My students love watching their pies grow throughout the year and are very motivated by it and are amazed to see their growth from their Initial Assessment taken at the beginning of the year. ALEKS provides that front–end loading for my students which, in the end, provides them with the confidence once we hit on it in class. This year many of my students that struggled in math started to say, "I love math this year!" I think this is due to the exposure that ALEKS provides my students.

Best Practices

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

ALEKS is a great tool to help form small group instruction. ALEKS is also a great tool to help you provide differentiation to your classroom of students with individualized needs. I am so pleased with the learning that happens with my students. Many students go from not liking math to loving it! I think it is due to seeing their progress on ALEKS. Thanks ALEKS!