

Implementation Strategies

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School, Catholic Diocese of Memphis
Cordova, TN

Grade(s): K – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom, Home Access

Purpose: Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 20%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1 hour per week

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables)

Judy Turnage, Teacher

I have been pleased with this program. I have seen many students improve not only in skills, but also improve their self-confidence with regard to participation in class.

Scenario

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

In the past we suffered from low math scores on standardized tests. We have been making improvements over several years, but still are always looking for more ways to enhance and improve our math program.

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

1 day per week.

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

50 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

For the first semester, we accessed the computer lab every week so that students would become familiar with the program. We also assigned the "Whole Numbers" section of the students' pies for the first term of the semester.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

I cover the "Whole Numbers" section of the pie first.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We normally correct the previous day's work, and then each student logs onto a computer and begins work where they left off from their last session. I make myself available for any students who may need help navigating through the program or who need help with a particular question or topic.

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

After using ALEKS, I spend far less time drilling. I am able to incorporate more interactive lessons in the classroom and some classes are able to advance in topics beyond the sixth grade level.

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

At least one hour per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents have called or emailed the administrator and I to report how great they feel this program has been for their child. Reports are sent home quarterly with report cards indicating the advancement each child has made in the program from the last term.

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 in addition to their homework and is about a quarter of their assigned homework each week.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I give quizzes, grade their time spend with the program, and how many items they learn in a term. The grade earned is based on the average of these three requirements.

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

They are given a quiz grade based on the amount of time logged on the program. Nine hours out of the term are required along with a minimum of seven items should be learned each term.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have found that my students are less afraid to explore or take risks when working with math topics. Students constantly remember and comment on topics that they have worked on in ALEKS. By far, the most gratifying thing I notice is the growth in the students' self-confidence when they work on math topics; particularly new math topics. Overall, they are satisfied. Because the program requires more drill in any area they have not mastered, all of my students have discovered that math is cumulative and that they must learn and retain the math information they are taught.

Best Practices

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

I would suggest providing plenty of opportunities to access computers at school, during class, before and after school, and in a variety of places. The program becomes an integrated part of the school's math curriculum, instead of an isolated part of it.