

Implementation Strategies

Jordan Hill Elementary School, Griffin–Spalding County Schools
Griffin, GA

Grade(s): K – 5

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom, Laptop Carts

Purpose: Intervention, Enrichment/Gifted and Talented, Improve State Test Scores, At–Risk Students

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 40%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2 hours per week, 18 hours per term

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

Dashia T. Josey, Teacher

I've used ALEKS for the last two years with my fifth grade students. The first year, I had about 12 students who were at risk for not passing the math portion of the Criterion–Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). I used ALEKS to help these students and ten out of the 12 passed, while the other two increased by at least 10 points. Since ALEKS was so successful with these students, our school system decided to purchase ALEKS subscriptions for all of the fifth graders! All of my students have made tremendous gains at their individual, differentiated levels. ALEKS helps those who struggle with math, and also provides a challenge for the gifted and talented students. ALEKS is the perfect math fit for all students!

Scenario

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

The main challenge that I had before ALEKS was finding a computer based program that would differentiate instruction for students. It was extremely hard to add a math supplement before ALEKS.

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

4 days per week.

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

30 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I use ALEKS for the rest of my class while I work with a small group to improve understanding on specific math concepts.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

I use our school system's curriculum map to decide what should be taught first. Our system has listed the concepts in the following order: Whole Numbers, Data Analysis, Decimals, Fractions, Geometry, and Measurement. Algebra is taught throughout the school year.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

My classes are an hour long. Each class begins with a sponge, a mini–lesson, small group instruction, and ALEKS instruction. All of my students are on ALEKS or working with me in a small group.

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

I use some of the explanations as new methods to teach concepts. I also use the data to drive the instruction to help prepare students for what they should be learning next.

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

A lot of our students do not have computers at home. I do not require ALEKS at home, but I do encourage it if a computer is available.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We have a Family Math Mania night to introduce our parents to ALEKS.

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 the quiz option to help assess my students. Since we use a standards-based report card system, I decide if the students know the material by meeting, exceeding, or not meeting the concepts that have been taught.

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

My students have to reach a monthly goal. The students and I have individual conferences about their progress and we decided together what a reasonable goal would be for each of them. Students use a progress monitoring form and a graph to record progress and growth.

Learning Outcomes

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

All of my students have gained confidence when it comes to solving different types of math problems. I've seen students enter fifth grade without knowing multiplication facts, and they are now learning them very quickly with the help of QuickTables. I've also seen students who had never passed the math portion of the CRCT before pass with the help of ALEKS! My students feel very confident since using ALEKS. They feel as if they can conquer any math problem, and they can!

Best Practices

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

Before you begin, develop a student progress monitoring form and a graphing system; I usually use a line graph to show progress over time. Before you begin, select a theme for the program, and develop a bulletin board to display students' work and their names when they have reached monthly or weekly goals. Take pictures and really promote the program!