

Implementation Strategies

Itineris Early College High School, Jordan School District
West Jordan, UT

Grade(s): 11 – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom

Purpose: College and Career Readiness, Improve State Test Scores, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3 hours per week, 30 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Algebra 1, High School Geometry, Algebra 2

Jeffrey Price, Instructor

ALEKS has been a wonderful tool for our students who struggle with mathematics. We are an early college high school with an emphasis on mathematics and biotechnology. Some of the students who come to our school are not ready for the rigor of college-level mathematics classes. ALEKS has provided us with a way to meet the needs of each individual student and help them fill in the "gaps" in their mathematics knowledge. We have also been successful in helping these students complete concurrent enrollment courses and become college-ready.

Scenario

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

The biggest challenge was having one class try to fit the individual needs of each student. To put all students in one class and try and help each one was impossible, because they all had different concepts that they needed help with. Now we can put them all in the same class and help each student with what they need! ALEKS has been an invaluable tool for us.

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

4–5 days per week.

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

45 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

It was already in place when I started teaching here.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

Not really. We have it structured so that each student can work at their own pace and cover the topics they need the most.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

The students come in and log on to ALEKS. I require them to complete at least six topics each day. If they are nearing the end of a course and the topics are more difficult, I require less than six, which seems to be about right for these students. Many of them also work on ALEKS at home.

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

I used to use the textbook exclusively. I then went to using the textbook three days a week and ALEKS two days a week. Now, my students like ALEKS so much that we use it almost daily, and I supplement ALEKS with the textbook.

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

Some work on it at home daily. If they cannot get the required sections done in class, they work on it at home. I would say, on average, they use it twice a week at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Frankly, we really don't do much. The students are motivated enough that they take care of their work on their own. It is wonderful to watch them master concepts they previously could not grasp.

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?

Yes, it is now probably 90 percent of their homework. I will supplement ALEKS with a textbook assignment if I find that most or all of the students are struggling with a particular concept.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Between the assessments and assignments, ALEKS is involved in 40 percent of the assignments and 50 percent of the assessments.

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

Yes, I require that they complete six topics in the pie each day.

Learning Outcomes

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

The students really like that ALEKS is individualized and builds a curriculum based on their needs. We have seen students able to learn concepts that they had previously been unable to master and have several students who completed more than one course during a school year. The fruit of our labors is that these students are able to be successful in college-level math classes after taking ALEKS for a semester or a year.

Best Practices

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

I am more of a guide than a teacher. ALEKS does the teaching, and I am able to walk around the classroom and individually help the students with concepts they are really struggling with. ALEKS has not only made my job easier but has also allowed me to become a much more effective teacher because I am able to meet the individual needs of each student.