

Implementation Strategies

Palmer High School, Matanuska–Susitna Borough School District
Palmer, AK

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1–1.5 hours per week, 18–25 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Pre–Algebra, High School Geometry

Jan Seaman–Stortz, Resource Teacher

Last year, I mainly used ALEKS QuickTables with my students, and I saw great results. I also had a few students who used ALEKS as their math program due to poor attendance or skills that were below the classes offered. This year, I am using QuickTables and also have my students doing ALEKS. They have to master 80 percent of the Pre–Algebra course by the end of the year. They are enrolled in an Algebra class, but many have holes in several skills or concepts. I have several students who really put the effort into the course as well as what we did in class that passed their exit exams. They have also had great leaps of growth in another test we do in the district three times a year that is normally referenced. I feel ALEKS really helps my students become learners rather than just listening and spitting back information.

Scenario

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

I can have a class of 10–20 and they can have math skills from third grade to just starting eighth grade. I am to get them through Pre–Algebra or Algebra and pass our exit exams. This helps me to start filling in the gaps as individuals.

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

2 days per week.

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

60–90 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

We use it on the long days as a chance to start filling in gaps.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No, but it is something I am looking at. I do encourage them to do the first two parts of the pie and then branch out.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I have a warm–up, we do a main concept, and then they work on ALEKS for 30–40 minutes.

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

I am still working on the best way to do this, but for now, I teach our regular curriculum while making time for the ALEKS.

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

All of the time.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I let parents know about ALEKS at conference time, and when I am in discussions with them.

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, some do not have access to computers at home.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS assessments fall under 45 percent of the grade, and time on topic per week is at 25 percent of the grade.

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

I set 80 percent by the end of the year and give goals for the other quarters to help them gauge their progress. Most have met, or are almost at that goal with two weeks to go. A few are at least near 50 percent.

Learning Outcomes

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

The students who take ALEKS seriously really feel good about the program and what they have accomplished. A few that have not taken things seriously don't have a sense of what they can get from ALEKS.