

# Implementation Strategies

**Gibson Southern High School, South Gibson School Corporation**  
Fort Branch, IN

**Grade(s):** 9 – 12

**Scenario:** Computer Lab, Laptop Carts

**Purpose:** Intervention, Improve State Test Scores, At-Risk Students, Supplement

**ALEKS Portion of Curriculum:** 60%

**Time Spent in ALEKS:** 3 hours per week, 60 hours per term

**ALEKS Course:** Algebra 1

## **Amanda Brown, Teacher**

I have been using ALEKS for three years now. My first experience with ALEKS was during my student teaching at Eastern Greene High School. I saw all the benefits of the program, and when I began my first teaching job at Shelbyville High School, I immediately recommended it for the Math Lab class. Shelbyville High School had an extremely low Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+) test pass rate for the Algebra 1 End-of-Course Assessment (ECA). By the end of the year, there was a 40 percent jump in the pass rate, after using the ALEKS program. At my current job, I use ALEKS with my remedial Math Lab class. My students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) have had tremendous success using the program. In addition, I recently had a student pass the ECA Algebra 1 test and he had NEVER passed a Math ISTEP test before. Over the course of two years, I have only had three students who have been in my Math Lab class not pass the Algebra 1 ECA, and they did not utilize the ALEKS program. I love the program, and would highly recommend it.

## **Scenario**

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

There was not a class to help students who struggle with math before Math Lab. The administration could not find a program that they liked and felt would improve test scores.

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

3 days per week.

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

45 minutes.

## **Implementation**

### **How do you implement ALEKS?**

I align ALEKS with our textbook, therefore students work on the same material we cover during Math Lab.

### **Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?**

I align ALEKS with the Indiana State Standards, and soon will use the Common Core Standards. I usually follow the order of the current book we use in class.

### **How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?**

Students open laptops and begin work in the program.

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

I use ALEKS three days a week, and we do hands-on review games two days a week. Students like the change of pace of ALEKS and being able to work at their own pace.

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

Students are not required to work at home but they are encouraged to do so three times a week.

### **How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?**

I have had a few parents who have had their child work in ALEKS at home; however many parents do not require it or do not understand how ALEKS works.

## 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?**

ALEKS is 50 percent of the grade.

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

I base my students' progress on hours spent in ALEKS, but I do tell students their goal is 60–75 percent completion before the end of the semester.

## Learning Outcomes

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

My remedial students with IEPs have seen great success with ALEKS when used correctly. Over two years, I have had 60 students with my Math Lab course, and only three of those did not pass the ECA test while incorporating ALEKS into their schedule. I try to help students understand what "good" progress is. Sometimes they have a hard time understanding why they lose pieces of their pie, but in the long run, competitive nature takes over and they push themselves to achieve more.

## Best Practices

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

I love the program, and would highly recommend it with proper instruction. It is very important that teachers receive the proper training before implementing ALEKS in their classrooms. I would also recommend that students keep a notebook with ALEKS notes in it, and count it as a grade.