

Implementation Strategies

Mount Pulaski High School, Mount Pulaski Community Unified School District #23

Mt. Pulaski, IL

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access

Purpose: Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 15%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3–4 hours per week, 30 hours per term

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

Denise Farnam, Teacher

Our Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) scores were low, and we had not met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three years. I use ALEKS as a strategy to improve our scores. I take the classes to the computer lab and students work individually. Many of them have said that it helps them to review past material and refresh their minds before they take the American College Testing (ACT) and PSAE tests.

Scenario

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

Our biggest problem is motivation. We have many students who are not willing to put extra time into their school work.

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

2–3 days per week.

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

45 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Students are required to complete the initial assessment. Then they are required to work on their individual needs and to log in time spent on the program for a grade.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

My Algebra 2 sections begin with Algebra 1 for review, followed by Geometry. My advanced math students begin with Algebra 2, and then Geometry for review.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students are graded for their participation in the program. We use class time to work on the program, as well as on assignments in which they have to complete portions of their pie. They are also required to log time in away from the classroom.

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

I take days out of my regular teaching to devote time to ALEKS.

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

Whenever we go to the lab, I assign a piece of the pie or a time requirement.

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?

They receive a grade that is equivalent to a test grade.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Participation in ALEKS replaces a test score. I grade them on completing pie pieces and meeting the time requirements assigned.

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

Yes, they are required to complete pieces of their pie as well as time requirements.

Learning Outcomes

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

We will not get the results of the tests until next year, but I hope that they have improved. I have had several situations in which students have said they remember concepts from working with ALEKS.

Best Practices

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

You really have to express the importance of ALEKS. Share other success stories and how it will help them.