

Implementation Strategies

Kumu Wai Mauloa Academy, Private
Wailuku, HI

Grade(s): 4 – 12

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Intervention, Credit Recovery, Special Education, Summer School

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 5 hours per week, 69 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables), High School Preparation for Algebra 1, Algebra 1, PreCalculus, Prep for GED Mathematics, Mastery of SAT Math

Sylvia FooSum, Academy Director

After 50 years as an educator there is finally a program that is effective in spanning the who, what and how of learning math. Students are CONSISTENTLY experiencing success where there was failure, building confidence where there was fear, and have excitement for math where there was aversion!

Scenario

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

Actual student responses include: "I always felt shame when the teacher had to explain over and over in front of the other students" and "I didn't like waiting for everyone to get caught up because I was always ahead of everybody."

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

5 days per week.

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

60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

All students begin at the recommended level of ALEKS and NOT at their actual grade. Students are allowed to do ALEKS at their own rate and time of the day.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We follow the program as designed.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

All core curriculum is individualized. We assign ALEKS for students at least an hour, and students generally work on the same subject. However, this may vary as we are INDIVIDUALIZE all core subjects and allow subject selections for the day depending on what is a student's priority for that specific day.

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

Group work has been almost entirely eliminated. Work on math facts has moved entirely to QuickTables and greater parent involvement has been introduced.

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

This varies as many do not own computers at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

QuickTables work is the responsibility of parents if a computer is available. Results from pie charts are shared with parents as a regular part of the student's report card.

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?

ALEKS is assigned only when a computer is available. The assignments for ALEKS vary.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS is 100 percent of the grade.

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

Students move at their own rate because we are entirely individualized. We attempt to move through a minimum of one or more ALEKS levels per year.

Learning Outcomes

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

My first student is a sixth grader who entered with above-passing grades at her previous school. The ALEKS Initial Assessment revealed significant gaps and lack of mastery back to the fourth grade level. This student completed ALEKS level five and level six with 98 percent accuracy and is ending the academic year in level seven. Now she loves math! For my second student with ADHD, ALEKS has worked perfectly. He can go at his own pace throughout the day, put his program "to sleep" without distraction when focusing becomes too difficult, and appreciate the fact he does not "stand out" and call attention to himself in this process! Actual comments from students include: "I like the visual explanations that are clear;" "The colors make me feel happy and help me;" "I like it when I can experience math with the measuring tools;" "It's 'funner' than being in a class;" "I like it because I can go at my own pace, and I don't feel shame when I am behind;" and "When you get it wrong, ALEKS tells you why."

Best Practices

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

Student note-taking is CORE to assessment results. Students are allowed to review their notes for up to an entire school day, depending on the student.