

Implementation Strategies

Visions in Education, San Juan Unified School District
Carmichael, CA

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: One-to-One Laptop Program, Online School, Home Access

Purpose: Exit Exam, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

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

Mindi Rold, Teacher

ALEKS is an effective tool for motivated individuals. The strength of the program is that students need to master topics and not just complete a problem. I have seen students improve over a period of time based upon mastering earlier topics. Teachers also had to complete ALEKS Algebra for our professional development. It allowed me to experience what students do in the program, as well as be able to help them better.

Scenario

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

One challenge we faced was students not retaining what they learned. Also, questions were not complex enough to teach the standards.

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

3–5 days per week.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

ALEKS was a curriculum offered to our school. We did it as a trial during summer school and saw success, so we decided to give it as a choice for students for the last two years. Teachers make the choice to enroll students in one of the classes.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No, students can choose what they want to master and when.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students work at home on their courses. They are assigned to log in daily and master at least two topics. This also depends on how many topics they need to complete to meet their objective.

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

I spend time monitoring students' work, what they mastered, how long they have been online, and assessment scores. During meetings, we often work on problems together or go over a quiz.

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

Students are encouraged to master 2–4 topics daily.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I complete an orientation with the students and their families to make sure they understand what is expected. This also helps parents to know what their students are working on.

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 100 percent of the homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

The first two quizzes are 60 percent, the notebook is ten percent, and the assessments are 30 percent.

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

Yes, students are expected to meet the objectives and to show progress in their assessments to receive a passing grade and credits.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have had several students complete ALEKS. One success story is a Special Education student who likes that it is specific and explains to him step-by-step exactly what he needs to master for the day. He is seeing at least ten percent growth each time he takes an assessment, and it is important to his progress for him to see his improvement. I have another student who had not passed the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) for the past two years. She started to study with ALEKS, and it really helped her retention. She passed the CAHSEE for the first time this year. Some students like to see their progress and will work to see their pie graph grow.

Best Practices

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

I provided a handout that describes how to keep a notebook and includes the assessment and quiz dates. This helps keep students on track.