

Implementation Strategies

Wapello High School, Wapello Community School District
Wapello, IA

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab

Purpose: At-Risk Students

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3.5 hours per week, 31.5 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Algebra 1

Megan Brown, Teacher

I use ALEKS with a mixture of students, many of whom are at-risk. I strictly use ALEKS with no supplementing. I have many students who take to the program and enjoy the online environment.

Scenario

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

The class I use the program with has mainly at-risk students, many of whom were not very strong in their math skills. Many of them also had behavioral problems, so I was constantly dealing with arguments between the students and rarely had time to teach meaningful content.

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?

40 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I use ALEKS for one of my three Algebra 1 classes exclusively.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

The students work through the content at their own pace.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students come into the computer lab, sit down at their computers, and log in to the program. I wander around the class, help students, and check for understanding as I go.

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

Using ALEKS allowed me to take more of a helping role instead of standing in front of the class. The students were more active in learning the material.

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

I never require students to work at home, but encourage it when they miss a day of school or if they are not making enough progress.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I send a letter home at the beginning of the class for the parents to read, and I discuss ALEKS with parents at conferences.

Grading

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS is my only grade. I grade on progress in the program on a weekly basis. I take the student with the highest topics mastered and break it down into A–F from there. Students also receive grades for effort on a daily basis and a grade for any assessments I assign.

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

I do not set a weekly limit because many of my students would stop after reaching the goal. I like to see them master at least one topic a day if not more, so roughly five topics a week on the lower end.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have seen a few students take more interest in mathematics. I have not had a chance to compare test scores since beginning ALEKS, but I think some of the students learned to think through the problems individually instead of relying on someone else to do their work. Many students enjoy watching their progress. I have students who have made a lot more progress than they would have in a regular classroom.