

Implementation Strategies

Frenship High School, Frenship Independent School District
Wolfforth, TX

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab

Purpose: Intervention

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 30%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1–1.5 hours per week, 18–24 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Algebra Readiness, Pre–Algebra, Foundations of High School Math, High School Preparation for Algebra 1, Algebra 1, High School Geometry, Algebra 2, PreCalculus, Trigonometry

Andi Giberson, Teacher

I feel that the ALEKS program is an integral part of our students' success. Our students use ALEKS as part of a math lab program, designed for students who did not pass their standardized test the previous year. Students are more confident in their ability to solve problems because they can work at their own pace to master objectives. They are always very excited to show me how much they have progressed in a course or on an objective.

Scenario

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

I think we face the same challenges that many districts face with students who are not meeting state expectations for progress. Those students may believe that they are incapable. This program is helping to show them that they are capable. It gives them the opportunity to work at their own pace and helps them build success incrementally.

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

2–3 day per week.

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

30 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

ALEKS is used to fill gaps in knowledge and to show students that they can progress on math objectives while working at their own pace. By starting students in a middle school math course, many of those gaps can be reinforced and mastered.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Our math labs are set up with ALEKS for skill building, state test practice to reduce test anxiety, homework help, and one–on–one and/or small group tutoring. There are also assessments to help students see their progress. If students don't have homework, that time is split between the remaining activities.

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

I find myself looking at the assessments and pre–tests that the students take in ALEKS to customize practice work that I assign them. I also encourage peer tutoring, using the results of the assessments to pair students with differing abilities. As a result of this, students realize that they excel at different topics and it builds new respect between classmates.

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

They are always encouraged but not required to. These students often struggle in more than one class and not all of them have computer access at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We send home communication at the beginning of the year outlining the math lab program. I like to provide recognition when students complete courses in ALEKS.

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?

I provide a few different grades for ALEKS. First, there is a daily grade for participation. Second, they receive grades on assessments. Finally, the percent change between pre-test and post-test is another grade.

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

They are only responsible for working diligently. Not everyone can make progress at the same rate and some students need way more assistance.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students are more confident in their ability to solve problems because they can work at their own pace to master objectives. They are always very excited to show me how much they have progressed in a course or on an objective.

Best Practices

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

Be open to all of the tools. Take the time to learn about ALEKS as much as you can. Our school had a representative come and do an on-site training, which I think was very helpful. Encourage and celebrate progress and success, and use the data that you get to personalize tutoring and assistance for your students.