

# Implementation Strategies

**Winters High School, Winters Joint Unified School District**  
Winters, CA

**Grade(s):** 9 – 12

**Scenario:** Computer Lab, Laptop Carts

**Purpose:** Credit Recovery, After-School, At-Risk Students

**ALEKS Portion of Curriculum:** 100%

**Time Spent in ALEKS:** 3 hours per week, 120 hours per term

**ALEKS Course:** Algebra 2

## **Raena Lavelle, Teacher**

At first, I was apprehensive when my previous teaching site purchased ALEKS as a remedial math tool. However, I quickly realized the power of ALEKS as I watched my students improve mathematically. I also saw my students gain an increased sense of confidence and pride. When I moved and my new school site was looking for a credit retrieval program that would be mostly independent study, ALEKS was my first thought. The program is a fantastic way to have students remediate standards independently of each other. It allows me to have 20 kids in the same classroom working at a different pace. The clear explanations help me manage my time with each student and the reports help students monitor their own progress. ALEKS is the best.

## **Scenario**

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

My students were struggling to obtain credits towards graduation. They needed to retake a course which would have a negative impact on class size as well as their schedules, elective choices, and progress towards graduation. Summer school is no longer offered because of budget cuts, so ALEKS is a way for our school to still help our struggling kids succeed.

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

3 days per week.

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

60 minutes.

## **Implementation**

### **How do you implement ALEKS?**

As a remedial course, ALEKS is used in our computer lab for three days a week during the "zero" period, which is the hour before school starts, so that students do not need to alter their schedules to retake the course.

### **Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?**

No.

### **How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?**

Students log on, review previous concepts, and then begin new ones. If they have questions, the circulating teacher helps them one-on-one. Once a week the teacher picks a specific standard for students to work on at the same time, and once a week students are also given a pop quiz.

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

ALEKS changes the way a traditional course needs to be taught. Because we have enough computers for each student, they work independently, rather than receiving traditional lectures with note taking. Students work independently with one-on-one help from the instructor when needed.

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

Every day, but it is not required.

### **How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?**

We use it as a way to save parents from paying for private online classes out of pocket. It also saves students from needing to take a course out of their schedules to retake the class. Parents have been hesitant but supportive.

## 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, ALEKS is not required from home because not all students have computers at home.

**How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?**

Grading is done on a standards-based system. It includes quizzes (20 percent) and standards completion (80 percent). Because ALEKS doesn't let a student move on until they have mastered the standard, as long as it is listed as mastered, I trust the system.

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

I go into the Advanced Teacher Module and set learning rates for students. This allows me to track who is falling behind without having them all working on the same things.

## Learning Outcomes

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

Students are able to remediate a class they would otherwise be retaking, which helps alleviate overcrowded classrooms and gives students the chance to take electives instead of repeating a course. ALEKS helps students fill gaps in knowledge and allows them to learn standards at an individualized pace. Students are motivated by the visual pie chart, and they enjoy watching the bar graph fill up as they master standards during practice. The percent increase shown after each assessment gives them an instant idea of how they have done on the material. I believe ALEKS helps even the most unmotivated students learn to trust their own abilities, no matter how varied they may be.