

Implementation Strategies

Idalia School, Idalia School District RJ-3
Idalia, CO

Grade(s): 7 – 12

Scenario: One-to-One Laptop Program

Purpose: Improve State Test Scores, At-Risk Students, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 60%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2.5 hours per week, 42 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mastery of SAT Math

Cindy Soehner, Teacher

I have been using ALEKS to supplement my math instruction with a group of Algebra 2 students. This particular group was very low-performing and had very diverse abilities. I do a traditional classroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays and use ALEKS on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. To make students accountable, I use a participation grade for number of topics mastered on ALEKS days and record ALEKS quiz scores from quizzes that I create through the instructor tools. The students like the variety of activities, and like most teenagers these days, they enjoy working on the computers. Progress remains to be seen, as we are awaiting Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) scores and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data. I think the students feel good about their progress. To master a topic requires three correct answers so success for these challenged students is possible!

Scenario

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

Students were very challenged by math, had poor performance on standardized tests, and did not like math class.

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?

50 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

We inter-weave ALEKS into our traditional school curriculum.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

It is the student's choice.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We begin each day with a bell-ringer activity while computers are booting up, followed by students selecting a topic from their pie. I require that they attempt five topics per day and master three to get full daily points. I also schedule a quiz every other week.

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

Each student gets individual attention depending on their topic and skill level.

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

Any time a student misses school, they are required to make up the ALEKS units missed. I find this to be an easy way for students to make up missed work and it is easy to track.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents are aware of the use of ALEKS; however, any expectation of parent involvement does not go beyond that.

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?

It is homework only if they miss a class period.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I require students to open five topics and master three, making it an eight point possible "assignment" for the day. Overall, assignments comprise 40 percent of a student's grade. Quizzes taken on ALEKS and tests given by the teacher comprise another 40 percent of their grade.

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

Yes, I measure their progress by the number of topics mastered.

Learning Outcomes

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

Progress remains to be seen, as we are awaiting CSAP scores and MAP data. I think the students feel good about their progress. To master a topic requires three correct answers so success for these challenged students is possible!

Best Practices

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

Be sure to set a minimum requirement or else the less motivated students will not use their computer time on ALEKS wisely.