

Implementation Strategies

Zeeland High School, Zeeland 4 School District
Zeeland, ND

Grade(s): 7 – 12

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Enrichment/Gifted and Talented, At-Risk Students, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 5 hours per week, 40 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 3, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, High School Geometry, Algebra 2, PreCalculus

Rebecca Meidinger, Teacher

ALEKS has been an amazing addition to our math classrooms. We are just finishing our second year with the ALEKS program and my students are thriving! Parents, students, teachers, and administrators have nothing but positive comments about the program. We love, love, love it here!

Scenario

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

High-achieving students got bored easily waiting for other students who were struggling. I could never seem to get through the entire curriculum each year. ALEKS makes it easier to get through everything the students need to get through, and they have a great understanding when they are done.

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?

50 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I started ALEKS on the first day of school in 2010. We had an Open House one night for parents to come and take a look at the program.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students come in and work on their topics, while I help students individually. Twice a week students print out worksheets for homework.

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

I am able to work with students on an individual basis. Students get more one-on-one attention and are thriving.

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

Students are encouraged to work on ALEKS at home. Some students do, some students don't.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We hold an open house to introduce parents to the program. Parents also come in for parent-teacher conferences twice a year to discuss student progress.

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?

Students do worksheets twice a week as a homework grade.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Students are given a Goal Chart that explains how many topics they need to finish by each grading period in order to receive a certain letter grade. This topic grade is 20 percent of their grade, homework worksheets are 20 percent of their grade, and an end-of-term test is ten percent of their grade. For their end-of-term test, I generate a worksheet for each student.

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

We have eight grading periods each school year and students are expected to finish 12.5 percent of their topics each grading period. For example, halfway through the year, if a student is 50 percent of the way through his topics, he receives an A for 20 percent of his grade. If a student is only 40 percent of the way through his topics, he will receive an 80 percent as 20 percent of his grade.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students are doing so much more math! Students who are quick learners thrive because they don't have to sit and wait for the others to catch up. The students who struggle can take their time and not have to worry about keeping other students waiting. It's a win-win! Students love that they can see their progress on a daily basis. They love competing for how many topics they can complete each day, and they really like seeing their pie charts fill up. They even have a song and dance they do when an assessment pops up.

Best Practices

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

My students enjoy the challenge of meeting the topic goals that I present. It keeps them motivated to continue making progress. We love ALEKS and our tests scores show it!