

Implementation Strategies

Pine Creek High School, Academy School District 20
Colorado Springs, CO

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom

Purpose: After-School, Special Education, Intervention

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 5%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3.75 hours per week, 67.5 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables)

Kim Elliott, Teacher

ALEKS is the primary tool I use to differentiate instruction for 23 special education students whose knowledge varies tremendously. In addition, I also use ALEKS to prepare my students for state assessments. With so many struggling students, ALEKS gives us the flexibility we need to effectively place students at the appropriate skill levels. My students are making real progress, with many approaching grade level. They motivate one another with their growth, and encourage each other to work even harder to achieve success.

Scenario

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

Our struggling students were failing their math courses across the board.

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

2–3 days per week.

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

90 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

After completing an assessment, our students are assigned to the appropriate ALEKS course. The majority of student work takes place in the classroom, but we do expect one hour of independent study, as well.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We do not cover ALEKS topics in a particular order.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Our class is entirely ALEKS-centered, with students working independently at home, as well. At the end of each month I assign a comprehensive ALEKS assessment. When a student scores at least a 75 percent on an assessment, they are moved to the next ALEKS course.

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

ALEKS gives us the flexibility to put a student where they need to be, which enables us to teach courses without requiring several different textbooks.

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

We require one hour of ALEKS home use per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We send home parent letters and discuss student progress at IEP meetings.

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?

ALEKS is 100 percent of my students' homework responsibilities.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Successfully completing ALEKS topics accounts for 33 percent of the grade, weekly homework completion accounts for 33 percent, and assessment performance accounts for 34 percent.

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

We do not require specific amounts of progress, but we do pay attention to student growth. If our students do not exhibit some sort of performance increase, we take this as a sign of misplacement, and suggest that they move down a course level.

Learning Outcomes

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

After the second year of implementing ALEKS, my special education students are making real progress, with many approaching grade level. They motivate one another with their growth, and encourage one another to work even harder to achieve success.

Best Practices

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

I have found that requiring ALEKS work for poor performers, in addition to their regular math classes, produces good results.