

Implementation Strategies

Paramount High School – West Campus, Paramount Unified School District
Paramount, CA

Grade(s): 9

Scenario: Computer Lab, One-to-One Laptop Program

Purpose: Intervention, Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2 hours per week, 35 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Algebra 1

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Because of high stakes testing, the programs that we implement must yield visible results or they are discontinued. At our school, ALEKS continues to produce measurable outcomes in student achievement. ALEKS allows our students to visualize their growth in math, which is very powerful.

Scenario

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

The primary challenge we face in classroom instruction for 9th grade Algebra is the variety of ability levels among students.

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?

53 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

As the anchor component of our Algebra Support elective, ALEKS is used 2–3 days per week in a dedicated computer lab. While in the lab, teachers monitor student progress and post achievement data in the room. There are 12 classes that use the computer lab and each class is represented on a line graph on the wall, illustrating progress by week. In review of our program's implementation, we've found that the role of the teacher in the ALEKS lab is absolutely vital to its success.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We do not cover ALEKS in a particular order.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students meet the teacher at the ALEKS lab, log in, and work throughout the period. Students are monitored by their teacher and by the program administrator. They are also required to complete a special form noting the topics that they worked on that day, as well as their percentage mastery at the beginning and end of the class period.

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

Instruction outside of ALEKS in the Algebra Support elective now mirrors our regular Algebra 1 curriculum.

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

Students are asked to use ALEKS from home for at least one hour per week. We've discovered, however, that this is difficult to enforce because many students don't have access to a computer or the Internet at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We send letters about ALEKS to the parents, as well as provide ALEKS demonstrations on parent nights.

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 not a part of the students' homework load.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

As our school moves toward a more performance-based grading system, it becomes more difficult to predict the portion of ALEKS included in the grading system. In general, however, the ALEKS portion of the final grade is relative to the ALEKS portion of the curriculum – approximately 50 percent.

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

Students are expected to increase their ALEKS Pie mastery every day. Additionally, we have found that the display of student progress data is a core motivator. Each teacher who uses the lab has a mini bulletin board that illustrates their class progress and celebrates the top ten students in their group. Average class progress is also charted in a line graph each week.

Learning Outcomes

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

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Best Practices

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

Teacher involvement and display of student progress are key!