

Implementation Strategies

Havermale High School, Spokane Public Schools
Spokane, WA

Grade(s): 9 – 12

Scenario: Laptop Carts

Purpose: Intervention, Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25–100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3–8 hours per week, 40–60 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables), Pre–Algebra, Foundations of High School Math, High School Preparation for Algebra 1, Algebra 1, Algebra 2

Karen Cockburn, Mathematics Instructional Coach

In our work with students who have repeated many math classes, we have found ALEKS to be the tool to turn the tide. Students find success, choice, immediate feedback, and good explanations with ALEKS. They re–engage in their own learning process and find new confidence in their math abilities. Our students have quit complaining that they hate math, and now enjoy learning and making visible progress. Thank you!

Scenario

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

Teachers were unable to meet students' needs for remediation.

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

3–5 days per week.

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

60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I introduced ALEKS to teachers as a diagnostic assessment tool and supplemental curriculum to support student learning.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We do not cover topics in a particular order.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Students work on ALEKS during the class period with help from teachers.

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

Our approach includes less whole group instruction and more individualized help based on student needs.

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

Students in our Contract class are asked to work 1.5–2 hours outside of class. In the other classes, it is entirely up to the student.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Most of our students don't have parents that are actively involved in their students' education. During Parent Nights, we have students show their parents what ALEKS is and how they have progressed.

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?

In the Contract class, ALEKS is 100 percent of the students' homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Grading systems greatly vary by teacher.

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

We look at items learned to determine progress, and we expect students to add more than two new topics to their pie charts each week. We also use the weekly log to verify time on task.

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

The reports that list what the student can do are invaluable! The student is finally able to see exactly what he can do, and can measure his progress! Our students have quit complaining that they hate math, and now enjoy learning and making visible progress.

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

With ALEKS, the teacher takes on the role of supportive cheerleader. The problems that the students are given are appropriate based on what they already know; this opens the door for some of the best teaching opportunities, and our teachers have learned to watch for those moments. I make it a habit to sit with each student and ask them to find a topic in their ALEKS Pie that they find difficult so that we can work on it together. I have found that this removes some of the shame that high school students feel when they haven't learned something from elementary math.