Implementation Strategies

Walter C. Polson Middle School, Madison Public Schools
Madison, CT

Grade(s): 7 – 8
Scenario: Computer Lab
Purpose: Intervention, RtI
ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 90%
Time Spent in ALEKS: 2 hours per week; 24 hours per term
ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables)

Gina M. Wygonik, Math Intervention Specialist
Utilizing the ALEKS program for our RtI Math Intervention has been a positive experience for all students involved. It is user friendly and easy for students to navigate, which ensures valid assessment results. The variety of options to assess students and collect data has been key to chart and monitor progress for each student. The support services and training provided by ALEKS for the facilitators has been superb.

Scenario

What challenges did the class or school face in math prior to using ALEKS?
Trying to find a program that has all of the components of ALEKS: an individualized program that fits student needs, in addition to, having the instant data to check for progress.

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?
40 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?
I mainly utilize the program as an intervention program for grades seven and eight.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?
We follow the order and sequence of what the class curriculum addresses on a daily basis as much as possible, but this is not always possible.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?
My class periods consist of no more than three students per class. Each student has their own computer. Each student works on QuickTables for a few minutes each period, then continues with the review, then their pie. We focus on the pie piece that the students are working on in class as much as possible. Once they are in the program, they can utilize the Explain feature once, try another practice and, if incorrect again, I step in as a teacher and teach the concept they are having problems with within the program.

How often are students required or encouraged to work on ALEKS at home?
They are not since we are utilizing it as an intervention. We are concerned with the type of support they will receive at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?
We do not.

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?
No.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?
We utilize the assessments and daily learning to monitor progress.

Learning Outcomes

Since using ALEKS, please describe the learning outcomes or progress you have seen.
To date, all of the students that utilize ALEKS for intervention have improved significantly over time. I believe the students enjoy using the computer instead of just plodding along in a textbook. It keeps their interest to see their progression each day through the data that is provided on their progress.

Best Practices

Are there any best practices you would like to share with other teachers implementing ALEKS?
I believe the teacher needs to observe all students while they are working within the ALEKS program. I feel there is much more progress and success if the teacher teaches along when the student is having difficulty, and doesn't just depend on the Explain feature to teach the students. Utilizing a graphic organizer to monitor student's work to see where they are having difficulty is another practice I feel is important. Where are they making the mistakes? I can review their work at the end of the day and address that the following day with a mini lesson if needed.