

Implementation Strategies

Peekskill Middle School, Peekskill City School District
Peekskill, NY

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: Computers in Classroom, Laptop Carts

Purpose: Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 5 hours per week, 100 hours per term

ALEKS Course: MS Rtl Tier 3

Chris Kness, Special Education Teacher

ALEKS has been extremely beneficial for the students in my self contained special education class. The students have a variety of disabilities including learning disabilities, emotional issues, neurological disorders, autism, physical and medical handicaps, and other various syndromes. The ALEKS program is an excellent because it allows the students to work independently and receive instant, direct feedback on their progress and tasks. Students can work at their own pace and if they get tired or lose focus they can stop and pick up later at that exact point. Each student can work at their own instructional and functioning level in order to meet their individual needs.

Scenario

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

With so many children having such varying degrees of function, it is difficult for a teacher to give every child an individual curriculum and assessment. ALEKS allows each child to work at their own pace and to have the math skills tailored individually to the areas they need to improve upon. Once they master a skill they go on to the next level. In a classroom setting, it is difficult to hold up the entire class for the few who cannot learn a desired skill. ALEKS allows the students to progress at their own rate.

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?

40 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I work it into a flex period.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I let half of the class work on ALEKS while I give individual attention to the other half working on another skill set. Then, another period we switch and do the same thing.

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

It allows me to focus my attention on individuals and smalls groups while ALEKS is being used.

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

They are encouraged to use ALEKS as much as they can, hopefully every night.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I speak to them on a regular basis and send home printed progress reports.

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?

Yes. It is their nightly math homework.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I do not use it for grading but for homework participation.

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

No.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have seen very good progress in my students with respect to their individual needs and functioning levels. The students are able to work independently and then we discuss their progress as well as their strengths and weaknesses. I have seen students improve in areas that they have demonstrated a weakness for an extended period of time; ALEKS allows them to focus on those skill sets which need improvement. The students really enjoy ALEKS and like to meet with me to discuss their progress and also their weak areas. They take ownership over their own learning as independent thinkers. The students can self monitor themselves and receive direct feedback from ALEKS. Many of the students have low self esteem and a poor self image due to years of academic frustration and failures. The fact that they can get direct feedback from ALEKS is very beneficial for them. It allows them to self adjust and work on skills they need to improve upon without it being advertised in class. The direct feedback and instant assistance gives them a new found independence and learning is great for them!