

Implementation Strategies

Lorenzo Dezavala Middle School, Irving Independent School District
Irving, TX

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: One-to-One Laptop Program, Home Access

Purpose: Special Education

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 50%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3.75 hours per week, 67 hours per term

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

Wokie Lartson, Resource Teacher

ALEKS is a very effective program. The students quickly develop a sense of comfort and self confidence in solving math problems. The Explain button is excellent; I encourage the students to use that option first before asking me for help. This makes them slow down and get comfortable with the question, and helps decrease their fear of answering the question incorrectly. It is a very individualized program; this makes them likely to compete with themselves and challenge themselves to excel.

Scenario

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

Issues with retention and with implementing more individualized instruction for the students who struggled, as well as for the students who moved ahead of the class.

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?

45 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Our math classes are double booked (90 minutes), so we replaced our text-based activities with the ALEKS program.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No particular order.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

The first half of the class (45 minutes) is direct instruction and second half (45 minutes) we use ALEKS.

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

I use more individualized instruction now, with small group instruction for the struggling students within the class. We tackle one problem at a time. Then I have each student hit the Practice and More Practice buttons until they understand the topic.

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

The students are encouraged to work at home and I monitor the number of topics learned per hour of use. I then share the feedback with each student. We also have an incentive program for the student that masters the highest number of topics per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

It is an ongoing endeavor. We hope to increase parental involvement in the future.

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 use the ALEKS worksheets as summative grades.

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

We require that the students make steady upward progress. I like to see an average of three topics mastered per hour of use.

Learning Outcomes

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

My students love ALEKS. It has strengthened their background knowledge of the basic math concepts. The students actually remember what they learned on ALEKS. In my class, I allow the students to listen to their mp3 players while working on the program, which has improved their focus and effort.

Best Practices

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

I think encouraging the students to use the Explain option is a great way to enhance learning.