

Implementation Strategies

Crocker Middle School, Hillsborough School District
Hillsborough, CA

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: Computers in Classroom

Purpose: Intervention, Special Education, At-Risk Students, Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 20–30%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1 hour per week, 12 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1

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My experience has been positive thus far. Most students are motivated to use the program and are able to do so independently. The reports are helpful, and I have made use of the worksheets for homework.

Scenario

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

It is difficult to meet the needs of students who are achieving math skills at different rates. It is also a challenge to work with special needs students at multi-grade levels and keep them all busy learning varied topics.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

ALEKS is used as a supplement to instruction and is sometimes given as a homework assignment. Students are required to work in ALEKS a minimum of one hour per week. This is mostly accomplished at home. Additional time in the program may be spent in the classroom as well.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No. The students I work with need instruction and practice in all areas. Topics are addressed as they appear in ALEKS.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

Some students may be asked to work in ALEKS while I am working with another group. I have one student who is significantly below grade level and is more motivated to work in ALEKS than engage in group instruction.

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

My approach has been modified in that I do not need to look for worksheets to keep certain students busy while I am working with another group.

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

Students are required to work in ALEKS a minimum of one hour per week. This is mostly accomplished at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents are introduced to the program at the start of the school year and are encouraged to promote its use at home.

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?

I would estimate that ALEKS homework is given 15–20 percent of the time.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS homework is graded and incorporated into the overall homework score. Students are graded on completion of the one hour per week requirement. Their grade reflects the percent of time they complete with regard to the one hour per week requirement, which is evaluated every three weeks.

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

I am tracking their time in ALEKS, but I do also discuss the number of topics students are adding (or not adding) to their pie. I am contemplating what a reasonable requirement might be regarding topics added per week.

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

Students have learned some new concepts strictly through the use of ALEKS. Foundational skills are being strengthened through repeated practice. Students are proud of their progress and motivated to complete a slice of their pie (particularly because they receive a slice of dessert pie of their choice when that happens).

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

I realize the program is geared to not using a calculator unless ALEKS provides one. However, I work with special needs students who have an accommodation that allows the use of a calculator for classwork and tests. Since I have started allowing students to use a calculator for some topics, I have noticed they are more self-confident in their skills and are willing to challenge themselves.