

Implementation Strategies

North Woods Discovery School, Gateway Unified School District
Redding, CA

Grade(s): K – 8

Scenario: One-to-One Laptop Program

Purpose: Intervention, Improve State Test Scores, Supplement

Time Spent in ALEKS: 2.5–3 hours per week

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 4 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables), Middle School Math Course 2, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, High School Geometry, Algebra 2, Algebra 2 with Trigonometry

Melissa Manly, Vice Principal/Teacher

After attending a Continuous School Improvement Conference, the administrator and I realized that our school did not have adequate math instruction to prepare students for each grade level. The students were advancing grade levels without the math skills needed to be successful. We found students to have significant gaps in their learning. This was also apparent on our standardized test scores and our in-house testing. Once the ALEKS program was implemented, we began to see large amounts of growth in the area of mathematics. The students were acquiring the needed skills to be successful in math. In my classroom, ALEKS is used as a supplement to the text. This has allowed me to differentiate instruction, while teaching the grade level standards.

Scenario

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

Many students were advancing to the next grade level without the math skills needed to be successful in that grade level. We also weren't able to differentiate math instruction for the lower grades, especially for the wide range of academic ability levels.

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?

30–60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Our school purchased a classroom set of laptops for the lower grades. Students use these laptops once a day to work in ALEKS for 40 minutes.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We structure the program in the lower grades by timed facts, green slice, red slice, etc.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

In the upper grades, some students use ALEKS as their only math instruction. In the lower grades, students use ALEKS once a day for 40 minutes.

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

ALEKS allows me, as the teacher, to reach all students at their individual academic ability levels in math. With the regular textbook approach, it is not possible to successfully accomplish this.

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

Our students are encouraged to work in ALEKS at home daily. Some teachers have assigned ALEKS as part of their homework or as part of an Independent Study.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents have recognized that their students are excited and motivated to do ALEKS. They have also seen the progress and improvement that their children are making in math.

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?

My students are not assigned ALEKS as part of their homework; however, they are encouraged to work on it to become better in math.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I don't incorporate ALEKS into my grading system.

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

The administrator and teachers consistently check on their students' progress daily.

Learning Outcomes

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

Our standardized test scores have improved since implementing ALEKS. We are also seeing students acquiring math skills at a quicker rate because of ALEKS and the fact that it is computer-based. We have also seen many students improve on their in-house test scores for mathematics. The students are excited to work in ALEKS. Many students have taken it upon themselves to work in ALEKS at home. We have also implemented a rewards program to promote ALEKS and successful progress.

Best Practices

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

Teachers need to make sure that they circulate through the classroom while students are working in ALEKS. Students need to be aware that they are held accountable for their work in ALEKS. Structuring the program by setting high expectations is very important to ensure the success of the students.