

Implementation Strategies

Mandalay Middle School, Jefferson County Public Schools
Westminster, CO

Grade(s): 7 – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access

Purpose: Improve State Test Scores, At-Risk Students, Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 25%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1–5 hours per week, 30–40 hours per term

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

Jill Kalb, Teacher

Our school has had a positive experience with ALEKS that can be described as life-changing for our students and encouraging for teachers. We have a group of students who work on ALEKS 2–3 times a week at school, and then again at home. When given the district Acuity Test toward the end of the school year, 95 percent of our ALEKS students showed improvement. Individual improvement ranged from 60–100 percent progress!!! Students have moved from being Partially Proficient to Proficient and Advanced in math. These students have become more confident in their math skills. They can also be found helping other students in math class. Daily, comments are heard in class from students connecting their classwork to their work in ALEKS. Other students not participating in the program are now asking if they can! It's contagious!!!

Scenario

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

Helping students at their individual level of math and getting them to proficiency and grade level. Finding strategies to target a large group of students who need individual instruction based on their needs.

How many days per week is class time dedicated to ALEKS?

2–3 days per week.

What is the average length of a class period when ALEKS is used?

25 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

We selected students based on their test scores and enrolled them into our daily Math Lab.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We have a Math Lab where students come 2–3 times a week at the end of the day for approximately 30 minutes. They are also required to work on ALEKS at home.

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

We refer to the topics that appear in ALEKS.

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

We tell them that their time spent on ALEKS at home has to match or exceed their time spent here at school.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

We start with a letter home and a phone call explaining what ALEKS is. Parents know it is a huge advantage to have their child participating in ALEKS. We also share progress reports and graphs during conferences, as well as send reports 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?

Partly. It is approximately ten percent.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

It is a pass/fail class. They must complete ten topics per week at school. They also have a spiral notebook to keep all of their work in and to show each topic mastered.

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

Yes, it is measured by the number of topics mastered for the week.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students have moved from being Partially Proficient to Proficient and Advanced in math. Students feel confident and proud!

Best Practices

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

Allow students to discuss their thinking with others. Require students to show their work. Ask students to prove how they know what they are doing is correct.