

Implementation Strategies

Kaleidoscope School of Discovery, Private
Panama City, FL

Grade(s): K – 12

Scenario: Computer Lab

Purpose: Core Curriculum

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 8.4 hours per week, 75 hours per term

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

Jennifer Jordan, Teacher

Here at Kaleidoscope, our students' abilities range from gifted students to students who are still struggling to read. ALEKS is a wonderful program that allows my students to work at their own pace and at their level. In return, my students have confidence in themselves. They like to fill in their pies and see their percentages grow. I have students who have come to my class from a standard textbook class, and they dread math. With ALEKS, they find out quickly that they are in control of the work, and they get immediate gratification. It makes my day to see the kids break through a math barrier and achieve success.

Scenario

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

Prior to ALEKS, we used a textbook and paper. It was common for all of our students to be in five different books. It was a struggle to teach 15 kids on five different levels. ALEKS has solved that problem for us.

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?

50 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

The first day of school I showed all the students how to log into ALEKS and explained to them how it worked.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

We start on the green pie slice and work clockwise around the pie.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

The class enters, and they sign into ALEKS. During the last ten minutes of class, I have them do their review.

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

I walk around and help each student in rotation.

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

It is not required of the students to work at home, but some do take it upon themselves to work 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?

No.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Students are required to complete a certain number of items per week. Every Friday we have a scheduled assessment. In their assessment, they are required to gain a certain percentage on their pie. The daily work is 80 percent of their weekly grade, and the assessment gain is 20 percent of their weekly grade.

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

The required gain for most students is 3–5 percent per week. A third of the students score higher than that.

Learning Outcomes

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

Most of my students have been able to complete at least one to one and a half levels of math per year. One sixth grade student came from a standard textbook class and was initially assessed at a third grade level course in ALEKS. She has been with us for nine weeks and is now on the fifth grade level at 63 percent completion. She stated that it is easier to understand and there is not a lot of busy work for her to do. My students love ALEKS. They are able to use the Explain button when I cannot help them, which gives them the tools to be a problem solver by themselves. They like to see their percentages rise with each assessment. They take pride in their math accomplishments.

Best Practices

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

It is best to utilize the review. It keeps the problems fresh in their minds so they do not forget. We use the assessment every week. It helps the kids to see their progress, and they feel good about their achievements.