

Implementation Strategies

Renfroe Middle School, City Schools of Decatur
Decatur, GA

Grade(s): 6 – 7

Scenario: Home Access

Purpose: Enrichment/Gifted and Talented

Time Spent in ALEKS: 30 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3

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We wanted to provide select students in our school the opportunity to skip an entire year of math in order to accelerate to the next grade. ALEKS' close alignment to our state standards allowed us to assess students' mastery of standards. We proposed that they skip and work through those they needed to review. Students used ALEKS at home over the summer, and monitoring their progress through the standards was easy. Without ALEKS, we couldn't have differentiated instruction for this group and would likely have had to host a summer school rather than let the students work at their own pace.

Scenario

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

We needed a way to offer summer acceleration for our students, and before ALEKS, we had no way to do that.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Students used ALEKS at home over the summer, and monitoring their progress through the standards was easy. Without ALEKS, we couldn't have differentiated instruction for this group and would likely have had to host a summer school rather than let the students work at their own pace.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

Yes. Students had to complete the course aligned with the grade they were skipping. Rising sixth graders did Middle School Math Course 1, rising seventh graders did Middle School Math Course 2, and rising eighth graders did Middle School Math Course 3. Students worked through the lessons based on their diagnostic assessment at the start of the course.

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

We would have had to offer summer school, which would have been expensive and not as efficient or tailored to students' lives.

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

They worked through at least 90 percent of the course over the summer. Most worked through 100 percent.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents received a letter at the start, and I sent email reminders to parents when I saw that students hadn't logged in for a couple of days.

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?

It was all done at home.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students were able to work through standards over the summer and successfully complete the next year of math. Students liked the ALEKS program, especially the independence it offered. Many of them asked to be moved to the next level even after they'd

completed all the required standards.

Best Practices

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

Sending frequent messages to students as they work through and master lessons is a great motivator for the students. Knowing that you're monitoring them and wanting them to progress is helpful to almost all.