

Implementation Strategies

George Washington Carver Academy, Waterloo Community Schools
Cedar Falls, IA

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: Laptop Carts

Purpose: Special Education

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1.6 hours per week, 30 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Essential Mathematics (with QuickTables), Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3, Algebra Readiness, Pre–Algebra, Algebra 1

Chris Peck, Special Education Teacher

ALEKS is an awesome resource because it teaches new concepts and reviews mathematical operations continuously. The feedback is immediate, and explanations are clear so students can learn the steps needed to solve the problem. Students love the challenge this program provides. They are much more confident when doing math and are very proud when they master a process. Every day for 20 minutes, we do ALEKS during homeroom where students learn at their own pace. I am so impressed with ALEKS and consider myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to use this program with my special needs students.

Scenario

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

There were so many gaps in individual learning. Math scores were low, and students were turned off to math because they had experienced failure on a regular basis.

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?

20 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I implemented ALEKS each morning in our homeroom. Due to the fact the computers are in high demand at our school, this was the only time I could use seven computers on a regular basis.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

This was my first year with the program. I would like to further refine what I am doing with ALEKS to compliment skills emphasized in our math book.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

ALEKS was done each morning during homeroom. I will use ALEKS during my math class next year as a small group activity.

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

I modified what I was doing to supplement what was being done or to provide additional practice on a given skill. I was also able to cover more operations because students were exposed to skills in ALEKS.

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

My students do not use the program at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

At parent–teacher conferences, I show the student's progress.

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?

Most of my students do not have computers at home.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

Students are given 100 points a week, divided into 20 points each day.

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

Students progress at their own rate. I need to make a change and monitor progress much better.

Learning Outcomes

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

My students are much more confident when doing math. Due to the nature of special needs, students are not always exposed to various skills. ALEKS covers skills at their level, and the pace is up to each student. This program is very visual, and the pie graph is a continuous reminder of progress. In addition, the explanations are great. The students are very motivated and not frustrated when doing ALEKS. They like the variety and challenge this program offers. After taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), students said that some of the problems they did were on ALEKS, too. I am so impressed with ALEKS and hope that we will continue using it.

Best Practices

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

Believe in the program... it works!