

Implementation Strategies

Thomaston Grammar School, Regional School Unit 13
Thomaston, ME

Grade(s): 5 – 8

Scenario: Laptop Carts

Purpose: Intervention, Enrichment/Gifted and Talented, Special Education, Improve State Test Scores

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 30%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1.67 hours per week, 21.67 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics – LV 3 (with QuickTables), Mathematics – LV 5 (with QuickTables), Essential Mathematics (with QuickTables)

Sara Gilfenbaum, Teacher

ALEKS not only helps students to master skills, but also helps to build confidence. ALEKS is used in conjunction with Connected Math. Connected Math is a rich, language-based math program. By supplementing it with ALEKS, all of my students' needs can be met. I have students on Level 3 and other students on Algebra. Differentiating like this has been wonderful for my students.

Scenario

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

Our students tend to be good at math reasoning and problem solving. However, they are not good at computation. ALEKS has helped them become more efficient and accurate in their computation.

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

2 days per week.

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

45 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

Although I use ALEKS as a stand-alone program, I tell the students to look for problems that compliment what is being studied in class.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

I ask the students to go to the part of the ALEKS Pie that compliments what we are covering in class.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I have two classes a week dedicated to ALEKS. It is also used during tutorials and in the afterschool study program. I also encourage students to use it at home and have shown parents how to do this.

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

ALEKS helps me determine what topics need more attention.

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

As often as possible.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

During open house and student-led conferences, we teach the parents how to log in to ALEKS.

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?

ALEKS is optional because not all students have computers and Internet access.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I don't incorporate ALEKS into the grading system.

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

I haven't required regular progress but feel like this will be a goal for next year.

Learning Outcomes

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

When a student completes an ALEKS assessment, I have a conference with them. ALEKS motivates them, and they are very interested in filling up their pie. We are taking the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) tests at the end of May; they feel confident and I feel confident that scores will increase.

Best Practices

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

It is critical to get students to "buy in" to ALEKS. When they do, their progress skyrockets. I have them keep track of their progress on a lab sheet that I designed called the ALEKS Tracker. During student-led conferences, they report to their parents about their progress.