

Implementation Strategies

Hart–Ransom Elementary School, Hart–Ransom Union Elementary School District
Modesto, CA

Grade(s): K – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab

Purpose: Intervention, At–Risk Students, Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 100%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1.5–2 hours per week, 50 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Pre–Algebra

Sara Martin, Computer Teacher/Technology Coordinator

I have been teaching with ALEKS for nearly three years. I teach in a computer lab that uses ALEKS as an Algebra Support class. I use the Pre–Algebra ALEKS course with these eighth grade students.

Scenario

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

The state of California wants all eighth grade students to take Algebra 1, but this is difficult for many students. ALEKS has helped us bring an entire extra class of students into the regular Algebra curriculum when they would have otherwise taken the general math course.

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?

40 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

All students in the class are given an ALEKS account for the school year.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No, I let students self–direct within the Pre–Algebra course.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

They work on ALEKS the entire time.

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

I help students one–on–one while they are in class.

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

Students are encouraged all the time to work on ALEKS from home. Extra credit is given for work done at home.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I use email to communicate with parents on a regular basis about their student's progress with 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?

No homework is required.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

I run the Time and Topic Report at the end of every week. The students earn ten points per day. I check their total minutes and items

mastered and practiced, and give higher weight to those students who have mastered more than they have practiced. I check to see which students have been assessed so they are not penalized if they show no mastery of topics.

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

This is quite subjective and individualized. I spend a great deal of time meeting with students one-on-one and setting individual goals for them. At the end of each trimester they are given points that reflect how well they did in achieving their goals.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students are enthusiastic learners with ALEKS. They often comment to me that they understand concepts in their regular Algebra class much better because of content they have mastered in the program. I surveyed my students at the end of last year and 87 percent of the class (29 out of 32 students) answered "Yes" to the question, "Do you think that ALEKS helped you this year?" Additionally, the Algebra teacher has also seen an improvement in overall competency in the regular Algebra class as a result of the students using ALEKS.

Best Practices

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

I have a large circular chart on the wall that looks like an ALEKS Pie. When students complete a portion of their pie, we celebrate by adding their name to the pie. The students also get a reward, usually a bag of cookies, which I let them eat in class. I also pass out headphones to students who have been making their goals; these students are allowed to listen to music while they work in class.