

Implementation Strategies

Achiever Christian School, Private
San Jose, CA

Grade(s): K – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Home Access

Purpose: Improve State Test Scores, Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 20–30%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 1 hour per week, 10 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Essential Mathematics (with QuickTables)

Tamar Hela, Teacher

ALEKS has been an amazing addition to our math program at the junior high level. With ALEKS, I am able to have extra practice available to my students and a way to reinforce new and previously learned concepts. The students also enjoy having "Lab Days" where we spend an hour in the computer lab, all working on ALEKS. By adding QuickTables, my students have been able to practice their calculation skills, which were poor. I have also assigned ALEKS as an extra homework supplement in order to keep my students' math skills sharp. Currently, my students have improved their calculation skills and their overall grades in my class. Our class average as of today is a high B. ALEKS truly has been a help to our school and has made math more exciting for our students.

Scenario

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

Our school's math program has been varied and sporadic. Because of this, students have suffered in that they were taught too many methods of solving one problem or too many teaching philosophies that were not congruent. Grades suffered, and students became lax in their calculation practices and skills.

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?

55 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I use the program as a supplement and align the ALEKS topics with our textbook. ALEKS is also assigned as extra homework twice a week.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

I have the students focus on ALEKS for a whole math period one day each week. They use QuickTables first and then work on their pies.

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

Students are required to work on ALEKS at home for at least one hour per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

I encourage parents to tell their children to practice ALEKS at home. I also provide information about ALEKS at the beginning of the school year.

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 about an hour of their 3–6 hour homework load each week.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS is weighted as regular homework, which is currently weighted at 30 percent. Each ALEKS assignment is worth 15 points for a half hour, so it weighs more at the beginning of each quarter but evens out to one percent or less per assignment by the quarter's end.

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

No, I just check their progress on a regular basis.

Learning Outcomes

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

My students' overall grade averages for math have improved greatly! At the beginning of the year, our class average was a low C; now, it's a high B. The students are motivated by seeing their pies grow. In fact, I offer incentives like homework passes for completing a slice of their pie, which has been a fun thing for them to aim for. They feel proud after finishing a section and gaining mastery over a subject.

Best Practices

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

Definitely implement ALEKS as part of the students' homework load if you're teaching from a typical mathematics textbook. This helps to sharpen skills or introduce new concepts that will build the students' confidence in math. Aligning ALEKS with the textbook is also helpful because it reinforces the current concepts being taught.