

Implementation Strategies

El Roble Intermediate School, Claremont Unified School District
Claremont, CA

Grade(s): 7 – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab

Purpose: Enrichment/Gifted and Talented

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 90%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 3 hours per week, 30+ hours per term

ALEKS Course: Pre-Algebra

James Guerra, Teacher

My gifted students are flying through the curriculum and love ALEKS. I let them work individually, and then I go around the room to monitor what they are working on and give direct instruction whenever it is needed.

Scenario

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

We had many students who did not know their basic math facts. We also had some students who worked very slowly and could not complete quizzes within the allotted time period.

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

4 days per week.

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

40 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I use ALEKS as the basis for the class, but I supplement it with worksheets to target specific areas the students need help in. I use the ALEKS Pie Chart to identify my remedial students. I also use the State Standards Report to divide the curriculum and make ALEKS quizzes. We do weekly quizzes with an unlimited number of attempts until the student learns the material. I set up 12 quizzes per trimester and give students the entire trimester to finish them. I appreciate that ALEKS automatically grades them for me and allows me to go over specific problems with students to figure out what they don't understand.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

Yes. We singled out Whole Numbers, Fractions, Signed Numbers, and Variables.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

We meet for roll, have a brief lesson, make announcements, and take care of any housekeeping. After about 10 minutes, we go to the computer lab where students work individually for the remaining 30–35 minutes. In the lab, I sit at a main computer and watch what individual students are working on and call students over when I see them struggling. I also teach students as they come to my desk for help.

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

All of the above has been modified from my previous teaching practices.

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

I encourage students to work on ALEKS approximately 30 minutes per night.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

At Back-to-School Night, I explain the program. During the first week, I send home some literature explaining the program with a list of standards that the students will be working on during the first trimester. I have had several interactions with parents since then to explain the program and to help families get set up at home.

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?

Yes, 76–100 percent of the student's homework is ALEKS. I assign 30 minutes per night, per student and verify completion with a homework log signed by the parent. The only drawback is the digital divide between students with Internet access at home and those without. I have had to offer alternative homework to those students who don't have Internet access at home, such as ALEKS Worksheets.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

The student's grade roughly breaks down as follows: number of standards learned in ALEKS is 50 percent; ALEKS quizzes are 20 percent; and ALEKS homework is 30 percent.

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

I ask them to learn about one-third of the standards per trimester. I look at their charts to see if they have done this.

Learning Outcomes

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

I have several students who have almost finished all of the Pre–Algebra standards for the entire year and have only been in class for 12 weeks! They are highly motivated to move into Algebra and this would have been impossible if we were using the traditional method of instruction.