

Implementation Strategies

Highlands Middle School, Fort Thomas Independent School District
Fort Thomas, KY

Grade(s): 6 – 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Computers in Classroom

Purpose: RtI, Summer School, At-Risk Students

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 10%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 5 hours per week, 10 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1

Dawn Laber, Assistant Principal

The ALEKS program meets and exceeds our expectations. Our teachers are able to use the diagnostic tool to create individualized learning paths for our struggling students and, in turn, our students are closing their math gaps and increasing their academic classroom performance.

Scenario

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

Our biggest challenge was keeping our students on grade level material while still filling in the skill level gaps that they needed in order to continue to prosper with mathematical concepts.

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?

60 minutes.

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

ALEKS is utilized as a Response to Intervention (RtI) or Title I program to close the academic math gaps.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No, unless the teacher feels that a student is selecting only topics that are easy for him or her and never getting to topics that are difficult.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

If students are struggling with a skill in ALEKS, the teacher will pull them and work on the skill using the provided worksheets or other small group activities.

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

Students who receive ALEKS still receive regular mathematics as well. They take ALEKS during an encore period class.

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

30 minutes per week.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

Parents must sign the 30-minute ALEKS log at home. They must also sign the list of weekly minutes completed at school and skills developed.

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.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS is not graded. It's set up as pass or fail.

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

This is done as a class, and progress is checked by the teacher. Students have a parent mentor (volunteer) who comes in and works with them, which keep students motivated.

Learning Outcomes

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

The majority of our students has leveled up and no longer need the remediation. Those who still have gaps will continue ALEKS next year until they too level up and can discontinue the program and return to their core curriculum path. The students feel more confident in the classroom. Mentors work with them while they are on ALEKS; students have told the mentors that they enjoy knowing what skills they need to work on to catch up. A few of them filled out an end of the year survey that the teachers created for the mentor program, and told us that they felt empowered with the skills continuum results and wanted to continue over the summer.

Best Practices

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

Parent mentors work out amazingly. It really helps keep students motivated and shows students that this task is important to the school!