

# Implementation Strategies

**Helmville School, Helmville School District 15**  
Helmville, MT

**Grade(s):** 7 – 8

**Scenario:** One-to-One Laptop Program

**Purpose:** Core Curriculum, Improve State Test Scores, Intervention

**ALEKS Portion of Curriculum:** 100%

**Time Spent in ALEKS:** 4–6 hours per week, 30–50 hours per term

**ALEKS Course:** Middle School Math Course 2, Middle School Math Course 3, Algebra 1

## **Dean Phillips, Teacher**

I have been using ALEKS for eight weeks and it has completely replaced our math curriculum for seventh and eighth grades. ALEKS has changed how I teach math to middle school students, and we are moving quite nicely in a student-paced direction that will allow each and every student to master the content standards. Master, you say? Yes, master. Students have said that they love ALEKS and feel comfortable learning at their own pace. They also love having a choice in what they learn and feel less peer pressure when it comes to math.

## **Scenario**

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

Our state test scores showed that while we scored very high overall on the state test, we were still below the mean in math computation.

### **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?**

75 minutes.

## **Implementation**

### **How do you implement ALEKS?**

When I first started with ALEKS, I thought I would use it for assessment and as a supplement to our current curriculum. However, after using ALEKS for just one week, I wanted to utilize the program as much as possible. Our school just implemented a one-to-one laptop program and ALEKS is a perfect fit for the seventh and eighth grades.

### **Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?**

I do not cover ALEKS topics in a particular order. However, if students are struggling, I use reports to target those specific standards in which multiple students are struggling.

### **How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?**

Each day, students are assigned a worksheet through ALEKS that is to be turned in the following morning. As I review and grade worksheets, students work on their pies. I do not use the textbook on a daily basis, but I set goals for students according to textbook pace and students use the textbook as a reference. At the end of each class, students are given a new worksheet to be completed as homework. On the last day of the week, I assign a quiz with topics that I have taught during that week. The rest of the last day is dedicated to QuickTables and other fun games for the students.

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

Since I've started using ALEKS, my teaching approach has completely changed from following a textbook to teaching topics that students struggle with. I also spend less time on topics that have already been mastered by my students.

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

Students are free to use ALEKS anytime at home. However, it is not required due to Internet access issues.

### **How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?**

I have shared student reports at conferences and it is quite powerful to provide the Progress Report for a Single Student and show what the student can do and what the student is working on.

## **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 100 percent of students' math homework.

**How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?**

ALEKS Worksheets and Quizzes make up 100 percent of a student's grade.

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

I strongly suggest that students try to complete at least three topics per day toward filling in their ALEKS Pie, along with a daily worksheet and a weekly quiz on topics we covered that week.

## **Learning Outcomes**

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

Although I do not yet have any data to support my observations, I feel that students are progressing adequately and are mastering material instead of relying on the "drill and kill" approach that is used in many textbooks.

## **Best Practices**

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

I think that using ALEKS to target specific standards and topics that the majority of students are struggling with is an invaluable tool in the classroom. This allows teaching decisions to be based on data from students and enables truly data-driven instruction.