

# Implementation Strategies

**Kiona–Benton City Middle School, Kiona–Benton City School District**  
Benton City, WA

**Grade(s):** K – 8

**Scenario:** Computer Lab

**Purpose:** RtI, Improve State Test Scores, At–Risk Students

**ALEKS Portion of Curriculum:** 100%

**Time Spent in ALEKS:** 5 days per week

## **Ronald Allen Harris, 8th Grade Math Teacher**

I have been using ALEKS for just under one quarter and I can already see improvement in the level of understanding that my students have. As a teacher, ALEKS is easy to use and administer. I have used the various reports to monitor individual student progress, to monitor overall class progress, and to provide data demonstrating the strengths and benefits of the continued use of ALEKS to administration. My students love getting online and working with ALEKS. Each day they are eager to login and begin work (definitely something that I have not seen out of this group of students before). I even have several students in my class that spend additional time outside of school working in ALEKS. What a great student motivator!

## **Scenario**

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

The biggest challenge that I faced in my intervention class before using ALEKS was trying to address the individual needs of each of my students. In fact, I would say that it was more than a challenge – it was impossible! ALEKS has changed that by providing individualized curriculum and attention for each of my students. Now I can monitor and assist each student as needed.

### **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?**

30–45 minutes.

## **Implementation**

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

No.

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

Students come into class and login to ALEKS immediately. The first ten minutes of class are devoted to QuickTables, after which students work in the RtI 8 course for the remainder of the class. Students receive a grade based on the number of minutes spent each week (Sunday–Saturday), with 100 percent equaling 180 minutes.

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

ALEKS is my teaching approach for this class. It allows me to assist students in their area of need, as they need it.

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

I encourage them to work on it as much as they can, but all of the students know that they must complete at least three hours per week in ALEKS. If they cannot get it all done in class, and they rarely can, then they must do it at home or in the homework center.

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

Prior to setting up ALEKS, I contacted each of my students' parents to discuss the benefits of program. I also sent them their student's password and login name so they can encourage their child to work on ALEKS 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?**

ALEKS is only a homework assignment if they cannot or do not get all of their three hours in class. On those few occasions that I cannot get access to the computer lab, I create worksheets for each student to work on in class and as a homework assignment.

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

ALEKS accounts for 100 percent of the student's grade in my Intervention class. They are graded based on the number of minutes spent on ALEKS each week (120 minutes equals 12 points, etc.) with 180 minutes being the target or a grade of 100 percent (an A).

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

No. I do not want the students to feel pressured to perform. From what I have seen from the short amount of time that I have used ALEKS, the more time the students spend in ALEKS, the more progress they tend to make. Even my lowest performers are making good progress just because they are spending time in the program.

## **Learning Outcomes**

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

Student attitudes towards math and their ability to do math have been the real success story so far in using ALEKS. I have one student that has gone from 25 percent mastery on the Initial Assessment to 88 percent mastery on her last assessment – all within six weeks. My students on average have improved by 23 percentage points (or a median of 17 percentage points). Not only do the majority of my students look forward to getting on ALEKS each day, I have several of them that spend time outside of school getting on ALEKS. All of my students in the intervention class have been in a position of not being successful in math for so long that they thought they were not capable, but after working with ALEKS the majority of them are changing that belief. I am constantly hearing comments like, "that's easy," "I can do that," and "I did not think that I could do that, but now I know I can," to describe what they believe about their ability to do math. Students are constantly going to their pie chart and bragging to other students about how many more sections they have to cover to completely shade in one section of the pie – it's like the kids use it as a competition to better themselves.

## **Best Practices**

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

Give the students time to work on QuickTables each day, but limit that time. It will help their overall performance in other areas of their work. I have also found less pressure to perform improves the students performance in my Intervention class.