



California Middle School Helps Struggling Students Conquer Math with ALEKS Individualized Learning

Personalized Math Program Fills Gaps in Student Knowledge to Teach Them What They Are Ready To Learn Right Now

IRVINE, Calif. – September 3, 2013 – Deborah Burton, a seventh and eighth-grade math teacher at Big Bear Middle School in Big Bear, Calif., considers the color-keyed pie chart in ALEKS as one of her favorite teaching tools. The interactive pie chart displays the results of a student’s current knowledge and each pie slice corresponds to a particular group of math topics, such as fractions or equations. The larger the area of a slice that is darker, the more mastery the student has of the topic area. Content mastery can be visually tracked by determining how much of each slice is dark.

Before class begins each day, Burton studies students’ pie charts to determine which topics her students are ready to learn. For the first 10 minutes of class, she calls groups of students to the whiteboard to work on problems before sending them to the computer lab for independent study. She then spends the remainder of the class working with students as they work individually on the topics they are ready to learn.

“ALEKS accomplishes two big goals: filling in the gaps of students’ knowledge and teaching them the topics they are ready to learn right now,” said Burton. “Normally, I would have to take the whole class to the lab and spend time focused only on the students who need the most help. Or, I would teach the whole class the same topics, even though not everyone would be ready to learn it. ALEKS allows for extremely targeted teaching, which is just wonderful.”

With its completely individualized approach to learning, ALEKS enables students to successfully master course material by targeting their learning on the material they are precisely ready to learn right now. Since ALEKS is web-based, and accessible directly via common Internet browsers, students can quickly access their accounts anytime, anywhere, via a tablet, laptop or traditional computer. All ALEKS courses feature user-friendly answer input tools that allow students to enter mathematical expressions and free-response answers that avoid multiple-choice and demonstrate true content mastery.

Before coming to the middle school, Burton taught math for 18 years at the high school, which is where she first used ALEKS. Already sold on the program, Burton became a highly vocal advocate for bringing ALEKS to the middle school. Her enthusiasm convinced Principal Tina Fulmer that the program would help the math department

meet its goals for the school year, and Fulmer and Burton worked together to find grant money to help cover the costs.

Once Burton began to use ALEKS at the middle school three years ago, the impact was immediate: Students who had been learning at a basic level were now at levels of advanced learning. After using ALEKS for a year, Algebra Readiness eighth graders more than doubled the increase of California Standards Test (CST) score typically seen at the school. Moreover, 56 percent of these students scored at least Proficient, compared with the usual 40 percent. Scores on the CST increased an average of 30 points, and students who used to need constant attention no longer required Burton's help, as they were now motivated and successful working independently.

For Principal Fulmer, ALEKS has been well worth the investment. Whenever she visits classrooms, she has found students to be completely engaged with the work and empowered enough to work at their own pace. Even students who don't struggle with math have been eager to share the success they've found with ALEKS.

"I had a student come into my office to show me her math grade, which was at 133 percent. When I asked her what she was doing, she said 'I'm addicted to the ALEKS program.' Even though this student already had an 'A,' she was excited to keep going and push herself as far as she could."

In another instance, Fulmer was contacted by a parent who was in tears because her daughter was failing math. She was able to use some additional funding to give the student access to ALEKS from home. Within one month, the student went from a failing grade to a "C-" and her mother was thrilled. Her daughter was so motivated by her quick progress that she spent every spare minute at home working on ALEKS.

"The success Big Bear Middle School has experienced is nothing short of extraordinary and is a prime example of how ALEKS makes for a truly personalized learning experience, allowing each student to learn at his or her own pace," said R.G. Wilmot (Wil) Lampros, president of ALEKS Corporation. "As always, our primary goal at ALEKS is to give educators powerful tools that enable them to help students master the basics of math in order to prepare them for life beyond the classroom."

Read more about the success at Big Bear Middle School:

http://www.aleks.com/k12/ALEKS_at_Big_Bear_Middle_School.pdf

To learn more about how ALEKS works, visit: www.aleks.com/video/how_aleks_works.

A free trial of ALEKS courses is available to teachers and administrators at:

www.aleks.com/free_trial/instructor

About ALEKS Corporation

ALEKS Corporation is a leader in the creation of web-based, artificially intelligent educational software. In 2013, ALEKS was acquired by [McGraw-Hill Education](#), a leading digital learning company. ALEKS assessment and learning technologies were originally developed by a team of cognitive scientists, mathematicians, and software engineers at the University of California, Irvine, with major funding from the National Science Foundation. ALEKS is founded on groundbreaking research in mathematical cognitive science known as Knowledge Space Theory. Through adaptive questioning, ALEKS accurately assesses a student's knowledge state, and then delivers targeted instruction on the topics a student is most ready to learn.

ALEKS has been used by millions of students in over 100 different mathematics, science, and business courses at thousands of K-12 schools, colleges, and universities throughout the world.

For additional information, visit: www.aleks.com

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