



Implementation Strategies

Mount Pisgah Middle School, Shelby County Schools
Cordova, TN

Grade(s): 5 - 8

Scenario: Computer Lab, Laptop Carts, Home Access

Purpose: Supplement

ALEKS Portion of Curriculum: 10%

Time Spent in ALEKS: 20 hours per term

ALEKS Course: Mathematics - LV 3 (with QuickTables), Algebra 1

Natalie Schwartz, Teacher

ALEKS is an excellent tool! We use it to enrich advanced students and remediate weak students. They have progress goals they are supposed to meet every nine weeks and I send out weekly quizzes. Students receive feedback from me via their quizzes and messages. Students enjoy being able to message me questions without having to ask in front of an entire class. While I do reserve the school computer lab once a month for students to use here, they are encouraged to use ALEKS at home.

Scenario

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

We use it for Algebra, so having a continual review system for the year was a huge challenge to ensure students are retaining gateway skills.

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

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

Implementation

How do you implement ALEKS?

I check the algebra content with ALEKS to the Algebra curriculum to ensure alignment. Then I encourage students to work on whatever they want to. I send out weekly quizzes the correlate to what we are doing in class.

Do you cover ALEKS concepts in a particular order?

No.

How do you structure your class period with ALEKS?

If we are using ALEKS in class, they are either taking an assessment or are required to meet a percentage goal and list what topics they picked to work on.

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

I check the class pie frequently to see what topics students are excelling in overall, and to determine the length necessary to teach those topics in class.

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

I encourage them to spend about 15 minutes per day, or whatever it takes for them to meet their goal of 25 percent growth every nine weeks.

How do you cultivate parental involvement and support for ALEKS?

At orientation, I present ALEKS by logging in as a student and showing them the student's pie view and how an assessment works. I also call parents individually and talk to them about ALEKS if they have not purchased the subscription yet. I stress to parents that ALEKS gives the students the freedom to work on what they need. I also mention that they can track their student's progress through their pie.

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?

They have paper-and-pencil homework based on the lesson that we do in class. They have a weekly homework quiz on ALEKS to review the content covered in class. They are given the freedom to decide when and how long they will work on their individual progress goals.

How do you incorporate ALEKS into your grading system?

ALEKS counts for 10 percent of their total grade. This is comprised of the score they earn on weekly homework quizzes if they meet the goal of 25 percent by the end of the first nine weeks; 50 percent by the second; 75 percent by the third; and 100 percent by the end of the fourth quarter.

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

They have due dates near the end of every nine-week period for them to meet a certain learning percent. To calculate, I take their score on their most recent assessment and add their percentage learned in Learning Mode together: 25 percent for the first quarter, 50 percent for the second quarter, 75 percent for the third quarter, and 100 percent for the fourth quarter.

Learning Outcomes

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

ALEKS is an excellent tool! My students last year scored in the 96th percentile on the Gateway Algebra exam. They far outscored other Algebra students at the school following the same curriculum who did not supplement their learning with ALEKS. The students love it! Their favorite thing is when they have already worked in ALEKS on the topic that we are covering that day in class. They come in and tell me when they have completed a pie piece, and they also enjoy being able to message me questions without having to ask in front of an entire class.

Best Practices

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

Weekly quizzes help to ensure that students are logging in. Generally they will log in and take the quiz, then work on a few items in the Learning Mode. I post the top three students and their percentage in each class to encourage competition and motivate the students to log

in and work hard so they can be a top ALEKS student.

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