



Teacher Shares SUCCESS Story On Using Personalized Learning Software

By strategically using personalized learning software in her classroom, Carol Huebner, a 30-year veteran math teacher at Pine View Middle School in Saint George, was able to help 89 percent of her students reach grade-level proficiency in the 2016-17 school year, outperforming the state average by more than 45 percent.

According to Huebner, her success isn't just about access to the software; it has to do with how she uses the software.

"Each Pine View Middle School (PVMS) teacher used ALEKS in a different way within our school,"

Huebner said. "I calculated how PVMS would have done without my scores and it would have only been 31 percent proficient! PVMS jumped from 31 percent to 55 percent with one teacher using it well. I'm a good teacher, but we have a lot of good teachers! If people start using this well, we will see these scores go way up across the entire state."

Huebner outlined two reasons she was able to utilize the software effectively. She relies on the software's personalized, real-time information about what students understand to adjust her instruction. She also uses a unique motivation system she created to keep students engaged.

The Data:

ALEKS shows each student a pie chart representing all grade level mathematics content, broken down by topic. Each student's chart shows them exactly what they have mastered, and what they still need to learn.

"The key is: I can get super good information from ALEKS and the data helps me drive instruction," Huebner said. "I understand me perfectly, but sometimes my students don't. Now, when they don't get a concept well, I can see that and I have the power to go back and fix that. I love having the power to immediately go back in and do a better job explaining something."

One of her students said they had learned much more math this year than they usually do because of the way Mrs. Huebner teaches.



Here are some of the students who earned 100% completion of their Aleks Pie. As an incentive, their teacher brought lunch from Jimmy Johns for each and every student.

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“Mrs. Huebner makes sure everyone understands the subject before moving on,” she said, “which is very helpful.”

In addition to giving immediate feedback to the teacher, the program provides feedback to each student as they are working.

“If I get a question wrong, I can see what I did wrong,” said another student. “It shows me how to do it right, and gives me multiple attempts to fix it to get a grade that I like.”

“ALEKS is the judge, and I am seen as the person who is helping them learn. It’s a total change of mindset,” Huebner said. “It’s given me super powers as a teacher. When you have 200 students, you can’t possibly collect homework and grade it and give that kind of instant feedback.”

The Motivation:

“Achievement is celebrated in my class,” said Huebner. “I think we need more of that. It builds confidence.”

From involving parents, to throwing parties, to showing students their own achievement data, Huebner has quite a few strategies to ensure students have the motivation and resources they need to help keep her class celebrating achievement.

“This is really a good thing. I’m just as jaded as the next person about the world of education where they are always pushing something new on you, but this is worth it,” she said. “I have seen results like this two years in a row, since using ALEKS.”



This is a giant display in Pine View Middle School's library. By the end of the year, 24 students had earned a special feature on it.

A Typical Day in Huebner's Classroom:

They come in, I give them a warm up problem (often something they struggled with, as shown by ALEKS).

If they don't have their homework done they receive a citation. If they really didn't get it and they came to see me, they can get a free pass.

If they get a citation, they have to go to the office and call their parents and explain why they chose not to do their homework and why they chose not to ask their teacher for help. By the end of the year, all my kids were doing their homework, and asking for help.

Every night before I go to bed I go to the reports on ALEKS and print out a report by class using their ID numbers showing their number of topics complete and their percent of pie complete and sort it by passed topics or percent of pie complete (ALEKS shows each student a pie chart representing all grade level mathematics content, broken down by topic. Each student's chart shows them exactly what they have mastered, and what they still need to learn). I pass this report around, (which doesn't have names on it, they just recognize their ID numbers) and they fill out the blanks on their progress report.

The progress report shows what homework is due next, and has a blank for percent of pie completed, a blank for the number of topics in pie completed, and what the end of quarter goal is. Sometimes if they are getting far behind I will call them to homeroom and give them time to work on it.

We go over the goal of the day, and we read it out loud. It seems silly but I think having them read it with me helps.

Then we have whatever lesson we have for that day, (teacher lead) sometimes visual examples like the water wheel Pythagorean Theorem, sometimes manipulatives, and sometimes group things.

I'll give an example, and have them work a few problems on their whiteboards, while I walk around and watch. Sometimes I will have them hold up their whiteboards, and I try to acknowledge each student. Each student needs to be acknowledged. Sometimes students are quiet, but they aren't invisible.

After the lesson, I say "OK, now you should be able to do this, how do you feel about it?"

And they hold up their whiteboards with a smiley face, a frowny face, or a straight face. I can then go back and check in with the ones who aren't a smiley face.

Then with the remaining time they work on assignments in ALEKS. While they work I can see exactly what they are doing and I watch and see if students are missing any problems. If they do miss, I can go help them immediately. I also walk around with Jolly Ranchers and give Jolly Ranchers to students who are on task.