

FY08 New Look Final Report

Title of your New Look Project: **Reckoning with ALEKS**

Partners:

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Special Populations Targeted: (check all that apply)



Individuals with Disabilities



Economically Disadvantaged

Implementation Date(s): October 2007 – April 2008

Self Study:

How did you use the conclusions drawn from the self-assessment exercise in your project?

Through the self-assessment exercise, we determined that Capital Area Career Center offers a variety of resources and opportunities for career exploration and development. We identified outreach and recruitment as strengths due to our positive counselor relationship, updated website, and participation in multiple exposure event opportunities. We also offer a variety of support services for all learners. We have a math and reading specialist on staff to support both faculty and student in increasing achievement potential. Our Learning Resource Center is equipped with a 20-station computer lab, a variety of career development resources, and two full-time staff members. With regards to placement and post-placement, our students indicate a desire to enter a variety of post-secondary options, with the greatest of these being to attend a community college or advanced technical training.

However, during a recent long-range planning forum at CACC, improving academic achievement was identified as an area that demands significant improvement. Too many of our economically disadvantaged and individuals with disabilities are entering post-secondary options with academic deficiencies, especially in math. Approximately 75% of our students scored two or more grade levels below achievement expectations in math as measured on the Wide Range Achievement Test. Additionally, a significant number of our students' lack the math skills necessary to meet the basic occupational skill standards for their particular career choice as indicated on the Workkeys website.

The need to address Illinois Learning Standards, the importance of the Prairie State Achievement Exam and WorkKeys puts Career and Technical Education in a unique position to positively impact student achievement. Capital Area Career Center has identified academic skill attainment as a priority goal for long-range improvement strategies in our economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities population. Without basic skills, success in future endeavors is tenuous at best. Post-secondary institutions, business and industry demand skilled workers with fundamental academic abilities. It is our responsibility to ensure our students gain the skills necessary to meet these expectations.

Goals:

- I. List long and short-term goals for your New Look Project.**
 - A. Perkins IV Core Indicator IS2 for Academic Attainment in Mathematics for Capital Area Career Center will increase by 10% from FY07 to FY08.

1. Students will increase math achievement levels by 0.8 grade level by participating in the online ALEKS math tutorial program during FY08 as measured on the Wider Range Achievement Test.
 2. 80% of New Look participants will complete math activities for one hour per week in the ALEKS online math tutorial program as measured by the ALEKS instructor management system.
 3. 80% of participants will maintain performance standard of learning 0.5 items per week in the ALEKS math tutorial program as measured in the ALEKS Assessment Report
- B. 25% of New Look participants with meet performance expectations in mathematics on the Prairie State Achievement Exam and WorkKeys Assessment in Spring of 2008.

II. Explain how those particular goals were aligned with your New Look Project.

In a recent session to develop a strategic plan for the Capital Area Career Center, math was identified as a critical need area. Career and Technical Education has a unique capability of establishing linkages between math knowledge and math application. Therefore, math skill improvement has become a major focus during the 2007 – 2008 school year. Aligning math goals with the Illinois Learning Standards was critical, as well. To address both the necessity for improving math skill attainment and improve learning standard attainment, this program was developed based on sound pedagogical practices.

III. How did you plan to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting the stated goals?

- Utilizing the reporting and management functions within the ALEKS online system. The teacher assigned to maintain and monitor the ALEKS subscriptions has access to a wealth of data, including total time in class, performance goal percentages, hours per week, and items learned. This information can be downloaded into a spreadsheet and data analyzed.
- Pre- and post-testing utilizing the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) to ascertain math achievement levels.
- Surveyed the student participants to ascertain their level of satisfaction with this system.

IV. Describe plans for sustainability and for accomplishment of the long-term project goals.

We plan to continue to hold math achievement as a priority goal for improvement within our student body. Whether we continue to utilize the ALEKS system or not, we will continue to implement strategies to ensure our students meet performance standards on the Prairie State Achievement Exam and, more specifically, the WorkKeys component.

Activities:

Describe activities implemented and/or products developed. Submit samples if applicable.

In order to increase math achievement levels, we enrolled 44 students identified as academically disadvantaged, including economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities, in math in the ALEKS online system for assessment and individualized teaching of mathematics. It is accessed over the World Wide Web and is designed to allow the monitoring and management of student progress towards math goals. The ALEKS learning module includes explanations, generated practice problems, ongoing assessment of student knowledge, and facilities for review and collaborative help. ALEKS determines what students know and what they need to learn, while guiding them down individualized learning paths to mastery. Students work in a dynamic, interactive learning environment on precisely those materials that they are individually ready to learn, building momentum toward mastery. More information regarding this research-based, pedagogically sound program can be found at <http://aleks.com>.

Identified students were given access codes that they utilized to log on to the program at any time; however, time and computer access were given at CACC on a weekly basis. Students were expected to maintain a minimum number of hours per week and progress goals were monitored to ensure goals and milestones were accomplished.

In past implementations of the ALEKS program, it has proven critical to reward student progress towards goals. An important component of this grant implementation was to provide incentives and rewards for student progress towards goals and goal mastery.

Evaluation:

- A. What evaluation methods and tools were used in assessing your New Look Project? Please submit a copy of your evaluation tool, if applicable.**
- Pre- and Post-testing in math utilizing the Wide Range Achievement Test.
 - ALEKS online administrative reporting functions
 - Online subscription-based survey tool called Zoomerang

- B. What conclusions were drawn during your assessment? Did you meet your short –term goals? Did you make progress toward meeting your long-term goals?**

Project Criteria	Project Goal	Actual Results
Total Hours in Class	8 - 10	6.3
Total Hours per Week	1	1.1
Items learned per week	0.5	5.9
Math Goal Attainment (ALEKS)	20%	36%
Math Assessment Performance (Increase)	N/A	10%
Math Achievement (Increase)	10%	19%

- C. What plans do you have for utilizing evaluation feedback in planning for similar activities?**

The most important feedback component of this project is the student analysis of this project. Our students completed a survey indicating their level of benefit and effectiveness of the ALEKS program and its implementation. Overall, the results indicated our students felt the program was effective and did improve their math abilities. Specifically, students stated,

- “I learned more math than I knew before”
- “It was good for me to take it”
- “It was at my pace of work and I liked it”

Some concerns that still need to be addressed in future implementations of this project are balancing time requirements for ALEKS with classroom expectations, level of difficulty, and how to support the students when they encounter problems they don’t understand.

- D. What outcomes or changes occurred to your program as a result of the project?**

Our ALEKS participants made marked improvements in their math achievement as measured on the WRAT. We had a 19%, or overall 1.28 grade equivalent gain. Additionally, 73% of the ALEKS participants indicated they felt the program helped them on the Prairie State Achievement Exam and 77% felt they had increased their math skills. These outcomes exceeded our expectations and solidified our belief in a tailored, prescriptive math delivery system.

- E. Which of the following Illinois Core Performance Indicators did your project assist your program in reaching?**

Secondary

1S2 Academic Attainment – Math

- F. Please provide information regarding the impact of your project, including: collaborating agencies, total number of students served, total number of educators served, materials distributed, and other pertinent quantitative information.**

Collaborating Agencies

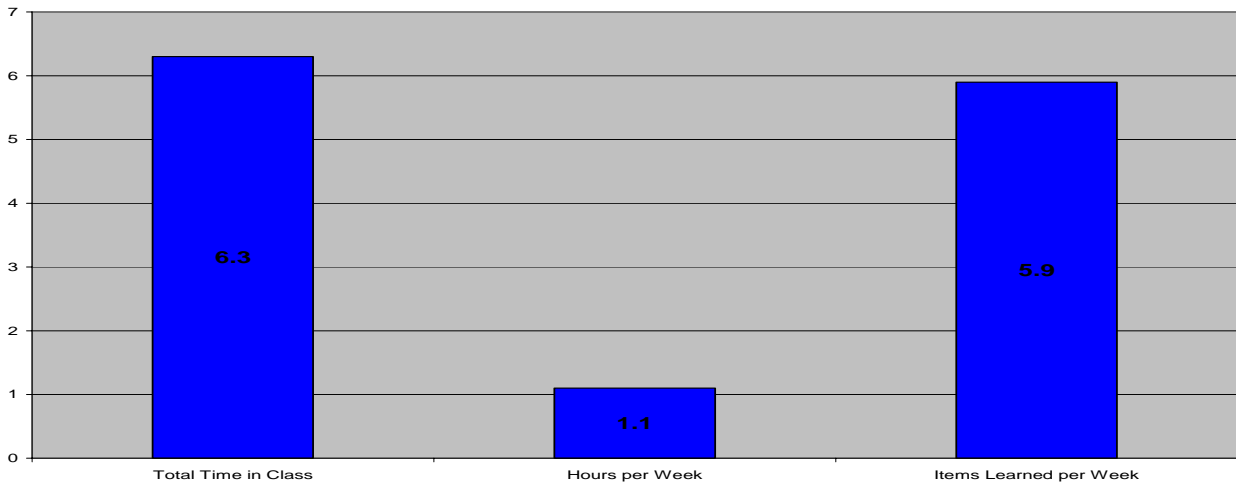
Total Number of Students Served 44

Total Number of Educators Served 10

Materials Distributed Brochures, "Race to 10", Individual Folders, Flash drives

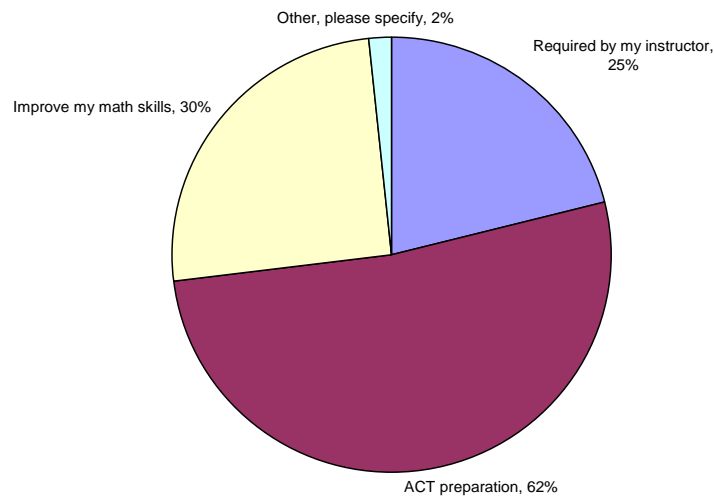
Other Quantitative Information

ALEKS Project Averages



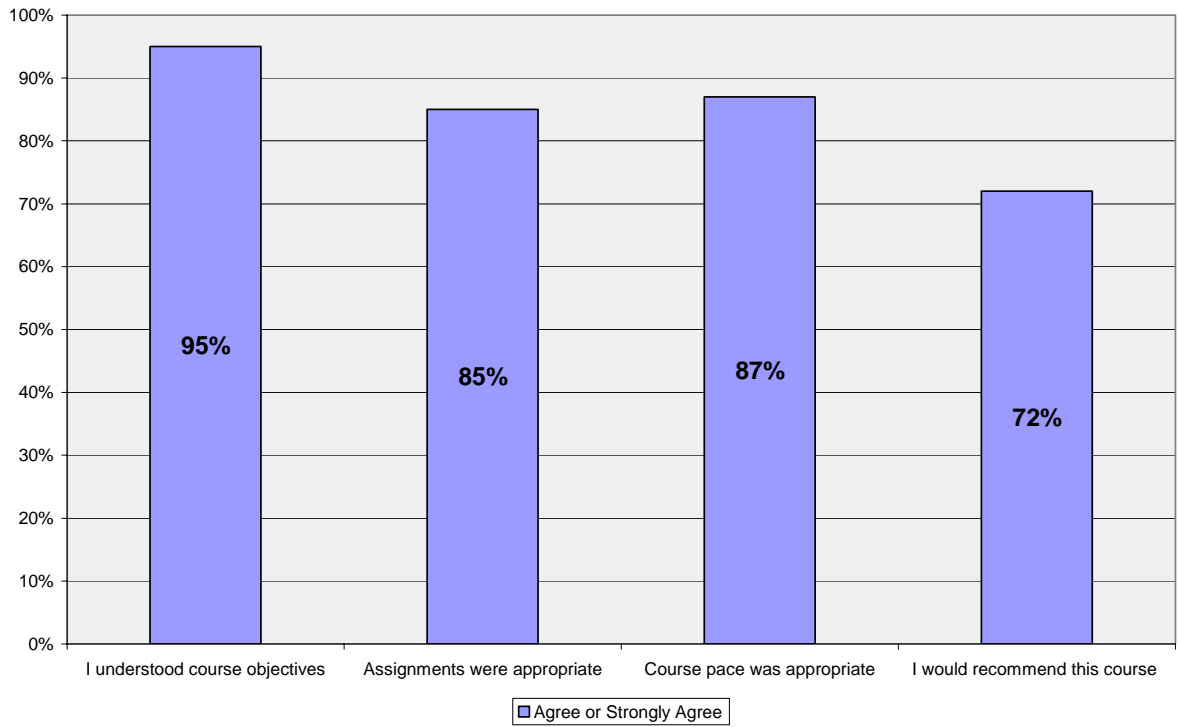
G. Provide feedback received from organizers, participants, and/or observers on the effectiveness of your program or product.

Reason Course was Taken

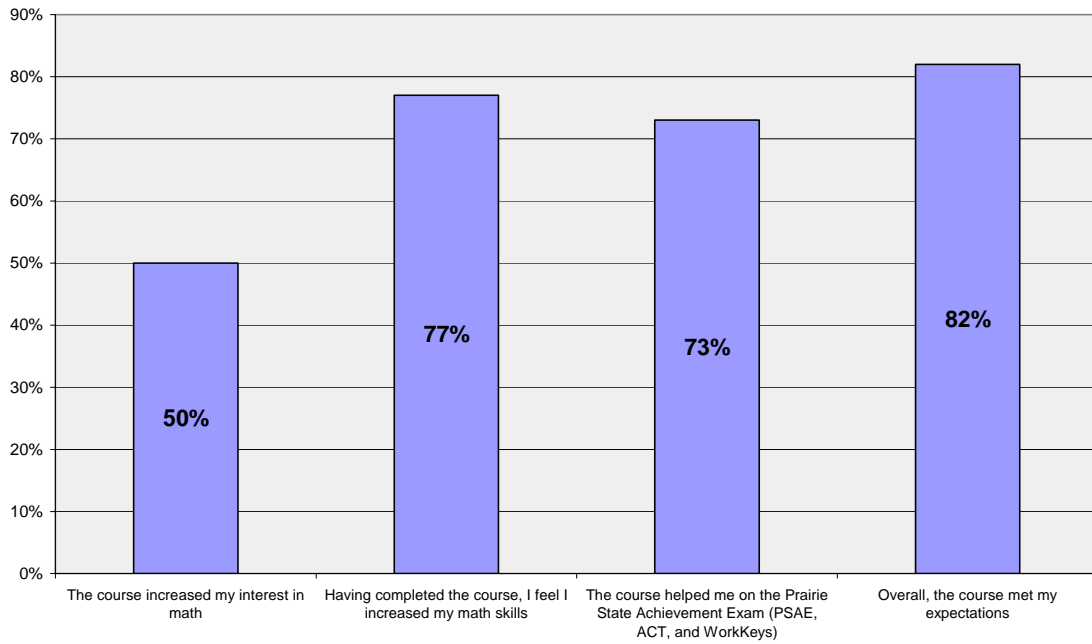


Please return the completed final report and supplemental materials on the 2.0 Memorex flash drive that was provided to:
Connie Borowski, ICSPS
705 E. Lincoln St., Suite 313, Normal, IL 61761

Overall Implementation



Benefit Derived From Course ALEKS



H. Based on the results of your evaluation, feedback, and personal reflection, what modifications could be made to improve your New Look Project?

1. I would provide more preliminary training in the use of the ALEKS program. Many students commented that calculators were not allowed; however, they were available within the program, if appropriate.
2. Time was a critical factor. It was difficult for the students to fulfill the expectations and take time away from their program activities to complete ALEKS. Those students that worked from home had a distinct advantage over those that did not. I would like to designate two times per week specifically for the ALEKS students to utilize the LRC computer lab. In this way, these students know exactly when they are to work on ALEKS and they will also have the LRC staff to assist them if they don't understand.
3. I would involve the parents to a greater degree. I would not only send home a copy of the contract the students signed, but I would also send progress reports home twice during the implementation.
4. I would also provide incentives in smaller increments. Participants only received an incentive if they met full program objectives. Therefore, many students did not feel motivated enough to finish, especially if they fell behind.

Dissemination:

A. Describe plans for dissemination of the project accomplishments, including record of or plans for statewide conference display/presentation. Please provide copies of your activity(s)/product(s) (e.g. promotional materials, educational products, and program descriptions). Electronic samples are preferred.

- I will participate in the New Look Showcase on May 1st by setting up a tabletop display and providing program information.
- Copies of products and activities are located in the literature folder.

B. Also, if applicable, provide photos of students participating in your event or using your product. (Digital photos are preferable.) Finally, if you received press coverage of your project, please include news clippings, web addresses, or contact information.

Technical Assistance Feedback:

A. In general, your experience with the FY08 New Look Project was ...

Excellent

B. The most valuable aspect(s) of the FY08 New Look Project was...

The financial support

The technical assistance and resources provided by ICSPS

The professional development, goal setting and networking opportunities

C. Did you request any technical assistance for your FY08 New Look Project?

Yes

D. Overall, how was your experience with your Technical Assistance Liaison?

Excellent

E. If anyone were to ask you if the money devoted to the New Look Project has made a difference in your institution's ability to serve special populations, what would you say?

Raising math achievement levels by over one grade level was absolutely significant. Based upon the feedback from the participants, they enjoyed the opportunity to increase their skills in an interactive and self-paced format. In one student's words, "It was good for me to take." Preparing our students for post-secondary options, with math skills being a fundamental component, is a number one priority at CACC. These students were given a unique opportunity to prepare for the high-stakes testing in the hopes of bypassing remedial coursework and being better prepared for the future.

F. Will you consider applying for another New Look Project in the future?

Yes

FY08 New Look Final Budget	FY08 Final Budget
Beginning Balance	<u>\$1500.00</u>
Salaries	\$
Benefits	\$
Contractual Services	\$
General Supplies and Materials	<u>\$287.50</u>
Travel Expenses	\$
Other Expenditures* (See Below)	<u>\$1210.00</u>
<u>Total Award Expended</u>	<u>\$1497.50</u>
* Provide detailed description of any expenses listed in the "Other Expenditure" category.	<u>\$1210.00</u>
ALEKS subscription	