Walla Walla Public Schools

Classroom Close-Up

TEACHER NAME: Shannon DeBeaumont SCHOOL: Pioneer Middle School

Position: Math Teacher YEARS IN DISTRICT: 18 years

Q. Why are you using an online program for your 7th grade RTI math class?

A These students are below grade level and have a lot of holes with their math skills. In a regular math classroom they really struggle. We are using an individualized, web-based program called ALEKS (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) to provide the support they need to be successful.

ALEKS uses adaptive questioning to quickly and accurately determine exactly what a student knows and doesn't know. There are 219 topics for 7th grade students to master and it only gives them the ones they are ready to learn. As they master some, then others show up. The students don't get frustrated because they are only working on materials they understand.

Q. What kind of results are you seeing?

A. Kids are adding two or three years of growth in just one school year based on their STAR testing. One of the best parts of the program is the students are gaining confidence. When we first started, my students had difficulty choosing a topic without help. Now they are becoming self-motivated learners.

Q. How is technology improving learning opportunities?

A. It's tremendous. We couldn't do this program without it. The kids love using their Chromebooks. It's less intimidating than having to be called on by the teacher to answer questions in front of the whole class. With this program, only the computer knows if they answered correctly and it lets them know immediately if the answer was right or wrong. I am so thankful we have our own set of Chromebooks for this class with a printer. Each student gets their own homework printed each week. The homework is individualized so each student has a different set of assignments.

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Shannon DeBeaumont

Prior to the ALEKS program, these students would have fallen through the cracks. Now the goal is to get them into a regular math class as soon as possible, and for sure by the time they are in high school.

MORE COMMENTS FROM SHANNON:

I have three students who are now working at grade level and have advanced to the Common Core ALEKS program. It will be exciting to see where they score on state assessments. They will definitely be ready for grade level classes next year.

Most of the students in RTI math are also in RTI Language Arts. These interventions are helping provide the support needed to be successful in school.

I graduated from Wa-Hi and Walla Walla University. My daughter is an accountant in Spokane. I love hiking, fishing and spending time in the mountains.