



Towards Effective Implementation of the ARAL Program: Challenges Faced by Elementary Public School Teachers in Region 02

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ABSTRACT

The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program was implemented to address learning gaps among learners and provide targeted academic support in key learning areas. However, the successful implementation of the program may be influenced by challenges encountered by teachers responsible for its delivery. This study examined the challenges faced by elementary public-school teachers in implementing the ARAL Program in Region 02. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, with 45 elementary teachers from selected schools in the Schools Division Offices of Cagayan and Santiago City participating through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a revised structured questionnaire assessing challenges in five areas: delivery mode, identification and acceptance of learners, access to learning materials, local government support, and tutor qualifications. Descriptive statistics, particularly mean and standard deviation, were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that teachers experienced varying degrees of difficulty across the identified implementation areas. Among the dimensions examined, delivery mode and access to learning materials emerged as notable areas of concern, while local government support presented a comparatively lower level of challenge. The findings suggest that effective implementation of the ARAL Program requires strengthened instructional support, improved access to appropriate learning resources, adequate preparation of tutors, and sustained coordination among schools, teachers, and relevant stakeholders. The study provides empirical insights that may inform school-level planning and policy decisions aimed at improving the delivery and sustainability of learning recovery initiatives in elementary schools.

Key Words: Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program; learning recovery; program implementation; implementation challenges; elementary teachers

INTRODUCTION

Learning gaps remain a persistent concern in the Philippine education system, particularly among learners who have not attained expected competencies in essential learning areas. In response, the Philippine government institutionalized the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program through Republic Act No. 12028 (2024) as a national learning recovery initiative that provides structured tutorial and remediation support to learners requiring additional assistance.

The program emphasizes learner assessment, targeted intervention, qualified tutors, accessible delivery modes, and appropriate learning resources. Its implementation was further guided by DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025, which requires schools to identify learners needing intervention, provide appropriate support, monitor progress, and determine whether learners should continue, exit, or be referred for further assistance.

The effective implementation of ARAL depends not only on policy provisions but also on the capacity and support available to teachers who serve as frontline implementers. Teachers are expected to identify learners, conduct interventions, select or prepare learning materials, monitor progress, and coordinate with parents and other stakeholders. These responsibilities require adequate pedagogical knowledge, assessment skills, instructional resources, and institutional support. Previous literature has shown that learning recovery initiatives may increase teachers' workload, create difficulties in differentiating instruction and monitoring learners, and expose limitations in instructional materials, technology, and administrative support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2022; Hammerstein et al., 2021; Reimers & Marmolejo, 2022; UNESCO, 2023; World Bank, 2022).

Recent Philippine studies likewise indicate that ARAL implementation is affected by teacher workload, insufficient instructional materials, time constraints, learner absenteeism, limited stakeholder support, and varying levels of school readiness (Erero, 2025; Aguinaldo, 2026; Baluyot, 2026;

Ostol, 2026; Tañajura & Escarlos, 2026; Taray & Mepieza, 2026). These findings suggest that learning recovery requires not only appropriate interventions for learners but also adequate conditions that enable teachers to deliver such interventions effectively.

The implementation challenges of ARAL may be viewed through Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory (1978), which emphasizes socially mediated learning, guidance, and scaffolding. Within ARAL, teachers and tutors provide targeted instruction and support to help learners address academic difficulties. However, their ability to provide effective assistance may be influenced by available resources, delivery conditions, learner participation, and their own preparation. The study is also anchored in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) of Hall and Hord (1987), which explains educators' concerns, readiness, and experiences in implementing educational innovations. Together, these perspectives provide complementary pedagogical and implementation lenses for understanding teachers' experiences in ARAL implementation.

Despite growing attention to learning recovery and ARAL, limited empirical evidence specifically examines the localized challenges experienced by elementary public school teachers. Existing studies have largely focused on program effectiveness, learner outcomes, teacher preparedness, and general implementation experiences. Context-specific evidence remains necessary because implementation conditions may vary across schools and divisions. Thus, this study examines the challenges encountered by elementary teachers in the Schools Division Offices of Cagayan and Santiago City in implementing the ARAL Program, particularly in terms of delivery mode, identification and acceptance of learners, access to learning materials, local government support, and qualifications of tutors. The findings are intended to provide evidence that may inform efforts to strengthen the implementation and sustainability of the ARAL Program at the local level. Addressing this gap is particularly important because teachers' experiences provide valuable evidence regarding the practical conditions that either facilitate or constrain program implementation. Understanding these challenges can help identify areas in which teachers require additional instructional support, learning resources, professional development, administrative assistance, stakeholder collaboration, or improvements in implementation mechanisms. It can also provide a basis for determining which dimensions of implementation require greater attention from school leaders and education policymakers.

Accordingly, this study examined the challenges in the implementation of the ARAL Program among elementary public school teachers in Region 02, particularly in terms of delivery mode, identification and acceptance of learners, access to learning materials, local government support, and qualifications of tutors. Specifically, the study sought to (1) assess the level of challenges they encountered across the five dimensions of ARAL implementation; (2) identify which dimension was perceived as the most challenging; and (3) develop recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the program. By examining these concerns from the perspective of teachers as frontline implementers, the study seeks to provide localized empirical evidence that may inform program planning, resource allocation, teacher support, stakeholder collaboration, and policy implementation.

Research Questions

This study investigated the Challenges in the implementation of ARAL program in the Elementary Schools in Region 02. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Grade level handled?
2. What is the level of challenges faced by elementary public school teachers in implementing the ARAL Program in terms of:
 - 2.1 Delivery mode;
 - 2.2 Identification and acceptance of learners;
 - 2.3 Access to learning materials;
 - 2.4 Local government support; and
 - 2.5 Qualification of tutors?
3. Which among the identified dimensions is perceived by teachers as the most challenging aspect of ARAL Program implementation?
4. What recommendations may be proposed to strengthen the implementation of the ARAL Program?

Literature Review

The implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program has become one of the Philippine government's major educational initiatives to address learning loss among learners, particularly those who did not attain the expected learning competencies. Republic Act No. 12028 institutionalized the ARAL Program as a national learning recovery intervention that provides structured academic support through tutorial and remediation programs. The law recognizes that the effectiveness of the program depends on the availability of qualified tutors, adequate learning resources, sufficient funding, and collaboration among schools, local government units, higher education institutions, parents, and other education stakeholders. These provisions emphasize that successful implementation requires both instructional and institutional support.

To ensure the effective implementation of the law, the Department of Education (2025) issued the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 12028. The IRR outlines the responsibilities of schools in identifying learners who require intervention, conducting diagnostic assessments, preparing intervention plans, implementing tutorial sessions, monitoring learner progress, and evaluating program outcomes. These responsibilities require teachers to perform instructional, administrative, and monitoring functions simultaneously, making their role central to the success of the ARAL Program.

The Department of Education (2024) further emphasized that learning recovery cannot be achieved solely through classroom instruction. The Department highlighted the need to strengthen teacher capacity, provide sufficient instructional resources, and encourage active participation from parents, communities, and partner institutions. Such support mechanisms are considered necessary in ensuring that schools can effectively implement learning recovery interventions and improve learners' academic performance.

The importance of learning recovery has likewise been recognized internationally. UNESCO (2023), in its review of global education responses, explained that effective learning recovery programs are characterized by the use of diagnostic assessments, differentiated instruction, individualized learning plans, continuous learner monitoring, and strong collaboration among teachers, families, and communities. These practices enable schools to provide interventions that address learners' specific academic needs while ensuring that learning support remains responsive and sustainable.

Similarly, the World Bank (2022) reported that learning poverty remains a significant challenge affecting education systems worldwide. The organization emphasized that successful recovery initiatives require targeted instruction, regular assessment, efficient allocation of educational resources, and continuous support for teachers and learners. These findings suggest that learning recovery programs become more effective when schools are provided with adequate resources and institutional support.

Despite these recommended practices, UNESCO (2023) acknowledged that teachers continue to face several challenges in implementing learning recovery programs. Among the commonly reported concerns are increased administrative responsibilities, limited instructional time, inadequate teaching and learning resources, and difficulties in balancing intervention activities with regular classroom instruction. These conditions may reduce teachers' capacity to provide consistent and effective learning support to struggling learners.

Recent Philippine studies present similar findings regarding the implementation of the ARAL Program. Tañajura and Escarlos (2026), through a systematic review of studies on Republic Act No. 12028, concluded that effective implementation depends on instructional leadership, contextualized implementation, adequate funding, continuous learner assessment, stakeholder collaboration, and effective monitoring systems. The review likewise identified teacher workload, limited instructional resources, inconsistent learner attendance, and varying levels of school readiness as recurring implementation concerns that may influence the sustainability of the program.

Empirical studies conducted in different educational settings consistently reveal similar challenges. Taray and Mepieza (2026) found that although the implementation of the ARAL Program in the Division of Bohol was generally effective, teachers encountered increased workload, insufficient instructional materials, time constraints, and limited stakeholder support. Nevertheless, teachers demonstrated adaptability by collaborating with colleagues, modifying instructional approaches, and maximizing available resources to sustain learning interventions.

Comparable findings were reported by Aguinaldo (2026), who found that ARAL tutors experienced insufficient instructional materials, limited instructional time, learner absenteeism, and inadequate institutional support during program implementation. To address these challenges, teachers employed differentiated instruction, scaffolding techniques, localized instructional materials, peer collaboration, and learner-centered teaching strategies to improve learner participation and academic achievement.

Furthermore, Ostol (2026) likewise reported that teachers experienced excessive workload, learner participation issues, inadequate instructional resources, and implementation concerns while delivering ARAL interventions. The study recommended strengthening teacher support systems and providing continuous professional development to improve teachers' capacity to implement the program effectively.

Baluyot (2026) further described the implementation of the ARAL Program as both rewarding and demanding. Teachers reported experiencing resource limitations, heavy workloads, and implementation challenges, particularly in geographically isolated schools. Despite these constraints, they remained committed to supporting learners by utilizing innovative instructional practices, collaborating with colleagues, and adapting available learning materials to meet learners' educational needs.

Moreover, another relevant study by Erero (2025) examined the preparedness of public elementary school teachers in implementing the ARAL Program. The findings indicated that teacher preparedness significantly contributes to effective implementation. However, the study also emphasized that preparedness alone is insufficient without adequate instructional resources, administrative support, continuous professional development, and stakeholder participation. These findings reinforce the importance of creating supportive school environments that enable teachers to perform their responsibilities effectively.

Overall, the reviewed literature consistently indicates that teachers play a critical role in the successful implementation of the ARAL Program. However, they continue to encounter various challenges, including increased workload, insufficient instructional materials, limited instructional time, learner absenteeism, inadequate institutional support, resource limitations, and stakeholder-related concerns. Although teachers demonstrate resilience and employ various instructional strategies to overcome these difficulties, the literature suggests that sustained institutional support and adequate resource provision remain essential for improving program implementation.

While existing studies have examined the implementation of the ARAL Program in different educational settings, limited research has specifically focused on the perceived challenges encountered by elementary school teachers within localized contexts. Most available studies concentrate on implementation effectiveness, teacher experiences, or preparedness in selected divisions and schools. Hence, the present study seeks to fill this gap by examining the perceived challenges of elementary school teachers in implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. The findings are expected to contribute to improving implementation practices and provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening learning recovery initiatives in elementary schools.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the challenges encountered by elementary public-school teachers in implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program.

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools under the Schools Division Offices (SDOs) of Santiago City and Cagayan, Department of Education (DepEd) Region 02. These divisions were purposively selected because they had schools implementing the ARAL Program and provided access to teachers directly involved in its implementation. A total of 45 elementary public school teachers participated in the study, comprising 24 teachers from SDO Santiago City and 21 from SDO Cagayan. The participants represented varied school contexts, including central, medium-sized, small, monograde, and multigrade schools. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of teachers with direct experience in implementing the ARAL Program.

Data were collected using an adapted structured questionnaire based on the instrument developed by Atrero and Cabal (2026), Challenges in the Implementation of ARAL Program as Perceived by the Teachers in Zone I Schools Division of Zambales. The instrument was slightly modified to improve the clarity and consistency of item wording while retaining the original meaning and intent of the statements. The questionnaire was administered electronically through Google Forms. Prior to administration, the researchers secured permission from the appropriate school authorities and provided participants with information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before respondents completed the questionnaire.

The collected responses were retrieved, reviewed for completeness, coded, organized, and subjected to appropriate descriptive statistical analysis to determine the extent of challenges encountered across the identified dimensions of ARAL implementation. Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process in accordance with applicable DepEd policies and research ethics, including DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017. Participant privacy and confidentiality were protected by avoiding the collection of unnecessary personally identifiable information and reporting responses in aggregate form. The researchers likewise maintained accuracy, objectivity, and transparency in data collection, coding, tabulation, and analysis, with no fabrication, falsification, or intentional alteration of data.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This section presents the data gathered, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data on the Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program.

Table 2.1

Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program in terms of Delivery Mode.

DELIVERY MODE	M	SD	QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION
1. Adjusting instructional strategies to different delivery modes (face-to-face, modular, online, or blended).	2.93	0.85	Challenging
2. Managing instructional time when implementing multiple delivery modes.	3.20	0.73	Challenging
3. limited access to technology and learning resources for implementing blended or online modes.	3.00	0.86	Challenging
4. Monitoring learners' progress in non-face-to-face learning environments.	3.18	0.79	Challenging
5. Preparing instructional materials appropriate for different delivery modes (i.e. unstable internet connectivity).	3.07	0.93	Challenging
6. Ensuring equal learning opportunities across various delivery modes.	2.93	0.79	Challenging
7. Maintaining regular communication with learners during remote learning.	2.93	0.93	Challenging
8. Conducting fair and accurate assessment regardless of the delivery mode.	3.00	0.81	Challenging
9. Receiving adequate training on various ARAL delivery modalities.	3.02	0.82	Challenging

DELIVERY MODE	M	SD	QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION
10. Maintaining learners' motivation during modular or asynchronous learning.	2.98	0.82	Challenging
11. Addressing technical issues that affect online or blended instruction.	3.02	0.76	Challenging
12. Ensuring equitable learning opportunities regardless of the delivery mode.	3.00	0.86	Challenging
OVERALL MEAN	3.02	0.83	Challenging

Table 2.1 indicates that teachers found the delivery mode challenging in implementing the ARAL Program ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.83$). Managing instructional time across multiple delivery modes received the highest rating ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.73$), followed by monitoring learners' progress in non-face-to-face settings ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.79$). These results suggest that teachers particularly struggle to balance ARAL intervention with regular teaching responsibilities and to monitor learners effectively when direct interaction is limited.

Although adjusting instructional strategies, ensuring equal learning opportunities, and maintaining regular communication received the lowest ratings (all $M = 2.93$), they were still considered challenging. The relatively close mean scores (2.93–3.20) indicate that difficulties were experienced across various aspects of delivery rather than being limited to one concern. The findings highlight the need for institutional support in workload management, learner monitoring, teacher capacity-building, and instructional resources, consistent with UNESCO (2023) and the ARAL implementing guidelines, which emphasize teacher support, appropriate resources, assessment, and monitoring.

Table 2.2

Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program in terms of Identification and Acceptance of Learners.

IDENTIFICATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF LEARNERS	M	SD	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. Identifying learners who genuinely require academic intervention or the ARAL Program.	2.32	0.91	Slightly challenging
2. Gathering reliable data to identify learners with learning gaps.	2.52	0.93	Challenging
3. Resistance from parents or guardians when learners are recommended for the ARAL program.	2.61	0.87	Challenging
4. Explaining to parents the purpose and benefits of the ARAL program.	2.50	0.95	Challenging
5. Completing the documentation required for learner identification.	2.80	0.88	Challenging
6. Lacking of clear criteria for selecting learners for academic recovery or the ARAL Program.	2.57	0.85	Challenging
7. Delays in the approval or acceptance of identified learners into the program.	2.57	0.79	Challenging
8. Completing the learner identification process within the required timeline.	2.75	0.78	Challenging
9. Coordinating with other teachers in finalizing the lists of identified learners.	2.73	0.82	Challenging
10. Encouraging identified learners to participate in ARAL sessions.	2.77	0.83	Challenging
11. Balancing time between identifying learners and performing other teaching duties.	3.05	0.81	Challenging
12. Receiving adequate stakeholder support during learner identification.	2.80	0.82	Challenging
OVERALL MEAN	2.66	0.85	Challenging

Table 2.2 shows that teachers perceived learner identification and acceptance as challenging ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.85$). The greatest challenge was balancing learner identification with other teaching responsibilities ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.81$), suggesting that the process adds to teachers' existing workload. In contrast, identifying learners who genuinely require academic intervention was the least challenging ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.91$), indicating that teachers generally experienced fewer difficulties in recognizing learners' needs.

The findings suggest that the identification and acceptance process may be improved through streamlined documentation, clear selection criteria, efficient scheduling, and stronger coordination among teachers, school heads, and parents or guardians. This is consistent with the ARAL Program's

emphasis on assessment-based learner identification and stakeholder coordination, as well as UNESCO's (2023) emphasis on accurate identification of learning gaps and institutional support for effective learning recovery.

Table 2.3

Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program in terms of Access to Learning Materials.

ACCESS TO LEARNING MATERIALS	M	SD	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. Experience difficulty accessing sufficient learning materials for the ARAL program.	2.82	0.92	Challenging
2. Experience difficulty accessing sufficient learning materials for the ARAL program.	2.91	0.88	Challenging
3. Encounter a lack of printed modules and references materials for learners.	3.02	0.82	Challenging
4. Struggle to find appropriate and updated materials that match learners need.	3.00	0.81	Challenging
5. Struggle to find appropriate and updated materials that match learners need.	3.09	0.83	Challenging
6. Experience delays in the distribution of learning materials to identified learners.	3.00	0.81	Challenging
7. Find it difficult to reproduce or print materials due to limited school funds.	2.95	0.99	Challenging
8. Find it difficult to reproduce or print materials due to limited school funds.	3.02	1.00	Challenging
9. Have limited access to online educational resource due to poor internet connectivity.	3.07	0.90	Challenging
10. Have limited access to online educational resource due to poor internet connectivity.	3.05	0.96	Challenging
11. Struggle to ensure that all learners have access to the same learning materials.	3.02	0.88	Challenging
12. Experience difficulty maintaining the quality and consistency of learning materials across subjects.	3.00	0.86	Challenging
OVERALL MEAN	3.00	0.89	Challenging

Table 2.3 indicates that teachers perceived access to learning materials as challenging in implementing the ARAL Program ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.89$). The greatest concern was finding appropriate and updated materials suited to learners' needs ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.83$), followed by limited access to online resources due to poor internet connectivity ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.90$). These findings suggest that the concern involves not only the availability of materials but also their relevance, quality, and accessibility.

The least challenging indicator was difficulty accessing sufficient learning materials ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.92$), although it remained within the challenging category. This indicates that while some resources are available, teachers still experience limitations in obtaining materials that adequately respond to learners' needs. The findings highlight the importance of providing updated and learner-responsive resources, reliable internet connectivity, and timely reproduction and distribution of materials. This is consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), Reimers and Schleicher (2023), and OECD (2023), who emphasized that adequate instructional resources and digital support are essential for effective learning interventions and recovery.

Table 2.4.

Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program in terms of Local Government Support

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT	M	SD	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. Receiving sufficient assistance from the Local Government Unit (LGU).	2.41	0.90	Slightly Challenging
2. Coordinating effectively with LGU officials regarding ARAL implementation.	2.41	0.87	Slightly Challenging
3. Accessing financial support from the LGU.	2.45	0.93	Slightly Challenging
4. Obtaining instructional resources from local government partners.	2.59	0.97	Challenging
5. Establishing partnerships between the school and the LGU.	2.64	0.94	Challenging
6. Sustaining community participation in ARAL activities.	2.52	0.93	Challenging

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT	M	SD	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
7. Receiving logistical support for ARAL implementation.	2.68	0.98	Challenging
8. Accessing community facilities for ARAL-related activities.	2.52	0.98	Challenging
9. Maintaining effective communication with LGU representatives.	2.55	0.98	Challenging
10. Mobilizing community stakeholders to support the ARAL Program.	2.48	0.90	Slightly Challenging
11. Sustaining long-term LGU support for the program.	2.52	0.85	Challenging
12. Receiving recognition from local leaders regarding the importance of the ARAL Program.	2.50	0.93	Challenging
OVERALL MEAN	2.52	0.93	Challenging

Table 2.4 shows that local government support was perceived as challenging in ARAL implementation ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.93$). The highest-rated concerns involved receiving logistical support ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.98$) and establishing school-LGU partnerships ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.94$), suggesting that teachers experienced greater difficulty in securing concrete assistance and sustaining institutional partnerships.

In contrast, receiving sufficient LGU assistance and coordinating with LGU officials were rated least challenging (both $M = 2.41$). This indicates that basic coordination may be relatively manageable, but translating it into sustained logistical and partnership support remains a concern. The findings highlight the need for more structured school-LGU collaboration through regular coordination, clear roles, and resource mobilization. This is consistent with UNESCO (2023) and the World Bank (2024), which emphasized collaboration among schools, local governments, and communities in supporting educational recovery.

Table 2.5.

Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program in terms of Qualification of Tutors

QUALIFICATION OF TUTORS	M	SD	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
1. Lacking of qualified tutors for the ARAL program.	2.84	0.99	Challenging
2. Ensuring that tutor possesses adequate teaching skills and subject knowledge.	2.64	0.99	Challenging
3. Facing issues with tutors who lack formal training in instructional strategies.	2.75	0.94	Challenging
4. Mentoring tutors who are inexperienced in handling struggling learners.	2.70	0.88	Challenging
5. Struggling with the limited availability of tutors who meet the programs competency requirements.	2.77	0.94	Challenging
6. Finding it difficult to maintain consistent quality of instruction among different tutors.	2.80	0.88	Challenging
7. Facing problems with tutors who are not familiar with the ARAL programs objectives and processes.	2.66	0.99	Challenging
8. Evaluating the effectiveness of tutors teaching performance.	2.80	0.93	Challenging
9. Motivating tutors who have minimal teaching background.	2.61	0.97	Challenging
10. Coordinating schedules due to the limited number of competent tutors.	2.68	0.93	Challenging
11. Providing continuous professional development for tutors.	2.77	0.91	Challenging
12. Sustaining the quality of the ARAL program due to variations in tutor qualification.	2.77	0.91	Challenging
OVERALL MEAN	2.73	0.94	Challenging

Table 2.5 shows that tutor qualifications were perceived as challenging in ARAL implementation ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.94$). The greatest concern was the lack of qualified tutors ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.99$), followed by maintaining consistent instructional quality and evaluating tutors' teaching performance

(both $M = 2.80$). This indicates that the concern involves not only tutor availability but also their competence and ability to provide consistent instruction.

The least challenging indicator was motivating tutors with limited teaching experience ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 0.97$), although it remained within the challenging category. The findings highlight the need for systematic tutor selection, targeted training, mentoring, and regular performance monitoring. This is consistent with World Bank (2024) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2022), who emphasized that educator competence, professional development, coaching, and sustained instructional support are important to the effectiveness of learning recovery interventions.

Figure 3.

Graphic presentation on the Challenges in the implementation of ARAL Program the Elementary Schools in Region 02.

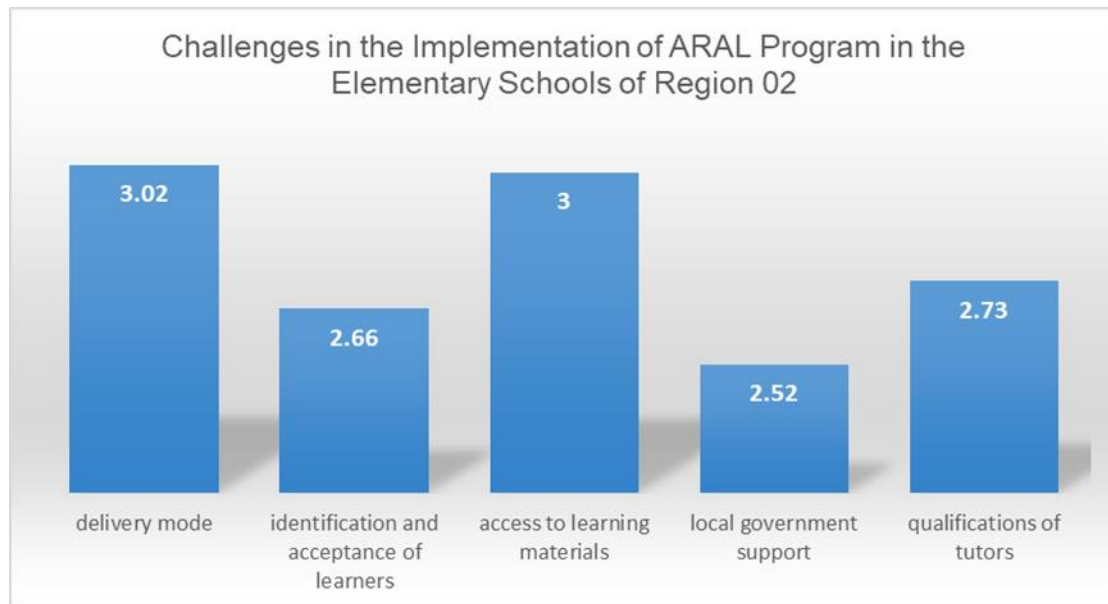


Figure 3 presents the overall pattern of challenges encountered in ARAL implementation across the five dimensions. Mean scores ranged from 2.52 to 3.02, with all dimensions interpreted as challenging, indicating that implementation concerns are multidimensional and involve instructional, resource, personnel, learner, and stakeholder-related factors.

Delivery mode ($M = 3.02$) and access to learning materials ($M = 3.00$) emerged as the most challenging areas, highlighting difficulties in managing instructional delivery and securing appropriate resources. Meanwhile, qualifications of tutors ($M = 2.73$) and identification and acceptance of learners ($M = 2.66$) were comparatively less challenging. Local government support ($M = 2.52$) received the lowest rating, suggesting that while stakeholder support remains a concern, instructional delivery and resource availability pose greater challenges to ARAL implementation.

Overall, the findings indicate that ARAL implementation involves interconnected instructional, operational, and resource-related challenges. Although the five dimensions varied in degree, all were perceived as challenging. This suggests that effective learning recovery requires not only teacher effort but also adequate resources, professional preparation, and stakeholder support. These findings are consistent with Hamoc (2023) and Coquilla et al. (2024), who reported concerns involving limited resources, teacher workload, instructional adaptation, and learner engagement in learning recovery initiatives.

Challenges in Terms of Delivery Mode

Delivery mode emerged as the most prominent challenge, particularly in managing instructional time and adapting instruction to learners' circumstances. This finding is consistent with Dayagbil et al. (2021) and Abante et al. (2021), who identified difficulties in adapting instruction and limitations in connectivity and learner resources. Similarly, Coquilla et al. (2024) reported substantial planning and adaptation demands among teachers implementing learning recovery. These findings suggest the need for manageable workloads, adequate preparation time, and effective mechanisms for monitoring learners across delivery arrangements.

Challenges in Terms of Identification and Acceptance of Learners

Learner identification and acceptance remained a challenge, highlighting the time and procedural demands of accurately identifying learners who require intervention. Dionglay and Callo (2024) and Barnuevo and Lastrella (2023) emphasized the importance of systematic assessment in identifying learning gaps and designing appropriate interventions. Thus, clear criteria, streamlined documentation, and stronger coordination among teachers, school heads, and parents may improve the efficiency of learner identification.

Challenges in Terms of Access to Learning Materials

Access to learning materials was also a significant concern, particularly in ensuring that resources are adequate and responsive to identified learning needs. Hamoc (2023) and Coquilla et al. (2024) similarly identified resource limitations and material-related workload as barriers to learning recovery. The findings underscore the need for sufficient, appropriate, and accessible instructional materials to support targeted ARAL interventions.

Challenges in Terms of Local Government Support

Local government support was comparatively less challenging but remained important to implementation. Agudo and Jalos (2023) and Adao and Ching (2024) highlighted the value of school-LGU collaboration, stakeholder participation, and resource support in sustaining learning initiatives. Strengthening formal coordination and resource-sharing mechanisms may therefore enhance LGU contributions to ARAL implementation.

Challenges in Terms of Qualifications of Tutors

The findings further indicate the importance of tutor qualifications and preparation in delivering effective interventions. Hamoc (2023) and Coquilla et al. (2024) emphasized the need for professional development and pedagogical preparation in addressing diverse learning needs. Tutor selection should therefore be complemented by orientation, capacity-building, and continuing instructional support.

Overall Interpretation

Taken together, the findings show that ARAL implementation challenges are primarily instructional and operational, with delivery mode and learning materials emerging as prominent concerns. While teachers appear capable of undertaking learner identification and stakeholder coordination, they require stronger institutional support to sustain effective interventions. Consistent with Hamoc (2023) and Coquilla et al. (2024), the findings emphasize that successful learning recovery requires a coordinated system of teacher preparation, adequate resources, efficient processes, and stakeholder support rather than relying solely on individual teacher efforts.

Conclusions

The implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program plays a vital role in addressing learners' academic gaps and promoting learning recovery. However, its effectiveness largely depends on how implementation challenges are managed at the school level. Based on the findings of this study, teachers encountered varying degrees of challenges across all dimensions of the program, indicating that successful implementation requires adequate instructional support, sufficient learning resources, qualified personnel, and collaborative stakeholder involvement. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening existing implementation mechanisms to ensure that the objectives of the ARAL Program are achieved effectively and sustainably.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

It is concluded that the respondents represented both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, with the majority handling Key Stage 1 learners. This indicates that the findings reflect the perspectives of teachers implementing the ARAL Program across the primary stages of elementary education.

The study further concludes that teachers encountered challenges across all identified dimensions of the ARAL Program. Specifically, they experienced difficulties related to delivery mode, identification and acceptance of learners, access to learning materials, local government support, and qualifications of tutors, suggesting that the implementation of the program is influenced by instructional, administrative, resource-related, and stakeholder-related factors.

Among these dimensions, delivery mode emerged as the most challenging aspect of implementation, followed closely by access to learning materials. These findings indicate that teachers face greater difficulties in managing instructional delivery across various learning modalities while ensuring the availability of appropriate learning resources for learners. In contrast, local government support was perceived as the least challenging dimension, although it still posed implementation concerns that require continued collaboration and support.

Overall, the findings underscore that the successful implementation of the ARAL Program requires strengthened instructional support, adequate learning resources, competent and well-prepared tutors, efficient learner identification processes, and sustained collaboration among schools, the Department of Education, local government units, and other stakeholders. Addressing these implementation challenges will contribute to improving the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of the ARAL Program, ultimately supporting learners in recovering from learning gaps and achieving the expected learning competencies.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented below are based on the findings and conclusions of the study. These are intended to address the identified challenges in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program and to provide practical directions for strengthening its implementation, improving learning recovery initiatives, and enhancing support for teachers and other stakeholders.

1. School administrators should strengthen instructional support mechanisms for teachers implementing the ARAL Program. Since delivery mode emerged as the most challenging aspect of implementation, schools should establish structured schedules for ARAL sessions, strengthen instructional supervision, and provide regular coaching and technical assistance. These measures will help teachers manage instructional responsibilities more effectively while improving the quality of learning recovery interventions.

2. The Department of Education (DepEd) should enhance the provision of learning resources and continuous capacity-building programs. Considering that access to learning materials and tutor qualifications were identified as major challenges, DepEd should ensure the timely provision of quality instructional materials, improve access to digital and printed learning resources, and conduct sustained professional development programs on remediation, differentiated instruction, and learning recovery strategies. These initiatives will enhance teachers' and tutors' readiness to implement the ARAL Program effectively.

School administrators and teachers should strengthen learner identification and monitoring systems. Schools should develop clear procedures for identifying learners requiring intervention, streamline documentation requirements, and utilize learner progress monitoring tools. A more systematic identification process will ensure that appropriate interventions are provided promptly to learners with the greatest academic needs.

3. Local Government Units (LGUs) and community stakeholders should strengthen partnerships with schools. Although local government support was perceived as the least challenging dimension, sustained collaboration remains essential for ensuring adequate logistical, financial, and material assistance. Strengthening school-community partnerships can improve resource mobilization and contribute to the long-term sustainability of the ARAL Program.

4. Teachers should continue to enhance their professional competencies related to learning recovery and differentiated instruction. Engaging in continuous professional development, collaborative learning communities, and the sharing of best practices will enable teachers to implement effective intervention strategies and respond more efficiently to learners' diverse academic needs.

5. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies on the implementation and effectiveness of the ARAL Program. Future investigations may include larger samples, different regions, or additional variables such as school leadership, parental involvement, teacher self-efficacy, learner outcomes, and program sustainability. Qualitative or mixed-method approaches are likewise recommended to gain deeper insights into the experiences of teachers and other stakeholders, thereby providing more comprehensive evidence for improving learning recovery initiatives.

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