

**Teacher behaviors and administrative support in the implementation of the
ARAL Program across Sarangani and General Santos City**

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ABSTRACT

The Philippine K-12 system is still having a lot of problems with kids not learning much as they should and some kids are not doing as well as others in school. This is because schools have been

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closed for a time and kids have not been able to learn like they normally would. To help with this problem the Department of Education started the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program, which is also called the ARAL Program. The ARAL Program is designed to help kids who are having trouble in school by giving them help and support in the classroom. The teachers are very important, to making the ARAL Program work. They need to use teaching methods help kids with their feelings and be able to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of each kid. This will help the kids learn what they need to know to do in school. The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program really needs teachers to do these things so that kids can have learning experiences. Teacher effectiveness is shaped by pedagogical knowledge, professional values, organizational support, and contextual realities, while professional development, collaboration, and technology integration enhance their capacity. Evidence shows that differentiated instruction, inclusive classrooms, and supportive teacher-student relationships promote successful academic recovery, whereas limited resources, time constraints, and burnout impede progress. This study underscores that teachers act as interpreters and adapters of remedial interventions, highlighting the critical role of their behaviors in optimizing learning recovery and ensuring equitable educational outcomes.

Keywords: ARAL Program, teacher effectiveness, learning recovery, differentiated instruction, inclusive education, pedagogical knowledge, Philippine K–12 Education

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INTRODUCTION

Learning loss and wide academic disparities remain persistent challenges in the Philippine K–12 system, particularly in the aftermath of prolonged instructional disruptions. In response, the Department of Education introduced the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program as a national intervention aimed at supporting struggling learners through targeted remediation, early identification of learning gaps, and the creation of inclusive learning environments. The ARAL Program helps learners catch up by providing timely and focused support, diagnosing areas of difficulty, and fostering classroom settings where all learners can participate without stigma. Unlike traditional pull-out systems that risk labeling or segregating students, ARAL integrates remediation within regular school settings to help learners reach grade-level proficiency (Cruz et al., 2025).

Central to the effectiveness of ARAL is the role of teachers. Teacher behavior is defined as the observable instructional actions, adaptive strategies, and relational practices educators employ which serves as the mediating force that transforms policy into actual learning experiences (Cruz et al., 2025). In academic recovery contexts, teachers enact differentiated instruction, provide socio-emotional support, apply flexible pedagogical strategies, and maintain sustained engagement with learners who require additional assistance (Delello et al., 2025). Their behaviors are influenced not only by pedagogical knowledge but also by their professional values, emotional dispositions, institutional support, and the broader learning environment. Theoretical foundations such as Response to Intervention (RTI), social-emotional learning models, and organizational

change frameworks further emphasize that teacher agency, combined with contextual constraints, shapes implementation fidelity and learner outcomes.

A growing body of literature underscores the importance of teacher behaviors in remedial and recovery programs. Research highlights that teachers' attitudes, professionalism, punctuality, fairness, and classroom climate significantly influence student performance and motivation (Ullah, 2024; Alsraisri, 2025). Evidence-based remedial frameworks such as RTI emphasize systematic assessment, progress monitoring, and tiered interventions, all of which rely heavily on teacher competence and consistent implementation (Haarauer-Krupa, 2012; Hardhita, 2024). Studies also show that differentiated instruction, adaptive teaching, and individualized strategies strengthen both student well-being and academic recovery (Rahmatullah, 2024). Beyond instructional behaviors, teacher-student relationships, socio-emotional support, and inclusive classroom climates are repeatedly identified as predictors of successful learning recovery (Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Sciotto, 2024).

Teacher preparedness also plays a critical role. Professional development initiatives enhance teachers' capability to implement remedial programs, particularly when such training includes coaching, collaboration, and technology integration (Hadiana, 2024; Younas, 2025). Conversely, lack of training, limited resources, time constraints, and inadequate organizational support hinder program success (Alghamdi, 2016; Alsraisri, 2025). Studies further indicate that teacher well-being and burnout directly affect their ability to sustain high-quality remedial instruction, reinforcing the need for supportive school systems (Rushton, 2022). Technology-enhanced tools also contribute to accessible learning, provided teachers possess sufficient digital competence and receive appropriate guidance (Buitre, 2023; Eluemuno, 2025).

School leadership and organizational structures similarly influence ARAL implementation. Collaborative teaching models, regular planning time, strong communication systems, and distributed leadership contribute to implementation fidelity and sustainability (Karlberg, 2025; Flynn, 2010; Ponnusamy, 2024). Inclusive education and culturally responsive teaching approaches also support the diverse needs of learners engaged in remediation (Wycoff, 2025; Hariningsih, 2025).

Given this landscape, understanding teacher behaviors within the ARAL Program becomes crucial. Teachers are not merely implementers of policy; they interpret, adapt, and reshape interventions based on their values, professional identities, perceived program purpose, and contextual realities.

Statement of the problem

This study investigates teacher behaviors and administrative support in the implementation of the ARAL Program across Sarangani Province and General Santos City by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do teachers describe their behaviors and instructional practices during ARAL implementation?
2. What administrative practices and support mechanisms influence or facilitate ARAL implementation?
3. How has participation in ARAL shaped or transformed teachers' professional behaviors and perspectives on teaching?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the experiences, perceptions, and practices of teachers and administrators in implementing the ARAL Program across Sarangani and General Santos City. It focused on understanding the behaviors, support mechanisms, and challenges encountered during program implementation through descriptive and interpretive methods, allowing the researcher to capture rich, in-depth insights from participants within their real-life educational contexts.

The study was conducted in selected public schools in Sarangani Province and General Santos City, areas where the ARAL Program is actively implemented. These locations were chosen for their representation of culturally diverse and resource- constrained educational settings, providing a context to examine how teacher behaviors and administrative support operate within the realities of local schooling environments.

Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants who are directly involved in the ARAL Program, including teachers serving as tutors and school administrators responsible for program oversight. This technique ensured that the study gathered data from individuals with relevant experience and insights into the implementation process, focusing on those who could provide detailed and meaningful information.

The primary research instrument consisted of semi-structured interview guides designed to elicit detailed narratives and reflections from teachers and administrators regarding their practices, challenges, and perceptions of the ARAL Program. The instrument included open-ended questions, prompts, and follow-up probes to ensure comprehensive responses, while also allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes during the interviews.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted in-person or online, depending on accessibility and participants' convenience. The researcher obtained permission from school authorities, scheduled interviews with selected participants, and recorded responses with consent. Observations and document reviews supplemented the interviews to provide contextual information on program implementation and administrative support practices.

The study adhered to ethical standards in research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by coding participants' identities, and all data were securely stored. The researcher ensured that the collection and reporting of data caused no harm and accurately represented participants' perspectives.

Collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving careful transcription, coding, and categorization of responses to identify patterns, recurring ideas, and emerging themes. The process allowed the researcher to interpret participants' experiences of teacher behaviors and administrative support in the ARAL Program and draw meaningful conclusions about the factors facilitating or hindering effective program implementation across the selected locales.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study, transitioning from the methodological procedures to an in-depth discussion of the results. The study employed a qualitative research design and involved teachers implementing the Academic Recovery and Acceleration for Learning (ARAL) Program in selected schools in Sarangani and General Santos City. Data were generated through key informant interviews, guided by a semi-structured

interview protocol designed to capture teachers' instructional practices, administrative support mechanisms, and professional transformations associated with ARAL participation. The analysis followed a thematic approach, allowing patterns and meanings to emerge inductively from participants' narratives. The discussion that follows is firmly grounded in the data collected and interprets the results in relation to the study's research objectives, with particular attention to instructional behaviors, administrative facilitation, and professional growth among teachers.

Teacher behaviors and instructional practices in ARAL implementation

The findings indicate that teachers' instructional behaviors during ARAL implementation are characterized by intentionality, responsiveness, and a strong learner-centered orientation. Across interviews, teachers consistently described ARAL as a structured yet flexible framework that enables them to address the diverse needs of struggling learners through targeted remediation. Instructional practices were grounded in systematic assessment, contextualized content adaptation, differentiated instruction, and socio-emotional support, reflecting a deliberate shift from generalized teaching approaches toward diagnostic-driven pedagogy. These practices illustrate how teachers operationalize ARAL in everyday classroom contexts while navigating constraints related to resources, time, and learner diversity.

A prominent feature of ARAL implementation is the use of diagnostic-driven identification and instruction. Teachers consistently reported relying on formal diagnostic tools such as the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI), the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment, classroom-based observations, and consultations with previous teachers to identify learners requiring intervention. This convergence across participants demonstrates a strong assessment culture in which instructional decisions are guided by evidence rather than intuition alone. Teachers emphasized decoding accuracy, fluency, and comprehension as primary indicators of literacy difficulty, underscoring a systematic approach aligned with ARAL's objective of targeted remediation. Such practices support research indicating that diagnostic assessments enhance the precision and effectiveness of literacy interventions by aligning instruction with learners' specific needs. However, teachers also acknowledged that exclusive reliance on standardized measures may overlook emotional, environmental, and contextual factors influencing learner performance, suggesting the need for more holistic assessment practices that integrate socio-emotional and contextual data.

Closely linked to diagnostic instruction is teachers' contextualized and culturally responsive adaptation of learning materials. Participants frequently described modifying ARAL modules to ensure relevance to learners' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences. These adaptations included simplifying texts, using familiar names and scenarios, integrating everyday experiences, and embedding culturally resonant narratives and games. Despite the structured nature of ARAL materials, teachers exercised professional autonomy to ensure that instruction remained meaningful and accessible. This finding aligns with literature emphasizing that culturally responsive instruction enhances learner engagement, comprehension, and motivation, particularly in literacy contexts. At the same time, the frequency with which teachers modified materials suggests that ARAL modules may not always sufficiently reflect local contexts, highlighting the need for stronger institutional support and professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy.

Differentiated and multisensory instruction emerged as another defining feature of teachers' practices. Participants described tailoring instruction to address varied literacy challenges through flexible grouping, pacing adjustments, leveled tasks, phonics drills, visual supports, guided reading, and one-on-one interventions. Even within ARAL's Basic and Plus classifications, teachers recognized nuanced differences among learners, prompting the use of varied scaffolding strategies. This level of instructional responsiveness reflects advanced pedagogical skill and aligns with evidence showing that multisensory and differentiated approaches significantly improve outcomes for struggling readers. However, teachers also noted that sustaining such practices requires considerable time, energy, and expertise, pointing to the need for additional manpower, instructional materials, and institutional support to maintain quality and prevent teacher fatigue.

Beyond academic strategies, teachers consistently emphasized the importance of socio-emotional support and the creation of an inclusive classroom climate. Participants reported that many ARAL learners experience low self-esteem, anxiety, and fear of embarrassment, prompting teachers to prioritize patience, encouragement, and emotional reassurance. By framing ARAL as an opportunity for growth rather than a marker of deficiency, teachers actively worked to remove stigma and foster learner confidence. These practices align with research demonstrating that positive teacher-student relationships and emotionally supportive environments enhance engagement, resilience, and academic persistence. Nevertheless, teachers noted that systemic constraints, such as rigid schedules and standardized expectations, can limit the full integration of socio-emotional practices, underscoring the need for policy-level support that values emotional as well as academic development.

Resourcefulness in the face of limited resources was another recurring theme. Teachers reported challenges related to insufficient instructional materials, limited printing resources, and constrained schedules. In response, they demonstrated creativity by reusing materials, relying on oral activities, improvising visual aids, and prioritizing essential competencies. While such adaptability reflects strong professional commitment, teachers acknowledged that reliance on improvisation is not a sustainable long-term solution. Consistent with existing studies, these findings suggest that while teacher resilience can mitigate resource scarcity, systemic provision of materials and logistical support is necessary to maintain program fidelity and reduce burnout.

Collaboration among teachers emerged as a critical support mechanism in ARAL implementation. Participants described consulting colleagues, sharing instructional materials, coordinating reading groups, and jointly addressing challenges such as low motivation and decoding difficulties. These collaborative practices functioned as both pedagogical and psychosocial support systems, enhancing instructional quality while reducing professional isolation. The findings support literature on professional learning communities, which highlights collaboration as a key driver of instructional improvement and teacher well-being. Teachers recommended institutionalizing ARAL-focused Learning Action Cells to formalize collaboration and expand collective capacity to address literacy challenges.

Administrative support and school-level practices enabling ARAL implementation

The findings further indicate that effective ARAL implementation is strongly influenced by administrative practices and school-level support mechanisms. Teachers consistently emphasized that while instructional expertise is essential, administrative actions create the conditions that enable or constrain program effectiveness. These practices include systematic

learner identification, resource provision, instructional leadership, workload management, and facilitation of collaboration.

Administrators play a critical role in learner identification and prioritization by consolidating diagnostic assessment data and validating results in consultation with teachers. This structured process ensures that learners requiring support are accurately identified and equitably prioritized, reducing the risk of exclusion. Such practices align with research emphasizing the importance of validated diagnostic systems in learning recovery initiatives, particularly in diverse and multilingual contexts.

The provision of resources and logistical support also emerged as a key enabling factor. Teachers reported that access to printed materials, reading tools, designated instructional spaces, and administrative assistance with scheduling allowed ARAL sessions to proceed smoothly. Administrative responsiveness during periods of material scarcity signaled institutional commitment to the program and directly influenced teacher morale and instructional focus. However, teachers emphasized that sustained and predictable resource provision is necessary to ensure consistent program quality.

Instructional guidance and leadership further shaped teachers' experiences of ARAL implementation. Mentoring, coaching, classroom walkthroughs, and constructive feedback were perceived positively when framed as developmental rather than punitive. Such practices fostered reflective teaching, reinforced best practices, and strengthened teacher confidence. These findings align with research on instructional leadership, which highlights trust-based supervision as a catalyst for professional growth and instructional improvement.

Workload management and scheduling adjustments were also identified as critical administrative practices. Teachers reported that protected time for ARAL sessions, balanced teaching assignments, and schedule alignment reduced stress and enabled focused instruction. Effective workload management was perceived as essential for sustaining teacher energy and program consistency, echoing findings from studies linking workload optimization to reduced burnout and improved instructional quality.

Administrative facilitation of collaboration further strengthened ARAL implementation. Regular meetings, cluster discussions, and Learning Action Cell sessions provided structured opportunities for reflection, problem-solving, and sharing of best practices. Teachers emphasized that when collaboration is intentionally supported by leadership, it fosters a culture of shared accountability and continuous improvement, enhancing both teacher capacity and learner outcomes.

Despite these supports, teachers identified persistent challenges, including limited materials, scheduling conflicts, and inconsistent monitoring. Adaptive strategies such as improvisation and close coordination with administrators helped mitigate these issues, but participants emphasized the need for additional manpower, technology integration, streamlined documentation, and structured coaching. Addressing these challenges is critical for sustaining ARAL and ensuring that learners consistently receive effective remediation.

Professional behavioral transformation through ARAL participation

Beyond instructional practices and administrative support, the findings reveal that participation in ARAL has significantly transformed teachers' professional behaviors and perspectives. Teachers described ARAL not merely as a remediation program for learners but as a

catalyst for sustained professional growth, influencing assessment practices, inclusivity, socio-emotional responsiveness, collaboration, and professional identity.

Teachers reported heightened intentionality in assessment and instructional planning, with greater reliance on diagnostic and formative data to guide decisions. This shift reflects a move away from generic lesson delivery toward responsive, learner-centered planning. While participants acknowledged challenges related to data literacy and time constraints, they emphasized that ARAL fostered reflective habits that extended beyond program sessions.

ARAL also deepened teachers' commitment to inclusive and differentiated teaching. Participants described increased awareness of learner diversity and greater use of adaptive strategies, including tailored pacing, chunked instruction, and culturally relevant examples. These practices reinforced equitable learning opportunities and strengthened learner engagement, consistent with research on differentiated instruction in inclusive education contexts.

Improved teacher–student interactions and socio-emotional responsiveness were likewise evident. Teachers described becoming more patient, empathetic, and attentive to learners' emotional states, using encouragement and interactive activities to sustain motivation. These changes contributed to stronger relationships and a more supportive classroom climate, reinforcing findings from studies on the role of socio-emotional support in academic persistence.

Finally, ARAL participation strengthened collaboration and professional identity. Teachers reported increased openness to mentorship, resource-sharing, and collective problem-solving, as well as renewed motivation derived from observing learners' progress. This strengthened sense of purpose and professional confidence contributed to resilience despite increased workload, supporting literature on the role of collaborative cultures in sustaining teacher commitment.

Synthesis of findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that ARAL implementation is shaped by the dynamic interaction of teacher practices, administrative support, and professional transformation. Teachers' diagnostic-driven, differentiated, and culturally responsive instruction, supported by socio-emotional practices and collaboration, enables meaningful learning recovery for struggling learners. Administrative mechanisms further create enabling conditions that sustain program delivery, while participation in ARAL fosters reflective, inclusive, and resilient professional identities among teachers. Collectively, these results address the study's research objectives and contribute to the literature on learning recovery, instructional leadership, and teacher development. The findings underscore the importance of sustained systemic support, resource provision, and collaborative structures to ensure the long-term effectiveness and scalability of ARAL, thereby preparing the ground for the subsequent chapter on conclusions and implications for practice, policy, and future research.

CONCLUSION

This study synthesized evidence on teacher behaviors, administrative support, and professional transformation in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Acceleration for Learning program, drawing together the findings, implications, and recommendations into a coherent conclusion. The results demonstrate that teachers consistently employ diagnostic driven practices using tools such as the Phil IRI, the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment, classroom observations, and consultations with previous teachers to identify learning gaps and

guide targeted interventions. Instructional practices are characterized by contextual responsiveness through the adaptation of ARAL modules to learners' cultural backgrounds, the simplification of texts, and the integration of familiar examples that enhance comprehension and engagement. Differentiated and multisensory strategies, including flexible grouping, guided reading, and one on one sessions, ensure alignment with learners' readiness levels, while socio emotional support is embedded in daily practice to foster safe and inclusive classrooms that reduce anxiety, build confidence, and promote persistence. Despite persistent constraints related to materials and time, teachers demonstrate creativity and resourcefulness by improvising instructional resources and prioritizing essential competencies. Collaboration among colleagues through shared planning, exchange of strategies, and participation in professional learning communities further strengthens instructional consistency, supports teacher well-being, and enhances overall program effectiveness. Taken together, these findings indicate that ARAL implementation is fundamentally evidence informed, contextually responsive, and learner centered, although its full potential depends on sustained institutional support, adequate resource provision, and structured professional development.

The study also establishes that administrative practices play a decisive role in shaping the effectiveness and sustainability of ARAL implementation. Administrators contribute to equitable and targeted academic recovery through systematic learner identification and prioritization based on diagnostic assessments such as the Phil IRI. The provision of instructional materials, physical learning spaces, and logistical assistance enables uninterrupted sessions and signals institutional commitment to the program. Instructional leadership manifested through mentoring, coaching, and developmental classroom observations strengthens teacher confidence and supports fidelity of implementation, while workload management and protected scheduling help prevent burnout and maintain program momentum. Intentional facilitation of collaboration through meetings, Learning Action Cell sessions, and collective sharing of best practices fosters a supportive professional community. Nevertheless, challenges persist in the form of material shortages, scheduling conflicts, and variability in monitoring, prompting teachers to recommend increased resources, structured coaching, technology integration, and additional manpower. These findings underscore that responsive, well-coordinated, and collaborative administrative systems are essential to overcoming operational barriers and ensuring that ARAL effectively addresses the learning needs of struggling students.

Beyond instructional delivery and administrative structures, participation in ARAL has resulted in substantial professional transformation among teachers. Engagement with the program has strengthened reflective practice, expanded instructional repertoires, and deepened commitment to learner centered education. Teachers demonstrate increased intentionality in the use of assessment data for planning, greater proficiency in differentiated and culturally responsive instruction, and more empathetic and supportive interactions with learners. Collaboration has become more pronounced, with teachers valuing shared problem solving and collective responsibility for learner outcomes. These developments have enhanced teachers' adaptability, professional identity, and sense of purpose, indicating that ARAL functions not only as an academic recovery initiative but also as a meaningful professional development experience. However, the sustainability of these gains is contingent upon continued institutional reinforcement, particularly in contexts marked by heavy workloads, inconsistent support, and limited opportunities for ongoing growth.

In synthesizing the implications of these findings, it is evident that while teachers possess the capacity to deliver highly adaptive and learner centered instruction even in resource challenged environments, the success of ARAL currently relies heavily on teacher initiative and collegial support rather than consistent institutional provision. Variability in resources, monitoring, and administrative alignment risks uneven implementation and outcomes across schools. To address these concerns, the study recommends the institutionalization of sustained support through the provision of standardized ARAL materials, ongoing capacity building in assessment literacy, differentiation, and socio emotional learning, and the formalization of professional learning communities. Strengthening administrative systems through clear monitoring frameworks, equitable distribution of materials, protected ARAL time blocks, structured coaching programs, technology supported progress tracking, and the allocation of additional manpower can further reduce teacher overload and enhance program fidelity. Finally, integrating ARAL inspired practices into regular teaching through mentoring, reflective sessions, recognition of innovative practice, and supportive workload adjustments will help ensure that the professional competencies developed through ARAL are retained and expanded. Collectively, these conclusions affirm the relevance of ARAL as both a learning recovery strategy and a catalyst for sustained instructional improvement, with important implications for policy, practice, and future research.

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