

Teachers' Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program

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Abstract

This study evaluated the level of implementation competence among elementary school teachers in the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program across four core instructional parameters: Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Grounded in the global commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4: Quality Education), this research highlights the pivotal role of educator capability in driving equitable learning recovery, bridging foundational literacy gaps, and ensuring inclusive, lifelong learning opportunities for all students. Using a quantitative, descriptive-comparative research design, data were collected from 85 elementary teacher respondents. The findings demonstrated that elementary teachers had a high level of overall competence across all four implementation parameters, establishing a strong pedagogical foundation for delivering quality education under the ARAL Program framework. Comparative analysis using inferential statistics indicated no significant differences in teacher competence levels across any of the core parameters when respondents were grouped according to age, educational attainment, length of service, or family monthly income. It is concluded that elementary educators demonstrate consistent pedagogical mastery and high professional capability in implementing targeted learning recovery interventions, bolstered by an experienced, highly educated workforce. Education policymakers should address socio-economic welfare and career progression pathways for teachers in lower-income brackets to safeguard educator well-being. Future research should investigate the direct, long-term impact of teacher implementation competence on actual student learning outcomes and reading proficiency gains within the ARAL Program.

Keywords: *Teachers' Competence, Aral Program, Program Implementation, Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills*

Introduction:**Nature of the Problem**

The global educational landscape faces an unprecedented learning crisis characterized by widening achievement gaps, learning loss, and persistent foundational skill deficits. To address these systemic disruptions, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) mandates member states to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2022). In the Philippines, national and international large-scale assessments such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) have underscored severe learning poverty, where a majority of young learners struggle with basic reading comprehension, mathematical problem-solving, and scientific literacy (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2021).

In response to these persistent challenges and post-pandemic learning gaps, the Philippine government enacted Republic Act No. 12028, officially establishing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program (Department of Education [DepEd], 2024). Governed by DepEd Order No. 018, s. In 2025, the ARAL Program serves as a national targeted intervention framework that provides free, systematic tutorial sessions in reading, mathematics, and science for learners in kindergarten to Grade 10 who are performing below minimum proficiency levels. Pedagogical competence encompasses not only subject-matter mastery but also diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, integration of socio-emotional learning, and adaptive teaching strategies tailored for struggling learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; DepEd, 2021). Teachers implementing the ARAL Program are tasked with transitioning from standard curriculum pacing to specialized remediation, requiring distinct skills in identifying learning gaps, managing multi-level tutorial groups, and utilizing targeted learning resources (EDCOM II, 2024).

Despite the strategic importance of the ARAL Program, teachers often encounter structural and instructional hurdles, including limited specialized training in remedial techniques, heavy workload distribution, and lack of contextualized learning materials (OECD, 2021; World Bank, 2022). Evaluating specific competency indicators provides empirical baseline data necessary to identify areas requiring institutional support. The results of this evaluation serve as the direct foundation for designing an evidence-based Capability Building Plan, a targeted professional development framework aimed at enhancing teacher capabilities, optimizing tutorial delivery, and advancing the overarching goals of SDG 4 within the basic education sector.

Current State of Knowledge

Education plays a vital role in human development, social mobility, and the improvement of individual and societal outcomes. Pocaan (2022) emphasized that education serves as a catalyst for human and social development, while Ferguson and Rooft (2020) highlighted its importance in reducing poverty and promoting social mobility. Despite increased access to education, the United Nations (2021) reported that many children and adolescents still fail to attain minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics, underscoring the need for effective learning recovery initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified learning gaps, particularly in literacy and numeracy (UNESCO, 2021; Dorn et al., 2020). In response, learning recovery programs have emphasized targeted instruction, remediation, tutoring, and extended learning opportunities, with teachers playing a central role in successful implementation (Education Development Center, 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Teachers' competence is particularly important in implementing programs designed to address learning deficiencies. Instructional competence requires teachers to move beyond conventional teaching approaches and adopt flexible, learner-centered strategies that respond to differences in students' readiness and learning needs. Hattie (2023) and the World Bank (2022) emphasized focusing on fundamental competencies and using approaches such as differentiated instruction, scaffolding, and small-group teaching to accelerate learning recovery. Similarly, King et al. (2023) noted that effective recovery programs require teachers to adapt instruction and prioritize essential learning competencies, while Kraft et al. (2021) highlighted the effectiveness of structured approaches such as Teaching at the Right Level. In the Philippine context, the ARAL Program provides opportunities for flexible and responsive instruction, although teachers may encounter challenges related to limited instructional time, competing school activities, varying learner abilities, and inadequate resources (De Los Santos et al., 2025). These conditions emphasize the need for teachers to balance curriculum requirements with contextualized and differentiated instruction.

Intervention and remediation skills are likewise essential in addressing foundational learning gaps. Tomlinson and Moon (2020) explained that effective remediation requires teachers to identify specific learning deficiencies and apply evidence-based instructional adjustments rather than simply repeating previous lessons. International literature supports the use of systematic phonics instruction, small-group tutoring, differentiated activities, and scaffolded learning to improve literacy and numeracy outcomes (Mather & Jaffe, 2021; Brooks et al., 2021). In local settings, teachers have employed individualized learning activities, peer tutoring, multilevel grouping, and other differentiated approaches to address learner needs (Dionglay, 2024). However, large class sizes, heavy workloads, limited instructional materials, and irregular attendance may constrain teachers' ability to provide effective remediation. Thus, professional development and Learning Action Cell activities are important in strengthening teachers' capacity to diagnose learning problems and implement appropriate interventions.

Assessment competence or assessment literacy enables teachers to determine learners' current levels of achievement, identify learning gaps, monitor progress, and modify instruction based on evidence. Black and Wiliam (2020) and UNESCO (2022) emphasized that formative and diagnostic assessments are essential to learning recovery because reliance solely on summative assessments may fail to identify specific learning deficiencies. Robinson et al. (2021) further stressed the importance of low-stakes and diagnostic assessment in designing appropriate remediation. In the Philippine ARAL context, teachers utilize assessment tools such as the Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment and Rapid Mathematics Assessment to establish learner baselines and guide intervention planning (Recla et al., 2024). Villanueva et al. (2024) noted that assessment competence also enables teachers to provide meaningful feedback and develop individualized learning programs, although local literature indicates a continuing need to strengthen teachers' skills in developing authentic and performance-based assessments (Romelo, 2026).

Monitoring and evaluation competence is another essential component of effective ARAL implementation because it allows teachers and school leaders to track learner progress, assess program fidelity, document attendance and performance, and identify areas requiring adjustment. The OECD (2023) emphasized the importance of consistent monitoring in learning recovery programs, including both quantitative indicators of skill development and qualitative evidence of learner engagement. King et al. (2023) similarly highlighted the role of monitoring and evaluation in maintaining program fidelity and informing policy and instructional decisions. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (2025, 2026) emphasized monitoring learner progress, supervising intervention activities, and conducting post-intervention evaluations as important components of ARAL implementation. Collaborative monitoring involving teachers, school administrators, parents, and community stakeholders can strengthen decision-making and facilitate timely responses to implementation challenges, although limited time, monitoring tools, and feedback mechanisms may affect the effectiveness of these processes.

Overall, the literature indicates that the success of the ARAL Program depends substantially on teachers' competence in instruction, intervention and remediation, assessment, and monitoring and evaluation. Effective implementation requires teachers to adapt instruction to learner needs, apply evidence-based remediation strategies, use diagnostic and formative assessments, and systematically monitor learner progress. Local and international studies also reveal common implementation challenges, including workload, limited resources, insufficient preparation, time constraints, and diverse learner needs (Dela Cruz, 2023; OECD, 2021; Serrano, 2019). At the same time, teacher collaboration, professional development, administrative support, and adequate instructional resources can strengthen implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Leithwood, 2020). These findings establish the relevance of examining teachers' competence in implementing the ARAL Program and provide a strong basis for developing a capacity-building plan responsive to teachers' professional needs and the learning requirements of elementary pupils.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, specifically in delivering reading interventions to learners in Grades 1 to 10, is strongly supported by Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, particularly his core construct of Teacher Self-Efficacy. Bandura posits that an individual's belief in their own capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific performance goals dictates their level of effort, persistence, and instructional effectiveness when facing challenging tasks (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). In the context of the ARAL Program, teachers' pedagogical competence in executing targeted reading interventions is directly mediated by their efficacy beliefs regarding diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction, and foundational literacy scaffolding across diverse developmental levels. When educators possess high instructional self-efficacy, they are significantly more likely to adapt evidence-based reading strategies, manage diverse classroom learning speeds from early grade phonics (Grades 1–3) to secondary reading comprehension (Grades 7–10), and sustain persistence when supporting struggling readers (Wyatt, 2018; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Furthermore, as teachers observe mastery experiences such as tangible reading gains among ARAL Program beneficiaries, their professional competence and instructional confidence reinforce one another in a reciprocal cycle, ultimately determining the overall quality and fidelity of the reading intervention program's rollout (Gullford et al., 2020; Holzberger et al., 2019).

The cultivation of reading adaptability has been regarded as an essential objective in basic education for several years. Bandura's theory emphasizes a social element, asserting that individuals can acquire new knowledge and behaviors through observing others (Lorenz, 2021; Selter, 2021). In connection with the study, the presage displays the pre-test results on the reading ability of the struggling readers in terms of word recognition, reading comprehension, and reading speed. The process displays the implementation of the remedial program using the developed strategic reading intervention materials. At the same time, the product is the result of the post-test, which illustrates the improvement in the learners' reading ability. Identifying the present status of learners in solving learning problems requires scientific investigations that primarily determine the nature of the problem. It provides a better understanding of how to develop suitable interventions that target specific goals for the students who are beneficiaries of the ARAL program. Strategic reading interventions may support students' reading improvement and are an effective tool in remedial programs.

Objectives of the Study

This study determined the level of competence of elementary teachers in the implementation of the Aral Program in one of the Schools Divisions in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for developing a capacity-building plan. Specifically, it examined the respondents' profiles in terms of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income; assessed their level of competence in implementing the Aral

Program in terms of instructional competence, remediation and intervention skills, assessment competence, and monitoring and evaluation; and determined whether there was a significant difference in their level of competence when grouped according to the identified profile variables.

Research Methodology:

This section presents the research design, study respondents, instrumentation, data-gathering procedure, data analysis and statistical tools, and ethical consideration.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design to determine the level of competence of elementary teachers in implementing the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program across four dimensions: Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Descriptive research systematically measures and describes existing conditions without manipulating variables, using numerical data to establish patterns and prevailing characteristics (McCombes, 2020; Shuttleworth, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design was appropriate because the study aimed to establish a baseline of teachers' competencies as they naturally occur within the ongoing implementation of the ARAL Program. Through weighted means and standard deviations, the study identified areas of strength and those requiring professional development or administrative support, thereby providing empirical evidence for the development of targeted capacity-building initiatives and improved program implementation.

Study Respondents

Respondents of the study were 85 public elementary school teachers from five schools in one of the Districts of the Schools Division in Northern Negros. From this total number of teachers, 85 respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Specifically, respondents were teachers who implement the ARAL program at selected elementary schools for the Academic Year 2025-2026. One of the schools is strategically located in the city. The school belongs to a large category with thousands of enrollees per year, and the remaining schools are rural elementary schools in the Schools Division. This investigation was limited to the kindergarten-to-grade teachers of one of the districts.

Instrument

The researcher developed a questionnaire to determine the level of competence of elementary teachers in implementing the ARAL Program during School Year 2025–2026. The instrument consisted of two parts: Part I covered the respondents' profile in terms of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, while Part II assessed competence in Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation through 35 items rated on a five-point Likert scale from 5 (Always) to 1 (Almost Never). The instrument underwent face validation by three experts in education, curriculum, language, and research, whose recommendations were incorporated into the final questionnaire. Using the criteria of Good and Scates, the instrument obtained a validation score of 4.90, interpreted as "Excellent," indicating that it was valid (Dudovskiy, 2019). Its reliability was established through a dry run involving 30 teachers from another division who were not included in the study sample, with Cronbach's alpha used to determine internal consistency. The questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.809, interpreted as "Good" and indicating acceptable reliability (Forero, 2022; Taber, 2021).

Data Gathering and Procedure

After the panel members approved the questionnaire, the researcher conducted validation with assistance from three (3) validators. Afterward, the research questionnaire's reliability was established by administering it to 30 teachers from districts within the same division who were not the actual respondents. After computing the reliability of the survey questionnaire, the researcher then sought the authority of the Schools Division Superintendent through a letter requesting permission to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher set a schedule for data collection among the identified respondents and sent a letter requesting permission from the School Principals. The researcher administered and retrieved the research instrument to ensure 100% retrieval. After retrieval, the data were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted in accordance with the specific problems outlined in this study. Scores for each respondent were coded by variable, and computations were performed using SPSS. Likewise, statistical tables were constructed in accordance with the study's objectives.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Data analysis employed descriptive-analytical and comparative-analytical schemes aligned with the objectives of the study. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profiles in terms of age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income. Mean was utilized to determine the level of elementary teachers' competence in implementing the ARAL Program in terms of instructional competence, remediation and intervention skills, assessment competence, and monitoring and evaluation. Meanwhile, the

Mann–Whitney U test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in teachers’ competence when grouped according to the identified profile variables.

Ethical Consideration

This study adheres to established ethical standards in educational research to ensure the integrity of the research process and the protection of all participants. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, including teachers, school heads, and other personnel involved. Participants were fully briefed on the purpose of the study, the nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Consent forms outlined the voluntary nature of participation and clarified that no incentives or coercive measures were used.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. Personal identifiers were removed from all data sets, and responses were coded to prevent traceability to individual participants or institutions. Data were stored securely and accessed only by the researcher for academic purposes. Findings are reported in aggregate form to avoid disclosing any sensitive or identifiable information.

Results and Discussion:

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered to carry out the predetermined objectives of this study.

Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age, Highest Education Attainment, Length of Service, and Average Family Monthly Income

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	Younger (Below 34 years old)	40	47.1
	Older (34 years old and above)	45	52.9
	Total	85	100.0
Highest	Lower (Bachelor’s degree)	22	25.9

Educational Attainment	Higher (MA and PhD)	63	74.1
	Total	85	100.0
Length of service	Shorter (Below 12 years))	37	43.5
	Longer(12 years and above)	48	56.5
	Total	85	100.0
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower (Below Php7,600)	38	44.7
	Higher (Php7,600 and above)	47	55.3
	Total	85	100.0

The demographic profile of the respondents ($N = N=85$) presents a workforce characterized by maturity, advanced academic qualifications, organizational tenure, and moderate financial stability. A slight majority of the respondents fall into the older age group (52.9%, $n=45$, aged 34 and above), while younger individuals make up 47.1% ($n=40$), indicating a balanced workforce that leans slightly toward experienced personnel. Crucially, a significant majority (74.1%, $n=63$) hold advanced degrees (Master's or Doctorate), whereas only 25.9% ($n=22$) have earned a Bachelor's degree, demonstrating a professional environment that prioritizes post-graduate education.

In terms of length of service, over half of the respondents (56.5%, $n=48$) have served for 12 years or longer, compared to 43.5% ($n=37$) who have been employed for less than 12 years, pointing to high organizational retention and institutional loyalty. Finally, regarding average family monthly income, 55.3% ($n=47$) earn Php 7,600 and above, while 44.7% ($n=38$) fall below this threshold, establishing a moderate overall income baseline.

These findings carry significant organizational implications. The combination of a highly educated workforce (74.1% MA/PhD) and strong tenure (56.5% long-serving) suggests a solid base for professional competency and strategic planning, as higher educational attainment positively correlates with organizational adaptability, innovation, and overall workplace performance (Nguyen & Luu, 2020). Furthermore, the concentration of experienced personnel highlights the need for structured mentorship programs, which are essential in tenured workforces to retain institutional knowledge and prevent capital loss during upcoming retirement transitions (Calo et al., 2021). However, the finding that nearly half (44.7%) of these highly qualified and long-serving employees fall into the lower income category highlights a potential disconnect; aligning compensation with educational credentials and tenure is critical to sustaining long-term commitment, maintaining job satisfaction, and mitigating mid-career turnover risk (Al-Sada et al., 2020).

Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation

Table 2

Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Instructional Competence

Instructional Competence			
	Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I....</i>			
	1. use specialized approaches, such as strength-based translanguaging and social-emotional learning, particularly for foundational literacy	3.72	High
	2. utilize tools like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) to identify and monitor student progress	3.74	High
	3. customize lesson plans and learning resources to meet the diverse needs of struggling learners	3.46	Moderate
	4. engage in developing data-based interventions to achieve the reading fluency of learners	3.99	High
	5. deliver structured tutorial sessions in reading.	3.78	High
	6. design and implement needs-based programs in the school that support the development of learners in reading	3.82	High
	7. utilize multisensory approaches, such as daily tailored reading sessions, word walls, and phonics-based methods, is crucial for engaging struggling readers	4.93	Very high
	8. utilize evidence-based, explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, and comprehension to address specific reading deficits	4.18	High
	Overall Mean	3.95	High

The overall mean score in table 2 for the level of competence in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program among elementary teachers in terms of instructional competence is 3.95, which is verbally interpreted as High. This indicates that the elementary teachers generally demonstrate a strong execution of pedagogical strategies required for reading recovery and foundational literacy. Within this dimension, the highest mean score is observed in Item 7 ("utilize multisensory approaches, such as daily tailored reading sessions, word walls, and phonics-based methods, is crucial for engaging struggling readers") with a mean of 4.93, interpreted as Very High.

This reveals that teachers rely most heavily on interactive, multimodal, and tactile reading strategies to directly engage struggling readers in targeted intervention settings. Conversely, the lowest mean score is recorded in Item 3 ("customize lesson plans and learning resources to meet the diverse needs of struggling learners") with a mean of 3.46, interpreted as Moderate. Relatively lower rating highlights that teachers experience greater difficulty or time constraints when tasked with individualizing instructional materials and adapting general lesson plans to suit varied learning paces. These findings carry important pedagogical and policy implications for learning recovery programs experienced school. The strong emphasis on multisensory methods reflects modern research confirming that structured, multimodal reading interventions such as phonics paired with visual and auditory aids are exceptionally effective for accelerating foundational literacy among struggling elementary students (Kilpatrick & O'Brien, 2021). However, the lower score in lesson customization points to a common systemic challenge: teachers often face heavy administrative workloads and limited resources, which hinders their ability to differentiate instruction effectively (Tomlinson & Moon, 2020). Addressing this gap requires educational managers to provide pre-differentiated learning packages, automated diagnostic tools, and targeted professional development on adaptive learning design to ensure that instructional support fully meets individual student needs in post-pandemic learning recovery initiatives (World Bank, 2022).

Table 3

Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Remediation and Intervention Skills

Remediation and Intervention Skills			
	Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>			
	1. analyze the literacy data to identify specific reading gaps and determine eligibility for intervention tiers.	3.65	High
	2. identify specific patterns in student errors, such as issues	3.62	High

with decoding, fluency, or comprehension, to refine the focus of remediation		
3. provide clear, direct guidance on foundational skills like phonemic awareness and phonics, leaving no room for student confusion.	3.76	High
4. break complex tasks into smaller, achievable steps and demonstrate think-aloud strategies for decoding or comprehension.	3.98	High
5. utilize technology to improve learners' reading participation in the improvement of learning outcomes.	3.45	Moderate
6. ensure punctuality and effective use of instructional time.	3.60	High
7. use tactile and kinesthetic tools to help students "build" words, which reinforces brain development.	4.64	Very high
8. move beyond simple oral reading to use techniques like echo reading, choral reading, and timed repeated readings with immediate feedback	4.33	High
Overall Mean	3.88	High

The level of competence among elementary teachers in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program under Remediation and Intervention Skills yields an overall mean score of 3.88, which is verbally interpreted as High. This overall result indicates that the teachers demonstrate strong capability in diagnosing reading difficulties and delivering targeted remedial strategies to struggling learners. Within this domain, the highest mean score is observed in Item 7 ("use tactile and kinesthetic tools to help students 'build' words, which reinforces brain development") with a mean of 4.64, interpreted as Very High.

This finding reveals that teachers predominantly rely on hands-on, multisensory learning experienced such as letter tiles and physical word-building activities to reinforce foundational literacy skills among struggling readers. Conversely, the lowest mean score is recorded in Item 5 ("utilize technology to improve learners' reading participation in the improvement of learning outcomes") with a mean of 3.45, interpreted as Moderate. Teachers face challenges or limitations in integrating educational technology, digital reading applications, or interactive tools into their remedial reading sessions. Teachers still primarily rely on traditional printed materials like printed flashcards, paper-based reading sheets, big books, chalkboards. Teachers still primarily rely on traditional printed materials such printed flashcards, paper-based reading sheets, big books, chalkboards) rather than interactive, technology-enhanced platforms like audio-assisted reading, gamified quizzes like Kahoot!, digital storybooks, or video phonic clips). rather than

interactive, technology-enhanced platforms such as audio-assisted reading, gamified quizzes like Kahoot!, digital storybooks, or video phonic clips. The heavy reliance on tactile and kinesthetic approaches aligns with contemporary neuro-educational research, which confirms that multisensory manipulation strengthens neural pathways, phonemic association, and word retention in early childhood remediation (Mather & Jaffe, 2021). On the other hand, the moderate execution of technology-integrated instruction underscores a common systemic gap in public basic education, where limited digital infrastructure, insufficient software access, or lack of ICT training hinders tech-enabled learning (OECD, 2023).

Table 4

Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Assessment Competence

Assessment Competence			
	Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I....</i>			
	1. utilize tools like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (PHIL-IRI) to identify and monitor student progress	3.72	High
	2. establishing baselines, setting, and monitoring progress through frequent assessment to adjust instruction	3.88	High
	3. administer a quick, informal check or structured weekly assessments to track growth and adjust instruction in real-time	4.01	High
	4. identify specific learners' reading gaps in phonics, fluency, and comprehension at the start of interventions	4.62	Very high
	5. use tools to track, analyze, and adjust instruction for struggling readers based on immediate, actionable data	3.82	High
	6. modify intervention strategies, such as small-group instruction or scaffolding, based on assessment results	3.79	High
	7. create high-quality classroom-based assessments that align with reading goals	3.86	High
	8. giving constructive feedback that encourages student learning and supports improvement	3.79	High
	Overall Mean	3.94	High

The level of competence among elementary teachers in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program under Assessment Competence yields an overall mean score of 3.94, which is verbally interpreted as High. This reflects a solid overall capacity among teachers to conduct diagnostic, formative, and evaluative reading assessments necessary for tracking student development. Within this dimension, the highest mean score is attained in Item 4 ("identify specific learners' reading gaps in phonics, fluency, and comprehension at the start of interventions") with a mean of 4.62, interpreted as Very High. This indicates that teachers excel at initial diagnostic profiling, accurately pinpointing foundational reading deficits before launching remediation efforts.

On the other hand, the lowest mean scores are tied in Item 1 ("utilize tools like the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory [PHIL-IRI] to identify and monitor student progress") with a mean of 3.72, interpreted as High. The results implied that reflects high competence, its relative position at the bottom of the set suggests that teachers experience relatively more routine challenges in executing or sustaining standardized tracking tools like the PHIL-IRI across all implementation phases compared to performing informal baseline diagnoses.

Agreed to Black & Wiliam(2020) that demonstrates alignment with modern assessment frameworks, which emphasize that precise baseline diagnostics are indispensable for effective learning recovery However, the slightly lower rating for standardized assessment execution like PHIL-IRI points to operational bottlenecks, such as time constraints, heavy administrative documentation, and large class sizes, which often hamper continuous monitoring in public school settings (Schildkamp et al., 2021).

Table 5

Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a teacher, I...</i>		
1. assess foundational skills in phonics, fluency, and comprehension every two to three weeks to check if interventions are effective	3.73	High
2. analyze data patterns to identify when a student is falling below the target growth line and to adjust instructional strategies, group sizes, or materials accordingly	4.01	High
3. administer a diagnostic assessment to pinpoint specific	4.34	High

reading gaps

4. utilize a described reading monitoring tool and structured tools to track progress across levels from sound recognition to comprehension	4.06	High
5. maintain up-to-date learner profiles, including post-test results and activity records to track progress over time	3.45	Moderate
6. use an assessment finding to reflect on teaching methods, receive feedback from stakeholders, and engage in continuous professional development to improve reading outcomes	3.41	Moderate
7. identify specific deficits in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension to target teaching	4.65	Very high
8. identify the needs and track progress like running records and sight word checks.	4.35	High
Overall Mean	4.00	High

The level of competence among elementary teachers in the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program under Monitoring and Evaluation yields an overall mean score of 4.00, which is verbally interpreted as High. This demonstrates that teachers generally exhibit strong practices in tracking student growth and evaluating learning recovery outcomes over time. Within this dimension, the highest mean score is attained in Item 7 ("identify specific deficits in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension to target teaching") with a mean of 4.65, interpreted as Very High.

This result highlights that teachers are exceptionally adept at diagnostic analysis, effectively pinpointing component-specific reading weaknesses to direct their instruction. Conversely, the lowest mean score is recorded in Item 6 ("use an assessment finding to reflect on teaching methods, receive feedback from stakeholders, and engage in continuous professional development to improve reading outcomes") with a mean of 3.41, interpreted as Moderate. Although still representing a functional baseline, its position as the lowest indicator reveals that teachers face difficulties in closing the evaluation loop through structured reflective practice, stakeholder feedback, and targeted professional growth.

These findings present critical implications for school leadership, teacher training, and program governance. The high proficiency in pinpointing literacy deficits reflects alignment with contemporary research emphasizing that targeted diagnostic monitoring is foundational to effective reading intervention and learner success (Fuchs et al., 2021). However, the lower performance in utilizing evaluation data for reflective teaching, stakeholder engagement, and

professional development reveals a common structural gap where monitoring remains largely compliance-driven rather than transformational (Guthrie,2020; Fullan & Quinn, 2020). To resolve this issue, educational administrators must establish collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and institutionalized feedback mechanisms that convert assessment findings into active pedagogical reflection, community engagement, and tailored professional development, ensuring sustained quality improvement in learning recovery initiatives (Merga, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Comparative Analysis of the Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in the Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation when grouped and compared according to Age, Highest Education Attainment, Length of Service, and Average Family Monthly Income

Table 6

Differences in the Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in Instructional Competence, when grouped and compared according to variables

<i>Instructional Competence</i>							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	40	48.09	696.50	0.070	0.070	Not Significant
	Older	45	38.48				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	22	48.43	573.50	0.225	0.225	Not Significant
	Higher	63	41.10				
Length of Service	Shorter	38	47.08	738.00	0.05	0.165	Not Significant
	Longer	47	39.70				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	38	44.14	849.50	0.697	0.697	Not Significant
	Higher	47	42.07				

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant differences in the level of instructional competence in implementing the ARAL Program when elementary teachers were grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income. The results indicate that teachers across the different demographic and professional categories demonstrated comparable levels of instructional competence, suggesting that these characteristics do not significantly influence their ability to implement ARAL instructional activities.

The findings further suggest that teachers maintain a consistent and high level of instructional competence regardless of their personal or professional background. The comparable performance of younger and older teachers, as well as those with shorter and longer service, may be attributed to standardized curriculum requirements, program guidelines, training, and school-based support. Similarly, educational attainment and family income did not produce significant differences, indicating that teachers' basic instructional implementation may be more strongly supported by common program resources and professional development than by individual socioeconomic or academic characteristics.

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in teachers' instructional competence when grouped according to the identified variables was accepted. This finding supports the continued use of standardized training, instructional resources, mentoring, and collaborative professional development to sustain teachers' competence while providing opportunities for more specialized and advanced pedagogical enhancement (Tomlinson, 2022; Helmz & Katz, 2022; King et al., 2023).

Table 7

Differences in the Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in Remediation and Intervention Skills when grouped and compared according to Variables

Remediation and Intervention Skills							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	40	40.05	782.00	0.05	0.291	Not Significant
	Older	45	45.62				

Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	22	43.61	679.50	0.890	Not Significant
	Higher	63	42.79			
Length of Service	Shorter	38	40.08	782.00	0.319	Not Significant
	Longer	47	45.36			
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	38	44.46	837.50	0.618	Not Significant
	Higher	47	41.82			

The Mann–Whitney U test showed no statistically significant differences in teachers' competence in remediation and intervention skills when grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income. The results indicate that younger and older teachers, those with shorter and longer service, and teachers from different educational and income groups demonstrated comparable levels of competence in applying remediation and intervention strategies under the ARAL Program.

The absence of significant differences suggests that teachers' competence in remediation and intervention is relatively consistent regardless of their demographic and professional characteristics. This consistency may be attributed to standardized program orientations, shared instructional resources, structured intervention protocols, and school-based support that enable teachers to apply appropriate remediation strategies. These findings are consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) and Nguyen and Luu (2020), who emphasized the value of structured professional development and collaborative support in strengthening teachers' capacity to address learning gaps.

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in teachers' competence in remediation and intervention skills when grouped according to the identified variables was accepted. The findings further support the importance of sustaining common remedial resources, professional development, peer coaching, and collaborative teaching practices to ensure equitable and effective implementation of the ARAL Program across teachers with diverse backgrounds (Kraft et al., 2021).

Table 8

Differences in the Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in Assessment Competence when grouped and compared according to variables

Assessment Competence							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	40	41.84	853.50	0.05	0.679	Not Significant
	Older	45	44.03				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	22	39.09	607.00	0.05	0.383	Not Significant
	Higher	63	44.37				
Length of Service	Shorter	38	41.24	826.00	0.05	0.549	Not Significant
	Longer	47	44.43				
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	38	40.47	797.00	0.05	0.391	Not Significant
	Higher	47	45.04				

The Mann–Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant differences in the level of assessment competence in the implementation of the ARAL Program when elementary teachers were grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income. The results indicate that teachers across the different demographic, professional, and socioeconomic categories demonstrated comparable assessment competence in administering diagnostic, formative, and summative evaluations. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in teachers' assessment competence when grouped according to the identified variables was accepted.

The absence of significant differences suggests that teachers possess relatively uniform assessment capabilities regardless of age, educational attainment, length of service, and family income. This consistency may be attributed to standardized DepEd assessment protocols, common evaluation tools, and school-based mechanisms such as Learning Action Cells (LACs), which provide teachers with shared guidelines and opportunities for professional learning. The comparable assessment competence across age and length of service further indicates that routine practices such as diagnostic profiling, baseline assessment, and progress monitoring are guided more by established procedures than by teachers' individual career characteristics (Dionglay, 2024).

Similarly, the non-significant results for educational attainment and family monthly income indicate that postgraduate qualifications and socioeconomic circumstances do not create substantial disparities in teachers' classroom assessment practices. Common institutional assessment tools, data management systems, and collaborative professional development may contribute to maintaining consistent assessment practices among teachers with diverse backgrounds (Romelo, 2026). Schools should therefore sustain standardized assessment procedures while strengthening digital assessment tools and continuous capacity-building in data analysis and feedback delivery to further improve the quality and consistency of ARAL Program implementation (Akemoglu et al., 2021).

Table 9

Differences in the Level of Competence in the Implementation of the Aral Program of Elementary Teachers in Monitoring and Evaluation when grouped and compared according to variables

Monitoring and Evaluation							
Variables	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U-test	Sig. Level	p-value	Interpretation
Age	Younger	40	43.42	883.00	0.05	0.879	Not Significant
	Older	45	42.62				
Highest Educational Attainment	Lower	22	37.86	580.00	0.249	0.249	Not Significant
	Higher	63	44.79				

Length of Service	Shorter	38	44.57	833.50	0.593	Not Significant
	Longer	47	41.73			
Average Family Monthly Income	Lower	38	41.91	851.50	0.709	Not Significant
	Higher	47	43.88			

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed no statistically significant differences in elementary teachers' level of monitoring and evaluation competence in the implementation of the ARAL Program when grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income. The results indicate that teachers, regardless of demographic and professional characteristics, demonstrated comparable levels of competence in monitoring learner progress, maintaining learner profiles, conducting assessments, and using evaluation results to guide instruction.

The findings further suggest that monitoring and evaluation practices are consistently implemented across teacher groups, with age and length of service showing no significant differences in competence. Similarly, educational attainment and family income did not create disparities in teachers' ability to perform monitoring and evaluation functions. These results imply that standardized program guidelines, assessment procedures, reporting systems, and collaborative school practices may contribute to a common level of competence among teachers. This is consistent with literature emphasizing the role of institutionalized monitoring frameworks and clear progress-tracking tools in promoting consistent evaluation practices (Fullan & Quinn, 2020; Schildkamp et al., 2021).

Overall, the findings support the acceptance of the null hypothesis, stating that there is no significant difference in teachers' monitoring and evaluation competence in the implementation of the ARAL Program when grouped according to the identified variables. To sustain this consistent level of competence, school administrators may strengthen digital progress-monitoring systems, provide regular feedback and data-review sessions, and encourage collaborative action among teachers and stakeholders. Such measures can further improve the efficiency, consistency, and responsiveness of ARAL Program monitoring and evaluation (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

Conclusion:

The findings revealed that most respondents were mature and experienced elementary teachers, generally aged 34 years and above, with 12 or more years of service and substantial postgraduate qualifications, although many reported a monthly family income of PhP 7,600 or less. Overall,

teachers demonstrated a high level of competence in implementing the ARAL Program across Instructional Competence, Remediation and Intervention Skills, Assessment Competence, and Monitoring and Evaluation. When grouped according to age, highest educational attainment, length of service, and average family monthly income, no significant differences were found in teachers' competence across all four dimensions. These results indicate that teachers consistently implement the ARAL Program at a high level regardless of their demographic, educational, professional, and socioeconomic characteristics, suggesting that their maturity, experience, and academic preparation contribute to effective and consistent program implementation and learner progress monitoring.

Recommendation:

Based on the conclusions of the study, teachers should be encouraged to integrate modern and interactive tools, such as Kahoot!, adaptive tests, and digital reading software, into intervention and remediation activities to increase learner engagement and support real-time formative assessment. Educational managers and instructional supervisors should establish professional learning communities and capacity-building workshops to strengthen teachers' competence in using technology-assisted and adaptive learning approaches. They should also provide personalized learning solutions, automated diagnostic tools, and professional development on adaptive instruction to ensure that interventions address individual learners' needs. To accelerate reading improvement, schools should provide accessible offline and online digital reading resources and training in technology-assisted remedial instruction. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to replicate the study in other geographic settings and examine the direct effects of teachers' competence and qualifications on learners' actual learning gains under the ARAL Program.

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