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TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARAL SUMMER PROGRAM FOR GRADE 3 LEARNERS: EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES AND PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Summer Program was introduced as an educational intervention to address learning gaps and strengthen foundational competencies among elementary learners, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This qualitative phenomenological study explored teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program for Grade 3 learners, focusing on their experiences, challenges encountered, and perceived educational outcomes. The study involved twelve Grade 3 teachers from selected public elementary schools in the Philippines who were purposively selected based on their direct participation in the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis, the findings revealed five major themes: (1) Learner-Centered and Remedial Instructional Practices in ARAL Implementation; (2) Improvement of Learners' Literacy, Numeracy, and Classroom Confidence; (3) Positive Learner Engagement Through Interactive and Supportive Learning Environments; (4) Instructional, Resource, and Attendance Challenges in Program Implementation; and (5) Teacher Adaptability and Professional Commitment in Educational Recovery Programs. Participants perceived the ARAL Summer Program as an important intervention in addressing learning loss and strengthening foundational academic competencies among struggling learners. Teachers observed improvements in learners' reading fluency, numeracy skills, participation, confidence, and classroom behavior. However, participants also encountered challenges related to limited instructional resources, irregular learner attendance, learner diversity, time constraints, and instructional workload. The study concludes that the ARAL Summer Program significantly contributes to educational recovery and learner support when implemented through responsive, learner-centered, and collaborative instructional practices. The findings provide implications for educational policy, teacher capability-building, and the strengthening of intervention programs in elementary education.

Keywords: ARAL Summer Program, educational recovery, literacy intervention, numeracy development, learner engagement, elementary education, qualitative research

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I. INTRODUCTION

Learning recovery programs have become increasingly significant in addressing the educational disruptions and learning gaps experienced by learners in recent years. In the Philippine educational context, many learners continue to demonstrate difficulties in foundational literacy and numeracy competencies due to interrupted learning experiences, limited instructional exposure, and varying socio-economic challenges. As a response to these concerns, the Department of Education introduced the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, a targeted intervention designed to strengthen learners' academic competencies and provide remediation support for struggling learners.

The ARAL Summer Program specifically aims to assist learners in improving foundational skills in reading, comprehension, numeracy, and classroom participation through structured remediation and learner-centered instructional activities. The program focuses on providing accessible, supportive, and engaging learning opportunities that address learners' academic deficiencies while promoting confidence and motivation toward learning.

Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of educational recovery programs because they directly facilitate intervention activities, assess learner progress, and adapt instructional strategies according to learners' diverse educational needs. Effective implementation of the ARAL Summer Program therefore depends on teachers' instructional competence, adaptability, classroom management practices, and commitment to learner support.

Previous studies have emphasized the importance of remedial instruction, differentiated teaching, and learner-centered interventions in improving literacy and numeracy outcomes among elementary learners (Darling-Hammond

et al., 2020; Snow & Matthews, 2016). Research further indicates that supportive learning environments and contextualized instructional approaches positively influence learners' engagement, confidence, and academic performance.

Despite the implementation of educational recovery initiatives, teachers continue to encounter challenges related to limited resources, learner diversity, irregular attendance, and instructional workload. Furthermore, limited qualitative studies have explored teachers' lived experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program, particularly within elementary education settings.

Thus, this study explored teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program for Grade 3 learners, focusing on their experiences, challenges encountered, and perceived educational outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

Educational Recovery Programs and Learning Interventions

Educational recovery programs are intervention initiatives designed to address learning gaps and improve learners' academic competencies following educational disruptions and learning difficulties. According to UNESCO (2021), learning recovery initiatives are essential in ensuring equitable access to quality education and supporting learners' academic resilience.

Remedial and intervention programs often focus on literacy, numeracy, comprehension, and learner engagement through differentiated and learner-centered instructional strategies. Studies reveal that structured remediation programs positively influence learners' academic performance and classroom participation.

Learner-Centered Instructional Practices

Learner-centered instructional practices emphasize active participation, differentiated learning opportunities, and



contextualized educational experiences. Teachers facilitate learning environments that accommodate learners' diverse abilities, backgrounds, and learning needs.

According to Weimer (2018), learner-centered teaching improves learner engagement, confidence, and academic motivation. Differentiated instruction and scaffolded learning approaches likewise support struggling learners in developing foundational competencies.

Literacy and Numeracy Development Among Elementary Learners

Foundational literacy and numeracy skills are critical components of elementary education. Reading fluency, comprehension, and basic mathematical skills significantly influence learners' long-term academic achievement.

Snow and Matthews (2016) emphasized that early intervention and continuous literacy support positively contribute to learners' academic success and cognitive development. Numeracy interventions similarly improve learners' problem-solving abilities and mathematical understanding.

Teachers' Experiences in Intervention Program Implementation

Teachers' instructional adaptability, commitment, and professional competence significantly influence the success of educational intervention programs. However, studies identify several barriers affecting program implementation, including insufficient instructional materials, learner absenteeism, time limitations, and teacher workload (OECD, 2021).

Professional development and institutional support remain essential in strengthening teachers' implementation capacities and instructional effectiveness.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore teachers' lived experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program for Grade 3 learners. Phenomenology was appropriate because it enabled the researchers to understand participants' instructional experiences, reflections, and perceived educational outcomes within authentic educational contexts. The study was conducted in

selected public elementary schools in the Philippines implementing the ARAL Summer Program. The participants consisted of twelve Grade 3 teachers selected through purposive sampling. Participants were required to have direct involvement in the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program, at least three years of teaching experience, and willingness to participate in the study. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving intervention materials, learner progress records, and instructional plans. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis involving coding, theme generation, theme review, and thematic interpretation. Credibility was established through member checking and triangulation, while dependability, confirmability, and transferability were ensured through audit trails, reflective journaling, and thick descriptions of participants' instructional experiences.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Learner-Centered and Remedial Instructional Practices in ARAL Implementation

Participants emphasized the importance of learner-centered and remedial instructional approaches in implementing the ARAL Summer Program. Teachers described utilizing differentiated instruction, phonics activities, guided reading, numeracy drills, peer-assisted learning, and interactive learning tasks to address learners' academic deficiencies.

One participant shared:

"Kailangan talagang i-adjust ang teaching strategies depende sa learning needs ng bata."

Another teacher explained:

"We focus more on remediation and mastery of basic skills."

Teachers observed that individualized and scaffolded instructional approaches helped learners gradually improve their literacy and numeracy competencies. Participants further emphasized the importance of patience, encouragement, and continuous monitoring in intervention instruction.

The findings indicate that learner-centered remedial strategies positively support educational recovery and



foundational skill development among Grade 3 learners.

Theme 2: Improvement of Learners' Literacy, Numeracy, and Classroom Confidence

Participants perceived noticeable improvements in learners' literacy skills, numeracy competencies, classroom participation, and confidence throughout the implementation of the ARAL Summer Program.

One participant stated:

"Mas naging confident magbasa ang learners pagkatapos ng intervention sessions."

Another teacher shared:

"There were improvements in basic numeracy and comprehension skills."

Teachers observed that learners became more willing to participate during classroom activities and oral recitation sessions. Participants also emphasized that repeated practice and supportive intervention activities strengthened learners' self-confidence and academic motivation.

One teacher remarked:

"Unti-unti silang naging confident sumagot at makipag-participate."

The findings suggest that structured intervention programs positively contribute to learners' foundational academic development and emotional growth.

Theme 3: Positive Learner Engagement Through Interactive and Supportive Learning Environments

Participants emphasized that supportive, engaging, and interactive learning environments contributed significantly to learners' participation and motivation during ARAL sessions.

One participant explained:

"Kapag interactive at enjoyable ang activities, mas active ang learners."

Another teacher shared:

"The learners participate more when they feel supported and encouraged."

Teachers described utilizing games, storytelling activities, collaborative tasks, visual aids, and positive reinforcement to sustain learner attention and classroom participation. Participants also noted that emotionally supportive environments reduced learners' fear of failure and

embarrassment.

The findings indicate that positive and learner-friendly educational environments strengthen learner engagement and participation during intervention programs.

Theme 4: Instructional, Resource, and Attendance Challenges in Program Implementation

Despite the positive instructional outcomes, participants encountered several challenges during program implementation.

One participant shared:

"Minsan kulang ang materials kaya gumagawa kami ng sarili naming resources."

Another teacher stated:

"Irregular attendance affects learners' progress in the program."

Participants emphasized that inconsistent learner participation limited the continuity and effectiveness of intervention activities. Teachers also highlighted the challenge of simultaneously addressing learners with varying literacy and numeracy difficulties.

The findings demonstrate the structural and instructional challenges affecting educational recovery program implementation.

Theme 5: Teacher Adaptability and Professional Commitment in Educational Recovery Programs

Participants highlighted the importance of teacher adaptability, dedication, and professional commitment in ensuring the success of the ARAL Summer Program.

One participant remarked:

"Kailangan talagang maging patient at flexible sa intervention teaching."

Another teacher explained:

"Teachers need commitment because the learners require continuous support."

Participants described exerting additional effort in preparing instructional materials, monitoring learner progress, and adjusting teaching strategies according to learners' needs. Teachers also emphasized the importance of collaboration among educators, parents, and school administrators in sustaining intervention programs.

The findings suggest that teacher professionalism and



instructional adaptability significantly contribute to the effectiveness of educational recovery initiatives.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the ARAL Summer Program positively supports educational recovery and foundational skill development among Grade 3 learners through learner-centered, remedial, and supportive instructional practices. Teachers observed improvements in learners' literacy competencies, numeracy skills, classroom confidence, and participation during intervention sessions.

The study further revealed that engaging and supportive learning environments strengthened learner motivation and reduced learners' fear of academic failure. Interactive instructional activities and scaffolded learning approaches likewise contributed to sustained learner engagement and academic improvement.

However, successful implementation of the ARAL Summer Program requires adequate instructional resources, consistent learner attendance, institutional support, and sustained teacher capability-building initiatives. The identified challenges highlight the importance of strengthening educational recovery systems and collaborative intervention practices in elementary education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The ARAL Summer Program serves as an important educational recovery initiative that supports foundational literacy, numeracy, learner engagement, and classroom confidence among Grade 3 learners. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing learner-centered and remedial instructional strategies that address learners' academic deficiencies and emotional needs.

Despite instructional and contextual challenges, teachers demonstrated adaptability, commitment, and professionalism in sustaining intervention activities and supporting learner development. Educational institutions should therefore strengthen instructional support systems, teacher capability-building initiatives, and resource allocation to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of educational recovery programs.

Implications of the Study

1. Schools should strengthen professional development programs focusing on remediation and intervention instruction.
2. Educational institutions should provide adequate instructional resources and intervention materials.
3. Teachers may integrate more interactive and learner-centered strategies in educational recovery programs.
4. Policymakers should strengthen support systems for literacy and numeracy intervention initiatives.
5. Future studies may explore learners' and parents' perspectives regarding the ARAL Summer Program.

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