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Page: 01-36

ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING (ARAL) IN READING: IMPLEMENTATION AND EXPERIENCES OF TUTORS AND LEARNERS AT GUINABSAN NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

***John Racho Maylid**

Teacher III- Guinabsan National High School Buenavista, Agusan del Sur.

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*Corresponding Author: John Racho Maylid

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the implementation and experiences of tutors and learners in the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in Reading at Guinabsan National High School, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. Specifically, it determined the perceptions of tutors and learners before and after the implementation of the program in terms of attendance, academic achievement, and reading comprehension. It also explored the learning experiences of tutors and learners during the implementation of the program. A null hypothesis was tested to determine whether a significant difference existed between the participants' perceptions before and after the implementation of the ARAL Program. The study employed a multi-method research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Forty-three (43) learners and seven (7) tutors participated in the study. Data were gathered using researcher-made questionnaires and interview guides, while mean and t-test were used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that, prior to the implementation of the ARAL Program, learners and tutors perceived that many students only sometimes demonstrated positive attendance, academic achievement, and reading comprehension. Qualitative findings showed that participants experienced increased support and guidance in reading, improved reading ability, greater interest in school, and more positive attitudes toward reading and learning. After several months of implementation, learners demonstrated significant improvements in attendance, academic achievement, and reading comprehension. Statistical analysis further confirmed a significant difference between the participants' perceptions before and after the

implementation of the program, indicating that the ARAL Program effectively addressed issues related to absenteeism, poor academic performance, and reading comprehension difficulties.

Based on the findings, the study concluded that the ARAL Program is an effective reading intervention that enhances learners' attendance, academic achievement, and reading comprehension while fostering positive learning experiences among both tutors and learners. The program also strengthened learners' motivation to attend school and improved their engagement in reading activities. Consequently, the study recommends the adoption of a sustainable implementation framework to ensure the continuity and long-term success of the ARAL Program. It further encourages educational leaders, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to strengthen collaborative efforts in supporting literacy development and academic recovery among learners.

KEYWORDS: Aral, absenteeism, academic achievement, and comprehension.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the single most important skill in the parlance of acquiring literacy, as it is key in unlocking knowledge in every subject. Knowledge in basic reading is the foundation of understanding, analysis, and absorption of complex information from textbooks and resources, moving beyond simple memorization to genuine comprehension. Recent research by Kim et al. (2020) strongly confirms a strong connection between reading and writing, showing that engaging with texts builds the essential knowledge and skills needed for both reading comprehension and successful written work. Reading is not just about decoding words; it is the foundation for all academic achievement and the development of comprehension necessary for lifelong learning. Basic reading among learners needs consistent presence in school, improved academic attainment, and better comprehension, ensuring quality learning among learners. These factors are significant in making our learners independent readers in school.

In this regard, the Department of Education order number 18 series of 2025 stressed that the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program was created by Republic Act (RA) No. 12028, which is also known as the ARAL Program Act. The goal of the program is to offer a free and useful national learning intervention. This policy takes the place of DepEd Order No. 45, s. 2002, which was the "Reading Literacy Program in the Elementary Schools," as well as DO 13, s. 2023, which was the "Adoption of the National Learning

Recovery Program in the Department of Education," and Department Memorandum No. (DM) 001, s. 2024, which is about "Implementation of Catch-Up Fridays." This educational policy is one of the Department's responses to the poor results seen in both national and international large-scale assessments. Data from DepEd (2019, 2023) and UNICEF & SEAMEO (2019) show that Filipino students still have trouble with reading. The World Bank said in 2022 that the Philippines' educational crisis is at 91%. This means that by the time they are 10 years old, nine out of ten Filipino kids have trouble reading and understanding simple things. The results of rapid assessments in reading also show that a lot of students are not doing well in reading.

This is a problem that the Department is dealing with on a national level, and it is also a problem that Guinabsan National High School in Guinabsan, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte is dealing with. There are 43 learners enrolled in the ARAL program due to problems with basic reading skills. These types of learners in school are most likely to have issues with absenteeism, academic achievement, comprehension, and the possibility of dropping out of school. Students who struggle with reading face a significantly higher risk of dropping out because their poor literacy skills make it extremely difficult to understand course material in all subjects, leading to academic failure and low self-efficacy (Bacong & An, 2020; Toste et al., 2020). Reading failure often creates a negative cycle of frustration, lack of interest, and disengagement that ultimately causes them to leave school. School dropouts remain a persistent and complex challenge at local, national, and global levels, with significant implications for individuals and national economies. Recent cross-national studies indicate that dropout rates are strongly correlated with socioeconomic disadvantage and family instability. (Olarte-Cubillos & Buelvas-Salcedo, 2025). With the new national law of the government, the ARAL program needs to be assessed. There is no study yet on the ARAL program of the department that evaluates addressing the basic reading problems in school. This program requires pre-assessment and post-assessment as a basis for the determination of the effectiveness and efficiency in addressing the reading problems in the country, resulting in poor academic performance of the learners across the country. These assessments must be analyzed statistically in order to provide a scientifically based claim of the study.

This study seeks to determine the perspectives of the ARAL tutors and learners prior to the implementation of the program, as well as their learning experiences in relation to the implementation of the program. This is also to find out whether the ARAL program has a significant impact on the ARAL learners in school. Results of the study will be the basis for the formulation of the enhancement program. This enhancement program will be used in a

span of one year and is subject to re-evaluation after its implementation for the purpose of sustaining the ARAL program in school.

1.1 *Statement of the Problem*

The study would like to assess the implementation and experiences of tutors and learners in the ARAL Program in reading at Guinabsan National High School, Buenavista, Agusan Del Norte.

1. What is the perception of the ARAL teachers and learners prior to the start of the program in terms of:

1.1 Attendance;

1.2 Academic Achievement; and

1.3 Comprehension?

2. What are the learning experiences related to the implementation of the ARAL program by the Department of Education?

3. What is the perception of the ARAL tutors and learners after the implementation of the ARAL Program in relation to:

3.1 Attendance;

3.2 Academic Achievement; and

3.3 Comprehension?

4. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and learners before the implementation of the program and after the implementation of the program?

5. Based on the results of the study, what enhancement program can be proposed to increase the engagement of the learners in the ARAL Program?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and learners before the start of the program and after the implementation of the program.

I. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a multi-method research design where quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The quantitative approach was used to determine the perceptions of the tutors and learners on the ARAL program prior and after the implementation of the program while the qualitative approach was used to determine the experiences of the learners related to the implementation of the ARAL program in the Department of Education. T-test was used to test the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and learners before and after the ARAL program and Thematic analysis was used to treat the qualitative data.

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were 43 identified ARAL learners in reading and 7 ARAL tutors of the school from grade 7. There were 50 total respondents, both the learners and the tutors. These were the learners with problems in basic reading in school, and tutors assigned to handle the program.

Table 1 and 2 presents the distribution of respondents and participants.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents (Quantitative)

	Tutors	Learners	Respondents	Participants Learners	Participants Tutors
n	7	43	50	43	7
N	7	43	50	43	7
Total	7	43	50	43	7

Table 2: Distribution of Participants. (Qualitative)

	Tutors	Learners	Respondents	Participants Learners	Participants Tutors
n	7	43	20	15	5
N	7	43	50	43	7
Total	7	43	50	43	7

2.3 Research Locale

This research study focused on the assessment of ARAL as a reading program in the Department of Education to address the reading problems among learners in school. ARAL in reading is related to family support, school Instruction, comprehension, prior knowledge, and motivation. This reading program is associated with students with issues of absenteeism, mental health, socioeconomic challenges, learning interests, and academic struggles. ARAL

learners were identified from the PHIL-IRI assessment and reading assessments conducted by the reading coordinator in school and by advisers. The schedule of the program is from Monday to Friday with 30-minute sessions per day.

This research was conducted at Guinabsan National High School, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. The school had a total land area of one hectare. It had three sections for grade 7 with a total population of 135 enrollees, 3 sections for grade 8 with 123 total enrollees, 3 sections for grade 9 with 110 total enrollees, 3 sections for grade 10 with 80 total enrollees, 3 sections for grade 11 with 58 total enrollees on General Academic Strand, Accountancy Business Management and Technical Vocational and Livelihood and 3 sections for grade 12 with 62 total enrollees respectively.

The school has a total of 32 teachers, one school principal, two school guards, five administrative assistants II, and one administrative officer. It has 18 classrooms, both Junior High School and Senior High School. It has one school library, one combined school clinic, and a science laboratory. It also has a Technical, Vocational, and Livelihood laboratory for SHS only.

Furthermore, the school has one principal's office, one school-based management room, one office for the record section, and the accounting section. It also has an SSLG office, a canteen, a reading center room, and an Information and Computer Technology room for the learners.

2.4 Research Instruments

The researcher used open-ended questions and a researcher-made questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was validated by three reading experts of the Department. It was also pilot tested with 5 ARAL learners in reading and ARAL tutors at Rizal National High School, Rizal, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, and 10 ARAL learners in reading and ARAL tutors at Sangay National High School, Sangay, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. The results of the pilot testing were tested using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability and validity of the internal consistency of the results of the pilot testing.

2.5 Statistical Treatment

In analyzing and interpreting data, the following statistical tools were used:

Mean. This was used to obtain the mean results of the attendance rate, academic achievements, and comprehension of the ARAL learners.

Paired sample t-test: The statistical tool was utilized to find out the significant difference between the pre-assessment and post-assessment of the ARAL program

I. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the perception of the ARAL tutors and learners prior to the start of the program in terms of attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension?

Table 3 presents the perceptions of the tutors and learners prior to the start of the program in terms of the learners' attendance.

Table 3: Mean Distribution of Attendance Rate of learners prior to the start of the ARAL program at Guinabsan National High School.

Attendance	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretations
Measures how regularly students are present in school.	3.01	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
The learner arrives on time in school.	3.03	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Is often used for student motivation and school effectiveness.	2.94	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Attendance data helps educators identify at-risk students early and intervene with support programs.	3.01	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Helps the learners recognize how attendance affects their academic performance and participation	2.97	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Encourages students to take ownership of their learning.	2.89	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Reinforces the importance of punctuality and consistency as life skills.	2.97	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Highlights risks of chronic absenteeism.	2.92	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Encourages learners to balance responsibilities and prioritize commitments.	2.92	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested
Total	2.96	Moderately Agree	Sometimes manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

In Table 3, the data show that attendance got an overall moderately agree verbal description. This only means that these ARAL learners were not too serious about coming to school. Sometimes these learners go to school, sometimes they prefer to be absent from classes. This means that their attendance status is not consistent and is shaky. This further means that these learners would have the possibility of failing the class due to some missed performance tasks and summative assessments in school.

The aforementioned result was affirmed by the study of Diaz and Chen (2023), citing that when a student misses school, teachers usually focus on how far that student is falling behind. However, research shows that high absenteeism creates a "ripple effect" that slows down everyone in the room. The study found that when more than 15% of a class is missing, teachers feel heavy pressure to pump the brakes on their lessons. Instead of moving forward into new, exciting topics. Teachers have to spend a huge chunk of their time re-teaching and reviewing old material for the sake of those who weren't there. This "hidden tax" on learning means that the students who do show up every day end up stuck in a cycle of repetition, which can lead to boredom and "instructional fatigue." Essentially, when attendance is low, the teacher cannot dive as deeply into the subjects, and the entire class misses out on the chance to tackle more challenging ideas.

The study concludes that absenteeism is not just a private problem for the absent student; it's a systemic hurdle that lowers the quality of education for every single person in the classroom. Another study of Banaan et al. (2025) takes a close look at why Junior High School students of Guinabsan NHS miss class and how those empty seats eventually show up on a report card. By studying students from Grades 7, the study found that health issues—specifically common ailments like stomach aches, fevers, headaches, poverty, and the like—are the biggest reasons students stay home, followed by personal motivation and challenges at home. While the average student in the study maintained a developing grade, the data proved a clear and undeniable link: as absences go up, grades go down. The study suggests that telling students to "show up" is not just enough; there is a need to actually help them stay healthy, make school a place they want to be, and build a stronger bridge between teachers and parents. By focusing on these specific areas, schools can help students stay in their seats and, ultimately, reach their full potential.

Another perception of the tutors and learners was on academic achievement. Table 4 presents the distribution.

Table 4: Mean Distribution of Academic Achievement of ARAL learners prior to the start of the program at Guinabsan National High School.

Academic Achievement	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
The learner possesses mastery of subject-specific knowledge and consistency across multiple courses.	2.73	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
The learner has knowledge in literacy and numeracy.	2.97	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
The learner has the ability to apply learned concepts to real-world situations.	2.83	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
The learner possesses creativity, innovation, and procedural knowledge (skills) alongside declarative knowledge.	2.80	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Learner has the ability to overcome setbacks and maintain effort despite challenges.	2.91	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
The learner has maintained good grades in academic subjects.	2.88	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Total	2.85	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

Table 4, results reveal that the academic achievement of the learners is neither good nor bad. The academic performance of the ARAL learners needs to be given much importance and should be subject to a research study. The results showed that the learners sometimes got 75% and above in their assessment results, and sometimes they got below 75%, which is a failure rate of the department. This is to better provide interventions or appropriate programs to address the real learning needs of the learners in school. It is the duty of the school to uphold the quality of learning of the learners inside the classroom. This further means that the academic status of the learners is shaky and might have the possibility of failing classes.

Garcia & Chen (2024) were negating results from the survey, highlighting that high-impact tutoring to students with great focus on a student-centered approach; this will help the learners improve in their academic performance in school. This supports the idea that every learner has the great possibility to become an education lover if these learners are nurtured and given much attention. This call needs much commitment and dedication from both the school leaders and teachers in the department. Another study of Pascual & Davies (2025) reiterated the importance of pedagogical approaches to addressing learning gaps and needs for the learners in school. An appropriate learning approach is necessary, suitable to the

learning interests of the learners. This is to boost their learning interests, igniting their active submission to the nature of reading and learning.

Table 5 presents data on the results of the survey on the comprehension level of the learners prior to the implementation of the program, and this is based on the ARAL tutors' assessment.

Table 5 Mean Distribution of Comprehension of ARAL learners prior to the start of the program at Guinabsan National High School.

Comprehension	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
Promotes academic success.	2.88	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Increases motivation in learning.	2.97	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Develops higher order thinking skills of the learners.	2.70	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Increases retention and memory.	2.79	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Expands word vocabulary.	2.79	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Performs better in all subjects.	2.72	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Improves the communication skills of learners.	2.84	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Increases learning participation in class.	2.84	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested
Total	2.82	Moderately agree	Sometimes manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

The data in the above table show that the level of comprehension of the ARAL learners signifies inconsistency due to its general verbal description of moderate. This means that the status of the comprehension of the identified ARAL learners needs to be evaluated to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tutor learners. This further signifies that these types of learners must be the subject of the ARAL program of the Department to establish the gaps or needs of the learners. This means that sometimes the learners can comprehend only very simple problems, but not on a higher-order thinking level.

The result of the study was negated by the study of Orellana et al. (2024), underpinning that the key to great success in studies is to have reading comprehension because this will lead the learners to become independent. Comprehension will be enhanced through intensive and

thorough implementation of the ARAL program in the school. The reading practice of the learners will become a habit, and this habit will become a part of the mindset of the learners, embracing the positive impact of constant reading. These good reading habits of the learners will also help develop their communication skills and increase their academic performance in school. Another study of Gebremariam and Weldeyohannes (2025) is a perfect match for the ARAL Program at Guinabsan National High School because it proves that reading shouldn't be a passive chore. By teaching our students how to contextualize what they read and reflect on how it fits their own values, the ARAL program is helping them move from just "getting through the page" to truly "owning the information." Essentially, these strategies turn a struggling reader into a confident thinker who can evaluate arguments and compare different texts with ease, which is exactly the kind of "literacy leap" the ARAL initiative aims to achieve for every student at GNHS.

Problem 2. What are the learning experiences related to the implementation of the ARAL program by the Department of Education?

After the pre-assessment and post-assessment on the implementation of the ARAL program, 15 learners and 5 teachers were interviewed based on their empirical observations and experiences in the school implementation of the program. These are the verbatim answers from the perspective views of the ARAL learners and the extracted themes and sub-themes as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Themes, sub-themes, and verbatim responses of ARAL learners.

Themes	Sub-themes	Verbatim Responses Learners	Thematic Analysis	Description
Support and Guidance in Reading	Instructional support and Scaffolding in reading	L1: "Sa akola kay natabangan ko nga makabalo ug basa kay pirmi man mi tudloan sa maestra para makabasa". For me, I was given help to know how to read basic reading because she constantly taught me to	Empirical experiences and observations of the learners on the implementation of the ARAL program of Guinabsan National High School were thoroughly and intensively analyzed. Answers from the given survey questionnaire were read thoroughly,	Support and guidance in reading emerged as the main benefits received by the ARAL learners during the implementation of the program in school. Teachers were dedicated and committed enough in helping the learners become readers in school.

		overcome my reading problem. L4: “Akong nabati nga nahatagan ko ug sakto nga supporta sa skol kay gina monitor manjud mi pirmi sa among pagbasa nga skedyol” I feel supported by the school because we are closely monitored on our reading sessions schedule. L8: “Para sa ako natabangan ko sa ARAL nga makabalo ug basa tungod sa suport sa among teacher” I was given help to learn how to read because of the support also of my teacher. L21: “Pirmi ko tudloan sa saktong pagbasa ug si Mam sigi gyud naghatag nko ug suport nga makabalo ko ug basa.” My ARAL teacher constantly taught me how to read correctly and	coded, reviewed, and labelled. Responses with same tone of answers from the interview were grouped and labelled. The help, personal experience, support, and facilitation extended by the teachers to the ARAL learners were classified as support and guidance in reading. Numerical improvement on comprehension and academic achievement among learners were treated under support and guidance in reading. Regular reading sessions have resulted significant progress on the part of the learners due to teachers’ dedication and commitment in helping and supporting the learners to become readers in school.	Constant reading sessions, monitoring, follow-up, and endless support are the significant factors that serve the learners the feeling of being supported and guided by the teachers, the school leader, and the school community. Additionally, the role of teachers in this program is very vital in boosting their interests in reading and learning.
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		provided support just to make me become a reader in school. L31:“ Dili jud ko undangan ni mam hantod ko makabasa ug usahay iya ko hatagan ug snacks para lang dili ko muabsent sa among ARAL.” My teacher did not stop teaching me until I learned to read and sometimes she gave snacks for me not to be absent from our ARAL. L35:” Medyo paspas nko mubasa ug si Mam pirmi pod mitabang nako sa pagpabasa”. I can read fast now and my teacher constantly helped me in reading.		
Increased Reading and Interest in school	Reading improvement and great desire of coming to school	L10: “Ganahan nako magsigi ug eskwela ug maka basa nako ug hinay hinay sugod adtong giapil ko sa ARAL program” I am now	Interests of going to school, and extrinsic motivation brought by the teachers’ help and support in reading were coded and labelled as increased reading abilities of ARAL learners and	The theme underpins the idea that constant practice in reading through great efforts and support of teachers can significantly improve the reading abilities of learners from frustration level up

		motivated to come to school and I learned to read slowly after I was included in the ARAL program of the school. L12: “Interesado nako muadto ug skol kay naa namay teacher mutabang namo ug pabasa” I am now interested to go to school because there is already an ARAL teacher who will teach and guide us in reading” L26: “Sa una nga mga words dili nako Mabasa ug maglisod ko ug basa, kaon ako na Mabasa ngapirmi man ibalik balik ni mam hantod dili malimtan.” There were some words before which I could not read or I could hardly read but now I am now able to read them because my teacher would not stop teaching me until I have memorized and mastered them.	improved their attendance rate. These factors are important in teaching basic reading skills of learners. Providing much effort to the learners to become readers in school can gradually help them become readers and can boost interest of learning and of reading, having the sense of support and value from their teachers. The numerical positive increase of the basic reading abilities of the ARAL learners and the increase of the attendance rate of learners were considered as increased reading abilities and interest in school. These personal observations of the learners were apparent based on their reading progress and their enthusiasm of coming to school everyday.	to instructional level. Progress in reading is a process. It takes time to gradually improve and this will take place when there is strong support, extended help, close monitoring, commitment, and dedication from the teachers. The positive attitude of teachers can radiate to the learners’ interest in reading and in attending classes at school.
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		L41:“ Sigihan me ug pasaba aron jud mi makabalo ug basa.” Our teacher constantly taught us in reading for us to become reader in school.		
Positive attitudes towards reading and learning	Willingness to read and learn	L15: “ Dili nako magduhaduha pa ug adto ug eskwelahan kay hinay hinay naman ko nakabalo ug basa ug dili napod ko gagmay ug kuha sa exam kay naa namn koy nahibalan sa klase gamay” I am no longer doubtful of coming to school because I have learned to read slowly and my scores in the assessments have also increased, highlighting that I gained little knowledge on the lessons. L17: “Nakabalo nako ug basa ug ganahan nko mo eskwela pirmi” I learned to read and I am now interested to go to school constantly.	Confidence of reading in front of their classmates without fear and great interest of attending classes are classified as the positive behaviors of learners in learning and in knowing to read. These positive aspects are the manifestations of the help, support, efforts, hard work, dedication, and commitment of teachers in helping the learners to know the basic reading skills as the foundational skill to be learned and mastered by the ARAL learners. Basic reading skill is the basic skill to be learned because no learning will happen if this skill is not evident from the learner. Numerical significant increase on attendance, comprehension, and academic achievement were evident after the	The positive attributes on the big desire of learners to learn in basic reading can be associated to the great support, help, and motivation from the teachers. Constant reading sessions of the learners, close monitoring and supervision, strong motivation and encouragement, and the never-ending facilitation until they become readers in school are the great contributory factors in boosting the learners’ interest and desire to become readers in school.

		L23:“Dili nko muabsent kay masuko man si Mam nga wala ko sa among ARAL nga pabasa.” I am afraid to be absent in school anymore because our teacher got mad when I am not around during our reading sessions. L36 “Dili nko maulaw pabasahon sa classroom kay makamao naman ko.” I am not ashamed to read in the classroom because I know already how to read. L39: “ For me, positibo nako mgsige ug eskwela tungod kay nahanas nako ug basa”. For me, I become optimistic of coming to school because I have become proficient in basic reading.	implementation of the program. This increase as manifested from the results of the study is classified as the positive behavior of the learners towards embracing the ARAL program. The program helps improve the reading abilities and learning of the learners in school.	
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The verbatim responses from the learners indicate that consistent, personalized guidance directly correlates with their progress and motivation to attend intervention sessions. One learner (L1) shared, "Sa akola kay natabangan ko nga makabalo ug basa kay pirmi man mi tudloan" (For me, I was helped to learn how to read because we are always taught). This highlights the value of continuous instructional intervention.

The second major finding highlights the theme "Increased Reading and Interest in School." Under this theme, the sub-theme "Reading improvement and great desire of coming to school" illustrates how academic intervention directly enhances student attitude and school attendance. Learner 10 (L10) shared, "Ganahan nako magsigi ug eskwela ug maka basa nako ug hinay hinay sugod adtong giapil ko sa ARAL program" (I now like going to school frequently, and I can now read little by little since I was included in the ARAL program).

The data reveal a third prominent theme: "Positive attitudes towards reading and learning." Tied to this is the sub-theme "Willingness to read and learn," which demonstrates how acquiring fundamental literacy skills transforms a student's academic self-worth, emotional resilience, and mindset. As Learner 15 (L15) expressed a significant reduction in school-related anxiety: "Dili nako magduhaduha pa ug adto ug eskwelahan kay hinay hinay naman ko nakabalo ug basa ug dili napod ko gagmay ug kuha sa exam..." (I no longer hesitate to go to school because I am slowly learning how to read, and I don't get low scores on exams anymore...). L15 also explicitly stated, "I am not ashamed to read in the classroom because I know already how to read." This underscores how reading proficiency mitigates the social shame of academic underperformance.

The result of the study was supported by Okwuonu & Jones (2025), suggesting that a holistic approach in addressing the learners' needs in reading can eradicate cases of reading problems, absenteeism, poor comprehension, and low academic performance of learners. This implies that deep commitment and dedication of the school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders can shape the learners' future and interests in learning. Collaborative efforts can change the learners' direction in life, embracing the positive impact of education. With the strong dedication of school leaders and teachers, learners will be given support and guidance in reading. Learners' reading ability and confidence in coming to school will improve, and the positive attitude towards reading and learning will be embraced by the learners.

Table 7: Themes, sub-themes, and verbatim responses of ARAL teachers.

Themes	Sub-themes	Verbatim Responses Teachers	Thematic Analysis	Description
Support and Guidance in Reading	Instructional support and Scaffolding in reading	T1: "As ARAL tutor of the learners, they felt that they are supported and guided by the teachers because of the daily reading sessions and commitment of the teachers in helping the learners become readers". T3: "Well, in my case as tutor to them, I have sensed that they felt supported and were given enough guidance in their reading and learning at school".	Empirical observations of teachers on the feeling of great help and facilitation extended to the ARAL learners were referred as support and guidance in reading for the learners. These personal observations were apparent during the daily contact, reading sessions, follow-up, and reading progress of ARAL learners in basic reading skills at school. Support and guidance of teachers to learners serve as important factors in improving the basic reading skills of learners. Numerical progress on academic support and comprehension of ARAL learners was classified as support and guidance in reading. The improvement of the learners is evident of the support and guidance extended to the learners by the teachers in school.	Support and guidance in reading from the teachers emerged as the main benefits received by the ARAL learners during the implementation of the program in school. Teachers were dedicated and committed enough in helping the learners become readers in school. Constant reading sessions, monitoring, follow-up, and endless support are the significant factors that serve the learners the feeling of being supported and guided by the teachers, the school leader, and the school community. Additionally, the role of teachers in this program is very vital in boosting their interests in reading and learning.
Increased Reading and	Reading improvement and great	T6: "There has been a big difference before	Status or level of reading progress was compared between	The theme underpins the idea that constant practice in reading

Interest in school	desire coming to school	and after the program was implemented. ARAL learners have tremendously improved in terms of reading. They can now read and have interest in reading and of coming to school regularly, not like before”. T4: “Personally, many of the ARAL learners become readers and their performance has significantly improved. Some learners become interested of coming to school, showing positive attendance records in school”.	the pre and post implementation of ARAL program at Guinabsan National High School. A progress from frustration level up to instructional level was given great personal considerations of teachers in the implementation of the program. Little by little when learners are supported and valued, significant improvement in reading will happen. Significant reading improvement of the learners and increased attendance of learners are considered as increased reading abilities of learners and increased interest of attending classes in school. These were indicative during the interview on the learning experiences during the implementation of the ARAL program.	through great efforts and support of teachers can significantly improve the reading abilities of learners from frustration level up to instructional level. Progress in reading is a process. It takes time to gradually improve and this will take place when there is strong support, extended help, close monitoring, commitment, and dedication from the teachers. The positive attitude of teachers can radiate to the learners’ interest in reading and in attending classes at school.
Positive attitudes towards reading and learning	Willingness to read and learn	T7: “Based on my assessment, ARAL learners are now interested to read and have self-confidence when they are called to read inside the classroom. They are now active in	Confidence of reading in front of their classmates without fear and great interest of attending classes are classified as the positive behaviors of learners in learning and in knowing to read. These positive	The positive attributes on the big desire of learners to learn in basic reading can be associated to the great support, help, and motivation from the teachers. Constant reading sessions of the learners, close

		participating the class discussions compared before”.	aspects are the manifestations of the help, support, efforts, hard work, dedication, and commitment of teachers in helping the learners to know the basic reading skills as the foundational skill to be learned and mastered by the ARAL learners. Basic reading skill is the basic skill to be learned because no learning will happen if this skill is not evident from the learner. Increased in attendance, comprehension level, and academic achievement was an indicative sign of the positive behavior shown by the learners in reading and learning.	monitoring and supervision, strong motivation and encouragement, and the never-ending facilitation until they become readers in school are the great contributory factors in boosting the learners’ interest and desire to become readers in school.
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Teachers recognized their vital role as facilitators in the reading program, with one tutor (T1) stating. "As ARAL tutor of the learners, they felt that they are supported and guided by the teacher to become a reader in school." This means that there was a positive change on the part of the learners in valuing learning and reading in school, as manifested in their positive behaviors of seriously attending the ARAL reading sessions.

Teacher 6 (T6) emphasized a distinct shift in student behavior, noting a "big difference before and after the program was implemented," with ARAL learners now actively participating and being "active in classroom" settings. This implies that significant improvement was apparent after the implementation of the ARAL program.

Teacher 7 (T7) highlighted this growth in self-belief: "Based on my assessment, ARAL learners are now interested to read and have self-confidence when they are called to read inside the classroom." This confidence in reading participation of the learners was personally built by the teacher during their day-to-day ARAL reading engagements.

The result of the study was supported by Okwuonu & Jones (2025), suggesting that a holistic approach in addressing the learners' needs in reading can eradicate cases of reading problems, absenteeism, poor comprehension, and low academic performance of learners. This implies that deep commitment and dedication of the school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders can shape the learners' future and interests in learning. Collaborative efforts can change the learners' direction in life, embracing the positive impact of education. With the strong dedication of school leaders and teachers, learners will be given support and guidance in reading. Learners' reading ability and confidence in coming to school will improve, and the positive attitude towards reading and learning will be embraced by the learners.

Problem 3. What is the perception of the tutors and learners after the implementation of the ARAL program in relation to attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension?

Table 8 presents data on the post-assessment of the learners in terms of the attendance status of the ARAL learners.

The aforementioned data show that the attendance of the ARAL learners of Guinabsan National High School after the ARAL program implementation has improved significantly. This means that the program has motivated the learners to grow and improve in their studies. This further signifies that the teachers handling the program are dedicated enough to help learners improve their reading abilities, as the most basic skills to be mastered and learned. This supports the idea that if learners are given much attention and care among our DepEd officials, instructional leaders, and teachers, with the support of the school community, no learner will be left behind.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents' perceptions after the implementation of the ARAL program in terms of attendance.

Attendance Rate	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
Measures how regularly students are present in school.	4.00	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner arrives on time in school.	3.91	Agree	Almost manifested
Is often used for student motivation and school effectiveness.	3.85	Agree	Almost manifested
Attendance data helps educators identify at-risk students early and intervene with support programs.	3.82	Agree	Almost manifested
Helps the learners recognize how attendance	3.88	Agree	Almost

affects their academic performance and participation			manifested
Encourages students to take ownership of their learning.	3.78	Agree	Almost manifested
Reinforces the importance of punctuality and consistency as life skills.	3.96	Agree	Almost manifested
Highlights risks of chronic absenteeism.	3.82	Agree	Almost manifested
Encourages learners to balance responsibilities and prioritize commitments.	3.81	Agree	Almost manifested
Total	3.87	Agree	Almost manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

The results of the post-assessment on attendance were supported by Moldero et al. (2024), emphasizing that attending school regularly is very important among learners, particularly those who struggle with basic reading, as it is the foundational skill that needs to be mastered and developed. The regular presence of the learners in school significantly improves their reading and learning abilities, preventing them from being part of the students at risk of dropping out. Another study of NasirpourOsgoei & Obembe (2025) supports that being always at school encourages the learners to engage and actively participate in any learning tasks and activities in school. This will gradually increase the academic performance of the learners and possibly embrace the positive impact of education on the lives of the learners in the future, despite the economic struggles of their families. Additionally, constant presence at school can help learners improve their learning skills needed for 21st-century skills, as indicated in the educational framework of the Department.

Table 9 presents data on the post-assessment of teachers on the level of the academic achievement of the ARAL learner, and this is based on the teachers' assessment.

Data show that post-assessment on academic achievement of the ARAL learners based on the assessment and evaluation of teachers at Guinabsan NHS has improved. This means that constant guidance on learning and strong commitment of teachers in pushing the learners towards better education, learning, and great improvement will eventually take place. Learners will submit themselves to learning wholeheartedly if these learners are valued and recognized by the educational leaders, teachers, and the community.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents' perceptions after the implementation of the ARAL program in terms of academic achievement.

Academic Achievement	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation	Verbal Interpretation
The learner possesses mastery of subject-specific knowledge and consistency across multiple courses.	3.58	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner has knowledge in literacy and numeracy.	3.83	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner has the ability to apply learned concepts to real-world situations.	3.74	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner possesses creativity, innovation, and procedural knowledge (skills) alongside declarative knowledge.	3.61	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner has the ability to overcome setbacks and maintain effort despite challenges.	3.82	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
The learner has maintained good grades in academic subjects.	3.72	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested
Total	3.72	Agree	Agree	Almost manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

The study of Carbonari (2024) supported the results of the survey, underpinning that interventions for the reading needs of the learners in school can positively enhance the academic achievement of the learners. Learners can apply new learning ideas and concepts in class through group activities where collaborative learning is adhered to. Learners will also be given help through the sharing of prior knowledge and ideas from the teachers and co-learners in the classroom. Another study of Hurjui (2024) supported the results of the study, highlighting that specialized support to students can provide educational opportunities to learn and improve. This is to positively improve the academic performance of the learners in school.

Table 10 presents data on the post-assessment of teachers on the level of comprehension of the ARAL learner, and this is based on the teachers' assessment.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents' perceptions after the implementation of the ARAL program in terms of comprehension.

Comprehension	Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
Promotes academic success.	3.76	Agree	Almost manifested
Increases motivation in learning.	3.91	Agree	Almost manifested
Develops higher order thinking skills of the learners.	3.62	Agree	Almost manifested
Increases retention and memory.	3.71	Agree	Almost manifested
Expands word vocabulary.	3.81	Agree	Almost manifested
Performs better in all subjects.	3.65	Agree	Almost manifested
Improves the communication skills of learners.	3.77	Agree	Almost manifested
Increases learning participation in class.	3.76	Agree	Almost manifested
Total	3.75	Agree	Almost manifested

Legend: 1.00-1.80 –Strongly disagree /Not manifested, 3.41-4.20 – Agree/Almost manifested, 1.81-2.60 – Disagree/Less manifested, 4.21-5.00- Strongly Agree/Always manifested, 2.61-3.40- Moderately Agree/Sometimes manifested

Results of the survey reveal that comprehension of the ARAL tutors has significantly improved after the intensive and thorough implementation of the ARAL program at Guinabsan NHS. From the status between 72%-79%, having the chance to be failed, now, it has reached 85% to 89% status, a positive indicative sign of reading and learning progress of the learners. This signifies that the program has enhanced communication skills, widened vocabulary, increased motivation, increased higher-order thinking skills, and promoted academic success of the learners.

The result of the survey was affirmed by Lin & Rodriguez (2025), underpinning that constant cognitive training and development of learners can significantly increase their comprehension skills. Regularly exposing the learners to learning activities and performance tasks with the help of their classmates in collaborative learning, the comprehension level and learning abilities of the ARAL learners will be enhanced. Learners will gradually develop mastery of the lesson, overcome learning setbacks, and apply the lessons in real-life scenarios. This is also supported by the study of Almeida & Gupta (2024), highlighting that in learning, comprehension is very important to attribute that learning takes place. This reiterates that

comprehension plays a crucial role in learning and in achieving quality education in the Department. This is the central objective of learning, emphasizing the deep understanding of the content knowledge of all the learning areas in schools. Without comprehension of the lesson from the learners, the essence of teaching strategies and methods is defeated because this is the core and the purpose of the teaching-learning process employed by the teachers inside the classroom.

Problem 4. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and learners before the start of the program and after the implementation of the program?

Table 11 presents the results on the significant impact of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning program of Guinabsan NHS.

Table 11: On the Significant Difference between the Pre and Post-Assessment of the ARAL Program.

Pre and Post Assessment of ARAL Program	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis
Attendance	0.000	Significant	Rejected
Academic Achievement	0.000	Significant	Rejected
Comprehension	0.000	Significant	Rejected

Level of significance ≤ 0.05

Table 11 presents result that reveals that the ARAL program has a significant impact on attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension of the learners. This means that the ARAL program has significantly improved from 72%-79% attendance rate, academic achievement, and comprehension level to 85% to 89% percent status. This is a positive sign of great improvement in the learners' progress when they are valued and supported by the teachers, the school leader, and the community. The program helps improve academic performance, regular attendance in school, and a deep understanding of the lessons in school. The result of the study, as affirmed by Garcia & Chen (2024), emphasizes that high-impact tutoring among learners addresses the learning needs precisely to struggling readers, in which basic reading skills are the core of the problem. Provision of a tutorial class where learners will be given special focus on their reading struggles enhances the attendance rate, academic achievement, and comprehension of the learners in school. Another study of Pascual & Davies (2025) underscores the importance of a pedagogical approach to be integrated into the reading needs of the learners of the ARAL program of the school. Reading approaches must align with the learning interests of every learner so that the daily engagement of the reading activity is fun and active.

Problem 5. Based on the results of the study, what enhancement program can be proposed to increase the engagement of the learners in the ARAL Program?

This enhancement program is based on the results of the pre-assessment and post-assessment relative to attendance status, comprehension level, academic achievement, and experiences of the ARAL program at Guinabsan National High School. This program aims to sustain and intensify the school's ARAL program as it provides significant effects to the learners' reading ability, interest in coming to school, understanding, and academic achievement as manifested both in quantitative and qualitative survey results.

The Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program was created to help bridge the learning gaps caused by disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, making sure everyone has equal access to quality education. To keep this positive momentum going, developing a sustainable plan is essential. Thus, the program is entitled "Pathways to Progress: A Sustainable Framework for Continuing ARAL Program at Guinabsan National High School."

Table 12: Enhancement ARAL program matrix of Guinabsan National High School.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators/ MOVS	Timeline	Expected Outcome
Ensure long-term funding and resource allocation in the school MOOE	Secure ongoing support through PTA funds, LGU school educational funds, and school MOOE to sustain the program.	Memorandum of Agreement	June 2026- July 2026	Raised financial support
Strengthen learners engagement and community support	Collaborate with NGOs, private sector, LGUs and external tutors as volunteers.	MOA/MOU	June 2026- March 2027	Improved basic reading skills of learners, Zero cases of struggling readers from the Post-assessment results of PHIL-IRI
Enhance program adaptability and scalability	Intensify the ARAL program by immediately addressing the challenges or bottlenecks being encountered in the	Action Plan Accomplishment report Mitigation plan Monitoring and Evaluation report	June 2026- March 2027	Zero cases of non-readers at the end of the school year 2027.

	implementation of the program			
Foster continuous monitoring and evaluation for improvement of the learners engagement in the ARAL program.	Conduct monitoring and evaluation of the program as well as feed backing system.	BEMEF (Basic Education Monitoring and Evaluation Form)	June 2026-March 2027	Zero Cases of non-readers in school Improved academic performances Increased attendance rate

Key Strategies

A. Diversify Funding Sources

School financial support: Secure ongoing support through PTA funds, LGU school educational funds, and school MOOE to sustain the program.

Partnerships: Collaborate with NGOs, the private sector, LGUs, and external tutors as volunteers.

Alumni and Community Contributions: Implement fundraising campaigns and community-based support initiatives.

B. Integrate into Institutional Frameworks

Embed the ARAL program into regular class programs of teachers. Each teacher has 30 minutes of ARAL reading sessions for the identified ARAL learners in school.

Establish dedicated units or offices responsible for program oversight and sustainability.

C. Capacity Building

Train educators and external ARAL tutors on innovative teaching methods and accessibility.

Develop digital and physical resource repositories for ongoing use.

D. Leverage Technology

Invest in scalable digital platforms for remote learning.

Promote blended learning models to reach diverse student populations.

E. Advocate and Promote

Conduct awareness campaigns highlighting program benefits.

Engage stakeholders through regular updates and success stories.

F. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback

Implement robust M&E systems to track progress and impact.

Each ARAL teacher will be closely monitored for the ARAL learners' progress and development in terms of the reading abilities of the learners.

The school will conduct feedback on the teachers' experience of the program.

Conduct collaborative expertise among the ARAL teachers on the opportunities and challenges faced by them during the implementation of the program.

Use data-driven insights to refine strategies and demonstrate value to strengthen and sustain the program at school.

Data on the progress and development of ARAL learners will be used as a basis for the formulation of an intervention program or a sustainable program.

Data on the monitoring, evaluation, and feedback will be utilized to mitigate possible challenges encountered in the implementation of the program.

IV. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary

The study assessed the implementation and experiences of tutors and learners in the ARAL Program in reading at Guinabsan National High School, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. Specifically, they sought answers to the following questions as to the perception of the ARAL tutors and learners prior to the start of the program in terms of Attendance, Academic Achievement, and Comprehension. Likewise, the study sought to unearth the learning experiences of tutors and learners related to the implementation of the ARAL program by the Department of Education and the experiences of the participants of the study after the implementation of the program.

A null hypothesis was tested for the significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and students before the start of the program and after the implementation of the program. The multi-method research design was used to gather the needed data. Forty-three learners and 7 tutors participated in the study. Mean and t-test were used to analyze and interpret the data.

4.2 Findings

The learners and tutors perceived that before the implementation of the ARAL program, a considerably larger number of learners had sometimes manifested verbal interpretations in terms of attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension.

Tutors and learners experienced support and guidance in reading, increased reading ability and interest in school, and positive attitudes towards reading and learning.

Perceptions of the tutors and students before the start of the program and after the implementation have manifested in verbal interpretations. This implies that the ARAL

program is effective in addressing issues of poor attendance, poor academic achievement, and poor comprehension of learners.

After several months of implementation of the ARAL program in school, attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension of learners have significantly improved. This means that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the tutors and learners before and after the implementation of the program.

Based on the findings, a sustainable framework for continuing the ARAL program at Guinabsan National High School is highly recommended.

4.3 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results obtained from the data in the study, the following key conclusions are formulated:

The learners are encouraged to be engaged in the ARAL program as it serves as their motivation of coming to school and drivers towards increased comprehension and academic achievement of learners in school.

The ARAL program provides support and guidance in reading, increased reading ability, and interest in school.

The ARAL program has significantly improved learners' attendance, academic achievement, and comprehension, which are vital factors in learning.

The ARAL program has a significant impact on learners with issues of absenteeism, poor learning performance, and poor comprehension. This program is an effective mechanism for addressing reading challenges in school.

A sustainable framework to continue the program is recommended because the program provided positive results. It helps the learners to become readers in school.

4.4 Recommendations

This study aims to provide valuable insight for stakeholders in the learning community who are dedicated to supporting learners' academic recovery, particularly in the area of reading. Its findings will be instrumental in guiding efforts to enhance reading programs and address literacy challenges. Specifically, this research will benefit:

Agusan del Norte Division. The results will serve as a foundation for assessing the effectiveness of the ARAL reading program across all schools within the division. Such an evaluation will inform strategic improvements and help close the reading gaps among learners.

Instructional Leaders. The study will offer data-driven insights that enable prompt decision-making to tackle issues encountered in implementing the ARAL program. It will support leaders in making informed adjustments to strengthen reading instruction.

Teachers. Findings from this research can be utilized to reflect on and refine reading strategies, approaches, and techniques. Moreover, it opens opportunities for collaboration with reading specialists to enhance the overall effectiveness of the program.

Students. The study will help identify the underlying causes of reading difficulties faced by learners, allowing for targeted interventions. It aims to promote the development of strong reading skills by understanding and addressing the key factors that influence literacy.

Parents. The research will raise awareness among parents about the significance of reading at home and underscore its vital role in supporting the learners' literacy development. It emphasizes the shared responsibility among teachers, parents, and students in fostering reading success.

Stakeholders. The findings will serve as a platform for fostering collaboration and garnering support from various organizations and groups invested in literacy improvement. Collective efforts are essential to effectively address reading challenges in schools.

Future Researchers. The outcomes of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in reading interventions, which can serve as a reference point for subsequent research related to literacy programs and reading recovery initiatives.

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