



Lived Experience of Selected Public-School Teachers Tutoring Students Under the DepEd's ARAL Program

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Abstract

This research studied the lived experiences of public-school teachers engaged in the Department of Education's Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program. Utilizing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) research design, this research explored the challenges of teaching the ARAL program, the strategies used by the teachers, and their understanding of their role as teachers of the program. Five public-school teachers from the National Capital Region participated in semi-structured interviews. The transcripts were analyzed using the IPA procedure. Findings revealed that teachers encountered issues related to the limitations of Aral program, as well as students' literacy problems. Wider concerns included the teachers' additional workloads and the need to provide care for their students. Students also encountered personal concerns, lack of parental support, and responsibilities at home that affected their attendance and learning. To cope, teachers used coping mechanisms such as understanding their students' academic situation, implementing effective teaching strategies, and encouraging students to manage the emotional and practical demands of study by regulating their emotions, seeking social support, and engaging in leisure activities. Teachers attached deeper meaning to their role by showing strong commitment to their profession, initiating improvements to their teaching, persevering despite difficulties, and adopting strategies to help students. Teachers emphasized the need for basic, consistent literacy programs, and recommended stronger involvement from parents to support reading development. This study concluded that ARAL tutors face significant challenges that they navigate through personal resilience, effective teaching strategies, and dedication to their profession.

Keywords: *ARAL Tutors, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Challenges, Managing Challenges, Meaning Making*

Introduction

The Covid 19 pandemic resulted in continuous disruptions and challenges among learners that remain to this day. Predominantly, there are learning gaps among learners. This is supported by the report of Untalan (2025) on Filipino literacy, indicating that 1 out of 5 Filipinos has difficulty in comprehending what they read. According to De Jesus et al. (2025), in response to the PISA report in 2022, the Philippines ranks 79 out of 81 countries in reading comprehension. Librea et al (2025) pointed to lack of reading materials, lack of motivation, teacher incompetence, limited parental involvement, and student health concerns as additional factors that influence this problem in the Philippines. Lagdaan et al. (2025) reviewed twenty empirical studies from 2020 to 2025, and found that evidence-based interventions like reciprocal teaching and guided reading show gains when implemented by trained teachers; though systemic barriers like unequal resource access and inadequate

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teacher preparation persist. Idulog et al. (2023) corroborate these findings, attributing poor reading abilities to resource scarcity and socioeconomic factors.

As a result, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented several programs to mitigate this problem. The Catch up-Friday program, includes reading activities every Friday which aim to help struggling readers in the basic education level (Hernando-Malipot, 2024).

According to qualitative research by LaBad and Alindo (2025), themes like student engagement, improved reading confidence, and the relevance of reading materials to students' interests and academic needs emerge. This indicates the positive outcome of the program based on the perspectives of the students.

On the other hand, the program also has its own problems and flaws. According to the research of Requillo (2024), issues such as training for teachers, budget allocation, and program implementation come out as per the report of EDCOM 2. Thus, it becomes burdensome for teachers and tutors.

However, in the school year 2025-2026, the Department of Education implemented the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning Program (ARAL) under republic act 12028 signed in October 2024. This program is a replacement for the Catch-up-Friday program. The ARAL program is supposed to provide tutoring for students starting from kindergarten through Grade 10 with subjects on Reading, Science, and Mathematics. The program aims to improve students' essential learning competencies in Reading, Science, and Mathematics. In terms of its extent, the ARAL Program is wider in scope than the initial Catch-up Fridays Program. This policy shift may present another hurdle for educators collectively.

Rafanan et al. (2024) posit research gaps and directions for future researchers. They recommend exploration of the challenges and coping mechanisms that Catch-up Friday tutors may experience.

Reflecting on this context, there is still a lack of studies that aim to address this research gap. Accordingly, this research aims to fill this gap from the perspective and context of ARAL tutors. Consequently, this research extends and complements existing and related studies. As a result, this all leads to several important questions. Thus, this research particularly aims to explore and address the following statement of the problems:

1. What are the lived experiences and challenges encountered by public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program?
2. How do public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program manage the challenges they encounter in the ARAL Program?
3. How do public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program interpret and derive meaning from their experiences as ARAL tutors?

Thus, this research specifically explored and highlighted lived experiences, challenges and strategies public-school teachers use to manage the challenges they encounter in the ARAL Program. Through the utilization of interpretative phenomenological analysis, the researcher was able to conduct a deeper exploration of the presented problems. Ultimately this study was relevant and beneficial for ARAL program tutors, school administrators, the Department of Education, policy makers, students, parents, and future researchers.

Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the Maslach Burnout Theory and Cognitive Load Theory. These theories served as a framework in developing research questions and interview protocols. In addition, it complements in elucidating and interpreting the research findings. The Maslach Burnout theory (1998) posits that increased burnout in individuals may result in productivity loss. It describes that the experience of burnout may result in decreased performance among teachers. Meanwhile, Cognitive Load Theory states that teachers can be

more effective in teaching by minimizing and managing load. This theory highlights the way teachers design effective teaching strategies to be more efficient (Sweller, 2011). Together, these theories accompanied each other in terms of expounding the exploration of the live experience and challenges among ARAL tutors, while also crafting strategies to manage those challenges.

A description of methods includes our research design, sampling procedures, participants, instrumentation, ethical considerations, data gathering procedures, and data analysis.

The framework of this research is guided by Larkin and Smith's (2021) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). As a rationale, it can provide a case-by-case analysis for each research participant, allowing an in-depth analysis of research data. IPA allows further exploration and interpretation, not just descriptions of individual lived experiences, but also on how they make sense of it.

The sampling techniques utilized both purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling is an appropriate technique for looking at and recruiting research participants with defined characteristics clearly relevant to the study, which in this study (Andrade, 2020). In addition, snowball sampling was also applied. The rationale for the utilization is that it served as a means of obtaining referrals for more qualified participants. (Gierczyk, 2024). The combination of techniques would allow the researcher to look for more qualified participants who will strictly met the inclusion criteria and overcome challenges in locating them.

For the sample size, the researcher gathered a total of six (6) participants, in which five (5) are included as the main research participants and one (1) for the pilot testing. Although "there is no right answer to the question of the sample size" (p.52), Smith et al. (2009) suggest that a sample size between three and six participants is adequate. This would allow for a more in-depth analysis of the phenomenon.

For the research participants, the researchers set specific inclusion criteria. All participants are public school teachers handling elementary to junior high school students. They must also be ARAL tutors handling English subject. Meanwhile, non-public schoolteachers are excluded.

The following instruments were utilized to collect data from the research participants for the purpose of meeting the research objectives. These instruments are consulted and validated by three Psychology PhD Holders, subject matter experts.

A Personal data sheet served as one of the measures to ensure that research participants strictly met the inclusion criteria set in this research.

An Interview protocol instrument included the following sections. First are rapport-building questions, which aim to safeguard the establishment of trust and comfort between the participants and researchers. Next are the main questions acknowledged in the statement of the problem. Last is the debriefing questions to affirm the whole interview process and most importantly to ensure the wellbeing of research participants after the interview process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocol and considerations were carefully observed in the conduct of this study. First, informed consent form was disseminated to the research participants. The purpose of the study, research procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights was outlined in the informed consent form. Ample time was given to participants to read the informed consent form. The research participants were given the right to voluntary participation. In addition, they were also given the right to withdraw.

Confidentiality and privacy were observed through the protection of the personal data shared by the research participants. Their personal identity was protected by providing research participants with anonymized code names.

For data security, the storage, backup, and disposal of data were properly secured and protected against unauthorized access.

Data Gathering Procedure

The following were the steps and procedures that were crafted and executed by the researchers to gather research data from the research participants.

1. Interview protocols were developed by the researchers and validated by three subject matter experts relevant to the field, particularly by PhD holders in psychology.

2. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were applied to locate qualified research participants.

3. Permission to conduct research was asked at the educational institution where the research participants belong.

4. An Informed consent form was carefully disseminated and explained to the research participants. This is followed by obtaining their approval to join the research.

5. Permission to record the whole interview was obtained.

6. Pilot testing was conducted to further refine the research procedures. This serves as the preliminary step to ensure that research design, instruments, and procedures are fine-tuned before proceeding to actual data gathering.

7. The research was conducted one-on-one, face-to-face using semi-structured interviews.

8. The following were also conducted to ensure data trustworthiness: Member Checking to verify the research finding to the research participants. Bracketing was also applied, wherein researchers set aside their preconceived assumptions and biases. Also, reflexivity wherein insights, decisions, and reflections were documented at the end of the researchers.

9. In addition, Data Sample Triangulation was also included in the procedure to ensure data trustworthiness. This would validate research further by cross-checking it with various data from the interviews, field notes, and memos

10. Lastly, debriefing is conducted to ensure participant well-being after all the procedures.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, IPA was used, which involved several step-by-step procedures. First, there was the careful review of audio recordings and the first case transcript, followed by initial noting and observations to further assist in analyzing data at an exploratory level. Next, the emergent themes were linked to developing a theme. Then connections between the emergent themes were noted and explored. The current theme/case was bracketed. Lastly, all cases were analyzed wherein similarities and connections were established, thus forming subordinate and superordinate themes. Therefore, the whole data analysis was treated through a hermeneutic cycle (Smith et al. 2009).

Results and Discussion

This research aimed to explore the lived experiences of 5 selected ARAL tutors from public schools in the National Capital Region. This section will explain the results of the data analysis, which resulted in final superordinate themes with the corresponding superordinate themes that reflect the challenges, how they manage them, and how they give meaning to

their experiences.

Table 1

Statement of the Problem 1 What are the lived experiences and challenges encountered by public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program?

Final Superordinate Themes	Superbordinate Themes	Illustrative Quotes From Main Respondent
Struggles of Aral Tutors	Limitations of Aral program	<i>Yung about sa government natin. Nagbigay sila ng ganyang programa, pero para sa akin, parang kulang sila sa materials, sa pagiging readiness. Kasi actually, meron naman kaming training bago i-ano ang aral na yan, bago simulan. Pero nung inatendan namin yung training, base sa ano ko ah, kung i-evaluate ko yung seminar nila, parang hindi rin masyadong napaghandaan. Mas napansin ko pa nga yung mga aberya na nangyari ng training ngayon eh. P3 L1-33</i>
	Student`s problems in literacy	<i>Hindi nila kayang abutin. And they cannot express in English. Mahina ang dating ng bata. P1 L1-51</i>
	Additional workload	<i>So wala eh hawak ko sila. Pero kapag yung maliit lang, mas nahirapan ako. Yung materyales na hawak naming, identify muna sila kung sino ang mahina. Mas Mahirap para sa akin ang ARAL. P2 L1-33</i>
Facing the Struggles of the student	Lack of Parental support	<i>Siyempre, madaming alibi ang mga magulang kasi nakita namin ang ibang bata, pinaghahanap buhay. Pinaghahanap buhay sila, bantayan ang mga kapatid, maghanap buhay. Kaya yun, yun ang nakikita namin problema din. Walang support ang magulang. At saka, siyempre, ang mga magulang. At saka, syempre, not all of them are educated. P1 L1-29</i>
	Providing Care for students	<i>Kasi, parang mas mamomotivate ka na maghanap pa ng iba't ibang strategies na ibigay yung best mo kapag yung learners mo talagang medyo academically medyo behind sila P3 L1-48</i>

Final Superordinate Theme: Struggles of Aral Tutors

The first final superordinate theme explores the struggle that ARAL tutor encounters. This includes the following superordinate theme that explains the struggle of ARAL tutors, the limitations of the ARAL program, student problems in literacy, and additional workload.

Superordinate Theme: Limitations of the Aral program

Research data from the research participants suggest that ARAL tutors experience problems concerning and associated with the program itself. The research participants perceived that the ARAL program has several limitations that hinder its effectiveness. This includes challenges concerning budget allocation, lack of materials, and program implementation. In addition, the lack of preparedness at the end of the government was also mentioned. However, training was provided for ARAL tutors, but teachers perceived the lack of readiness in terms of its delivery. Participant 3 stated, *“Yung about sa government natin. Nagbigay sila ng ganyang programa, pero para sa akin, parang kulang sila sa materials, sa pagiging readiness. Kasi actually, meron naman kaming training bago i-ano ang Aral na yan, bago simulan. Pero nung inatendan namin yung training, base sa ano ko ah, kung i-evaluate ko yung seminar nila, parang hindi rin masyadong napaghandaan. Mas napansin ko pa nga yung mga aberya na nangyari ng training ngayon eh. P3 L1-33.*

Superordinate Theme: Students' problems in literacy

Another struggle that teachers face in terms of the Aral program is their students' problem with literacy. They find it challenging to deal with students struggling to read. Research participants mentioned that students under the ARAL program find it hard to understand and comprehend even a simple English word at the Grade 6 level. This clearly reflects the issue of illiteracy among children and learners in the Philippines, particularly the latest PISA report. Participant 1 mentions that *“Hindi nila kayang abutin. And they cannot express themselves in English. Mahina ang dating ng bata.” P1 L1 51.*

Superordinate Theme: Additional workload

Another problem and concern reported by research participants is understanding students' academic situation. The ARAL program means providing remedial support for selected students. This student must meet the criteria to be included in the program. This means working with students in small groups. Working in small groups of students made the program more individualized in approach compared with the regular class. This makes the program's process and procedures more tedious. This also entails extra work and effort on the end of the tutors. Participant 2 stated that *“So wala eh hawak ko sila. Pero kapag yung maliit lang, mas nahirapan ako. Yung materyales na hawak naming, identify muna sila kung sino ang mahina. Mas Mahirap para sa akin ang ARAL”. P2 L1-33.*

Final Superordinate Theme: Facing the Struggles of the Student

The next final superordinate theme entails the teachers' experiences in facing their students' own struggles. This is explained further by the following superordinate themes of dealing with students' personal problems and providing care for students.

Superordinate Theme: Lack of Parental support

One of the common problems among ARAL Students is that they don't receive enough financial support from their parents and family. Due to poverty, these students are tasked to work to support and attend to the daily living needs of their own families. As a result, the ARAL teachers frequently encountered students who are tired in school. On a worst-case scenario, problems like student tardiness and absenteeism also occur. As stated by participant 1: *"Siyempre, madaming alibi ang mga magulang kasi nakita namin ang ibang bata, pinaghahanap buhay. Pinaghahanap buhay sila, bantayan ang mga kapatid, maghanap buhay. Kaya yun, yun ang nakikita namin problema din. Walang support ang magulang. At saka, siyempre, ang mga magulang. At saka, syempre, not all of them are educated."* P1 L1-29.

Superordinate Theme: Providing Care for students

But on the positive side, teachers also face the struggles of their students by providing care for them. Teachers aim to motivate their students to attend class. They design and implement strategies as a means of caring for their students. This is also for the benefit of their students. Therefore, they give their best effort. *"Kasi, parang mas mamomotivate ka na maghanap pa ng iba't ibang strategies na ibigay yung best mo kapag yung learners mo talagang medyo academically medyo behind sila"*. P3 L1-48

Table 2

Statement of Problem 2: How do public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program manage the challenges they encounter in the ARAL Program?

Final Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes	Illustrative Quotes From Main Respondents
Adopting an effective coping mechanism	Understanding students' academic situation	<i>Ayun yung ano, kung uunawain mo sila, kung baga dahil tanggap ko na ganun talaga yung level nila eh. So mas malelessen yung, pag talagang inis na inis ka na kasi hindi nila mabasa pero dahil tinanim mo sa sarili mo na ganun lang talaga yung level nila so imbis na mainis ka, hindi na lang parang mas uunawain mo na lang sila at kapag ganun, mas nagiging mas mabait ka sa kanila at pag mas mabait ka sa kanila mas ano yun eh, parang nararamdaman ng mga bata eh, kasi once na parang halimbawa, nakikita nila na bwisit yung teacher sa kanila parang mas hindi mamomotivate pumasok parang di kailangang galit lagi. Ayun. P3 L1-56</i>

	Play as a way to manage anger	<i>Minsa nagkukwentuhan kami, dinadaan namin sa laro, para at least yung, pati na rin ako, para yung inis mo na, kailangan po, bato mo to. Kailangan libangin ko na rin sa sarili ko. P2 L1-53</i>
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Adopting strategies to help student	Implementing Effective Teaching Strategies	<i>Pwedeng siya yung little teacher, siya yung nagtuturo o kaya ano sila partner ganon. Pag kunyare eto hindi ko na siya, may chinecheck pa ako dito tapos ito kailangan niya ng tulong, ipapa yung katabi niya papa “ o tulungan mo siya”. Kasi actually yung mga bata sa Aral Program marurunong naman din sila. Yung mga ilan lang doon na makikita namin na talagang hirap na hirap sila P5 L1-169</i>
	Giving Students Encouragement	<i>Lahat sila na kasama sa ARAL eh makapasa lang. Diba, saya?</i>

Superordinate Theme: Adopting an effective coping mechanism

This superordinate theme includes superordinate themes that describe participants' taking care of their own well-being and managing their own emotions.

Superordinate Theme: Understanding students' academic situation

Managing emotion was crucial in handling the challenges brought by the ARAL program, understanding students' academic situations. Understanding academic situations means having an awareness of their own students' individual needs and capabilities. In addition, having patience regarding this situation is also important to further motivate their students. As stated by Participant 3: *“Ayun yung ano, kung uunawain mo sila, kung baga dahil tanggap ko na ganun talaga yung level nila eh. So mas malelessen yung, pag talagang inis na inis ka na kasi hindi nila mabasa pero dahil tinanim mo sa sarili mo na ganun lang talaga yung level nila so imbis na mainis ka, hindi na lang parang mas uunawain mo na lang sila at kapag ganun, mas nagiging mas mabait ka sa kanila at pag mas mabait ka sa kanila mas ano yun eh, parang nararamdaman ng mga bata eh, kasi once na parang halimbawa, nakikita nila na bwisit yung teacher sa kanila parang mas hindi mamomotivate pumasok parang di kailangang galit lagi. Ayun. P3 L1-56 Ayun”* P3 L1-56.

Superordinate Theme: Play as a way to manage anger

Given the stress that they encounter that ARAL tutors encounter, one the ways ARAL tutors manage stress is through engaging in play to manage anger. They also make sure to have social support from co-faculty, the school head, and family members. These prove to be helpful among ARAL tutors in coping with the challenges concerning the ARAL program. Participant 2 stated the *“Minsan nagkukwentuhan kami, dinadaan namin sa laro, para at least yung, pati na rin ako, para yung inis mo na, kailangan po, bato mo to. Kailangan libangin ko na rin sa sarili ko”* P2 L1-53.

Final Superordinate Theme: Adopting strategies to help students

This final superordinate theme includes the following superordinate themes: implementing effective teaching strategies, giving students encouragement, and identifying root causes of student problems.

Superordinate Theme: Implementing Effective Teaching Strategies

Teachers also manage problems they encounter related to ARAL programs by creating effective strategies to help ARAL students in engaging in and learning the lessons. This includes strategies like engaging pairing students as a study buddy. Participant 5 stated that: *“Pwedeng siya yung little teacher, siya yung nagtuturo o kaya ano sila partner ganon. Pag kunyare eto hindi ko na siya, may chinecheck pa ako dito tapos ito kailangan niya ng tulong, ipapa yung katabi niya papa “o tulungan mo siya”. Kasi actually yung mga bata sa Aral Program marurunong naman din sila. Yung mga ilan lang doon na makikita namin na talagang hirap na hirap sila” P5 L1-169.*

Superordinate Theme: Giving Students Encouragement

According to the ARAL tutors, encouragement and support must be given to ARAL students. Teachers are encouraging their ARAL students to keep on persevering in their studies with the goal of learning and passing all requirements. They also encourage their students to aspire to finally graduating from school. This is supported by participant 2 quote: *“Lahat sila na kasama sa ARAL eh makapasa lang. Diba, saya?” P2.*

Table 3

Statement of the Problem 3: How do public-school teachers interpret and derive meaning from their experiences as ARAL tutors?

Final Superordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes	Illustrative Quotes From Main Respondents
Commitment to their profession	Initiative to improve teaching	<i>Pero ano as a teacher na ano ako eh naevaluate ko na dapat ginagawa din talaga siya ng teacher. Di man perfect yung teacher pero inevaluate din dapat natin kung nagawa ko ba yung best ko. Naturuan ko ba talaga sila ng maayos P5 L1-296</i>
	Perseverance despite some difficulties	<i>Ayun nga, iniisip ko na lang siya na trabaho ko to, obligasyon ko to at kailangan itong mga batang to ay unawain na lang. P3-L1-54</i>

	Adapting strategies to help students	<p><i>Yung mga best practice. Ayan, unang-una dapat i-involve yung parents.</i></p> <p><i>Parents. Ayan, i-involve natin yung parents sa pagpapalano. kasi importante na nagtutulungan yung school at yung parents na matuto yung mga bata pagdating sa pagbabasa. Kung kaya nga eh, magkaroon din sana ng program na tuturuan ang mga parents. Baka kasi may mga parents tayo na kailangan din. Then, hindi lang para matutong magbasa, pagpwede rin silang turuan ng mga basic lang na strategy na paano ba yung tamang pagtuturo ng pagbabasa sa mga anak nila. Ayun, gano'n. P3 L1-83</i></p>
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Final Superordinate Theme: Commitment to their profession

This final superordinate theme is commitment to their profession. Teachers derive meaning on their profession to be thru commitment to their duty to teach. This commitment is demonstrated and represented by the following superordinate themes: Initiative to improve teaching, Perseverance despite some difficulties and Adapting strategies to help students.

Superordinate Theme: Initiative to improve teaching

For the ARAL tutors, it is important to have awareness and self-evaluation on their own teaching effectiveness. This would also entail the initiative for constant improvement of their own teaching. As stated by participant 5 “*Pero ano as a teacher na ano ako eh naevaluate ko na dapat ginagawa din talaga siya ng teacher. Di man perfect yung teacher pero inevaluate din dapat natin kung nagawa ko ba yung best ko. Naturuan ko ba talaga sila ng maayos*” 5 L1-296.

Superordinate Theme: Perseverance despite some difficulties

Being an ARAL tutor, they see it as a passion and vocation, having a sense of duty which is crucial for the success of their students. Given all the challenges and difficulties, they find it an obligation to understand their students and persevere for the best of their own students. This is further supported by statement by Participant 3: “*Ayun nga, iniisip ko na lang siya na trabaho ko to, obligasyon ko to at kailangan itong mga batang to ay unawain na lang*” P3-L1-54.

Superordinate Theme: Adapting strategies to help students

Programs supplemental to the ARAL program must be added to the existing ARAL program. The involvement of the parents is necessary to further support the needs of the ARAL students. They show their commitment by adopting the best strategies possible to help their students. As stated by Participant 3: “*Yung mga best practice. Ayan, unang-una dapat i-involve yung parents. Parents. Ayan, i-involve natin yung parents sa pagpapalano. kasi*

importante na nagtutulungan yung school at yung parents na matuto yung mga bata pagdating sa pagbabasa. Kung kaya nga eh, magkaroon din sana ng program na tuturuan ang mga parents. Baka kasi may mga parents tayo na kailangan din. Then, hindi lang para matutong magbasa, pagpwede rin silang turuan ng mga basic lang na strategy na paano ba yung tamang pagtuturo ng pagbabasa sa mga anak nila. Ayun, gano'n" P3 L1-83.

Discussion

In this section, the interpretation of results, limitations, implications, and recommendations drawn based on the results of the study.

Based on the research findings, in terms of the lived experiences and challenges encountered by public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program, generally, most of the research participants encountered problems concerning the ARAL program. Among the challenges are the lack of budget, the lack of training, and the lack of structure. As also stated in the report of EDCOM 2, issues such as training for teachers, budget allocation, and structure were not properly executed and are still prevalent (Requillo, 2024).

Another thing that burdens ARAL tutors is the problem concerning student literacy. This is in relation to the latest PISA report that most of the Filipino students are functionally illiterate. In addition, this is further supported by the report of Untalan (2025) that 1 out of 5 Filipinos has trouble with reading comprehension.

Additionally, according to the report of Hernando-Malipot (2025), ARAL tutors are encountering problems in budget allocation, resources and training. The design of the ARAL program itself is flawed. The next problem is that they need to face the daily struggles of their students. There are many problems encountered in the classroom that the participants reported. One is dealing with students' personal problems. Most of the ARAL students experience the problem of poverty. They are forced by their parents to work to provide some support to their own family. Thus, absenteeism is common. ARAL tutors also encountered problems concerning the fact that they need to provide care for their students. This is further supported by the research of Merga (2019), stating that barriers like literacy, problems at home, and absenteeism further affect student learning.

Now, given the challenges encountered by public-school teachers tutoring students under the DepEd's ARAL Program, how do they manage challenges? Based on the results of data analysis, teachers adopt an effective coping mechanism. They do this through managing their own emotions and taking care of their own well-being. According to the research of Karakus et al. (2024), among teachers, their emotional regulation skills have an impact on minimizing stress, burnout, etc.

They also deal with that problem by adopting strategies to help students. Most particularly, they are implementing effective teaching strategies, giving students encouragement (Ratinho and Martins, 2023). Identifying the root cause of student problems is also necessary.

This is further explained by the cognitive load theory. This theory elucidates and supplements the primary research finding. It states that teachers can be more effective in teaching through minimizing and managing load, which reflects in designing effective instruction and teaching strategies (Sweller, 2011).

How public-school teachers interpret and derive meaning from their experiences as ARAL tutors is through their commitment to their profession. This is further reflected by having the initiative to improve teaching further. They also have a passion for teaching. According to Alzoraiki (2023), teachers' commitment to teaching positively affects teaching

performance.

Finally, the program favors the back-to-basics approach. This focuses more on what is essential for the students and this impacts the design activities as a supplement to the ARAL program.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Research findings must be read with discretion. The first limitation is the research's generalizability. This research included 5 main participants. Thus, due to the small sample size, research findings cannot be generalized to the whole teacher population.

Another limitation is research demographics. This research focused on the National Capital Region alone. It focused only on public school teachers handling ARAL programs. Specific characteristics like age, gender, and length of tenure were not included in the inclusion criteria for participants.

Lastly, teachers handling other remediation programs were not included in the research. Future researchers must consider working on a larger sample size conducting quantitative research and consider widening demographics. Lived experiences of ARAL teachers outside the National Capital Regions must be explored as well. In addition, characteristics like age, gender, and length of tenure must also be given focus. Teachers handling other remediation programs must also be considered in future research.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, the result of the study stated that ARAL tutors are facing challenges that primarily deal with the ARAL program; they also manage those challenges through coping mechanisms and adopting teaching strategies last is on how they make sense of those experiences. Therefore, the government must implement programs that would address issues of educational crisis and teachers' challenges. As for future directions, researchers must focus on broadening the scope of this research.

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