From Policy to Practice: Lived Realities of Implementers in ARAL Reading Program

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived realities of teachers who implemented the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Reading Program and examined how they translated policy into classroom practice in the public junior high schools of the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa during School Year 2026–2027. Guided by interpretive phenomenology, the study involved sixteen purposively selected ARAL Reading Program implementers from eight public junior high schools. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals and was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings revealed that implementation was characterized by instructional responsiveness, teacher agency, learner-centered adaptation, and resilience amid systemic challenges. Implementers translated policy into practice through data-informed instructional planning, contextualization of learning resources, differentiated instruction, and continuous monitoring of learner progress. Despite challenges related to learner attendance, motivation, resource limitations, and workload, participants sustained implementation through positive reinforcement, stakeholder collaboration, instructional innovation, and learner follow-up. The program was perceived by the participants to have contributed to improvements in learners' reading skills, confidence, engagement, and participation, while the findings highlighted the need for stronger institutional support, continuous professional development, adequate resources, and collaborative partnerships. Based on these findings, the study developed the proposed implementation enhancement framework, BRIDGE (Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement), as a practical model for strengthening ARAL implementation by connecting policy intentions with responsive literacy practices that supported sustainable learner development.

Keywords: ARAL Reading Program, interpretive phenomenology, lived realities, policy implementation, reading intervention

INTRODUCTION

Education has long valued literacy as its foundation and a key element in the progress of individuals, societies, and countries. It consists of not only reading and writing ability but also interpretation, analysis, communication, and information processing skills. Literacy is a means for individuals to be engaged members of their societies, as well as to strive for their educational and financial opportunities, and for the growth of their nations. Therefore, promotion of literacy is one of the main objectives of education worldwide.

Education and literacy are important parts of Sustainable Global Development Goals; specifically, Goal 4, which is associated with education for all people regardless of their abilities. Although more steps are taken to improve and strengthen basic education, such as literacy, several countries still face numerous challenges related to education systems, which do not work properly in terms of teaching learners how to read and be

functional. The issue has become even more challenging after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the disruption of the learning process and increased inequality.

In the Philippines, literacy is still a major education issue. As per the Philippine Statistics Authority (2025), basic literacy is distinguishable from functional literacy since the latter is more advanced and involves higher-level skills like comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of a variety of information. Results of the 2024 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) indicate that while the country's basic literacy rate is around 90 percent, only about 70 percent of people are functionally literate. This disparity indicated that the ability to perform basic literacy tasks does not necessarily translate into the higher-level reading competencies required for effective participation in contemporary society. The concern has likewise been reflected in large-scale educational assessments. As illustrated by the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Filipino learners have performed inadequately in the area of reading literacy on global standards; moreover, national-level evaluation outcomes indicate further challenges in reading comprehension on the part of Filipino learners. These conditions have strengthened the need for sustained learning recovery efforts and interventions that respond to learners' varying levels of reading development.

The Philippine government has acknowledged the issue and made significant changes in the system. One of the main Acts is the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Act (Republic Act No. 12028), with which the Department of Education Order No. 018, s. 2025 was also instigated. The goal of this law is to mitigate learning losses, strengthen foundational reading and numeracy skills, and promote equitable academic recovery. This policy aligned with broader national and international development directions, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education, the long-term vision of Ambisyon Natin 2040, and the reform priorities of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II), all of which emphasized improved foundational learning, stronger teacher capacity, and effective policy implementation.

The implementation of a national intervention, however, takes place within diverse school contexts. Teachers and ARAL implementers may encounter differences in learner needs, instructional preparedness, available resources, scheduling, parental or stakeholder support, and school-level arrangements. These conditions can shape how program requirements are interpreted and carried out. Therefore, analyzing the program necessitates taking into consideration not only formal regulations but also the way in which they are interpreted and implemented by all those participating in its implementation.

Although the ARAL initiative has become an important national answer to learning gaps, empirical understanding of its implementation, particularly in reading, was still developing at the time of the study. Existing literature had largely emphasized policy provisions, program objectives, and learning recovery, while fewer studies had examined how implementers themselves experienced the demands, adjustments, successes, and difficulties associated with carrying out the program. This created a need for an inquiry that placed the experiences of implementers at the center of understanding ARAL implementation.

The researcher's professional experience further provided the context for this inquiry. The researcher had served as a Master Teacher in a public junior high school of the City Schools Division in the Philippines and had taken part in several literacy initiatives such as the Bawat Bata Bumabasa program, Every Child-A-Reader Program (ECARP), Catch-Up Fridays, and the National Learning Recovery Program in Reading. These experiences provided opportunities to observe continuing concerns in learners' reading development, particularly in comprehension, fluency, and decoding, despite the implementation of structured interventions. Such experiences prompted the researcher to examine not only learners' literacy needs but also the realities faced by those tasked with addressing these needs.

Despite structured interventions, issues in comprehension, fluency, and decoding continued to affect learners' performance. These observations reflected a broader national concern and highlighted the need to examine how policies were operationalized in real educational settings.

The conditions gave rise to the study that sought to find out the implementation of the ARAL Program in

Reading through the lived experiences of its implementers. It aimed to explore in what way teachers and implementers of ARAL lived and acted on the implementation in their own school dynamics, considering all the conditions for successful application and its barriers. A phenomenological interpretive study was conducted to comprehend the experience and the meaning embedded in the experiences that surround the implementation of reading recovery efforts.

In essence, the research aimed at imparting information for the ongoing improvement of a program aimed at enhancing literacy levels and recovering from gaps in learning around basic education in the Philippines. The research provided valuable information based on which strategies were developed for creating efficient resource and assistance systems including the one aimed at enhancing the process of implementing the ARAL Program in Reading.

Objectives of the Study

This qualitative study aimed to explore how ARAL Reading Program implementers translated policy into practice within their respective educational contexts. Specifically, it sought to understand their lived experiences in implementing the ARAL Law in their classrooms and schools; the strategies they employed in translating ARAL policy into reading instruction; the challenges and barriers they encountered during implementation; how they navigated and responded to these challenges; their perceptions of the program's contributions to learners' reading development; and the insights and recommendations they proposed to enhance program implementation and improve learners' reading outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Philippines, recent studies have highlighted the role of the ARAL law and National Reading Program (NRP) in addressing learning loss through structured reading interventions, teacher professional development, and stakeholder collaboration (Santillan, 2025; Momo, 2025). Sustainable literacy initiatives require adequate resources, appropriate teacher training, culturally responsive instruction, community involvement, clear policies, systematic monitoring, and continuous teacher support (Gatcho et al., 2024; William et al., 2025; Bautista, 2025; Ahmed, 2023; Lu, 2024). Research has also demonstrated that structured, differentiated, and learner-centered instruction, supported by appropriate materials, improves reading comprehension, proficiency, engagement, and literacy confidence (Magableh et al., 2022; Hall, 2022; Achmad et al., 2024; Solehun et al., 2025; Sales, 2024; Boonstra, 2026; Maramag-Esguerra, 2026; Premo & Schunn, 2026). Teacher commitment, resilience, and responsive practices further contribute to successful implementation, although irregular attendance, low motivation, and limited support remain challenges (Zhu et al., 2022; Ibrahim & Al-Jneibi, 2022; Cantrell et al., 2023; Basma & Savage, 2023; Hunt et al., 2025; McBreen & Savage, 2020; Daniel et al., 2026; Bartolata & Despi, 2026; Pérez-Marco et al., 2025).

Studies on translating reading policies into classroom practice emphasize careful planning, learner assessment, and differentiated instruction. Screening, diagnostic assessment, and learner profiling help teachers identify reading needs and design appropriate interventions, while guided and critical reading promote engagement and comprehension (Whittingham et al., 2024; Lai et al., 2025; Karst et al., 2022; Nicholas, 2026). However, limited resources, insufficient training, large class sizes, inconsistent implementation, and weak parental support constrain policy implementation (Pelagio, 2025; Antonio, 2025; Bete, 2025; Almagro et al., 2024). Specifically, ARAL Reading Program implementers encounter challenges involving learner motivation, attendance, behavior, parentl support, instructional materials, funding, facilities, workload, administrative duties, and limited teaching time (Morris, 2026; Webber et al., 2023; Javiñar, 2025; Alo, 2026; Bullos et al., 2025; Tolentin, 2023; Capate et al., 2025). Addressing these concerns requires differentiated learner support and collaboration among teachers, school administrators, families, and communities (Phala et al., 2025; Newbury et al., 2023; Isada, 2025; Samuelson et al., 2025; Soterio & Fajardo, 2026; Tagose et al., 2025; Relyea et al., 2026).

Despite these challenges, empirical studies have documented improvements in foundational reading skills, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, confidence, motivation, and participation through structured interventions, guided reading, supportive feedback, and research-based instruction (Serry et al., 2025; Roberts et al., 2022; Wang & Hu, 2025; Ataya et al., 2026; Romulado, 2026). Effective implementation is further supported by positive reinforcement, continuous assessment, progress monitoring, data-informed decisions, professional development, adequate funding, technical assistance, and stakeholder collaboration (Van der Sande et al., 2023; Ehlert et al., 2022; Guven & Haddad, 2023; Filderman et al., 2025; Rice et al., 2024; Reyes & Fajardo, 2026; Shapiro & Bellows, 2025; Miel, 2025; Pante, 2026).

Methodologically, previous studies employed experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, mixed-method, and qualitative designs, generally focusing on learner outcomes and program implementation. However, limited research has explored how teachers interpret, experience, and implement the ARAL Reading Program in Philippine public secondary schools through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This gap provides the rationale for the present study, which explores implementers lived experiences, meaning making, and understanding of translating ARAL policy into practice within their school contexts.

Empirical studies have shown that reading interventions improve learners' foundational reading skills, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, confidence, motivation, and engagement (Serry et al., 2025; Roberts et al., 2022; Wang & Hu, 2025; Ataya et al., 2026; Romulado, 2026). These interventions also promote learner autonomy and lifelong reading habits, particularly when supported by committed teachers and supportive classroom environments (Alqahtani, 2024; Zhang & Zhu, 2025; Ryan & Hendry, 2022; OECD, 2024). Effective implementation requires positive reinforcement, differentiated instruction, stakeholder collaboration, continuous assessment, and progress monitoring (Van der Sande et al., 2023; Ehlert et al., 2022; Achmad et al., 2024; Alo, 2026; Miel, 2025; Pante, 2026). Furthermore, sustained teacher professional development, adequate resources and funding, technical assistance, structured program management, and institutional support contribute to program continuity and improved learner outcomes (Filderman et al., 2025; Rice et al., 2024; Shapiro & Bellows, 2025; Serry et al., 2025; Briones, 2026).

Overall, the literature presents reading program implementation as a complex, context-specific process shaped by policy interpretation, instructional practices, learner needs, teacher experiences, available resources, stakeholder participation, and institutional support. However, limited research has explored how teachers interpret, experience, and implement the ARAL Reading Program in Philippine public secondary schools using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Addressing this gap, the present study explores the lived experiences of ARAL Reading Program implementers and how these experiences shape their understanding and implementation of the policy within their school contexts.

Research Gap and Justification

Existing literature highlights the importance of learner-centered instruction, contextualized resources, professional teaching development, systematic assessment, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional support in implementing reading programs. However, several gaps remain in understanding how educators interpret and implement literacy policies in actual school settings.

First, theoretical and empirical gaps persist because many studies focus on reading outcomes, intervention strategies, and program evaluations rather than the lived experiences of implementers. Although previous research identifies challenges such as limited resources, learner disengagement, competing teacher responsibilities, and insufficient institutional support, less attention has been given to how implementers understand, navigate, and respond to these realities.

Second, methodological gaps exist because much of the previous research employs quantitative, quasi-experimental, mixed-methods, or evaluation approaches. While these methods provide valuable evidence on reading performance and program outcomes, fewer studies use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore educators' experiences and meaning making during program implementation.

Third, contextual gaps are evident in the limited research on the implementation of the ARAL Reading Program in Philippine public junior high schools, particularly following the enactment of Republic Act No. 12028 and the issuance of DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025. The experiences of ARAL Reading Program implementers in the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City, Laguna, therefore, warrant further investigation.

To address these gaps, this study explored how ARAL Reading Program implementers translated policy into practice, adapted instructional strategies to learners' needs, encountered and managed implementation challenges, and perceived the program's contributions to learners' reading development. Using IPA, the study provided an in-depth understanding of their lived experiences within their respective educational contexts.

The findings informed the development of the BRIDGE (Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement) Framework and its accompanying Practical Implementation Toolkit. These outputs offer practical guidance for strengthening instructional responsiveness, teacher capacity, resource development, stakeholder engagement, and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

Furthermore, the study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), aligns with the aspirations of AmBisyon Natin 2040, and contributes to ongoing literacy improvement efforts associated with EDCOM II. Overall, it addresses important theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps by documenting implementers lived realities and generating evidence-informed recommendations for enhancing ARAL Reading Program implementation and supporting learners' literacy development.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed qualitative research design, specifically interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenology, to explore the lived experiences of ARAL Reading Program implementers and how they interpreted and implemented the policy within their school contexts. Qualitative research was appropriate because it examines how individuals construct meaning from social and human experiences in natural settings (Creswell, 2014, as cited in Regmi, 2024).

Grounded in Martin Heidegger's philosophy and the works of Max van Manen (2023), interpretive phenomenology focuses on understanding experiences within their historical, cultural, social, and institutional contexts. Unlike descriptive phenomenology, it emphasizes how individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences. This approach enabled the study to examine how implementers understood their roles, navigated challenges, adapted instructional practices, and interpreted policy requirements in actual educational settings.

The design was appropriate because the study sought to understand participants' experiences and meaning making rather than measure variables or examine relationships. It explored both the unique experiences of individual implementers and the shared meanings emerging from their narratives.

Constructivist Learning Theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory complemented the approach by providing perspectives on knowledge construction, social interaction, and the environmental conditions shaping implementation. These frameworks helped contextualize how implementers developed instructional responses and navigated collaborative and institutional settings.

Overall, interpretive phenomenology enabled an in-depth understanding of implementers' experiences, perceptions, instructional adaptations, and implementation challenges. Through reflexive interpretation of participants' narratives, the study examined how they made sense of translating educational policy into practice and identified contextual conditions that supported or constrained the implementation of the ARAL Reading Program.

Research Locale and Context

The study was conducted in the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa, Laguna, Philippines, under the Department of Education (DepEd). The division provided a relevant setting for examining the implementation of the ARAL Reading Program amid varying educational needs, learning gaps, and resource conditions.

The study covered all eight public junior high schools in the division, allowing the researchers to explore the shared and unique experiences of ARAL Reading Program implementers across different school contexts. Within these schools, administrators and teachers implemented national education policies while addressing contextual factors such as class size, instructional resources, time constraints, and learner diversity. ARAL tutors conducted reading interventions, monitored learner progress, and adapted instructional strategies to meet learners' needs.

Anchored in the ARAL Law, which addresses learning gaps and supports foundational literacy and numeracy, the study examined how implementers interpreted and translated policy guidelines into actual school practices. This setting enabled the exploration of their instructional approaches, implementation challenges, contextual experiences, and coping strategies.

The study was conducted during School Year 2026–2027, providing a specific temporal context for understanding the participants' experiences during the program's implementation. Overall, the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa and its eight public junior high schools served as an appropriate locale for investigating how ARAL Reading Program implementers understood and navigated the process of translating national policy into practice.

Selection of Participants/ Co-Participants

The study participants were 16 ARAL Reading Program implementers, specifically ARAL tutors responsible for delivering reading interventions in their respective schools. Their involvement in planning, instruction, learner monitoring, and reporting provided valuable insights into the program's implementation experiences and challenges.

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with direct experience and the ability to provide rich, meaningful accounts of the phenomenon, consistent with the interpretive phenomenological approach. Two implementers were selected from each of the eight public junior high schools in the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa, Laguna. This approach captured both shared and unique experiences across school contexts while maintaining a manageable sample for in-depth Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The study prioritized the depth of participants' experiences rather than statistical generalizability.

Participants were chosen based on these criteria:

1. They served as implementers of the ARAL Reading Program at the time of research, i.e., teacher-facilitators or tutors in the implementers' respective schools;
2. They had completed at least a year of experience directly implementing the ARAL Reading Program, which may include planning and conducting the reading intervention;
3. They were engaged in providing reading interventions to learners needing further support;
4. They agreed to take part in semi-structured interviews about their professional experiences.

This approach ensured that the individuals being studied had enough background knowledge and experience to deliver valuable views on the process of implementation while being capable of reflection, which is something that is needed in phenomenological studies.

Participants were recruited in coordination with school heads or department heads, who helped identify eligible ARAL Reading Program implementers. Each participant received a Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form explaining the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, ensuring ethical and safe sharing of their experiences.

The study targeted 16 participants, with data adequacy assessed through saturation, or the point at which additional data no longer generated new insights (Nasheeda, 2022, citing Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Adequacy was determined by considering recurring themes and the depth and contextual richness of participants' narratives.

Through purposive selection, the study gathered meaningful accounts of implementers' experiences, practices, challenges, and responses in translating ARAL policy into practice. These narratives provided the foundation for Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and informed recommendations for strengthening reading interventions, teacher training, and policy implementation in Philippine public schools.

Data Generation Methods

This study used semi-structured interviews and reflective journals to explore how ARAL Reading Program implementers experienced, interpreted, and enacted policy within their school contexts. Consistent with interpretive phenomenology, these methods emphasized participants' reflections and the meanings they attached to their experiences (van Manen, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2021).

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method. Guided by the research questions and theoretical framework, each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face or online. With participants' consent, interviews were recorded and transcribed, and transcripts were shared with participants for accuracy checking.

Reflective journals complemented the interviews by documenting participants' instructional practices, challenges, adaptations, and personal reflections. Combining these sources supported methodological triangulation and provided richer insights into the experiences of 16 purposively selected implementers from eight public junior high schools.

Ethical procedures included securing approval from the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa and the participating schools, obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw without penalty, and protecting confidentiality through pseudonyms and password-protected data storage.

Overall, these methods aligned with the interpretive phenomenological design by capturing the depth, meaning, and context of implementers' experiences. The resulting data provided a foundation for understanding policy implementation and developing recommendations for instructional leadership, teacher development, and reading interventions.

Data Analysis Procedure

The study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how ARAL Reading Program implementers interpreted and made sense of their lived experiences. The analysis followed an idiographic and hermeneutic process, progressing from individual accounts to shared experiential themes while preserving the uniqueness of each participant's narrative.\

The analysis involved seven iterative steps:

1. Immersion and Reading: Interview transcripts and reflective journals were read and reread, with audio recordings reviewed when necessary to understand participants' narratives in depth.
2. Exploratory Noting: Descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments were recorded to examine participants' experiences, language, and underlying meanings.
3. Developing Personal Experiential Themes (PETs): Exploratory notes were synthesized into experiential statements and grouped into themes representing each participant's account.
4. Within-Case Analysis: Connections, similarities, and differences among PETs were examined within each individual case.
5. Cross-Case Analysis: Patterns of convergence and divergence across participants were identified to develop Group Experiential Themes (GETs).

6. Interpretive Synthesis: The GETs were interpreted using the study's phenomenological orientation and complementary theoretical perspectives, including Constructivist Learning Theory, Sociocultural Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory.
7. Reflexivity and Documentation: Reflexive notes and an audit trail documented analytical decisions, assumptions, and interpretive revisions to support transparency and trustworthiness.

Through this systematic and iterative process, the study developed context-sensitive interpretations of implementers' experiences, revealing how they understood and translated ARAL policy into practice, responded to implementation challenges, and adapted their instructional approaches within their school contexts.

Ethical Considerations

This research followed all relevant ethics guidelines in ensuring the protection of the participants' rights, privacy, and welfare at all times. There was formal approval from the Schools Division Office of Santa Rosa City, Laguna, and the school principals of the respective schools participating in the research study before data collection was done. Participants were provided with the Participant Information Sheet with the purpose and procedures of the research, time required for study, potential benefits, and the nature of voluntariness of participation in the study was explained to them. The participants signed the consent forms after being provided with all necessary information before the process of interviews and reflective report submission.

The involvement of participants in the study was on a voluntary basis, with the right to withdraw from participation at any point in time without any penalty. In keeping with the principles of privacy and confidentiality, which is an important aspect of research, all identification information has been replaced with pseudonyms in transcripts, research reports and any outputs of the research. The data is stored in password-protected computer files accessible only to the researchers. Data is stored in accordance with research policies and ethical regulations of the different institutions. After the required retention period has lapsed, all data that can help identify the participants is destroyed in line with the policies to preserve the privacy and confidentiality of Personal Information of the participants.

All research procedures were designed to minimize any risk of physical, psychological, or professional harm to participants. Sensitivity and respect guided all interactions, particularly when discussing professional experiences, challenges, or institutional practices. Participant perspectives were thoroughly reviewed, and member checking was used to enable participants to verify their descriptions of events and to clarify or add any comments where necessary.

The study also maintained ethical rigor in reporting and dissemination. The study was conducted in such a way that the identities of the participants were concealed and professionally safeguarded, but the findings served to provide some value for educational policy and practice. The researcher implemented systematic and clear interpretive processes to base the analysis not on personal beliefs but on the actual experiences of the participants.

In compliance with institutional policies and academic ethical standards, the use of AI instruments during the research process has been disclosed. Any processes using AI, including language editing, transcription help, data organization, or any other research task that is allowed, were subject to the researcher's verification. AI technology was not employed in place of the researcher's understanding of the lived experiences of participants or to make choices related to analyzing and presenting results.

In observing these ethical safeguards, which include voluntary participation, confidentiality, data security, the safety of participants, and responsible and transparent use of AI-assisted tools, allowed the study to follow proper conduct of data collection and analysis, and collection and reporting. The practices applied guarantee proper conduct of the study, integrity, and credibility of its results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outcomes of the study have been discussed in this section based on the findings which came from the narratives obtained. The findings are presented in a thematic format reflecting all patterns and categories found in the data analysis. Participants' statements are reported and illustrated through verbatim quotations so that the participants' accounts are voiced properly. This section includes critical analysis and interpretation of the findings in relation to the study's theoretical framework.

Thematic Narratives, Verbatim Excerpts, Critical Analysis, and Interpretation of Findings

Lived Realities in the Implementation of Reading Program

Theme 1. Structured and Differentiated Reading Instruction

Participants' narratives revealed that ARAL Reading sessions followed structured instructional routines while adapting activities to learners' reading abilities. Common practices included reviewing previous lessons, guided reading, phonics instruction, vocabulary development, oral reading, and comprehension exercises. Implementers also emphasized continuous progress monitoring and immediate feedback to address individual learning needs.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) described the process:

"Preparing reading materials suited to the learners' reading levels kasi iba't iba sila, conducting guided reading activities, monitoring individual progress, and providing immediate feedback."

Similarly, Participant 4 (Teacher I) explained the combination of structure and flexibility:

"Kadalasan, I begin with a short review and after that I conduct different reading activities depending on the learner's need, guiding them and providing immediate feedback."

Instruction also progressed from basic word recognition to comprehension. As Participant 5 (Teacher I) shared:

"First, they were asked to read the words. Next, bagong set of words were introduced. Lastly, they were asked to answer simple questions for comprehension."

Differentiated instruction was evident in the selection of appropriate reading materials and individualized assistance. Participant 6 (Teacher I) noted, *"Nagbibigay ako ng ibang reading material depending on their reading ability... one-on-one session."* Meanwhile, Participant 7 (Teacher I) emphasized reviewing previously learned sight words, while Participants 10 and 11 highlighted the integration of phonics, vocabulary, guided oral reading, and comprehension activities suited to learners' abilities.

Other participants described checking comprehension through questions, designing interventions around individual needs, and following systematic routines that included reviewing previous lessons before introducing new reading tasks (Participants 12–16). These practices demonstrated how implementers combined structured instruction with flexibility to accommodate varying reading competencies.

Overall, the findings showed that structured and differentiated instruction was a defining feature of ARAL Reading implementation. Through systematic lesson sequences, individualized materials, guided practice, progress monitoring, and immediate feedback, implementers sought to address diverse learner needs and support gradual reading development.

Theme 2. Teacher Commitment and Instructional Resilience

Participants' narratives revealed that implementing the ARAL Reading Program required perseverance, patience, adaptability, and resourcefulness beyond regular teaching responsibilities. They devoted additional time to preparing materials, addressing diverse reading needs, and sustaining learner engagement despite instructional and emotional challenges.

Participant 1 (Teacher I) emphasized the importance of personal discipline:

"Para sa akin, discipline has played a vital role in the success of the implementation."

Similarly, Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) described extending efforts beyond regular class hours:

"Sa katunayan, usually, we continued to prepare materials and encourage learners to attend even beyond the regular class schedule."

These accounts reflected the additional time and effort invested by implementers to sustain reading interventions. Participants also highlighted the emotional demands of supporting struggling readers. Participant 5 (Teacher I) shared:

"Encouraging the learners who felt hopeless or talagang hirap magbasa… and confused was very challenging."

Participant 6 (Teacher I) likewise acknowledged the difficulty of addressing varied learning needs:

"It was so difficult to juggle around different learning styles and different learning needs."

Resourcefulness and patience were also evident in their practices. Participant 8 (Teacher I) shared, *"For those who can't recognize even the letters, bumili ako noong ABAKADA booklets para sa kanila,"* while Participant 9 (Teacher I) emphasized *that "Each session was really a challenge... kailangan talaga ng maraming pasensya."*

Other participants described strategies for sustaining learner participation, including monitoring progress and providing feedback (Participant 13), creating a relaxed learning environment (Participant 14), using games and group activities (Participant 15), and offering individualized assistance (Participant 16).

Overall, the findings highlighted commitment and resilience as essential aspects of ARAL Reading implementation. Through perseverance, patience, instructional adaptability, and resourcefulness, implementers continued to support struggling readers despite competing responsibilities and challenges in sustaining the intervention.

Theme 3. Learner Progress and Growing Confidence

Participants identified learners' reading improvement and growing confidence as the most rewarding outcomes of implementing the ARAL Reading Program. They observed gradual progress in decoding, reading fluency, independent reading, and classroom participation. Even small improvements provided meaningful indicators of learner development and strengthened teachers' sense of professional fulfillment.

Participant 1 (Teacher I) highlighted the importance of foundational reading skills:

"Whenever learners recognize words... lalo kapag nakakapagdecode na ng words."

Similarly, Participant 7 (Teacher I) observed that "Some of them read a whole passage correctly," demonstrating learners' gradual improvement in reading competence. Participant 9 (Teacher I) expressed the fulfillment gained from witnessing this progress:

"Seeing our tutees improve every session yun talaga is the most rewarding part."

Beyond reading proficiency, participants emphasized learners' growing confidence and independence. Participant 10 (Teacher I) described the experience as *"Seeing struggling readers gradually gain confidence and improve their reading skills," while* Participant 11 (Master Teacher I) recalled instances when learners *"successfully read a passage independently for the first time."* Participant 12 (Teacher I) also noted that learners became more confident and less afraid to read aloud.

These improvements brought emotional and professional satisfaction to implementers. Participant 14 (Master Teacher I) recalled a learner who finally read a short story aloud, sharing, *"Nang makita ko ang ngiti sa kanyang mukha it made all the effort worth it."* Other participants observed increased enthusiasm and participation, including learners who gradually volunteered to read before the class (Participants 15–16).

Overall, the findings showed that learner progress and growing confidence were significant sources of fulfillment for ARAL implementers. Improvements in decoding, fluency, independent reading, and classroom participation reinforced their commitment to supporting struggling readers.

Theme 4. Attendance, Motivation, and Diverse Learning Needs

Participants identified inconsistent attendance, limited motivation, and diverse reading abilities as persistent challenges in implementing the ARAL Reading Program. Late arrivals, absences, and reluctance to attend sessions disrupted instructional continuity, while varying literacy levels required additional adjustments within limited intervention time.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) observed that some learners viewed the program as an additional obligation:

"Ang napapansin ko ay maraming student viewed the program as an additional requirement... kaya yung iba nga tumitigil nang umattend."

Similarly, Participant 3 (Teacher I) shared that *"Most of the time, they arrived late or did not attend at all,"* while Participant 15 (Teacher III) described sessions as beginning with *"waiting for the learners to arrive."* These accounts illustrate how attendance concerns affected the delivery of reading interventions.

Participants also emphasized the difficulty of addressing diverse literacy needs. Participant 6 (Teacher I) noted that learners had "varied reading abilities... different learning styles and different learning needs." Meanwhile, Participant 8 (Teacher I) highlighted the challenge of supporting Grade 7 and 8 learners who could not yet recognize letters. Participant 9 (Teacher I) expressed frustration upon encountering learners aged 12–16 who were still beginning to learn letter names and sounds.

These challenges required further instructional adjustments despite limited intervention time. As Participant 10 (Teacher I) explained, difficulties included *"differences in learners' abilities and limited time for intervention."*

Overall, the findings showed that learner motivation, attendance, and diverse reading needs posed significant challenges to program implementation. These concerns affected instructional continuity and required implementers to adjust their strategies to accommodate learners' varying literacy competencies.

The themes presented the shared experiences and meanings that participants attributed to implementing the ARAL Reading Program. Supported by their verbatim accounts, the findings illustrated the instructional practices, personal commitment, perceived learner progress, and implementation challenges that shaped their lived experiences as reading intervention implementers.

Theme 5. Learner-Centered and Responsive Reading Instruction

Participants described ARAL Reading instruction as a learner-centered process requiring patience, flexibility, and responsiveness to individual reading levels. They emphasized differentiated strategies, individualized support, and continuous encouragement to address learners' varying needs and progress.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) emphasized the importance of personal qualities:

"Teaching reading goes beyond delivering lessons... patience, consistency, and genuine care are just as important as instructional strategies."

Similarly, Participant 4 (Teacher I) highlighted the need to adjust to learners' differences:

"Every learner has different needs and learns at a different pace... being patient and flexible."

Participant 11 (Master Teacher I) stressed the value of appropriate interventions:

"Every learner can improve with the right support and intervention... differentiated instruction."

Participant 8 (Teacher I) further emphasized meeting learners at their current reading levels:

"Meeting every learner where they are doon ka talaga magsisimula... a one-size-fits-all approach does not work."

Overall, the findings highlighted patience, flexibility, and differentiated instruction as essential to responsive reading instruction. Participants recognized that effective literacy support requires adapting teaching strategies to learners' individual needs rather than applying a uniform approach.

Theme 6. Building Confidence through Reading Intervention

Participants emphasized that the ARAL Reading Program supported not only literacy development but also learners' self-esteem, confidence, and classroom participation. They viewed emotional encouragement and a supportive learning environment as essential to helping struggling readers overcome fear and persist in learning.

Participant 4 (Teacher I) explained:

"Reading intervention is not just about helping learners read words but also building their confidence na kaya niya..."

Similarly, Participant 13 (Teacher III) highlighted the importance of encouragement:

"What learners need most is someone who believes in them."

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) noted that reading development also depends on learners' emotional and social circumstances:

"Yung reading development kasi is influenced by learners' motivation, confidence, emotional readiness, and support system."

Participant 16 (Teacher II) further emphasized the value of positive teacher responses:

"Para sa akin, patience and encouragement often have a greater impact than simply correcting mistakes."

Overall, the findings revealed that literacy development and emotional support were closely interconnected. Participants recognized that fostering confidence, motivation, and emotional readiness was as important as developing reading skills in supporting learners' continued progress.

Theme 7. Professional Fulfillment through Learner Growth

Participants described ARAL implementation as both challenging and rewarding. Despite additional workload and instructional demands, witnessing learners' progress in reading, confidence, and participation strengthened their professional fulfillment and commitment to teaching.

Participant 10 (Teacher I) described the experience as:

"Both challenging and highly rewarding... strengthened my skills."

Participant 13 (Teacher III) reflected on its impact on professional purpose:

"The experience reminded me bakit ako nasa propesyong ito bilang isang teacher."

Similarly, Participant 12 (Teacher I) shared:

"Seeing learners improve makes me happy and motivates me."

Participant 16 (Teacher II) added that the experience:

"Strengthened both my professional skills and personal resilience."

Overall, the findings showed that witnessing learners overcome reading difficulties reinforced teachers' professional purpose, skills, and resilience, motivating them to continue supporting struggling readers despite implementation challenges.

Theme 8. Shared Responsibility for Reading Success

Participants viewed ARAL implementation as a collaborative responsibility involving teachers, learners, parents, school leaders, and the community. They emphasized that sustained reading progress requires coordinated support for attendance, motivation, and reading practice beyond school.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) highlighted several essential factors:

"Successful educational programs require learner motivation, parental involvement, realistic implementation timelines, and continuous monitoring."

Participant 3 (Teacher I) emphasized learner commitment:

"Ang success ng program depends not only on the teachers but also on the learners' commitment."

Participant 8 (Teacher I) underscored parental involvement:

"Foundational reading starts kung yung mga magulang ay tutulungan ang anak nila sa bahay."

Similarly, Participant 14 (Master Teacher I) stressed the importance of collaboration:

"Collaborative efforts talaga among teachers, school leaders, parents, and the community."

Overall, the findings highlighted shared responsibility as essential to sustained reading development. Participants recognized that meaningful progress depends not only on teachers but also on active learner participation and coordinated support from families, schools, and communities.

Theme 9. Systemic Support for ARAL

Participants regarded ARAL as a valuable literacy initiative but identified limited instructional materials, additional workload, and implementation difficulties as constraints. Their accounts emphasized the need for adequate resources and sustained institutional support to strengthen program delivery.

Participant 1 (Teacher I) acknowledged the gap between the program's goals and implementation realities:

"The intention... is good... It is ideal but is far from reality."

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) similarly described ARAL as worthwhile but challenging to implement:

"ARAL is a meaningful initiative... implementation was ambitious and presented practical challenges."

Participant 13 (Teacher III) identified key constraints:

"Additional workload kasi talaga ito for many of us and the lack of instructional materials."

Despite these difficulties, Participant 16 (Teacher II) demonstrated adaptability:

"Implementation presented several obstacles, but I learned to adapt."

Overall, the findings showed that systemic and institutional support is crucial to sustaining ARAL implementation. While participants valued the program's literacy goals, they emphasized the importance of sufficient instructional materials, manageable workload, and continuous implementation support to address practical challenges.

The nine emergent themes, **Structured and Differentiated Reading Instruction; Teacher Commitment and Instructional Resilience; Learner Progress and Growing Confidence; Attendance, Motivation, and Diverse Learning Needs; Learner-Centered and Responsive Reading Instruction; Building Confidence through Reading Intervention; Professional Fulfillment through Learner Growth; Shared Responsibility for Reading Success; and Systemic Support for ARAL**, reflected interconnected instructional, personal, relational, and organizational dimensions of participants' lived experiences. Collectively, they showed how implementers adapted instruction, sustained their commitment, recognized learner progress, and relied on support from families, colleagues, school leaders, and other stakeholders. These dimensions were closely connected: responsive instruction addressed diverse learner needs, learner progress strengthened professional fulfillment, and collaboration and institutional support shaped implementation. Rather than presenting a linear or causal process, the themes provided an interpretive account of how teachers translated ARAL policy into classroom and school practices.

At the instructional level, **Structured and Differentiated Reading Instruction (Theme 1) and Learner-Centered and Responsive Reading Instruction (Theme 5)** emerged as foundational aspects of implementation. Participants emphasized assessing learners' reading abilities, identifying difficulties, and adjusting instruction accordingly. Structured routines alone were insufficient; continuous assessment and instructional adjustments were necessary to address learners' varying needs.

Differentiated instruction enabled teachers to translate standardized program expectations into context-responsive practices. Rather than simply following predetermined activities, implementers adjusted pacing, selected appropriate materials, provided scaffolding, and modified activities based on learners' demonstrated abilities and reading needs. Thus, differentiation emerged not merely as a teaching strategy but as an ongoing process of interpreting and applying the ARAL Reading Program in actual classroom contexts.

These findings aligned with studies emphasizing the need to match instruction with learners' literacy profiles. Achmad et al. (2024) described differentiated instruction as curriculum customization based on students' skills, while Magableh et al. (2022) highlighted differences in reading proficiency as a basis for differentiated reading instruction. Similarly, Solehun et al. (2025) found that structured literacy procedures and engaging instructional tools supported learner participation and comprehension. The present study extended these perspectives by illustrating how ARAL implementers experienced differentiation as a continuous process of adapting policy expectations to learners' needs and classroom realities.

The relationship between instructional responsiveness and teacher agency was evident in **Teacher Commitment and Instructional Resilience (Theme 2).** Participants described devoting additional time to preparing materials, providing individualized assistance, monitoring progress, and encouraging struggling readers. Their commitment extended beyond fulfilling assigned responsibilities, reflecting their continued efforts to adapt instruction to learners' needs and the demands of ARAL implementation.

Teacher resilience was also shaped by contextual challenges rather than individual determination alone. Absenteeism, inconsistent participation, low motivation, and diverse reading abilities required continuous instructional adjustments. These challenges, reflected in **Attendance, Motivation, and Diverse Learning Needs (Theme 4),** shaped how teachers responded to learners and sustained intervention efforts.

These findings aligned with Zhu et al. (2022), who highlighted the role of teacher commitment, trust, and positive emotions in learner performance; Ibrahim and Aljneibi (2022), who discussed how workload and competing priorities affect teachers' work engagement; and Munezero et al. (2026), who emphasized instructional adaptation, contextualized resources, and learner monitoring as responses to classroom challenges. The present study extended these perspectives by illustrating how resilience emerged through teachers' experiences of learner needs, institutional limitations, and the responsibility of translating policy into classroom practice.

The relationship between instructional practices and teacher commitment was further reflected in **Learner Progress and Growing Confidence (Theme 3) and Building Confidence through Reading Intervention (Theme 6).** Participants observed improvements in learners' decoding, fluency, comprehension, confidence, and classroom participation. These accounts showed that reading development extended beyond literacy skills to include greater self-assurance and willingness to participate in learning activities.

Participants also associated learners' progress with their own professional motivation and fulfillment. Witnessing learners become more confident and engaged, reinforced teachers' commitment to providing continued support. Rather than indicating a direct causal relationship, the narratives suggested that learner development and teacher commitment were mutually meaningful aspects of implementation: teachers' sustained efforts provided opportunities for reading growth, while observed progress strengthened their sense of professional purpose.

This interpretation is aligned with studies linking literacy development to learners' cognitive and emotional growth. Cockerill et al. (2023) associated achievement and meaningful feedback with increased learner confidence, while Hall (2022) highlighted the role of reading programs in promoting literacy engagement. Similarly, Hicks et al. (2026), Alhuraybi et al. (2026), Latraca (2026), and Sales (2024) linked structured reading support with self-efficacy, independence, and reading enjoyment. The present study extended these perspectives by showing how implementers viewed learners' growing confidence as both an indicator of reading progress and a source of professional fulfillment.

Professional Fulfillment through Learner Growth (Theme 7) further demonstrated the personal and professional significance of learner improvement. Despite additional responsibilities, participants described observing learners' progress as a source of satisfaction and renewed commitment. This aligned with Basma and Savage (2023), who highlighted teachers' satisfaction from observing learner progress; Frankel et al. (2025), who emphasized teachers' experiences in reading intervention implementation; and Dixon and Oakhill (2024), who underscored the importance of teachers' knowledge, instructional practices, and professional attitudes. The present study extended these findings by illustrating how learner progress strengthened implementers' sense of purpose and encouraged their continued engagement in literacy intervention.

Beyond classroom practices, **Shared Responsibility for Reading Success (Theme 8) and Systemic Support for ARAL (Theme 9)** highlighted the importance of collaboration and institutional conditions. Participants emphasized that sustainable reading improvement required coordinated involvement from parents, school leaders, fellow teachers, learners, and other stakeholders. Cross-case analysis revealed shared recognition of these needs, alongside differences in implementation experiences shaped by resource availability, administrative support, and learner contexts. While some implementers experienced stronger organizational support, others relied on self-prepared materials, personal initiative, and collaboration to address limitations.

These findings aligned with Killingly et al. (2025), who emphasized collaboration between leadership and instructional support, and Al Otaiba et al. (2022), who highlighted teacher coaching, progress monitoring, and implementation coordination. The present study extended these perspectives by showing how institutional, instructional, and collaborative support formed part of the context in which ARAL implementers sustained their efforts.

The study's theoretical lenses further illuminated these interconnected experiences. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory helped interpret guided reading, scaffolding, and individualized assistance as practices supported by

social interaction. Constructivist Learning Theory explained the importance of considering learners' prior knowledge, abilities, and existing reading levels when adapting instruction. Meanwhile, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provided a lens for understanding how classroom practices, family involvement, school leadership, and institutional structures shaped implementation. Together, these perspectives situated participants' experiences within their social, educational, and organizational contexts.

Overall, the findings portrayed ARAL implementation as an adaptive, context-sensitive process involving instructional responsiveness, teacher commitment and resilience, learner development, collaboration, and institutional support. Rather than simply applying prescribed strategies, implementers interpreted policy expectations and adjusted their practices to address actual classroom and school conditions. The study contributed an interpretive account of how teachers experienced this process, highlighting the importance of responsive instruction, continuing professional support, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional arrangements that address the realities of reading intervention implementation.

Strategies in Translating Policy into Practice

The following themes describe how participants translated ARAL Reading Program policies into classroom practices through instructional decisions and intervention strategies. Their accounts highlighted how implementers adapted instruction to learners' varying reading needs. Each theme is supported by verbatim excerpts illustrating these experiences.

Theme 1. Data-Driven and Differentiated Reading Intervention

Participants described assessment and learner profiling as the foundation of ARAL implementation. They used assessment results to identify reading levels, determine learning gaps, group learners, and design appropriate interventions. Continuous progress monitoring also guided instructional adjustments.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) explained:

"We first identified learners who needed intervention based on assessment results... designed reading activities appropriate to their instructional level."

Similarly, Participant 4 (Teacher I) emphasized grouping learners according to their abilities:

"I first identify the reading level and specific needs ng bata... grouping the learners according to their reading abilities."

Participant 11 (Master Teacher I) noted:

"I use reading assessments to identify learners who need support and design targeted interventions."

Participant 13 (Teacher III) added:

"Nakafocus ako on meeting the learners where they are... adjust my teaching based on what they need."

Overall, the findings highlighted assessment-driven planning, differentiated instruction, and continuous monitoring as essential practices for addressing learners' individual literacy needs.

Theme 2. Learner-Centered Reading Strategies

Participants described using varied instructional strategies, including guided reading, individualized sessions, repeated reading, phonics, vocabulary activities, storytelling, and peer learning. These approaches allowed implementers to adapt instruction to learners' specific needs rather than rely on a single method.

Participant 1 (Teacher I) identified several strategies:

"Guided reading, one-on-one reading sessions, repeated reading, shared reading, interactive storytelling, phonics-based activities, flashcards, word games."

Participant 6 (Teacher I) described combining structured approaches:

"Small group guided reading, phonics, high-frequency drills, time repeated reading, comprehension checks."

Participant 3 (Teacher I) emphasized individualized support:

"One-on-one or small group reading sessions... guided oral reading, vocabulary activities, and comprehension questions."

Participant 16 (Teacher II) highlighted collaborative learning:

"Guided practice, peer support, think-pair-share activities, and differentiated reading materials."

Overall, the findings showed that learner-centered implementation involved varied, flexible, and structured reading strategies that combined individualized assistance, collaborative learning, and targeted literacy activities to address learners' diverse needs.

Theme 3. Contextualized Instructional Resources

Participants described developing, adapting, and localizing instructional materials when ready-made resources were insufficient. These efforts helped make reading activities more appropriate and engaging for learners despite resource limitations.

Participant 1 (Teacher I) explained:

"Implementers tulad namin ay we still have to provide reading materials either crafted or adapted... manipulatives that make learning more fun and engaging."

Participant 6 (Teacher I) shared:

"We developed a book/booklet intended for struggling readers."

Similarly, Participant 13 (Teacher III) stated:

"I often created my own reading passages, worksheets, and flashcards using whatever resources I had."

Participant 10 (Teacher I) added:

"I use flashcards, word games, and leveled reading materials to make learning meaningful."

Overall, contextualizing instructional resources enabled implementers to translate policy into relevant reading activities by developing and adapting materials to learners' needs.

Theme 4. Responsive and Flexible Instruction

Participants emphasized adjusting teaching strategies, activities, pacing, and materials based on learners' progress and needs. Rather than rigidly following predetermined lesson plans, they modified instruction to support participation and reading development.

Participant 2 (Master Teacher I) explained:

"Flexibility became one of our most important strategies... we continuously adjusted our instruction."

Participant 4 (Teacher I) shared:

"I use differentiated instruction by modifying activities and teaching strategies."

Participant 13 (Teacher III) emphasized:

"I adjust my teaching based on what they need instead of rushing them."

Participant 14 (Master Teacher I) highlighted the role of monitoring:

"Progress monitoring... determine whether instructional strategies need further adjustment."

Overall, instructional flexibility allowed implementers to respond to learners' individual abilities, progress, and learning pace, making implementation an adaptive process.

Theme 5. Resource and Attendance Constraints

Participants identified insufficient instructional materials and inconsistent learner attendance as challenges that disrupted intervention delivery and required additional teacher effort. Implementers often developed their own resources while managing interruptions caused by absenteeism.

Participant 3 (Teacher I) described the attendance problem:

"The biggest challenge was the attendance... instead of teaching, I often ended up just waiting."

Participant 1 (Teacher I) noted the need to prepare materials:

"Implementers still have to provide reading materials... crafted or adapted."

Participant 13 (Teacher III) explained:

"Dahil wala kasing sapat na ready-made materials... I often created my own reading passages, worksheets, and flashcards."

Overall, the findings showed that resource limitations and attendance-related challenges shaped ARAL implementation. Despite these constraints, participants adapted their practices and developed supplementary materials to sustain reading interventions.

The five emergent themes, **Data-Driven and Differentiated Reading Intervention, Learner-Centered Reading Strategies, Contextualized Instructional Resources, Responsive and Flexible Instruction, and Resource and Attendance Constraints,** illustrated how teachers exercised professional judgment to address learners' diverse needs while navigating the practical demands of implementing the ARAL Reading Program.

Data-Driven and Differentiated Reading Intervention (Theme 1) emerged as the starting point for translating policy into practice. Participants used assessment, learner profiling, reading diagnosis, and progress monitoring to identify learners' needs, select appropriate strategies, and adjust instruction. Assessment therefore served not merely as a requirement but as a basis for making informed instructional decisions. Rather than applying a uniform approach, teachers used learner data to determine suitable interventions.

This finding highlighted teachers' role as instructional interpreters of policy, transforming broad guidelines into context-responsive practices. Learner information bridged policy expectations and classroom realities through an ongoing process of identifying needs, selecting strategies, monitoring progress, and modifying instruction.

These findings align with Whittingham et al. (2024), who emphasized analyzing learners' strengths and weaknesses when selecting interventions, and Lai et al. (2025), who identified screening, diagnosis, and assessment of learner capabilities as essential components of literacy programs. The present study further

demonstrated how teachers translated assessment results into practical decisions that guided reading interventions.

From the perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory, assessment-based instruction reflected the need to connect learning with learners' prior knowledge, experiences, and readiness. Similarly, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory explained how differentiated interventions provided scaffolding suited to learners' zones of proximal development. By identifying reading difficulties and adjusting support, teachers addressed learners' immediate developmental needs.

Building on assessment, **Learner-Centered Reading Strategies (Theme 2)** served as the primary means of addressing identified reading needs. Participants used guided reading, individualized instruction, repeated reading, phonics, vocabulary development, storytelling, collaborative activities, and peer-assisted learning. These strategies were combined according to learners' readiness, difficulties, and classroom conditions, demonstrating teachers' pedagogical flexibility.

The relationship between Themes 1 and 2 reflected a sequential process: assessment identified what learners needed, while learner-centered strategies determined how those needs could be addressed. This illustrated how teachers used professional judgment to align instructional practices with learners' characteristics. Morgan et al. (2024) highlighted the role of guided reading in promoting literacy interest and motivation, while Griffin et al. (2024) emphasized combining traditional methods with approaches responsive to individual differences. Gebremariam et al. (2025) likewise associated learner-centered and guided reading approaches with improved comprehension, motivation, and engagement. The present study extended these findings by showing how such strategies translated program objectives into meaningful classroom experiences.

Contextualized Instructional Resources (Theme 3) further supported policy implementation by addressing gaps between available materials and learners' needs. Participants developed localized materials, modified existing resources, and created supplementary tools when provided materials were insufficient or unsuitable. Rather than simply using available resources, teachers adapted them to classroom realities. This theme reinforced learner-centered instruction because differences in reading abilities, backgrounds, and learning needs required accessible and meaningful materials. Contextualization supported engagement while addressing resource limitations, demonstrating teachers' resourcefulness and agency in adapting policy to local contexts.

These findings aligned with Tamayo et al. (2026), who reported that contextualized reading materials improved comprehension and reading speed, and Ayoo et al. (2026), who associated contextualized resources with improvements in vocabulary, phonological awareness, pronunciation, and comprehension. The present study further highlighted contextualization as a means of bridging national program expectations and local classroom conditions through teachers' instructional creativity.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, contextualized resources reflected how learning is shaped by learners' cultural, social, and educational environments. By adapting materials to these contexts, teachers localized national literacy policies to learners' actual experiences.

Responsive and Flexible Instruction (Theme 4) further demonstrated that policy translation required continuous adjustment. Participants modified instructional pacing, tasks, materials, and teaching approaches according to learners' progress and emerging needs. This indicated that implementation depended on teachers' ability to respond to varying levels of readiness and unpredictable classroom conditions.

Policy implementation was therefore inherently adaptive. Although ARAL provided program directions and objectives, teachers made ongoing decisions based on learner responses. Fidelity to policy did not necessarily mean rigid adherence to prescribed procedures; rather, it involved preserving the program's objectives while adapting strategies to classroom realities. Nicholas (2026) emphasized adjusting literacy instruction to learner progress and classroom responses, while Karst et al. (2022) showed how combining assessment data with differentiated teaching enabled more relevant support. The present study further highlighted flexibility as an essential implementation competency.

However, **Resource and Attendance Constraints (Theme 5)** revealed how structural limitations affected policy translation. Participants identified insufficient materials, inconsistent attendance, time constraints, and additional preparation demands as challenges. Although these conditions did not prevent implementation, they required greater teacher effort, resourcefulness, and instructional adjustment.

This finding revealed a tension between teacher agency and systemic support. Teachers addressed limitations through contextualized resources and flexible strategies, but continued reliance on individual effort raised concerns about sustainability. Resource constraints therefore hindered implementation while encouraging adaptive practices. These findings aligned with Pelagio (2025), who identified inadequate materials, limited reading spaces, and inconsistent implementation as barriers to literacy programs; Antonio (2025), who highlighted resource limitations in reading initiatives; and Bete (2025), who emphasized time constraints, class size, and instructional support. The present study added evidence of how these challenges shaped teachers' day-to-day implementation of ARAL.

Taken together, the five themes showed that translating ARAL policy into practice involved adaptive enactment. Teachers identified learner needs through assessment, responded through learner-centered strategies, contextualized resources, adjusted instruction, and navigated constraints through professional resilience. These interconnected processes positioned teachers as active agents who bridged policy expectations and classroom realities.

The findings also reflect three theoretical perspectives. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasized responsive scaffolding, while Constructivist Learning Theory highlighted meaningful learning grounded in learners' prior knowledge and experiences. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory further explained how policy implementation was shaped by interactions among classroom practices, school environments, families, and broader educational systems.

Overall, the study highlighted that policy fidelity requires both adherences to program objectives and professional interpretation responsive to context. Sustainable implementation depends on empowering teachers to exercise instructional judgment, providing adequate resources, and establishing institutional conditions that support responsive teaching. These insights have implications for policy development, teacher professional learning, and future literacy initiatives by emphasizing the alignment of policy design, teacher capacity, learner needs, and school-level realities.

Challenges and Barriers Encountered in the Implementation

The accounts provided illustrative accounts of the problems and hindrances faced by those carrying out the ARAL Reading Program. The themes highlighted the operational, pedagogical, and situational limitations shaping how participants experience the implementation of the program in the classroom.

Each theme was discussed through descriptive narratives supported by verbatim excerpts, illustrating how these challenges influenced the implementation of reading interventions across different school settings.

Theme 1. Inconsistent Learner Attendance and Motivation

Participants identified irregular attendance and low motivation as persistent challenges in implementing the ARAL Reading Program. Absenteeism, tardiness, fatigue after regular classes, and limited enthusiasm disrupted instructional continuity and slowed learner progress. Teachers often had to repeat lessons, modify activities, or wait for learners instead of conducting interventions.

Particpant 2 noted that some learners viewed the intervention as additional work:

"One of the biggest challenges was learner attendance and motivation... many students perceived it as additional work." (Participant 2, Master Teacher I)

Participant 3 shared, *"Most of the time, kung hindi absent ay late..."* while Participant 8 explained, *"Burden kasi sa kanila na magspend ng additional hour after class."* Participant 14 likewise stated, *"Inconsistent learner attendance affects the continuity of reading interventions."*

Overall, inconsistent attendance and limited motivation hindered the continuity of reading interventions and challenged teachers' efforts to sustain learner participation.

Theme 2. Limited Instructional Resources

Participants identified insufficient reading materials, printing resources, and logistical support as barriers to implementation. Teachers often had to develop, reproduce, or adapt materials independently, increasing their workload and requiring additional creativity and personal resources.

Participant 4 explained, *"We had to prepare and print the materials ourselves."* Participant 9 added, *"Teachers have no choice but to print everything at their own expense."* Similarly, Participant 13 stated, "*I had to prepare my own materials after class."* Participant 16 emphasized the need for *"Additional assistance... particularly in terms of instructional resources and logistical support."*

These accounts showed that limited resources placed additional demands on implementers, who had to independently prepare suitable materials to sustain reading interventions.

Theme 3. Balancing ARAL and Teaching Responsibilities

Participants described the challenge of managing ARAL implementation alongside regular teaching, administrative tasks, lesson preparation, and other school responsibilities. Limited instructional time and extended working hours added pressure to their existing workload.

Participant 2 identified the challenge of *"Balancing ARAL responsibilities with our regular teaching workload."* Participant 10 highlighted *"Limited instructional time, especially when balancing regular classroom responsibilities."* Participant 9 described how *"Fully loaded teachers... spend extra time in school... with no compensation."* Participant 13 similarly shared, *"Balancing ARAL with my regular teaching responsibilities."*

The findings indicated that ARAL implementation required additional time, effort, and commitment alongside teachers' existing professional obligations.

Theme 4. Diverse Learner Needs

Participants emphasized the wide variation in learners' reading proficiency, learning pace, and instructional needs. These differences required teachers to modify strategies, provide repeated remediation, and differentiate materials to support individual progress.

Participant 6 described the need to *"Teach learners with varied learning needs... differentiated instruction... scaffolding."* Participant 11 noted that "*Varying reading abilities... requires individualized support."* Participant 12 observed, *"Some improve faster, while others need more time."* Participant 16 likewise explained, *"Learners had very different reading abilities... required careful planning."*

These accounts highlighted the importance of differentiated instruction and continuous adjustments to address learners' varying reading needs.

Theme 5. Limited Systemic and Stakeholder Support

Participants stressed that ARAL implementation depended not only on teachers but also on support from parents, school administrators, the Department of Education, and other stakeholders. Limited parental involvement, insufficient administrative assistance, inadequate funding, and the absence of incentives were identified as concerns affecting implementation and sustainability.

Participant 6 cited the *"Lack or insufficient support coming from stakeholders, parents or sometimes even the admin."* Participant 9 expressed concerns about *"No budget... no compensation."* Participant 10 noted "Limited parental support at home," while Participant 16 emphasized the need for *"Additional assistance from the school and concerned agencies [that] could have made the implementation smoother…"*

In sum, the narratives shared by the participants showed that the sustainability of the ARAL Reading Program is dependent not only on classroom developments but also on various forms of coordinated efforts by institutions, administrators, funds, and involved parties in order to meet the practical aspects of putting this program into practice.

The five emergent themes, **Inconsistent Learner Attendance and Motivation, Limited Instructional Resources, Balancing ARAL and Teaching Responsibilities, Diverse Learner Needs, and Limited Systemic and Stakeholder Support**, captured the interconnected challenges experienced by ARAL Reading Program implementers. These challenges were not isolated but collectively shaped teachers' capacity to deliver continuous reading interventions, highlighting that implementation depends on both teacher effort and the broader program environment.

Inconsistent Learner Attendance and Motivation (Theme 1) emerged as a major barrier to instructional continuity. Participants described how absenteeism, tardiness, fatigue after regular classes, and low motivation disrupted reading sessions. These challenges reduced opportunities for repeated practice, guided support, and skill reinforcement. Teachers consequently had to revisit lessons, adjust pacing, and provide additional remediation.

The findings indicated that learner participation was a foundational condition for successful intervention. Even appropriate instructional strategies could not fully support progress when attendance and engagement were inconsistent. Regular participation enabled systematic instruction, while meaningful and engaging activities could encourage learners to attend and participate actively.

These findings aligned with Morris (2026), who identified low learner motivation, behavioral concerns, limited parental support, and time constraints as challenges in ARAL implementation. Webber et al. (2023) likewise observed declining reading motivation across grade levels. The present study extended these findings by showing how attendance and motivation disrupted instructional continuity and required teachers to adjust program delivery to learners' participation patterns.

From the perspective of Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, literacy develops through sustained interaction and guided participation. Learner absences therefore limited opportunities for scaffolding and meaningful instruction, making attendance essential to the learning process rather than merely a matter of compliance.

Limited Instructional Resources (Theme 2) also constrained teachers' ability to deliver consistent and appropriate interventions. Participants reported shortages of reading materials, printing resources, and instructional supplies, requiring them to create, reproduce, or adapt materials independently. Although these efforts demonstrated creativity and commitment, they also demanded additional time and personal resources.

The findings revealed a connection between resource limitations and teacher workload. When institutional resources were insufficient, teachers compensated through individual effort and initiative. While these adaptations helped sustain interventions, they raised concerns about long-term sustainability. Effective implementation cannot depend solely on teachers' personal sacrifices; it also requires adequate institutional resources and support.

Pelagio (2025) reported that shortages in instructional materials, digital resources, reading spaces, and learning support weakened reading program implementation. Similarly, Javiñar (2025) identified inadequate materials, limited implementation guides, and insufficient teaching supplies as barriers, while Bete (2025) highlighted resource limitations, insufficient teacher support, and monitoring difficulties. The present study extended these findings by showing how resource shortages affected not only program delivery but also teachers' responsibilities, creativity, and professional burden.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, these findings emphasized how environmental and institutional conditions shaped educational outcomes. Access to resources, organizational structures, and support systems influenced teachers' capacity to deliver reading interventions.

Balancing ARAL and Teaching Responsibilities (Theme 3) emerged as another challenge. Participants described ARAL implementation as an additional responsibility requiring preparation, instructional time, monitoring, and coordination alongside regular teaching duties. Competing instructional, administrative, and professional obligations affected teachers' capacity to sustain consistent intervention quality.

These findings revealed a gap between policy expectations and implementation realities. Although teachers recognized the importance of reading interventions, additional responsibilities within already demanding workload raised concerns about program sustainability and potential burnout. Workload, therefore, should be understood as an organizational concern rather than solely individual responsibility.

This finding aligned with Morris (2026), who identified workload pressures and time constraints among ARAL implementers. Capate et al. (2025) similarly reported that competing classroom responsibilities affected reading interventions, while Tolentin (2023) identified administrative requirements and additional school duties as implementation barriers. The present study highlighted the need for school structures that provide teachers with sufficient time and support to fulfill their intervention responsibilities.

Diverse Learner Needs (Theme 4) further illustrates the complexity of reading intervention. Participants described differences in reading proficiency, learning pace, confidence, and readiness, requiring differentiated instruction, repeated remediation, and continuous adjustments to learning activities.

Learner diversity increased instructional demands but also reinforced the need for responsive teaching. Rather than applying standardized approaches uniformly, teachers made instructional decisions based on individual learners' needs and progress. Thus, diversity was not merely an implementation barrier but a defining condition of effective intervention.

These findings aligned with Phala et al. (2025), who emphasized differences in reading ability, language background, and instructional readiness; Almagro et al. (2024), who highlighted teachers' capacity to respond to learner differences; and Newbury et al. (2023), who emphasized adapting literacy programs to learners and their contexts. The present study further demonstrated how learner diversity required continuous instructional adaptation.

Finally, **Limited Systemic and Stakeholder Support (Theme 5)** emerged as an overarching condition affecting program sustainability. Participants emphasized the importance of shared responsibility among parents, school leaders, educational authorities, and other stakeholders. Limited parental involvement, inadequate administrative assistance, insufficient funding, and the absence of incentives constrained implementation.

The findings suggested that systemic support influenced the other challenges. Strong institutional support could help address resource shortages, workload pressures, and learner participation concerns, whereas inadequate support intensified the burden on teachers. Consequently, ARAL implementation must be understood within the broader educational environment rather than attributed solely to teachers' instructional practices.

These findings were consistent with Isada (2025), who highlighted challenges in sustaining school, family, and community collaboration; Soterio and Fajardo (2026), who emphasized stakeholder involvement; and Samuelson et al. (2025), who underscored leadership, coordination, and institutional support. Tagose et al. (2025) and Relyea et al. (2026) likewise highlighted cooperation among teachers, parents, school authorities, and other stakeholders. The present study extended this literature by demonstrating how systemic support contributed to continuity in instructional implementation.

Taken together, the five themes revealed that ARAL implementation challenges were interconnected. Learner engagement, resource availability, teacher workload, diverse learning needs, and organizational support collectively shaped implementers' experiences.

Conceptually, the findings positioned reading policy implementation as an ecological and adaptive process, wherein teachers exercised professional agency within enabling or constraining institutional conditions. Successful implementation therefore required balancing teacher adaptability with systemic responsibility. Beyond improving classroom practices, sustainable reading interventions needed stronger learner motivation, adequate resources, manageable workloads, and coordinated stakeholder support.

Navigating and Responding to Challenges Encountered in the Implementation

The themes mentioned below depict the strategies adopted by the implementers to overcome the hurdles experienced during the implementation of the ARAL Reading Project. The implementers provided insights into different teaching practices, teamwork activities, and monitoring strategies that kept them committed to reading interventions regardless of the challenges posed by their learners' apparent attendance and varied learning needs. This also brings to light the strategies that implementers adopted to deal with the challenges while following through the implementation, while remaining steadfast in their conviction of helping learners improve their reading.

Theme 1. Positive Reinforcement and Encouragement

Participants identified positive reinforcement as an essential strategy for sustaining learner motivation. They emphasized recognizing small achievements, offering praise, and creating a supportive environment where learners could participate without fear of embarrassment.

Participant 2 shared, "*We continuously encouraged learners by recognizing even small improvements and creating a supportive learning environment.*" Participant 10 explained, *"I provide positive reinforcement by recognizing their progress and celebrating small achievements."* Similarly, Participant 16 stated, *"I celebrated small accomplishments and used positive reinforcement to encourage continuous improvement."*

Overall, positive reinforcement helped build learner confidence, encourage participation, and sustain motivation throughout reading interventions.

Theme 2. Differentiated and Individualized Instruction

Participants adapted teaching strategies and materials to address learners' varying reading abilities and developmental needs. Their approaches included simplified materials, explicit instruction, scaffolding, guided reading, and individualized sessions. Participant 6 explained, "I used differentiated instruction, explicit instruction, scaffolding, one-on-one session and feedback." Participant 4 emphasized, "I adjusted the learning materials based on my learners' reading abilities." Participant 10 likewise shared, *"I use differentiated instructional materials... guided reading... one-on-one coaching."*

These accounts demonstrated how differentiated instruction enabled teachers to provide responsive, individualized support and address learners' diverse reading needs.

Theme 3. Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement

Participants emphasized collaboration among teachers, parents, school leaders, and community members as a strategy for sustaining ARAL implementation. Sharing resources, exchanging instructional ideas, and collectively addressing challenges strengthened support for learners' reading development.

Participant 11 stated, *"I collaborate closely with teachers, parents, and school leaders."* Participant 13 added, *"We shared materials, exchanged ideas, and talked about strategies."*

The findings highlighted collaboration as a shared responsibility that helped teachers address implementation challenges and sustain reading interventions.

Theme 4. Resource Development and Adaptation

Participants demonstrated resourcefulness by creating localized materials, modifying available resources, and developing supplementary activities when official materials were insufficient. These efforts helped maintain reading instruction despite limited resources and logistical support.

Participant 13 shared, *"I made my own flashcards, printed simple reading passages, and recycled old learning materials."* Participant 11 explained, *"I maximize available resources by* creating *localized reading materials."* Participant 9 added, "We shouldered all the expenses in producing the materials."

Overall, resource development and adaptation reflected teachers' creativity and initiative in addressing material shortages, although some efforts required personal expenses.

Theme 5. Continuous Monitoring and Learner Follow-Up

Participants identified continuous monitoring and proactive follow-up as essential for sustaining learner participation and tracking reading progress. They monitored attendance, documented progress, provided timely interventions, and followed up with learners at risk of missing sessions.

Participant 11 explained, "I monitor learner progress regularly and provide immediate intervention when necessary." Participant 6 emphasized, *"Data and record keeping are highly important to track the learners' progress."* Participant 8 described a proactive attendance strategy: *"Five minutes before the bell rang, I was at the school gate to look out for students who might go home."*

These accounts demonstrated how systematic monitoring, timely instructional adjustments, and active learner follow-up helped maintain participation and provide continuous reading support despite implementation challenges.

The five emergent themes, **Positive Reinforcement and Encouragement, Differentiated and Individualized Instruction, Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement, Resource Development and Adaptation, and Continuous Monitoring and Learner Follow-Up**, illustrated how implementers responded to ARAL implementation challenges. Collectively, these practices showed how teachers motivated learners, adjusted instruction, mobilized stakeholder support, developed resources, and monitored progress to sustain reading interventions.

Positive Reinforcement and Encouragement (Theme 1) emerged as a key response to challenges involving learner motivation, confidence, and participation. Participants emphasized recognizing small achievements, providing encouragement, and creating supportive learning environments. These practices helped learners experience success despite reading difficulties, potentially strengthening their confidence and willingness to participate.

These findings aligned with Van der Sande et al. (2023), Ehlert et al. (2022), and Guven and Haddad (2023), who highlighted the importance of motivation, supportive learning environments, and meaningful interaction in reading development. The present study extended these perspectives by demonstrating how teachers used encouragement and affirmation to address motivational barriers during ARAL implementation.

Differentiated and Individualized Instruction (Theme 2) enabled teachers to address learners' varying reading abilities through modified activities, adjusted pacing, simplified tasks, individualized coaching, and appropriately leveled materials. These practices demonstrated that teachers adapted program implementation to learners' developmental readiness rather than relying on uniform instructional approaches.

Differentiation therefore served as a bridge between program objectives and learners' actual needs, allowing teachers to provide appropriate support while maintaining the intervention's goals. This finding aligned with Achmad et al. (2024), who described differentiated instruction as modifying content, learning processes, and assessment according to learner characteristics. The present study illustrated how teachers applied differentiation continuously within a government-funded reading intervention.

Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement (Theme 3) emerged as another important response to implementation challenges. Participants described working with parents, fellow teachers, school leaders, and other stakeholders to coordinate learner support, address attendance concerns, share instructional strategies, and sustain reading interventions.

Collaboration helped distribute responsibility beyond individual teachers, recognizing that challenges involving attendance, resources, and learner progress required support beyond the classroom. These findings aligned with Alo (2026), who emphasized cooperation, instructional leadership, and data-based decision-making; Tolentin (2023), who highlighted parental involvement in literacy development; and Narciso (2025) and Arnahoutova et al. (2025), who emphasized stakeholder participation in sustaining educational initiatives. The present study reinforced these perspectives by showing how collaborative networks helped implementers respond to interconnected classroom and organizational challenges.

The importance of shared responsibility was further explained by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which recognizes the interconnected influence of learners' environments. The findings demonstrated that reading development depended not only on classroom instruction but also on relationships among families, schools, and communities. Strengthening these connections was therefore important for sustaining literacy support and advancing learners' reading development.

Resource Development and Adaptation (Theme 4) emerged as a form of instructional resilience. When available resources were insufficient, participants developed localized materials, modified existing resources, and created supplementary activities suited to learners' needs. These practices demonstrated teachers' creativity and professional judgment in sustaining reading instruction despite limited support.

However, reliance on individual resourcefulness also raised sustainability concerns. Although teachers' innovations helped maintain program implementation, they increased personal demands and could not replace adequate institutional resource provision. Resource adaptation therefore reflected both teachers' capacity to overcome constraints and the need for stronger systemic support.

These findings aligned with Ladion and Baguio (2025), who emphasized the role of resource management in strengthening teachers' implementation of reading programs. Ehlert et al. (2022) likewise highlighted teachers' adjustments to materials and instructional methods based on classroom experiences. The present study extended these perspectives by demonstrating how ARAL implementers responded to resource shortages through instructional innovation.

Continuous Monitoring and Learner Follow-Up (Theme 5) emerged as a mechanism for sustaining instructional support. Participants monitored attendance, documented reading progress, identified emerging difficulties, and provided follow-up interventions for learners requiring additional assistance. Monitoring became an integral part of instruction rather than merely an administrative responsibility.

The findings indicated that systematic documentation and progress monitoring enabled teachers to make timely decisions and adjust interventions according to learners' needs. This aligned with Miel (2025), who emphasized monitoring and evaluation as mechanisms for continuous improvement in literacy implementation, and Pante (2026), who highlighted progress assessment, early identification of difficulties, and timely instructional responses. The present study further demonstrated how monitoring helped implementers maintain instructional responsiveness amid implementation challenges.

Overall, the findings showed that responding to ARAL implementation challenges required continuous adaptation rather than reliance on a single strategy. Participants exercised professional agency through

motivational support, differentiated instruction, collaboration, resource development, and systematic monitoring. These interconnected practices enabled teachers to address immediate challenges while sustaining reading interventions.

More broadly, the findings positioned reading program implementation as an adaptive process shaped by teacher decision-making, learner needs, and institutional conditions. Sustainable implementation requires more than policy direction; it also depends on empowered teachers, collaborative partnerships, adequate resources, and mechanisms for continuous monitoring and improvement. Through these combined efforts, implementers transformed implementation challenges into opportunities to strengthen literacy support and advance learners' reading development.

Perceived Contributions of the ARAL Reading Program to Learners' Reading Development

Themes listed in this section present how the participants perceive the contribution of the ARAL Reading program to the reading development of learners. Given the narratives, the participants were able to describe the concrete reading outcomes, learner attitudes, and conditions they linked with the ARAL Reading implementation. Providing their accounts, the participants disclosed both the improvements noted in the literacy level of learners and the factors that they think are crucial for the success of the ARAL Reading program.

Theme 1. Improved Reading Skills

Participants perceived the ARAL Reading Program as supporting improvements in learners' foundational reading competencies, including phonemic awareness, word recognition, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Their observations highlighted the importance of regular, focused reading interventions in helping learners progress from recognizing individual words to reading phrases and understanding texts.

Participant 10 observed improvements across several reading domains:

"Noticeable improvements in phonemic awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension." (Participant 10, Teacher I)

Similarly, Participant 5 described learners' gradual progress:

"Few of them have improved from learning words into phrases... tapos into reading with comprehension." (Participant 5, Teacher I)

Participant 9 likewise reported:

"There is a significant improvement... in word recognition and phonemes... and reading comprehension." (Participant 9, Teacher I)

These accounts indicated that participants observed progress across multiple dimensions of literacy. The findings suggest that the program provides opportunities for learners to strengthen foundational reading skills and develop greater comprehension.

Theme 2. Learner Confidence and Active Participation

Beyond reading development, participants associated the ARAL Reading Program with increased learner confidence and classroom participation. They observed that some learners became more willing to read aloud, participate in activities, and engage with reading tasks with less hesitation. These changes suggested that improvements in reading ability were accompanied by more positive learning experiences.

Participant 7 shared:

"My students are more confident to read in front of their classmates." (Participant 7, Teacher I)

Participant 2 similarly observed:

"Some learners... became more willing to read aloud and participate." (Participant 2, Master Teacher I)

Participant 13 also noted:

"They were no longer as hesitant as before…" (Participant 13, Teacher III)

These accounts highlighted participants' perceptions that reading interventions helped some learners overcome hesitation and participate more actively. Confidence emerged as a meaningful outcome alongside literacy development, as learners became more willing to engage in reading activities and demonstrate their abilities.

Theme 3. Teacher Commitment and Learner Participation

Participants emphasized that the progress associated with the ARAL Reading Program depended on the sustained commitment of implementers and the consistent participation of learners. While teachers provided instruction and support, regular attendance and active engagement were considered necessary for maintaining instructional continuity and promoting reading development.

Participant 1 emphasized the importance of teacher dedication:

"The success of the ARAL Reading Program depends on how passionate the implementer is." (Participant 1, Teacher I)

Participant 2 highlighted the role of learner participation:

"The overall impact depended greatly on learner attendance and commitment." (Participant 2, Master Teacher I)

However, Participant 3 identified inconsistent attendance as a limitation:

"The program's impact was limited because many learners did not attend consistently." (Participant 3, Teacher I)

These accounts revealed that participants viewed implementation as a shared responsibility. Teacher commitment sustained instructional support, while learner attendance and engagement provided opportunities for continuous practice. Inconsistent participation, however, limited the continuity of interventions and the progress learners could achieve.

Theme 4. Independent Reading and Lifelong Learning

Participants viewed the ARAL Reading Program as contributing to reading independence and reinforcing the importance of reading in learners' continuing education. They recognized reading not only as a foundational academic competency but also as a lifelong skill that supports learning across subject areas.

Participant 6 described an observed outcome:

"Two of my learners... became independent readers." (Participant 6, Teacher I)

Participant 1 emphasized the broader academic value of reading:

"Reading is the skill needed so students can learn... in all subject matters." (Participant 1, Teacher I)

Participant 11 also highlighted the long-term value of positive reading attitudes:

"Positive attitudes toward reading and learning... important for long-term educational success." (Participant 11, Master Teacher I)

These accounts reflected participants' understanding that reading development extends beyond immediate intervention outcomes. By supporting greater independence and encouraging positive attitudes toward reading, the program was perceived as helping learners build skills that could support their continuing academic growth.

Theme 5. Focused Support for Struggling Readers

Participants recognized the ARAL Reading Program as an opportunity to provide struggling readers with focused instructional support suited to their needs. Through targeted interventions, learners who experienced reading difficulties received additional opportunities to practice and develop their skills. Participants associated these experiences with positive changes in learner performance and reading development.

Participant 14 explained:

"The program provides opportunities for struggling readers to receive focused instructional support." (Participant 14, Master Teacher I)

Participant 13 reflected on the changes observed among learners:

"I saw a lot of positive changes sa mga estudyanteng handled ko." (Participant 13, Teacher III)

Participant 9 likewise expressed a positive assessment:

"I honestly see the good effect of this program." (Participant 9, Teacher I)

Thus, it became evident that all participants believe in the ARAL Reading Program's great learning opportunities, which provide useful experience in reading improvement.

The ARAL Reading Program was consistently recognized as a valuable literacy intervention. Participants viewed the program as providing struggling readers with focused instructional support, enabling them to demonstrate measurable progress and achieve meaningful improvements in their reading development.

The five emergent themes, **Improved Reading Skills, Learner Confidence and Active Participation, Teacher Commitment and Learner Participation, Independent Reading and Lifelong Learning, and Focused Support for Struggling Readers**, represented interconnected dimensions of how implementers perceived the ARAL Reading Program's contributions to learners' literacy development. Rather than representing isolated outcomes, the themes reflected a connected process in which improvements in reading skills supported learners' confidence and participation, while sustained teacher assistance and learner engagement created opportunities for continued progress toward reading independence. These findings suggest that the program's perceived contributions were shaped by the interaction of instructional practices, learner development, and the conditions supporting sustained participation.

Improved Reading Skills (Theme 1) emerged as the most immediate and observable contribution. Participants reported improvements in word recognition, phonemic awareness, decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. These observations suggested that implementers viewed reading development as a cumulative process in which foundational competencies provided the basis for more advanced literacy skills.

The relationship between reading improvement and other learner outcomes indicated that literacy development extended beyond technical reading skills. As learners experienced success in reading tasks, participants observed greater confidence, motivation, and willingness to engage in classroom activities. Reading improvement therefore represented both an academic accomplishment and a foundation for positive changes in learners' attitudes and participation.

These findings aligned with Serry et al. (2025), who reported that structured literacy interventions improved core literacy skills and reduced the need for additional assistance. Roberts et al. (2022) likewise highlighted the contributions of reading interventions to foundational literacy, fluency, comprehension, and oral skills. Armas (2025) further emphasized the importance of systematic support in strengthening the literacy competencies of struggling readers. The present study extended these perspectives by illustrating how implementers understood gradual learner progress within their daily experiences of delivering reading interventions.

From the perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory, the findings suggest that reading development was supported through practice, feedback, and interaction with learning materials. Similarly, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of scaffolding, whereby teachers provide guidance that helps learners accomplish reading tasks they may not yet manage independently. These perspectives help explain how structured instructional support may contribute to the development of foundational reading competencies.

Beyond reading improvement, **Learner Confidence and Active Participation (Theme 2**) emerged as another significant perceived contribution. Participants observed that learners who were initially reluctant to read aloud became more willing to participate in reading activities. These accounts suggested that the program supported not only the development of reading skills but also learners' confidence in their abilities. Positive learning experiences, teacher feedback, and opportunities for practice appeared to contribute to this change.

The relationship between confidence and reading development reflected a reinforcing process. As learners gained reading skills, they became more willing to participate; increased participation, in turn, provided further opportunities for practice and learning. Confidence was therefore perceived not merely as an accompanying outcome but also as a factor that could support continued engagement in literacy activities.

This finding was consistent with Wang and Hu (2025), who emphasized how supportive feedback and positive reading experiences strengthen learners' confidence and emotional engagement. Ataya et al. (2026) similarly reported improvements in confidence, engagement, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary through guided reading interventions. Romulado (2026) also highlighted the contribution of research-based reading support to learner participation and confidence. The present study contributed to these perspectives by showing how implementers interpreted growing confidence as a meaningful sign of progress, particularly among learners who had previously had trouble or hesitation in reading.

However, participants' accounts also indicated that learner progress was not determined by instructional strategies alone. **Teacher Commitment and Learner Participation (Theme 3**) emerged as an important condition underlying the program's perceived contributions. Participants emphasized that meaningful progress required teachers to provide consistent instructional support and learners to attend and participate actively in intervention sessions. This finding highlighted the relational nature of reading development, in which sustained teacher commitment and learner engagement worked together to support continuity in instruction and opportunities for improvement.

The findings indicated that Teacher Commitment and Learner Participation (Theme 3) were essential conditions for the ARAL Reading Program's perceived success. Although the program provided an implementation framework, sustained progress depended on teachers' instructional efforts and learners' active engagement. This supported Ryan and Hendry (2022), who emphasized the importance of teacher and learner involvement, and Zhang and Zhu (2025), who linked teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement with reading enjoyment and proficiency. The present study highlighted how implementers viewed these factors as interconnected contributors to reading development.

Independent Reading and Lifelong Learning (Theme 4) reflected participants' view of ARAL as more than short-term intervention. They perceived reading as a transferable skill that supports learning across subjects and promotes independence. This aligned with the OECD (2024), which emphasized the strategies, motivation, and confidence needed for lifelong learning, and Gotlieb et al. (2022), who viewed reading as a developmental process extending toward self-directed learning. The findings highlighted the importance of developing learners' capacity to continue learning independently.

Focused Support for Struggling Readers (Theme 5) emerged as a key contribution of ARAL by providing targeted instruction, repeated practice, and individualized assistance for learners experiencing reading difficulties. Participants viewed this support as essential in addressing learning gaps and enabling learners to progress at their own pace. This aligned with Neitzel et al. (2022), who emphasized the value of individualized and small-group interventions, and Roberts et al. (2022), who highlighted the benefits of systematic reading support.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, these findings underscore that literacy development is shaped by interactions among learners, teachers, classrooms, and broader support systems. Overall, participants perceived ARAL as contributing to reading skills, learner confidence, independence, and engagement. These outcomes were associated with structured interventions, sustained teacher commitment, active learner participation, and focused support for struggling readers.

The deeper contribution of this study is the demonstration that reading intervention programs are not only mechanisms for remediation of literacy deficits, but also spaces in which learners rebuild their identities as readers. The experiences of ARAL implementers showed that successful reading development involves both competence and confidence, where learners were supported not only to read better but also to become more motivated, independent, and lifelong learners. Thus, sustaining the impact of ARAL requires continued investment in instructional support, teacher capacity, learner participation, and systemic conditions that allow literacy development to flourish.

Implementers Insights and Recommendations to Enhance the Implementation of the ARAL Reading Program

The identified themes included the insights and recommendations given by the implementers to improve the implementation of the ARAL Reading Program. Based on their experiences in implementing the program, the participants recommended suggestions concerning teacher development, instructional materials, involvement of the stakeholders, management of the program, support of the institutions, and mechanisms of ensuring quality. These recommendations reflected the areas that implementers considered essential for enhancing program effectiveness and sustaining improvements in learners' reading outcomes.

Theme 1. Continuous Professional Development

Participants recommended continuous professional development through training, mentoring, and coaching to strengthen teachers' competence in reading interventions.

Participant 1 stated:

"Provide more training for implementers in teaching reading." (Participant 1, Teacher I)

Participant 14 recommended:

"Additional training for teachers on evidence-based reading interventions." (Participant 14, Master Teacher I)

Participant 16 emphasized:

"Continuous capacity-building activities for teachers would strengthen their ability." (Participant 16, Teacher II)

These responses highlighted the need for sustained capacity-building to improve instructional competence and ARAL implementation.

Theme 2. Adequate Instructional Resources and Financial Support

Participants emphasized providing complete, varied, and appropriate reading materials, along with sufficient funding and logistical assistance, to reduce teachers' reliance on personal resources.

Participant 13 stated:

"Teachers should be provided with complete instructional materials before the program starts." (Participant 13, Teacher III)

Participant 10 emphasized:

"There should be more accessible and varied reading materials." (Participant 10, Teacher I)

Participant 16 recommended:

"Providing adequate instructional materials... sufficient funding." (Participant 16, Teacher II)

Collectively, these recommendations underscored the importance of timely resource provision and financial support in improving instructional delivery.

Theme 3. Parent and Stakeholder Engagement

Participants recommended stronger collaboration among parents, schools, and other stakeholders to improve learner motivation, attendance, and reading performance.

Participant 10 stated:

"Strengthening parental involvement is essential." (Participant 10, Teacher I)

Participant 15 suggested:

"Regular orientation sessions for parents could help improve learners' attendance." (Participant 15, Teacher III)

Participant 2 emphasized:

"Greater emphasis should be placed on learner motivation and parental engagement." (Participant 2, Master Teacher I)

These responses highlighted shared responsibility in sustaining learner participation and supporting reading development.

Theme 4. Enhanced Implementation Support

Participants recommended flexible scheduling, additional tutors, protected instructional time, and continuous technical support to improve implementation and balance teachers' responsibilities.

Participant 3 stated:

"The program would be more effective if additional tutors were hired." (Participant 3, Teacher I)

Participant 10 recommended:

"Allocate more dedicated time for ARAL sessions." (Participant 10, Teacher I)

Participant 14 emphasized:

"Allocating sufficient instructional time and providing continuous monitoring and technical support." (Participant 14, Master Teacher I)

These recommendations highlighted the need for adequate staffing, time allocation, and implementation support.

Theme 5. Institutional and Government Support

Participants emphasized stronger institutional commitment, government assistance, and financial support to sustain the program and reduce the burden on implementers.

Participant 16 stated:

"Stronger institutional commitment and greater government assistance." (Participant 16, Teacher II)

Participant 9 recommended:

"Budget for the compensation of our ARAL Tutors." (Participant 9, Teacher I)

Participant 15 added:

"Financial support... would reduce the burden on volunteer teachers." (Participant 15, Teacher III)

These accounts underscored the importance of sustained funding, administrative assistance, and institutional commitment for long-term implementation.

Theme 6. Continuous Monitoring and Feedback

Participants recommended systematic monitoring, regular feedback, program evaluation, and the sharing of effective practices to support continuous improvement.

Participant 2 stated:

"Collecting regular feedback from teachers and learners can help improve future implementation." (Participant 2, Master Teacher I)

Participant 13 recommended:

"Continuous monitoring and opportunities for teachers to share good practices." (Participant 13, Teacher III)

Participant 14 emphasized:

"Continuous monitoring and technical support would contribute to more sustainable implementation." (Participant 14, Master Teacher I)

Based on the narratives given by the participants, continuous monitoring, regular feedback, program evaluation, and the practice of sharing good practices are suggested for continuous improvement of the ARAL Reading Program.

The experiences of ARAL implementers provided insights into areas requiring improvement to strengthen program implementation. Although participants recognized the program's value in supporting struggling readers, they emphasized the need for improvements in teacher preparation, resources, stakeholder engagement, program coordination, institutional support, and monitoring.

Six themes emerged: **Continuous Professional Development, Adequate Instructional Resources and Financial Support, Parent and Stakeholder Engagement, Enhanced Implementation Support, Institutional and Government Support, and Continuous Monitoring and Feedback.** These themes highlighted that sustainable implementation requires not only teacher commitment but also adequate resources, active stakeholder participation, and strong institutional support.

Continuous Professional Development (Theme 1) emerged as a key priority. Participants emphasized regular training, mentoring, and coaching to strengthen teachers' knowledge of reading interventions, assessment, and differentiated instruction. Since teachers translate ARAL policy into classroom practice, continuous learning can improve their instructional decisions and responsiveness to learners' needs.

This finding aligned with Filderman et al. (2025), Rice et al. (2024), Basma and Savage (2023), and Marinelli et al. (2023), who emphasized professional development in strengthening teaching practices and literacy instruction. From the perspective of Constructivist Learning Theory, continuous professional learning can help teachers design meaningful learning experiences suited to learners' needs.

Adequate Instructional Resources and Financial Support (Theme 2) was also identified as essential. Participants recommended accessible, leveled, and contextualized reading materials, printing assistance, and sufficient funding. Although teachers adapted and developed materials, relying on personal resources increased their workload. Sustainable implementation therefore requires institutional provision rather than depending solely on teachers' resourcefulness. This aligned with Shapiro and Bellows (2025), who highlighted the importance of evidence-based instruction and adequate educational resources.

Parent and Stakeholder Engagement (Theme 3) emerged as another priority. Participants recommended strengthening parental awareness, encouraging home reading, and fostering school-community partnerships to improve learner attendance, motivation, and reading practice. These findings reinforced the view that literacy development extends beyond classroom instruction and requires shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities. This aligned with Cruz et al. (2023), Yasar and Gültekin (2025), Narciso (2025), Balway (2026), and Decena and Hernandez (2024), who emphasized the contribution of home-school collaboration and stakeholder partnerships to reading development.

Enhanced Implementation Support (Theme 4) emerged as an important area for improvement. Participants recommended flexible scheduling, additional tutors, sufficient instructional time, and stronger technical assistance. Their experiences indicated that effective implementation depended not only on teacher commitment but also on organizational support that enabled teachers to balance ARAL duties with regular responsibilities. This aligned with Ehlert et al. (2022) and Serry et al. (2025), who highlighted the importance of supportive implementation conditions and effective program management.

Institutional and Government Support (Theme 5) was considered essential for sustainability. Participants recommended increased funding, administrative assistance, policy support, and recognition of teachers' efforts. Their accounts emphasized that literacy development should be a shared responsibility rather than a burden placed solely on classroom teachers. This finding aligned with Bete (2025) and Briones (2026), who emphasized sustained institutional assistance, training, monitoring, and school improvement initiatives.

Continuous Monitoring and Feedback (Theme 6) was identified as a mechanism for ongoing improvement. Participants recommended regular learner assessment, feedback from teachers and learners, evaluation of implementation practices, and opportunities to share effective strategies. They viewed monitoring as a means of identifying areas for improvement and informing instructional decisions rather than merely fulfilling compliance requirements. This aligned with Miel (2025), Pante (2026), and the National Center on Improving Literacy (2025), which emphasized monitoring, evaluation, and data-informed adjustments in strengthening reading interventions.

Most importantly, the results also enhanced the understanding of reading program enhancement as a dynamic and collaborative process. The experiences of ARAL implementers showed that policies are made to work by capable teachers, responsive systems, and communities that take care of learners' literacy advancement. These insights provided an important foundation for developing an enhanced framework that recognized the instructional, organizational, and human factors necessary for sustaining the ARAL Reading Program.

Reflexivity and Triangulation

The researcher's position as an educator and researcher provided insights into the ARAL Reading Program but also required careful reflection on how personal experiences and assumptions influenced interpretation. Reflexive notes were maintained throughout the analysis to document initial interpretations, uncertainties, and changes in understanding. Through repeated examination of interview transcripts, reflective journals, and relevant documents, the researcher refined interpretations based on participants lived experiences. This process broadened the understanding of ARAL beyond instructional practices to include teacher commitment, learner confidence, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional support. Theme development was likewise reviewed to ensure that shared meanings were identified while individual differences were preserved (Nigbur & Chatfield, 2025).

Triangulation strengthened the contextual understanding of the findings by combining semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and program documents (Folgueiras et al., 2026). Interviews captured participants lived experiences, journals provided personal reflections, and documents described program objectives and implementation guidelines. Comparing these sources revealed both shared experiences and differences in how implementers addressed challenges involving resources, attendance, motivation, and workload. Differences between actual experiences and formal program expectations were treated as meaningful insights into how policy was interpreted and implemented in school contexts.

Cross-participant comparisons further identified connections among instructional strategies, implementation challenges, learner progress, and recommendations. These comparisons showed that participants understood reading development as shaped by instructional support, teacher commitment, learner engagement, and contextual conditions.

Using reflexivity along with triangulation improved the credibility and precision of the research. Reflexivity helped the researchers realize their stand and thereby made interpretations clearer, whereas triangulation helped in using more sources for the interpretation of the obtained results. In summary, using both reflexive practice and triangulation led to the realization of accomplishing a deeper comprehension of how the ARAL Reading Program was implemented. The process eventually allowed us to find out not just the things that the implementers went through but also the meaning that the implementers gave to their duties, difficulties, answers to the lessons, and contributions made in the context of the ARAL Reading Program. The overview of all the acquired interpretations showed that there is a complexity in transforming an educational policy into practice and that implementation is a complex, contextual, relational, and permanent process through which teachers were adapting to the conditions of the policy as well as the specific environmental conditions.

Insights, Contradictions, and Implications

Key Insights

This study's findings indicated that the process of implementing the ARAL Reading Program was not simply a matter of translating policy requirements into classroom practices, but rather an adaptive, interpretive, socially situated practice that was influenced by the interplay among teachers, learners, education systems, and schools. The lived experiences of implementers demonstrated that the implementation of a national reading intervention depended not only on the quality of its policy design but also on how teachers interpreted, negotiated, and translated policy provisions within the realities of their classrooms. Across the identified themes, ARAL implementation emerged as a dynamic process in which instructional responsiveness, teacher agency, learner development, and systemic support were experienced as interconnected dimensions of program implementation.

A central insight was that **teachers served as policy translators, transforming reading guidelines into responsive learning experiences.** Through learner assessment, differentiated instruction, contextualized materials, and progress monitoring, teachers exercised professional judgment rather than simply following prescribed procedures. This aligned with Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes learning based on learners' needs and experiences, and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which highlights teachers' role in scaffolding literacy development.

A second insight was that **reading development involved both skill improvement and learner transformation.** Participants observed progress in reading abilities alongside increased confidence, motivation, and participation. These experiences suggested that literacy development extended beyond technical skills to include learners' self-perception and independence as readers. Skill development, confidence, and engagement were understood as interconnected dimensions of progress.

A third insight was that **teacher resilience supported implementation but could not replace institutional support.** Participants adapted materials, followed up with learners, and adjusted their practices despite resource limitations, attendance issues, and competing responsibilities. However, relying heavily on personal effort raised concerns about sustainability. Effective implementation therefore requires institutional support that strengthens teachers' professional capacities rather than placing the burden of overcoming systemic constraints on them alone.

Another key insight was that **ARAL implementation occurred within an interconnected ecological system.** Participants recognized that reading development was shaped not only by classroom instruction but also by family involvement, school leadership, stakeholder participation, resource availability, and institutional arrangements. Challenges involving attendance, motivation, and limited resources demonstrated that literacy development extends beyond the classroom and requires coordinated support across these environments.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory supported the finding that ARAL implementation was shaped by interconnected environmental systems. Participants' experiences highlighted the roles of teachers, parents, school leaders, and educational institutions in supporting literacy development through instruction, home reading practices, organizational support, policy direction, and resource provision. These interactions demonstrated that reading development extended beyond the classroom.

Participants also balanced program objectives with practical classroom realities. They adjusted lesson pacing, contextualized materials, provided individualized assistance, and developed alternative strategies to address learners' needs. These practices suggested that implementation of fidelity involved not only following prescribed procedures but also preserving the intervention's objectives while adapting instructional approaches to specific contexts.

The findings emphasized the need to balance program structure with contextual flexibility. Excessive standardization may limit teachers' responses to learner diversity, while insufficient guidance may result in inconsistent implementation. Clear objectives, appropriate guidance, adequate resources, and professional discretion were therefore important conditions for responsive implementation.

Overall, the lived realities of ARAL converged around three interconnected dimensions: **responsive instructional practice, teacher agency, and supportive educational ecosystems.** Teachers' instructional decisions were shaped by their professional judgment and institutional conditions, while learner participation and development were situated within broader networks of support. These dimensions demonstrated that literacy development was not attributable to the program alone but emerged through the relationships, practices, and structures surrounding its implementation.

Thus, ARAL represented not only a reading intervention but also a component of broader educational reform. The findings highlighted teachers' roles in interpreting and enacting policy, learners' participation in reading interventions, and schools' responsibility for translating policy into practice. This understanding provided a context-grounded basis for strengthening future literacy initiatives through responsive instruction, support for teacher agency, and educational structures that address the realities of schools and learners.

Contradictions and Tensions

Although the findings highlighted participants' positive experiences of supporting learners through the ARAL Reading Program and their strong commitment to its implementation, the study also uncovered several contradictions and tensions that characterized their experiences of translating policy provisions into practice. These contradictions were analytically significant because they revealed the gap between the intended design

of a national reading intervention and the complex contextual conditions within which the program was interpreted and enacted. Rather than being understood simply as implementation problems, these tensions illustrated the dynamic and negotiated nature of educational reform, in which policy expectations were continually interpreted and adapted in relation to institutional demands, learner needs, and local implementation realities.

Policy Standardization versus Contextual Adaptation

The findings revealed a tension between standardized program expectations and the need for contextual adaptation. While the ARAL Reading Program provided common objectives, guidelines, and accountability structures, participants' experiences showed that implementation required adjustments based on learners' reading abilities, confidence, interests, language skills, available resources, and school conditions.

Standardized guidelines promoted consistency and equitable access to reading support. However, rigid applications did not always accommodate learners' diverse needs. Participants therefore adjusted instructional strategies, pacing, and materials to address specific learning contexts. This suggested that implementation fidelity did not necessarily require uniformity; rather, it involved preserving the program's core objectives while making appropriate adaptations.

The findings highlighted teachers' roles in interpreting and translating policy into practice. Their knowledge of learners and school conditions informed how program provisions were enacted. Contextual adaptation was therefore not necessarily a departure from policy but an essential part of implementing it responsively across diverse educational settings.

Teacher Commitment versus Systemic Support Limitations

The findings also revealed a tension between teachers' professional commitment and the limitations of institutional support. Participants demonstrated dedication by preparing additional materials, providing individualized assistance, monitoring progress, motivating struggling readers, and extending support beyond regular instructional responsibilities. These efforts helped sustain reading interventions despite implementation challenges.

However, the findings indicated that program sustainability could not depend solely on teachers' dedication. Participants' accounts highlighted concerns involving workload, limited resources, time constraints, personnel, and institutional assistance. Teachers often addressed these limitations through personal initiative and additional effort, raising concerns about the long-term sustainability of such practices.

This tension distinguishes teacher agency from dependence on teacher sacrifice. Teacher agency enabled implementers to exercise professional judgment and respond to learners' needs. However, repeatedly relying on individual effort to compensate for systemic limitations risked making teacher resilience a substitute for adequate institutional support. Resilience was therefore both a professional strength and a response to challenging implementation conditions.

The findings emphasized the need to complement teacher commitment with adequate instructional resources, dedicated intervention time, professional development, technical assistance, and recognition of teachers' additional responsibilities. These mechanisms could help sustain responsive instruction without placing disproportionate responsibility on individual teachers.

Overall, the findings situated teacher agency within the organizational conditions of ARAL implementation. Teachers' capacity to respond to learners' needs depended not only on their professional knowledge and commitment but also on the availability of resources, time, personnel, leadership support, and appropriate organizational structures. Sustainable literacy reform therefore requires both committed teachers and institutional conditions that enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Program Expansion versus Implementation Readiness

The findings revealed a tension between the urgency of addressing literacy gaps and schools' readiness to implement large-scale interventions. Although ARAL demonstrated the government's commitment to improving learners' reading abilities, participants' experiences highlighted operational challenges that affected implementation.

These challenges included limited instructional materials, scheduling constraints, learner attendance concerns, and competing professional responsibilities. Thus, the need to address literacy difficulties promptly had to be balanced with the organizational conditions required for sustainable implementation.

The findings emphasized that educational reform requires more than clearly defined program objectives. Successful implementation also depends on adequate preparation, resources, capacity-building, monitoring, and organizational support. Sustainability must be considered from the outset by aligning policy goals, teacher competencies, available resources, and school contexts.

Learner-Centered Intervention versus Learner Participation Challenges

The findings also revealed a tension between ARAL's learner-centered approach and the challenges of sustaining learner participation. Participants provided individualized assistance, adapted instruction, and prepared engaging activities; however, absenteeism, low motivation, fatigue, and inconsistent attendance sometimes limited intervention continuity.

These experiences indicated that responsive instruction alone could not ensure sustained participation. Even when teachers prepared appropriate learning activities, frequent absences or reluctance to attend could disrupt intervention. Learner participation therefore emerged as a concern shaped not only by instructional practices but also by conditions beyond teachers' immediate control.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory helped explain how learners' participation was situated within interconnected family, school, community, and peer environments. The findings highlighted the importance of complementing classroom interventions with family engagement, learner-motivation strategies, school support, and stakeholder partnerships to promote sustained participation.

Resource Innovation versus Resource Sustainability

The findings further revealed a tension between teachers' resourcefulness and the sustainability of instructional resource provision. Participants developed localized materials, modified available resources, and designed supplementary activities to address learners' needs. These practices demonstrated their capacity to respond creatively to resource limitations.

However, producing additional materials requires time, effort, and personal investment. Although teacher innovation supported contextualized instruction, continued reliance on individual initiative raised concerns about workload and sustainability. Teacher-generated resources could not fully substitute for adequate institutional provision.

The findings distinguished adaptive innovation from compensatory effort. Adaptive innovation involved modifying or supplementing resources to improve responsiveness to learners, whereas compensatory effort involved repeatedly addressing institutional resource gaps through personal initiative. Sustainable implementation therefore required institutional support that enabled teachers' creativity to complement, rather than replace, adequate resource provision.

Formal Accountability versus Continuous Improvement

The final tension concerned the dual purpose of monitoring and evaluation as mechanisms for accountability and continuous improvement. Participants emphasized assessment, progress tracking, and regular monitoring as important practices for identifying learners' needs and adjusting instruction. However, monitoring could have limited developmental value when treated primarily as a compliance requirement.

The findings indicated that monitoring became more meaningful when assessment results informed

instructional decisions, professional reflection, collaborative learning, and the identification of implementation challenges. Beyond determining whether targets were achieved, monitoring provided opportunities to examine learner progress, refine teaching strategies, and identify needed support.

These findings emphasized the importance of integrating accountability with professional learning. Continuous feedback enabled teachers and schools to identify effective practices, address emerging challenges, and improve implementation. Monitoring was therefore best understood as an ongoing cycle of assessment, reflection, decision-making, and adaptation rather than merely a means of verifying compliance with program requirements.

Synthesis of Contradictions and Tensions

Taken together, the contradictions revealed in this study demonstrated that ARAL implementation existed within a complex space between policy intention and practical reality. The tensions did not indicate shortcomings of the program alone; rather, they revealed the realities of implementing educational reform within diverse and dynamic school environments.

The findings suggested that literacy interventions involved the simultaneous presence of structure and flexibility, accountability and trust, teacher agency and systemic support, innovation and resource sustainability, as well as policy direction and contextual responsiveness. These tensions provided valuable insights because they identified areas where implementation could be strengthened.

Ultimately, the study demonstrated that the lived realities of ARAL implementation extended beyond the actions of individual teachers and were situated within the broader conditions that supported and constrained those actions. The awareness of these tensions may help in developing the idea of ARAL further and turning it from a simple policy into a long-term and efficient literacy program.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The research explored the lived realities of those involved in carrying out the ARAL Reading Program within the City Schools Division of Santa Rosa, Laguna. Using interpretive phenomenology and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), it became evident that implementing ARAL was more than just adhering to set procedures. Instead, it emerged as a flexible and context-driven practice influenced by teachers' professional insights, students' circumstances, and the surrounding institutional environment. The findings demonstrated that the implementation of a national reading intervention involved continuous interpretation, adaptation, and negotiation between policy provisions and the realities of classroom and school contexts.

1. Instructional Responsiveness and Teacher Agency in ARAL Implementation. The findings revealed that ARAL implementation required instructional flexibility and professional judgment to address learners' diverse reading needs. Participants assumed multiple roles as teachers, mentors, resource developers, motivators, and advocates for struggling readers. They used learner assessment, reading profiling, progress monitoring, and individualized intervention planning to guide instruction. Strategies included phonics, guided and repeated reading, vocabulary development, comprehension activities, storytelling, and one-on-one coaching. These practices were adjusted according to learners' reading abilities, pace, confidence, and readiness, demonstrating that implementation required both literacy-teaching competencies and a commitment to responsive instruction.

2. Adaptive Translation of Policy into Classroom Practice. The findings showed that teachers acted as active interpreters of ARAL policy rather than passive recipients of directives. They contextualized materials, modified activities, adjusted instructional pacing, and developed supplementary resources to address learners'

needs. Policy translation involved an ongoing process of identifying learning gaps, selecting interventions, adapting resources, and monitoring progress. These experiences highlighted the importance of professional autonomy in translating program objectives into context-responsive classroom practices.

3. Systemic Barriers to Effective Program Implementation. The findings identified interconnected barriers that challenged ARAL implementation, including irregular attendance, low learner motivation, diverse reading needs, limited instructional resources, competing professional responsibilities, and insufficient stakeholder involvement. Although participants demonstrated resilience and continued providing learner support, these challenges highlighted the need for stronger institutional mechanisms to sustain implementation.

4. Adaptive Responses to Implementation Challenges. Despite implementation difficulties, participants employed proactive strategies to sustain reading interventions. These included positive reinforcement, differentiated instruction, individualized assistance, stakeholder collaboration, resource development, progress monitoring, and learner follow-up. Their responses demonstrated instructional flexibility and continued commitment to addressing learners' needs. These practices supported learner confidence, encouraged participation, and enabled teachers to adjust interventions based on observed progress and emerging challenges.

5. Holistic Contributions to Learner Literacy Development. Participants perceived ARAL as contributing to learners' reading development, confidence, engagement, independence, and motivation. Reported improvements included word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and willingness to read. Beyond these literacy skills, participants observed positive changes in learners' confidence and participation, suggesting that guided instruction and repeated practice supported the development of more positive reading identities among struggling readers.

6. Collaborative and Systemic Approaches for Sustainable ARAL Implementation. The findings emphasized that sustainable ARAL implementation required collaboration among teachers, schools, families, communities, educational institutions, and government agencies. Although teachers played central roles in delivering interventions, sustained literacy development depended on broader institutional and stakeholder support. Participants highlighted the need for adequate resources and funding, engaged school leadership, appropriate workload management, continuous professional development, contextualized instructional materials, technical assistance, systematic monitoring, and regular feedback. These findings positioned ARAL implementation within an interconnected educational ecosystem in which instructional practices, organizational support, and policy directions worked together to support literacy development.

Overall, the findings showed that ARAL implementation was a complex and collaborative process shaped by responsive instruction, teacher agency, and institutional support. Teachers translated policy into practice by adapting interventions to learners' needs, while school conditions influenced their implementation experiences.

The results gave a context-based basis for establishing the suggested ARAL Reading Program Implementation Enhancement Framework, in which instructional responsiveness, teacher capacity development, collaboration among stakeholders, resource assistance, and mechanisms for ongoing improvement were worked in. This framework represented the practical contribution of the study by bringing together key dimensions identified in participants' experiences and recommendations for supporting ARAL implementation and sustainable literacy development among learners.

Conclusions Derived from Participants' Voices and Literature

The findings from the research provided the basis for drawing conclusions presented in this chapter. To reach conclusions, the lived experiences of the participants were utilized as well as relevant literature and theoretical framework of the research.

Collectively, the conclusions provided insights into understanding the ARAL Reading Program in terms of its interpretation and implementation in the classroom context and in the context of the entire school and contributed to making its implementation stronger.

1. **The defining features of effective ARAL Reading Program implementation were instructional responsiveness and teacher agency.** ARAL implementation relied on teachers' professional judgment, adaptability, and commitment to addressing learners' diverse reading needs. Participants adjusted instructional strategies according to learners' progress and readiness, highlighting the importance of responsive teaching, consistent with Constructivism and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory.
2. **The translation of educational policy into classroom practice was an adaptive and context-dependent process.** The findings showed that implementing ARAL involved interpreting and adapting policy provisions to learners' needs and school conditions rather than simply following prescribed procedures. Teachers acted as active policy implementers who bridged program objectives and classroom realities through professional judgment.
3. **The success and sustainability of the ARAL Reading Program was influenced by interconnected instruction, organizational, and systemic conditions.** Learner attendance, motivation, resource availability, competing professional responsibilities, learner diversity, and stakeholder support were interconnected conditions affecting implementation and sustainability. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the findings emphasized the need for coordinated institutional support, teacher development, and stakeholder collaboration.
4. **Adaptive and learner-centered practices enabled teachers to sustain meaningful reading interventions despite implementation challenges.** Teachers sustained reading interventions through differentiated instruction, positive reinforcement, resource adaptation, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous monitoring. These practices demonstrated teacher resilience, instructional flexibility, and reflective decision-making in responding to learners' needs and implementation challenges.
5. **The ARAL Reading Program played a significant role in helping learners to become successful in reading through the improvement of both reading competency and reader identity.** Participants associated ARAL implementation with improvements in reading skills, confidence, motivation, participation, and independence. Their accounts suggested that reading intervention supported not only literacy development but also learners' self-perception and identity as readers.
6. **The sustainability of the ARAL Reading Program necessitated a collaborative educational ecosystem that would include continuous improvement mechanisms.** Sustaining ARAL required shared responsibility among teachers, school leaders, families, stakeholders, and policymakers. Participants emphasized continuous professional development, adequate resources, stakeholder engagement, accountability, and ongoing monitoring and feedback. These findings highlighted the importance of aligning instructional practices, organizational support, and educational policies to sustain literacy development.

To sum it up, this study found that while a national policy on literacy was in place, the successful implementation of the ARAL Reading Program depended on the combined strength of teachers, educational institutions, communities, families, and schools in interpreting and translating policy provisions into responsive and meaningful learning experiences. The lived experiences of implementers revealed that reading intervention was experienced as an adaptive, learner-centered, and collaborative process involving professional agency, instructional responsiveness, sustained institutional support, and active stakeholder engagement. Although educators showed exceptional ability and creativity during the implementation of the many issues they faced, the results of the research stressed the necessity of an educational atmosphere that has enough resources, ongoing improvement of skills, coherent leadership, and systematic assessment of the results.

Recommendations for Further Inquiry

Future research may explore the following areas to strengthen understanding and implementation of the ARAL Reading Program:

1. **Exploration of ARAL Implementation in Different Educational Settings.** Examine implementation across different districts, school levels, and remote communities to understand how contextual conditions shape program implementation.

2. **Insistence upon Multiple Stakeholder Perspectives.** Explore the experiences of learners, parents, school heads, reading coordinators, curriculum supervisors, and policymakers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of ARAL implementation.
3. **Longitudinal Investigation of Learner and Program Outcomes**. Investigate changes in learners' reading comprehension, motivation, and performance over time, as well as the development and sustainability of teachers' instructional practices.
4. **Evaluation of the Proposed BRIDGE Framework and Toolkit**. Assess the implementation of the Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement (BRIDGE) Framework through experimental, action research, or mixed-methods approaches, focusing on teacher practices, implementation quality, learner engagement, and reading outcomes.
5. **Development and Assessment of Complementary Literacy Interventions**. Design and evaluate instructional toolkits, digital resources, contextualized reading materials, coaching models, parent engagement programs, and monitoring systems that may support ARAL implementation.

Overall, future inquiry should continue examining literacy intervention as a dynamic and collaborative educational process influenced by instructional practices, institutional support, stakeholder participation, and policy implementation. The undertaking of research in other contexts, populations, and methodologies will support the building of a more substantial evidence base for the betterment of the ARAL Reading Program and the promotion of literacy development of Filipino learners.

Proposed Implementation Framework

The proposed implementation enhancement framework is named BRIDGE: Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement.

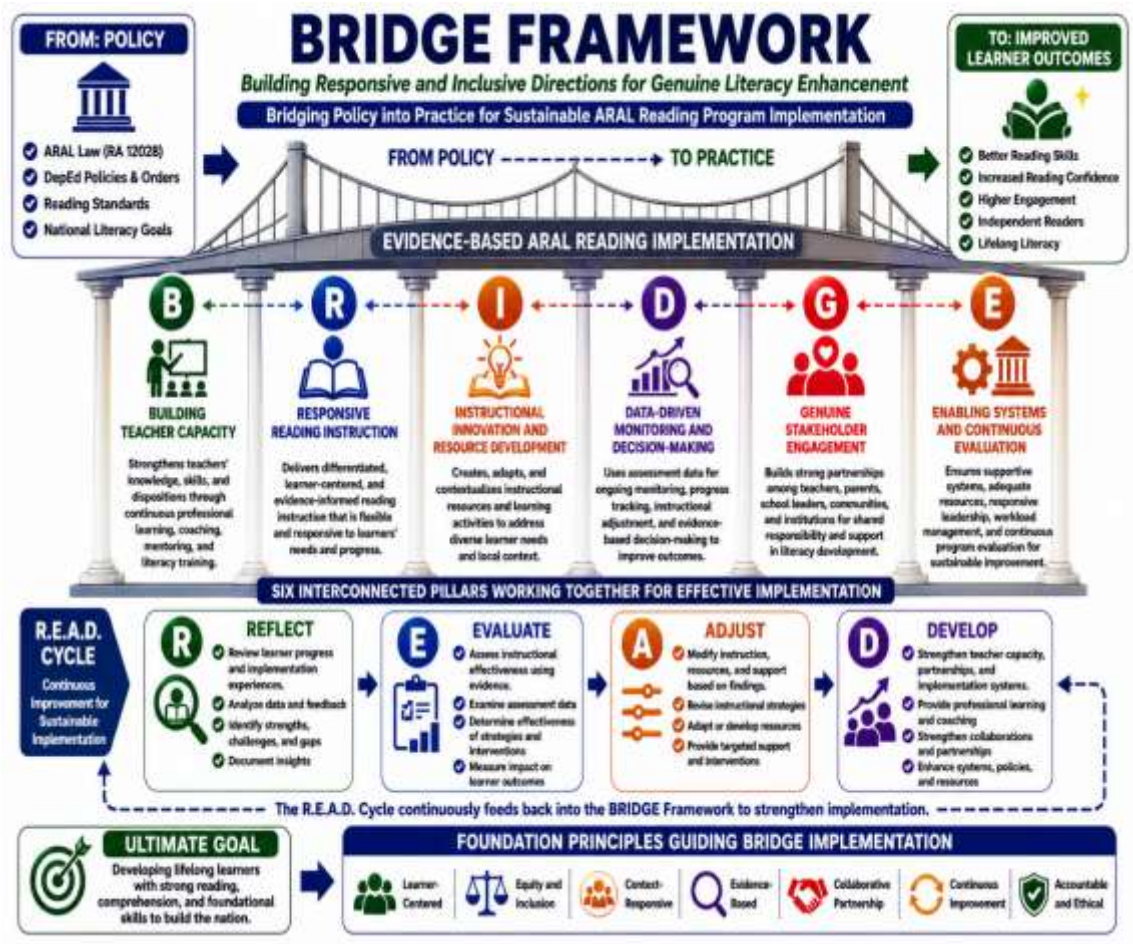

Figure 1. The Proposed Implementation Enhancement Framework, named as BRIDGE (Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement): Bridging Policy into Practice for Sustainable ARAL Reading Program Implementation

Nature of the Output

Drawing from the findings, the researcher proposed BRIDGE (Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement) as the study's primary practical output. The framework aims to strengthen the implementation and sustainability of the ARAL Reading Program in secondary schools by translating implementers' experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and recommendations into actionable guidance.

Unlike models that emphasize program fidelity alone, BRIDGE recognizes implementation as an adaptive, collaborative, and context-responsive process. It positions teachers as active policy implementers who adjust instruction to learners' needs while working within broader educational systems. It integrates instructional practices, organizational support, and leadership mechanisms to sustain literacy interventions.

To support implementation, the framework is accompanied by a practical implementation toolkit containing tools, templates, monitoring instruments, and support documents for teachers, school leaders, and stakeholders. Together, BRIDGE and the toolkit connect the study's findings to practical strategies for implementing, monitoring, and continuously improving the ARAL Reading Program.

Purpose and Rationale

The proposed BRIDGE (Building Responsive and Inclusive Directions for Genuine Literacy Enhancement) Framework was developed from the study's findings, which showed that ARAL implementation required responsive instruction, teacher agency, stakeholder collaboration, and sustained institutional support.

Although participants demonstrated commitment, creativity, and resilience in addressing implementation challenges, their reliance on personal initiative raised concerns about program sustainability when institutional support was insufficient.

BRIDGE was therefore designed to bridge national policy and classroom practice through a structured yet flexible approach that strengthens teachers' instructional capacity, institutional coordination, stakeholder participation, and continuous program improvement while upholding ARAL's objectives.

To support implementation, the framework was accompanied by a Practical Implementation Toolkit containing aligned tools, templates, monitoring instruments, and implementation guides. Together, BRIDGE and the toolkit translated the study's findings into practical resources for supporting evidence-informed, responsive, and sustainable implementation of the ARAL Reading Program.

Fundamental Components of the Proposed Enhanced Implementation Framework Known as BRIDGE

The proposed implementation enhancement framework named as BRIDGE consisted of six interrelated components that collectively support effective implementation of the ARAL Reading Program.

B – Building Teacher Capacity

This component emphasizes continuous professional development to strengthen teachers' competencies in literacy instruction, differentiated teaching, learner assessment, progress monitoring, and instructional material development. Training, coaching, mentoring, and sharing of best practices help teachers respond to diverse learner needs.

R – Responsive Reading Instruction

This component promotes learner-centered and evidence-informed instruction based on reading assessments and learner profiles. Strategies include phonics, guided and repeated reading, vocabulary development, storytelling, comprehension activities, and individualized coaching. Teachers adjust instruction according to learners' progress and needs.

I – Instructional Innovation and Resource Development

This component encourages teachers to develop, adapt, and contextualize instructional materials to address diverse literacy needs. It recognizes resourcefulness as valuable while emphasizing the importance of institutional support to ensure adequate and sustainable access to learning resources.

D – Data-Driven Monitoring and Decision-Making

This component focuses on continuous assessment, progress tracking, and evidence-based instructional decisions. Assessment results help teachers identify learning gaps, adjust interventions, monitor progress, and determine appropriate support for learners.

G – Genuine Stakeholder Engagement

This component recognizes literacy development as a shared responsibility among teachers, parents, school leaders, communities, and education stakeholders. It promotes parent engagement, community literacy initiatives, collaborative planning, and shared responsibility for learner attendance, motivation, and progress.

E – Enabling Systems and Continuous Evaluation

This component emphasizes supportive leadership, adequate resources, workload management, policy coordination, and regular program evaluation. It calls for institutional mechanisms that address implementation challenges, strengthen accountability, and sustain continuous improvement.

Overall, the six components provide an integrated approach to strengthening teacher capacity, responsive instruction, resource development, data-informed decisions, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional support for sustainable ARAL Reading Program implementation.

Intended Users and Context of Application

The proposed BRIDGE Framework is intended for multiple educational stakeholders involved in literacy development. At the classroom level, it guides ARAL implementers in planning, delivering, and assessing differentiated reading instructions.

At the school level, school heads, reading coordinators, department chairs, and instructional leaders can use the framework to guide teacher development, monitor implementation, allocate resources, and strengthen community partnerships.

At the division level, education supervisors and curriculum implementers can use it to provide technical assistance, monitor implementation, and support policy implementation. At the policy level, DepEd policymakers and education planners may use the framework to refine literacy intervention guidelines by promoting teacher agency, contextual responsiveness, and stakeholder collaboration.

Although developed from the experiences of ARAL implementers in the Schools Division of Santa Rosa City, Laguna, the framework may also inform similar literacy intervention programs in other educational settings.

Connection to the Study Findings

The proposed BRIDGE Framework was directly grounded in the study's findings. Building Teacher Capacity reflected participants' recommendations for continuous professional development, coaching, and literacy training. Responsive Reading Instruction emerged from findings on differentiated instruction, learner-centered strategies, and adaptive teaching. Instructional Innovation and Resource Development addressed teachers' experiences in contextualizing materials and developing supplementary resources.

Data-Driven Monitoring and Decision-Making reflected the use of learner assessment, reading profiling, progress monitoring, and instructional adjustments. Genuine Stakeholder Engagement emphasized

collaboration among teachers, parents, school leaders, communities, and educational institutions. Enabling Systems and Continuous Evaluation addressed the need for institutional support, adequate resources, responsive leadership, workload management, and systematic program evaluation.

To operationalize these six components, the study also developed a Practical Implementation Toolkit containing tools, templates, monitoring instruments, and implementation guides. Together, the framework and toolkit translated the study's findings into practical guidance for strengthening the instructional, organizational, and systemic dimensions of ARAL implementation.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

The BRIDGE Framework is intended as a flexible implementation guide rather than a rigid model, allowing schools to adapt its principles to their contexts, learners' needs, available resources, and organizational capacities.

Although developed from the experiences of ARAL implementers in Santa Rosa City, Laguna, Philippines, the framework may inform similar literacy initiatives in other settings, provided that contextual differences are considered. It is designed to complement existing DepEd literacy policies, not replace established guidelines.

Further validation through pilot implementation, expert review, and evaluation is recommended to refine the framework and examine its applicability across diverse educational contexts. Together with the Practical Implementation Toolkit or Templates, BRIDGE represents the study's practical contribution by translating research findings into actionable guidance for more responsive, collaborative, and sustainable implementation of the ARAL Reading Program.

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