

Evaluating the ARAL Program Implementation: Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence among Elementary Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in relation to Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence among elementary teachers in Cluster B, Ipil District, during School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, it examined the extent of Instructional Scaffolding, Resource Contextualization, and Differentiated Remediation; the extent of Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage and Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring; differences according to teacher profile; and the relationship between the two core implementation variables. A quantitative descriptive-correlational design was used with 35 ARAL tutors selected through Total Enumeration. Data were gathered through a researcher-made, validated survey questionnaire with high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .931$). Pedagogical Adaptations obtained an overall mean of 4.40, interpreted as to a great extent, while Program Adherence obtained 4.38, also to a great extent. Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring had the higher adherence mean (4.45), compared with Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage (4.31). No significant differences were found in either core variable when respondents were grouped by grade level, years of teaching experience, or number of ARAL learners handled. A very strong positive and statistically significant relationship was found between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence ($r = .926$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that, within this sample, learner-responsive adaptation and adherence to essential program requirements were closely aligned rather than mutually exclusive. The study proposes ARAL-FLEX (Fostering Learner-Responsive Experiences through Flexible and Contextualized Instruction) as a practical school-based response.

Keywords: Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning, pedagogical adaptations, program adherence, program implementation, reading intervention, learning recovery

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a foundational competency that supports learning across school subjects. Persistent difficulty in reading and comprehension can restrict learners' access to instructions, learning materials, and other curriculum content. International and Philippine literature continues to identify foundational learning gaps as a major concern and emphasizes targeted support for learners who are not acquiring basic competencies (Azevedo et al., 2021; Bautista & Aranas, 2023; UNICEF & SEAMEO, 2024; World Bank, 2022).

The Department of Education's Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program provides a national response to identified learning gaps. Institutionalized through Republic Act No. 12028 and implemented through DepEd Order No. 018, s. 2025, ARAL establishes a structured approach to targeted academic recovery, including instructional delivery, dosage, monitoring, and reporting. Its focus on closing learning gaps is also consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education.

Effective implementation nevertheless requires teachers to work between program structure and learner variability. Program Adherence protects essential intervention elements such as content, instructional dosage, quality of delivery, and progress monitoring. Fidelity research emphasizes that these dimensions help preserve intervention integrity, while also recognizing that implementation is shaped by contextual conditions (Anteneh & Anshu, 2024; van Dijk et al., 2023).

Pedagogical Adaptations provide the complementary learner-responsive dimension. Differentiated instruction

calls for purposeful adjustment of instructional processes to learners' readiness, needs, and characteristics while maintaining intended learning goals. Evidence also indicates that assessment information, teacher preparation, and classroom context influence differentiated practice (Bi et al., 2023; Karst et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021, 2022; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2023). In Philippine multilingual classrooms, familiar language may likewise support meaning-making and participation (De Los Reyes & Bagona, 2022).

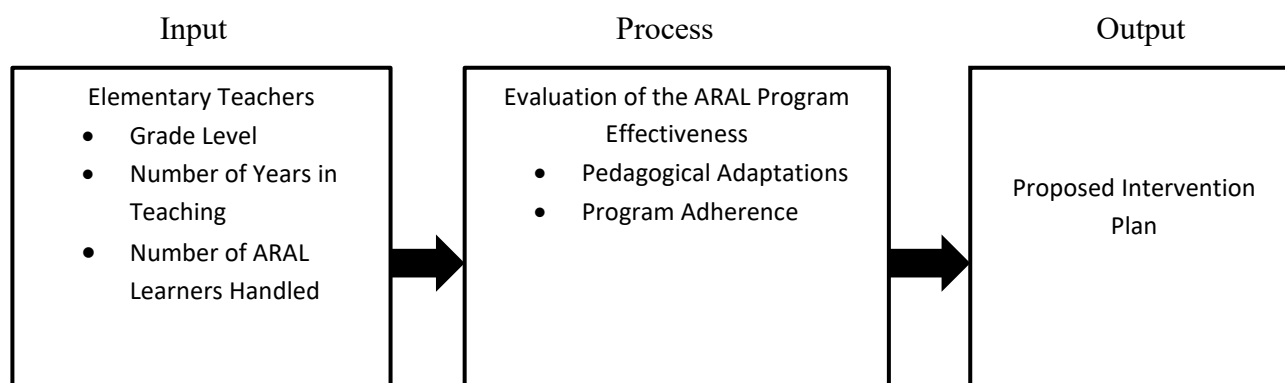
In Cluster B schools of Ipil District, there is limited empirical evidence describing how Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence coexist in actual ARAL implementation. This study therefore examined the extent of both variables, tested differences according to teacher profile, and determined their relationship. The findings are intended to inform school and district technical assistance, supervision, resource support, and professional learning while helping teachers maintain learner responsiveness within essential program boundaries.

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis

The study is anchored in complementary perspectives that explain both sides of ARAL implementation. Tomlinson's differentiated instruction framework (2001) supports Pedagogical Adaptations by emphasizing purposeful adjustments to instruction in response to learner readiness and needs. Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective (1978), particularly scaffolding within the Zone of Proximal Development, provides a basis for Instructional Scaffolding. Carroll et al.'s (2007) implementation fidelity framework supports the assessment of Program Adherence, while Stirman et al.'s (2013) Fidelity–Adaptation Model explains how context-sensitive modifications may coexist with fidelity when essential intervention components are retained. Together, these perspectives frame adaptation and adherence as complementary dimensions of implementation rather than inherently competing requirements.

Figure 1

Conceptual paradigm of the study



Note. The Input–Process–Output framework presents teacher profile characteristics as inputs, evaluation of Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence as the process, and the proposed intervention plan as the output.

Research Objectives

This study was designed to evaluate the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in relation to pedagogical adaptations and program adherence of teachers in Cluster B School in Ipil District. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions: (a) to what extent do respondents demonstrate Pedagogical Adaptations in the ARAL Program in terms of Instructional Scaffolding, Resource Contextualization, and Differentiated Remediation; (b) to what extent do respondents exemplify Program Adherence in the ARAL Program in terms of Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage and Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring; (c) whether there is a significant difference in the level of Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence when respondents are grouped according to their profile; (d) whether there is a significant relationship between Pedagogical Adaptation and Program Adherence in the implementation of the ARAL Program; and (e) what intervention plan can be designed on the basis of the findings.

Significance of the Study

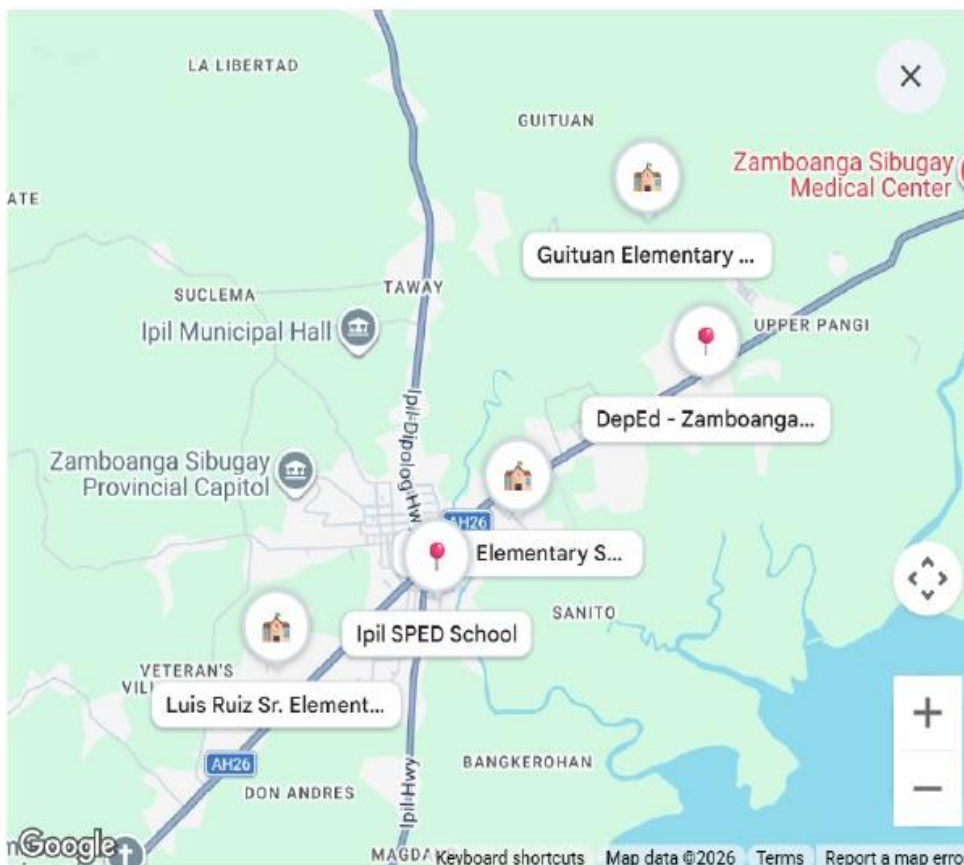
The study is significant to the administrators, specifically the Schools Division Superintendent, as well as the Public Schools District Supervisor by providing evidence that may guide technical assistance, resource support, and monitoring of ARAL implementation. School heads may use the findings to strengthen school-level support and professional learning for ARAL tutors. Teachers may use the findings to reflect on learner-responsive practices while maintaining essential program requirements. The proposed ARAL-FLEX intervention may provide a practical basis for strengthening flexible, contextualized, and assessment-informed implementation. Future researchers may also use the findings as a localized reference for further studies on ARAL implementation, adaptation, and adherence.

Methods

Research Design and Locale

The study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component determined the reported extent of Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence among ARAL teacher-respondents, while the correlational component examined the relationship between the two principal implementation variables. The study was conducted in four Cluster B schools in Ipil District, namely Guituan Elementary School, Ipil Special Education Center, Luis Ruiz Sr. Elementary School, and Sanito Elementary School, during School Year 2025–2026.

Figure 2



Cluster B schools of Ipil District (Google Maps view)

Note. The map identifies the four Cluster B schools included in the study.

Participants and Sampling

The target population consisted of the official ARAL Tutors actively implementing the Academic Recovery and

Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in Cluster B of Ipil District for School Year 2025–2026. Administrative records were verified with the respective School Heads to identify the active Grade 1–6 ARAL tutors, resulting in a total population of 35. Because the population was finite, accessible, and specifically defined by official ARAL assignment, the study employed Total Enumeration. All 35 eligible ARAL tutors were therefore included in the study.

For descriptive purposes, respondents were grouped into Grades 1–3 and Grades 4–6, as well as categories for years of teaching experience and number of ARAL learners handled. The profile distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Category	f	%
Grade Level	Grades 1–3	17	48.6
	Grades 4–6	18	51.4
Years of Teaching	0–5 years	3	8.6
	6–10 years	9	25.7
	11–15 years	5	14.3
	16 years and above	18	51.4
Number of ARAL Learners	1–5 learners	13	37.1
	6–10 learners	15	42.9
	11 or more learners	7	20

Note. N = 35.

Instrument and Measures

Data were collected through a researcher-made survey questionnaire. The Pedagogical Adaptations items were conceptually based on Tomlinson’s differentiated instruction framework and Vygotsky’s scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development perspective (Tomlinson, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Program Adherence indicators were developed in relation to the implementation-fidelity framework of Carroll et al. (2007). The instrument contained a respondent-profile section and two principal measurement sections.

Pedagogical Adaptations were measured through Instructional Scaffolding, Resource Contextualization, and Differentiated Remediation. Program Adherence was measured through Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage and Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring. Responses were collected using a five-point Likert scale. Composite dimension and overall scores were summarized using the reported mean responses for the corresponding indicators. For the reported results, mean scores were interpreted as follows: 1.00–1.50, to no extent; 1.51–2.50, to a slight extent; 2.51–3.50, to a moderate extent; 3.51–4.50, to a great extent; and 4.51–5.00, to a very great extent.

Because the two principal constructs concern related aspects of ARAL implementation, conceptual relatedness between some indicators was considered when interpreting their correlation. However, the available study materials do not include an item-level overlap analysis or factor-analytic assessment; therefore, no claim is made that the questionnaire items were statistically independent or that measurement overlap did not contribute to the observed association.

Validity and Reliability

For content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts for clarity, relevance, alignment with

the ARAL Program guidelines, and consistency with the theoretical bases of the study. The instrument was revised based on the panel's recommendations. A pilot test involving 30 respondents from a nearby school who were not part of the main study was conducted to establish internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was .931, indicating high internal consistency.

Data Collection and Ethical Procedures

Before data collection, the researcher secured ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics Office and obtained formal authorization through the Schools Division Superintendent, the Public Schools District Supervisor of Ipil District, and the School Heads of the participating Cluster B schools. The online questionnaire was distributed after approval. An informed consent form preceded the questionnaire, and participation was voluntary.

The online survey was configured not to collect names or email addresses. Each submitted response received a random code from AT1 to AT35. The resulting dataset was stored in a password-protected cloud drive accessible only to the researcher and statistician for data processing. Findings were reported in aggregate form. The study followed the confidentiality and privacy principles of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

Data Analysis

Weighted means were used to determine the extent of Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test differences in the two core variables across grade level, years of teaching experience, and number of ARAL learners handled, consistent with the F statistics reported in the study tables. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence.

The inferential analyses considered the assumptions relevant to each statistical procedure. For One-Way ANOVA, these included independence of observations, approximate normality, and homogeneity of variance. For Pearson product-moment correlation, the analysis considered linearity, approximate bivariate normality, and the absence of influential outliers. The reported inferential findings were interpreted with these assumptions in mind. Because formal assumption-test statistics are not presented in the statistical results, the study does not make claims that these assumptions were formally confirmed.

Statistical decisions were evaluated at the .05 level of significance. In addition to p values, effect sizes were considered for the ANOVA results using eta squared (η^2), derived from the reported F statistics and corresponding group and sample-size information. For the Pearson correlation, the reported r served as the effect-size estimate, and a 95% confidence interval was derived using the Fisher z transformation based on $r = .926$ and $N = 35$. These supplementary statistics provide information about the magnitude and precision of the observed effects rather than relying primarily on statistical significance.

Because both principal variables were measured through the same self-report questionnaire, the correlation analysis was interpreted cautiously with respect to potential common-method bias and measurement overlap. The study did not include item-level correlation, factor-analysis, or independent-source measurement results that would permit a formal test of whether overlapping items or scoring procedures inflated the observed association. The intervention recommendation was developed through synthesis of the descriptive and inferential findings rather than through a separate statistical test.

RESULTS

The results are organized according to the study objectives. Tables 2–8 present the item-level and dimension-level findings for Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence. Tables 9 and 10 present the tests of differences by respondent profile, while Table 11 presents the correlation between the two principal variables.

Pedagogical Adaptations

Respondents demonstrated Pedagogical Adaptations to a great extent across all three dimensions. Differentiated

Remediation obtained the highest dimension mean, followed by Resource Contextualization and Instructional Scaffolding. The item-level findings provide a more detailed description of the reported practices.

Table 2

Extent of Pedagogical Adaptations in Terms of Instructional Scaffolding

Indicator	M	Interpretation
Temporary supports (prompts, cues) gradually removed as learner gains independence.	4.26	To a great extent
Use of Think-Aloud strategies to demonstrate decoding processes.	4.31	To a great extent
Use of graphic organizers to visualize relationships among ideas in a text.	4.29	To a great extent
Multiple entry points to accommodate different reading readiness levels.	4.37	To a great extent
Immediate, specific feedback guiding the correct reading strategy.	4.31	To a great extent
Grand Mean	4.31	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Instructional Scaffolding obtained a grand mean of 4.31, interpreted as to a great extent. The highest-rated practice was providing multiple entry points for lessons to accommodate different reading readiness levels (M = 4.37). The lowest-rated practice was providing temporary supports that are gradually removed as learners gain independence (M = 4.26). All five indicators were interpreted as to a great extent.

Table 3

Extent of Pedagogical Adaptations in Terms of Resource Contextualization

Indicator	M	Interpretation
Modify instructional materials to include local references familiar to learners.	4.31	To a great extent
Relate reading topics to daily life experiences of pupils in the community.	4.49	To a great extent
Use Mother Tongue bridge-words to clarify complex English reading concepts.	4.63	To a very great extent
Adapt ARAL module vocabulary to learners' current linguistic level.	4.4	To a great extent
Integrate culturally relevant stories to increase motivation and engagement.	4.29	To a great extent
Grand Mean	4.42	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Resource Contextualization obtained a grand mean of 4.42, interpreted as to a great extent. The highest-rated indicator was the use of Mother Tongue bridge-words to clarify complex English reading concepts (M = 4.63), interpreted as to a very great extent. The lowest-rated indicator was integrating culturally relevant stories to increase motivation and engagement (M = 4.29), although this remained within the great-extent range.

Table 4

Extent of Pedagogical Adaptations in Terms of Differentiated Remediation

Indicator	M	Interpretation
Adjust reading-task difficulty according to readiness and mastery.	4.43	To a great extent
Use varied processes such as flexible grouping and differentiated activities.	4.51	To a very great extent
Offer reading materials or content that interests or motivates learners.	4.57	To a very great extent
Adjust the learning environment to reduce distractions during remediation.	4.4	To a great extent
Provide specific adjustments and modifications for learners with disabilities.	4.43	To a great extent
Grand Mean	4.47	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Differentiated Remediation obtained a grand mean of 4.47, interpreted as to a great extent. The highest-rated indicators were offering reading materials or content that interests or motivates learners ($M = 4.57$) and using varied processes such as flexible grouping and differentiated activities ($M = 4.51$), both interpreted as to a very great extent. Adjusting the learning environment to reduce distractions had the lowest mean in this dimension ($M = 4.40$), still interpreted as to a great extent.

Table 5

Summary of Pedagogical Adaptations

Dimension	M	Interpretation
Instructional Scaffolding	4.31	To a great extent
Resource Contextualization	4.42	To a great extent
Differentiated Remediation	4.47	To a great extent
Overall Grand Mean	4.4	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Overall, Pedagogical Adaptations obtained a grand mean of 4.40, interpreted as to a great extent. Differentiated Remediation had the highest dimension mean ($M = 4.47$), followed by Resource Contextualization ($M = 4.42$) and Instructional Scaffolding ($M = 4.31$). The three dimensions were therefore consistently rated within the great-extent category.

Program Adherence

Respondents also reported Program Adherence to a great extent. Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring obtained the higher dimension mean, while Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage obtained the lower mean. Both dimensions remained within the great-extent interpretation.

Table 6

Extent of Program Adherence in Terms of Content and Instructional Dosage

Indicator	M	Interpretation
Deliver ARAL curriculum as intended without skipping core components.	4.26	To a great extent

Adhere to the required frequency of sessions per week.	4.23	To a great extent
Maintain the prescribed duration for each remedial reading session.	4.37	To a great extent
Utilize specific instructional guides provided by ARAL.	4.34	To a great extent
Ensure target competencies are covered within the allotted timeframe.	4.34	To a great extent
Grand Mean	4.31	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage obtained a grand mean of 4.31, interpreted as to a great extent. Maintaining the prescribed duration for each remedial reading session received the highest mean ($M = 4.37$), while adherence to the required frequency of sessions per week received the lowest ($M = 4.23$). All indicators were interpreted as to a great extent.

Table 7

Extent of Program Adherence in Terms of Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring

Indicator	M	Interpretation
Employ standard assessment protocols to measure learner growth.	4.4	To a great extent
Keep systematic and accurate records of every learner's attendance.	4.49	To a great extent
Use individual progress tracking tools for data-driven decisions.	4.46	To a great extent
Follow the official reporting schedule for ARAL results.	4.49	To a great extent
Verify authenticity of student outputs through consistent monitoring.	4.43	To a great extent
Grand Mean	4.45	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring obtained a grand mean of 4.45, interpreted as to a great extent. Keeping systematic and accurate attendance records and following the official reporting schedule both obtained the highest means ($M = 4.49$). Employing standard assessment protocols to measure learner growth had the lowest mean in this dimension ($M = 4.40$), although it remained within the great-extent category.

Table 8

Summary of Program Adherence

Dimension	M	Interpretation
Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage	4.31	To a great extent
Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring	4.45	To a great extent
Overall Grand Mean	4.38	To a great extent

Note. M = mean response.

Program Adherence obtained an overall grand mean of 4.38, interpreted as to a great extent. Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring had the higher mean ($M = 4.45$), while Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage

obtained $M = 4.31$. Thus, the reported adherence was consistently high across both dimensions.

Differences by Respondent Profile

The tests of differences showed no statistically significant differences in Pedagogical Adaptations across grade level, years of teaching experience, or number of ARAL learners handled. All reported p -values were greater than .05.

Table 9

Differences in Pedagogical Adaptations by Respondent Profile

Profile	Group	M	F	p	η^2	Decision
Grade Level	Grades 1–3	4.45	0.304	0.585	0.009	Do not reject H_0
	Grades 4–6	4.36	0.304	0.585		Do not reject H_0
Years of Teaching	0–5 years	4.69	2.813	0.056	0.028	Do not reject H_0
	6–10 years	4.48	2.813	0.056		Do not reject H_0
	11–15 years	3.88	2.813	0.056		Do not reject H_0
	16 years and above	4.46	2.813	0.056		Do not reject H_0
Number of ARAL Learners	1–5 learners	4.49	0.463	0.633	0.028	Do not reject H_0
	6–10 learners	4.39	0.463	0.633		Do not reject H_0
	11 or more learners	4.27	0.463	0.633		Do not reject H_0

Note. ANOVA; H_0 = null hypothesis. All p values exceed .05. η^2 = eta squared; values were derived from the reported F statistics and corresponding group and sample-size information.

For grade level, Grades 1–3 had a slightly higher mean ($M = 4.45$) than Grades 4–6 ($M = 4.36$), but the difference was not significant ($F = 0.304$, $p = .585$, $\eta^2 = .009$). Across teaching-experience groups, means ranged from 3.88 among respondents with 11–15 years of experience to 4.69 among those with 0–5 years, but the difference was not significant ($F = 2.813$, $p = .056$, $\eta^2 = .214$). For number of ARAL learners, the 1–5 group had the highest mean ($M = 4.49$) and the 11-or-more group had the lowest mean ($M = 4.27$), with no significant difference ($F = 0.463$, $p = .633$, $\eta^2 = .028$). The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected for all three profile variables. The effect-size estimates are reported to describe the magnitude of group-related variation separately from statistical significance.

Program Adherence likewise did not differ significantly across grade level, years of teaching experience, or number of ARAL learners handled. All p -values exceeded .05.

Table 10

Differences in Program Adherence by Respondent Profile

Profile	Group	M	F	p	η^2	Decision
Grade Level	Grades 1–3	4.46	0.737	0.397	0.022	Do not reject H_0
	Grades 4–6	4.31	0.737	0.397	0.022	Do not reject H_0

Years of Teaching	0–5 years	4.6	1.519	0.229	0.128	Do not reject Ho
	6–10 years	4.42	1.519	0.229	0.128	Do not reject Ho
	11–15 years	3.94	1.519	0.229	0.128	Do not reject Ho
	16 years and above	4.44	1.519	0.229	0.128	Do not reject Ho
Number of ARAL Learners	1–5 learners	4.49	0.471	0.628	0.029	Do not reject Ho
	6–10 learners	4.33	0.471	0.628	0.029	Do not reject Ho
	11 or more learners	4.29	0.471	0.628	0.029	Do not reject Ho

Note. ANOVA; Ho = null hypothesis. All p values exceed .05. η^2 = eta squared; values were derived from the reported F statistics and corresponding group and sample-size information.

For grade level, Grades 1–3 had a mean of 4.46 compared with 4.31 for Grades 4–6, but the difference was not significant ($F = 0.737$, $p = .397$, $\eta^2 = .022$). For years of teaching experience, means ranged from 3.94 to 4.60, with no significant difference ($F = 1.519$, $p = .229$, $\eta^2 = .128$). For number of ARAL learners, the 1–5 group had the highest mean ($M = 4.49$), while the 11-or-more group had the lowest mean ($M = 4.29$), and the difference was not significant ($F = 0.471$, $p = .628$, $\eta^2 = .029$). The null hypothesis was not rejected for all three profile variables.

Relationship Between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence

The analysis identified a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between the two principal implementation variables.

Table 11

Relationship Between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence

X Variable	Y Variable	<i>r</i>	95% CI	Interpretation	<i>p</i>	Decision
Demonstrating Pedagogical Adaptations	Exemplifying Program Adherence	0.926	[.857, .962]	Very strong positive correlation	<.001	Reject Ho

Note. $**p < .01$. The correlation was statistically significant at the .05 level. 95% CI for $r = [.857, .962]$.

The precision of the observed relationship was further examined through a 95% confidence interval. The correlation coefficient of $r = .926$ had a 95% confidence interval of [.857, .962], indicating that the estimated association was consistently strong within the study sample. This additional estimate provides information about the precision of the observed relationship beyond statistical significance. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the correlation was interpreted cautiously because both Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence were measured using the same self-report questionnaire and from the same respondents.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Findings

The findings indicate that ARAL implementation in Cluster B was characterized by high reported levels of both learner-responsive instruction and adherence to program requirements. Pedagogical Adaptations obtained an overall mean of 4.40, while Program Adherence obtained 4.38, both interpreted as to a great extent.

Differentiated Remediation was the strongest adaptation dimension ($M = 4.47$), while Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring was the stronger adherence dimension ($M = 4.45$). This pattern supports the view that structured learning-recovery interventions require both program integrity and responsiveness to learner differences (Anteneh & Anshu, 2024; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2023; van Dijk et al., 2023).

The strongest adaptation practices were differentiated and contextualized responses to learners. Flexible grouping and differentiated activities and the use of motivating reading materials received very high ratings, while Mother Tongue bridge-words obtained $M = 4.63$. These findings are compatible with research on data-informed differentiation and Philippine multilingual practice, which emphasizes matching instructional responses to learner needs and supporting meaning-making through familiar language (De Los Reyes & Bagona, 2022; Karst et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2021, 2022). Instructional Scaffolding had the lowest adaptation dimension mean ($M = 4.31$), suggesting a possible area for strengthening, particularly in the gradual release of support as learners become more independent (Uçak & Kartal, 2022).

Program Adherence was also high, although Quality of Delivery and Progress Monitoring ($M = 4.45$) exceeded Adherence to Content and Instructional Dosage ($M = 4.31$). Attendance and reporting were the highest-rated monitoring practices, while weekly session frequency was the lowest-rated dosage item. This pattern is consistent with the multidimensional treatment of implementation fidelity, in which adherence, dosage, and quality are related but distinct dimensions (van Dijk et al., 2023). It suggests that practical scheduling conditions may deserve attention alongside compliance with program requirements.

No statistically significant differences were found in either core variable across grade level, years of teaching experience, or number of ARAL learners handled. The years-of-teaching result for Pedagogical Adaptations approached but did not reach the .05 threshold ($F = 2.813$, $p = .056$). These results are compatible with literature indicating that experience alone does not determine differentiated practice; teacher preparation, knowledge, beliefs, and contextual conditions may also matter (Bi et al., 2023; Shareefa, 2023; Smale-Jacobse et al., 2023).

The most notable finding was the very strong positive correlation between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence ($r = .926$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.857, .962]). Within this sample, teachers who reported more learner-responsive practices also tended to report stronger adherence to the ARAL Program. This finding supports the view that adaptation and fidelity can function as complementary aspects of implementation rather than as inherently opposing practices.

However, the magnitude of the correlation warrants careful interpretation. Both variables were measured from the same respondents using the same self-report questionnaire during the same measurement occasion. Common response tendencies and the conceptual relatedness of some implementation indicators may have contributed to the strength of the observed association. The study did not include item-level correlation, factor-analysis, or independent-source measurement evidence that would allow a formal determination of whether overlapping questionnaire items or scoring procedures inflated the association. Thus, $r = .926$ is interpreted as evidence of a very strong association within the present sample and measurement context, rather than as evidence that one construct causes the other or that the two constructs are empirically identical. This interpretation is consistent with the Fidelity–Adaptation Model, which recognizes that adaptations may occur while essential intervention components are maintained (Stirman et al., 2013).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has several methodological limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings.

First, the study used Total Enumeration of the 35 ARAL tutors who were actively implementing the program in the four Cluster B schools during School Year 2025–2026. Although Total Enumeration was appropriate because the accessible population was finite, clearly defined, and identified through official ARAL assignment, the resulting census remains small for inferential analysis. Some profile categories contained relatively few respondents, limiting statistical power for subgroup comparisons and potentially reducing the stability of group-specific estimates. Thus, the absence of statistically significant differences across profile groups should not be interpreted as definitive evidence that no differences exist in the broader population of ARAL tutors.

Second, the study was conducted in four schools within a single district cluster. The census provides complete coverage of the accessible ARAL-tutor population in that setting, but it does not remove the limitation in external validity. Differences in school resources, administrative support, teacher preparation, learner characteristics, scheduling conditions, and local implementation practices may produce different findings elsewhere. The results should therefore be understood primarily as evidence of ARAL implementation in the specific Cluster B context and should not be generalized automatically to other districts or divisions.

Third, the principal measures were based on teacher self-report. The findings therefore represent respondents' reported practices rather than independently verified implementation. Self-report responses may be influenced by recall limitations, social-desirability tendencies, or acquiescence, particularly for indicators concerning compliance with prescribed program requirements. The high ratings for both principal variables should consequently be interpreted as reported levels of implementation rather than direct observational evidence of fidelity.

Fourth, both principal variables were measured from the same respondents, through the same questionnaire, and during the same measurement occasion. This creates a potential common-method bias in which shared response tendencies or characteristics of the measurement method may contribute to the observed association. This issue is particularly relevant to the unusually high correlation ($r = .926$). Because the two constructs also contain conceptually related implementation indicators, item or scoring overlap may have contributed to the magnitude of the association. However, the study did not include item-level analyses, factor-analytic evidence, or independent-source measurements that would permit a formal test of such overlap or common-method bias. The correlation should therefore be interpreted as a very strong association within this measurement context, not as proof that the constructs are causally related or empirically identical.

Finally, the statistical analyses considered the assumptions relevant to One-Way ANOVA and Pearson product-moment correlation. However, formal assumption-test statistics were not included in the reported statistical results. The study therefore does not claim that these assumptions were formally confirmed. The descriptive-correlational design also does not permit causal conclusions, and the study did not directly measure learner reading achievement, retention, or long-term literacy outcomes.

Future research should replicate the study with larger and more diverse samples and, where feasible, longer observation periods. Comparative or quasi-experimental designs could examine implementation approaches in relation to learner reading outcomes. Delayed post-tests may be used to investigate retention, while qualitative or mixed-method studies could examine how teachers determine when an adaptation remains within program boundaries and when it becomes a substantive deviation.

Future studies should also use multiple measurement sources, such as teacher self-reports combined with direct fidelity observations, attendance or implementation records, and learner-level outcomes, to reduce reliance on a single method. Researchers should further examine the unusually high association between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence through item-level analysis, construct-validation procedures, or other appropriate methods of assessing construct distinctness before drawing strong conclusions about their relationship.

Implications for ARAL Implementation

The findings indicate that Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence were both highly evident in the implementation of the ARAL Program among the participating teachers. The results further suggest that teachers were able to employ learner-responsive practices while maintaining adherence to the prescribed program requirements. The absence of significant differences across grade level, years of teaching experience, and number of ARAL learners handled suggests that the reported implementation practices were generally consistent across the profile groups examined.

The very strong positive relationship between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence further suggests that, within the present study context, these two dimensions of implementation tended to occur together. This finding supports a complementary understanding of adaptation and fidelity: teachers may adjust instructional approaches to respond to learner needs without necessarily compromising essential program requirements. At

the same time, the strength of the observed correlation requires cautious interpretation because both constructs were measured through the same self-report instrument and from the same respondents. The finding therefore demonstrates a strong association in the present sample but does not establish a causal relationship.

Taken together, the findings provided the basis for the development of ARAL-FLEX (Fostering Learner-Responsive Experiences through Flexible and Contextualized Instruction) as a proposed intervention plan. The proposed intervention focuses on strengthening teachers' capacity to provide flexible, contextualized, and differentiated remediation while maintaining adherence to essential ARAL Program requirements.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the ARAL Program was implemented to a high extent among the participating elementary teachers in Cluster B, Ipil District, as reflected in both Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence. Teachers demonstrated the use of instructional scaffolding, resource contextualization, and differentiated remediation while also maintaining adherence to prescribed content, instructional dosage, delivery, and progress-monitoring requirements. These findings suggest that learner-responsive instructional practices can be integrated within the implementation requirements of the ARAL Program.

The study further concludes that the reported levels of Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence did not significantly differ according to grade level, years of teaching experience, or number of ARAL learners handled. This suggests that the implementation practices reported by the participating teachers were generally consistent across the profile groups examined.

A very strong positive relationship was also found between Pedagogical Adaptations and Program Adherence. Within the study context, teachers who reported greater use of learner-responsive adaptations also tended to report stronger adherence to the ARAL Program. However, this relationship should be interpreted as an association rather than a causal effect, particularly because both constructs were measured through the same self-report instrument.

Overall, the findings support a complementary rather than oppositional view of pedagogical adaptation and program adherence in ARAL implementation. Teachers can respond flexibly to learners' needs while maintaining essential program requirements. On this basis, the study proposes ARAL-FLEX (Fostering Learner-Responsive Experiences through Flexible and Contextualized Instruction) as a practical intervention framework to further strengthen flexible, contextualized, and differentiated remediation while preserving the core requirements of the ARAL Program.

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