

THE ARAL PROGRAM IN THE K TO 12 CURRICULUM: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL REFLECTION

by:

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When the ARAL (Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning) Program was first introduced in our school, I remember feeling a mix of relief and worry. Relief – because at last, there was a structured national effort to address the learning gaps we had all witnessed after years of blended and disrupted schooling. Worrying because as a teacher, I knew that much of the program's success would depend on how well we understood our learners' needs and how willing we were to adjust our own practices.

I never viewed ARAL as just another requirement or another set of modules to distribute. For me, it became a window into the real struggles of my students. Many of them were active in class but quietly admitted during remediation sessions that they had trouble reading longer texts, solving multi-step problems, or recalling basic concepts that should have been mastered in earlier years. Hearing these confessions firsthand made the purpose of ARAL much more personal.

The program's focus – strengthening foundational literacy skills – was something I deeply appreciated. In the regular classroom setting, it's easy to get carried away with rushing lessons to meet deadlines. ARAL forced me to slow down. Instead of simply checking answers, I found myself asking more questions: Where exactly did this student get lost? What part of the process is unclear? Is it the concept or the confidence that is missing?

What I liked most about ARAL is its flexibility. I had the freedom to adjust the sessions depending on my learners' interests. Some afternoons, we used short stories

connected to their daily lives; other days, we played Scrabble games that didn't feel like lessons but still strengthened their vocabulary skills. These moments reminded me that learning doesn't always need to be loud or impressive, it just needs to be meaningful.

Of course, the work wasn't easy. ARAL demanded time, patience, and creativity. There were days when only half of my target learners showed up because of family errands or financial limitations.

There were times when I questioned whether I was truly helping them catch up or just adding to their workload. But each small improvement student reading with fewer pauses, a child solving a problem confidently for the first time – felt like a quiet victory.

What the ARAL Program taught me, above all, is that recovery in education is not a race. It is a process of rebuilding trust, restoring confidence, and rediscovering the joy of learning. As teachers, we may not see dramatic changes overnight, but we do witness growth in the little steps our students take. And sometimes, that is enough to remind us why the work matters.

In the larger conversation about the K to 12 curriculum, ARAL serves as a gentle but powerful reminder: education is not just about meeting competencies – it is about meeting learners where they are. And in my own classroom, that has made all the difference.

References: