



EFFECTIVENESS OF ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING (ARAL) PROGRAM TO THE PERFORMANCE OF KEY STAGE 2 LEARNERS IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program in improving the English performance of Key Stage 2 learners at Mapgap Integrated School, Baybay City Division. Specifically, the research aimed to assess learners' pre-test and post-test performance, determine the presence of a statistically significant difference, and propose a data-driven improvement plan based on the findings. Adopting a quasi-experimental research design, the study involved twenty-five (25) Key Stage 2 learners. The baseline and final evaluations utilized the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) under Department of Education Order No. 14, s. 2018, which serves as a standardized national tool for public elementary schools to pinpoint student strengths and reading vulnerabilities. Tailored intervention materials corresponding to the learners' pre-test diagnostic profiles were meticulously prepared by the researcher and administered over a focused four-week implementation period. Following the intervention, a post-test utilizing comparable reading passages from the official Phil-IRI compilation was conducted.

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Comparative data analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, indicating that the structured tutorial intervention successfully enhanced the learners' reading performance. These empirical findings underscore the value of targeted academic recovery strategies for students experiencing literacy learning gaps. Furthermore, the outcomes align seamlessly with the Department of Education's broader institutional framework, which prioritizes structured, evidence-based interventions like the ARAL Program to help struggling students attain expected grade-level competencies and bridge systemic educational gaps.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program, Performance, Key Stage 2 Learners, English*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill that serves as the foundation for lifelong learning and academic success. It enables learners to access information, construct meaning from texts, communicate effectively, and participate actively in educational and social activities. In elementary education, reading proficiency is particularly crucial because it supports learning across all subject areas. However, despite the recognized importance of reading, many learners continue to experience significant literacy challenges that hinder their academic achievement and overall educational development.

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Globally, literacy remains a major educational concern. According to UNESCO (2025), literacy is a fundamental human right and a key driver of sustainable development. Yet millions of learners worldwide continue to struggle with acquiring adequate reading and comprehension skills, limiting their opportunities for educational advancement and social participation. Literacy difficulties often begin in the early grades and, when left unaddressed, may persist throughout a learner's educational journey, affecting performance in higher grade levels.

In the Philippine context, concerns regarding learners' reading proficiency have intensified in recent years. Various national and international assessments have revealed persistent gaps in reading achievement among Filipino learners. The Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) 2024 reported that the Philippines showed minimal improvement in reading performance compared to previous assessment cycles. A considerable proportion of Filipino learners remained at very low proficiency levels and had trouble understanding even simple texts. The report further emphasized that socioeconomic conditions, language factors, and access to learning resources contribute significantly to disparities in reading achievement.

Reading difficulties continue to be evident even among learners in the intermediate grades. While many learners can decode words, they often struggle with vocabulary development, fluency, comprehension, inference-making, and critical understanding of texts. A study by Heraña and Azarias (2024) found that elementary learners frequently experience difficulties in understanding vocabulary and answering comprehension questions, which

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significantly affect their reading performance. The study highlighted the importance of contextualized intervention materials and targeted reading support programs in addressing these challenges.

Similarly, Aballe, Agcal, and Canoy (2024) reported a significant relationship between language proficiency and reading comprehension among elementary learners. Their findings suggest that learners with limited vocabulary and language skills tend to demonstrate lower levels of reading comprehension, making it difficult for them to engage meaningfully with academic texts. These literacy gaps often become more pronounced as learners advance to higher grade levels where reading is expected to serve as a tool for learning rather than merely a skill to be acquired.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing literacy gaps, schools and educational institutions have implemented various reading intervention initiatives. One of the most widely utilized approaches is the Reading Recovery Program, which provides intensive and individualized support to struggling readers. Reading recovery interventions focus on strengthening foundational reading skills, improving fluency, enhancing comprehension, and building learners' confidence in reading. Such interventions are designed to help learners catch up with grade-level expectations and prevent long-term academic difficulties.

Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of structured reading interventions in improving learners' reading performance. Gerodias (2024), in evaluating Project REAL (Read Every Day and Learn) among elementary learners in Cebu, found significant improvements in reading comprehension after the implementation of the

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intervention program. The study concluded that targeted reading interventions can effectively reduce literacy gaps and improve learners' reading outcomes.

Likewise, Bete (2025) reported that the implementation of a structured National Reading Program significantly enhanced learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. The findings affirmed that systematic and sustained reading interventions contribute positively to the development of literacy skills among struggling readers.

Valencia (2024) also found that reading intervention strategies such as Reading-in-Tandem significantly improved the reading proficiency of struggling learners. Through guided peer-assisted reading activities, learners demonstrated measurable gains in reading performance, indicating that intervention programs can provide meaningful support for learners experiencing literacy difficulties.

Despite the implementation of numerous reading initiatives in schools, literacy gaps remain evident among many intermediate learners. These learners often continue to exhibit difficulties in reading fluently, understanding texts, and applying comprehension skills necessary for academic success. As a result, there is a need to evaluate the effectiveness of existing reading recovery programs to determine whether they are achieving their intended objectives and contributing to improved learner performance.

The present study, therefore, seeks to assess the effectiveness of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program to the performance of key stage 2 learners in English. Specifically, it aims to examine whether participation in reading recovery interventions leads

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to measurable improvements in learners' reading abilities. The findings of this study may provide valuable insights for school administrators, reading coordinators, teachers, and policymakers in strengthening literacy intervention programs and developing evidence-based strategies to address persistent reading difficulties among intermediate learners.

Ultimately, improving reading proficiency among intermediate learners is essential not only for academic achievement but also for fostering lifelong learning, critical thinking, and active participation in society. Through effective reading recovery programs, schools can help bridge literacy gaps and ensure that all learners acquire the reading skills necessary for educational success.

This study evaluates the effectiveness of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program to the performance of key stage 2 learners in English in Mapgap Integrated Schools, Baybay City District 10, Baybay City Division. The findings of the study were basis for the proposed improvement plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the performance of the in key stage 2 learners in English before the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program?
2. What is the performance of the key stage 2 learners in English after the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program?
3. Is there a significant difference in the performance of the key stage 2 learners in English before and after the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program?

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4. What improvement plan can be proposed based on the findings of this study?

METHODOLOGY

Design. This study adopted quasi-experimental research design evaluating the pre-test and post-test performances of the key stage 2 learners before and after the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. The pre-test and the post-test were conducted before and after the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. This study was conducted in Mapgap Integrated Schools, Baybay City District 10, Baybay City Division. The twenty-five (25) key stage 2 learners were involved in the study. Utilizing the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) of the Department of Education. DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018, "Policy Guidelines on the Administration of the Revised Philippine Informal Reading Inventory" as legal basis for these tools. This tool was administered for Grade 3 to 6 learners in public elementary schools nationwide. This tool helps teachers as well as other stakeholders in pinpointing learners' strengths and areas for improvement, allowing for tailored instruction to support each learner through various support programs. Moreover, the researcher prepared the materials provided for the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program as to the level of the key stage 2 learners based on the pre-test. Intervention was provided within the four-weeks then after post-test were administered. The materials used in the post-test were also taken from the Phil-IRI compilation of reading passages in English.

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Sampling. The twenty-five (25) key stage 2 learners were involved in the study. Complete enumeration was employed in choosing the respondents of the study.

Research Procedure. Upon securing a research permit, data gathering was initiated. Application letters for study permits were personally submitted to concerned offices. A request letter was first submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent for approval to gather data from targeted respondents. After securing the approval of SDS, letters of permission were also submitted to the Public Schools District Supervisor and School Principals of the identified schools in the district. After getting the approvals, the researcher conducted data-gathering activities. An orientation was also held for the respondents together with their parents, and their agreement through permits was to participate in the research. During the orientation, respondents were informed about the study's goals and their right to confidentiality. Anonymized data was used solely for research, minimizing any burden on participants. Data were stored securely, accessible only to the research team, reinforcing confidentiality. Participation was purely voluntary, with the freedom to withdraw at any time. The presentation of findings maintained strict transparency, highlighting participants' views without bias or alterations. After the orientation, data gathering follows. The researcher conducted the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test (GST) following the guidelines stipulated in the DepEd Order No. 14, s. 2018. The key stage 2 learners whose scores are below 14 were provided with the reading recovery program through the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program intervention materials. This data was the pre-test performance of the learners. Then the researcher provided the recovery intervention program

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to these learners in four-weeks. After the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) program, post-test was administered using the Phil-IRI tools. After accomplishing the test, it was checked, tallied, and submitted for statistical treatment.

Ethical Issues. The researcher obtained the necessary written permission from the authorities to conduct the study. While developing and checking the tests used in the study, the use of offending, discriminatory, or other undesirable terminology was eschewed. The names of the respondents and other personal information were not included in this study to ensure confidentiality. The respondents were also voluntarily participating. Orientation was done for the respondents. During orientation, concerns and issues were clarified, and consent to be part of the study was signed. The researcher-maintained objectivity in discussing and analyzing the results. All authors whose works were cited in this study were correctly quoted and were acknowledged in the reference. Keeping of responses from the respondents were given to the researcher and kept under her care.

Treatment of Data. The quantitative responses underwent tallying and tabulation. Statistical treatment involved using specific tools: Simple Percentage was employed to evaluate the pre-test and post-test performances of the key stage 2 learners before and after the implementation of Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. **t-Test of Mean Difference** was used to determine the significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of the key stage 2 learners in English.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Pre-test Performance of Key Stage 2 Learners in English

Score Range (out of 25)	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
21–25	0	0%	Very High Performance
17–20	3	12%	High Performance
13–16	8	32%	Moderate Performance
9–12	9	36%	Low Performance
1–8	5	20%	Very Low Performance
Mean = 9.64 (MPS = 38.6%)			Low Performance

Table 1 presents the pre-test performance of Key Stage 2 learners in English before the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. The results revealed that the learners obtained an overall mean score of 9.64 out of 25, equivalent to a Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of 38.6%, interpreted as Low Performance. In terms of distribution, 36% of the learners were classified as having Low Performance, 32% demonstrated Moderate Performance, and 20% were categorized as having Very Low Performance. Only 12% of the learners obtained High Performance, while none reached the Very High-Performance level. These findings indicate that more than half of the participating learners initially demonstrated low levels of performance in the competencies assessed.

The low pre-test performance suggests the presence of learning gaps among the participating Key Stage 2 learners prior to their exposure to the ARAL intervention. This finding is consistent with the rationale of the ARAL Program, which was designed to provide targeted

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academic support to learners experiencing learning difficulties and to help them attain grade-level competencies. The Department of Education identifies ARAL-Reading as an intervention intended to support learners in achieving grade-level reading proficiency through targeted tutorial support, appropriate learning resources, and systematic monitoring of learner progress (Department of Education, 2025).

The result is also supported by Briones (2026), as reported marked improvements in decoding, phonemic awareness, and reading confidence among Grade 3 non-readers who participated in the ARAL Program, although fluency and comprehension continued to require additional support. Similarly, Arroyo et al. (2026) reported positive changes in the reading levels of elementary learners following ARAL implementation.

The finding implies that the learners required structured and targeted intervention to address identified learning gaps. It emphasizes the importance of using baseline assessment results in planning instruction, grouping learners according to their needs, selecting appropriate learning resources, and monitoring progress throughout the intervention. The low pre-test performance therefore provides a strong basis for the implementation of an academic recovery intervention such as ARAL.

Table 2

Post-test Performance of Key Stage 2 Learners in English

Score Range (out of 25)	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
21–25	6	24%	Very High Performance
17–20	12	48%	High Performance

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Score Range (out of 25)	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
13–16	7	28%	Moderate Performance
9–12	0	0%	Low Performance
1–8	0	0%	Very Low Performance
Mean = 18.28 (MPS = 73.1%)			High Performance

Table 2 presents the post-test performance of Key Stage 2 learners after the implementation of the ARAL Program. The findings revealed a considerable improvement in learner performance. The learners obtained a mean score of 18.28 out of 25, equivalent to an MPS of 73.1%, interpreted as High Performance. Of the 25 learners, 48% were classified as having High Performance and 24% achieved Very High Performance. The remaining 28% demonstrated Moderate Performance. Notably, no learner was classified under either the Low or Very Low-Performance categories after the intervention.

The results demonstrate a substantial positive shift in the learners' performance distribution. Before the intervention, 56% of the learners belonged to the Low or Very Low-Performance categories; after the intervention, all learners moved out of these categories. The mean score likewise increased by 8.64 points, while the MPS increased by 34.5 percentage points, from 38.6% to 73.1%.

The observed improvement is consistent with findings from research on targeted tutoring and literacy interventions. Cortes et al. (2024), in a randomized controlled trial involving 818 kindergarten learners, found that learners who received supplementary individualized reading tutoring were more than twice as likely to reach the targeted reading

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level as those who did not receive the intervention. Similarly, an independent evaluation of the PALS-UK structured paired-reading intervention involving 4,800 Year 5 learners found positive effects on pupils' reading skills, including oral reading fluency and reading comprehension (Education Endowment Foundation, 2024).

The findings imply that targeted and supplementary instruction may provide struggling learners with opportunities to receive additional practice, individualized assistance, corrective feedback, and focused instruction based on their learning needs. The substantial reduction in the number of learners classified as Low and Very Low performers further suggests that the intervention was responsive to the initial learning gaps identified through the pre-test.

However, the presence of 28% of learners who remained at the Moderate Performance level indicates that not all learners had yet achieved the higher performance categories. This implies the need for sustained intervention, differentiated instruction, and continuous progress monitoring to ensure that initial gains are maintained and that learners who remain at the Moderate level receive additional support.

Table 3

Test of Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Performance of Key Stage 2 Learners

Variables Compared	Mean	Mean Difference	t-Computed	t-Critical (0.05, df=24)	p-Value	Decision on Ho	Interpretation
Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Scores	9.64 vs. 18.28	8.64	15.72	2.06	< 0.001	Reject Ho	Significant Difference

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Table 3 presents the test of difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of Key Stage 2 learners in English before and after the implementation of ARAL program. The results revealed that the learners' mean score increased from 9.64 in the pre-test to 18.28 in the post-test, yielding a mean difference of 8.64 points. The computed t-value of 15.72 exceeded the critical value of 2.06 at the 0.05 level of significance with 24 degrees of freedom. Furthermore, the p-value was less than .001. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of the key stage 2 learners.

The significant improvement indicates that the learners performed substantially better after the implementation of the ARAL Program than before. This finding is consistent with recent evidence on the study conducted by Cortes et al. (2024). They (Cortes et al., 2024) found that supplementary reading tutoring significantly improved the likelihood of learners attaining targeted reading levels. Recent Philippine studies on ARAL likewise reported improvements in the literacy performance of participating learners following intervention.

The finding implies that the ARAL Program may serve as a valuable intervention for addressing learning gaps among Key Stage 2 learners in English. The substantial increase in the learners' mean performance and the statistically significant pre-test/post-test difference provide empirical support for the continued implementation of targeted learning recovery initiatives. The findings further underscore the importance of structured tutoring, appropriate instructional materials, learner-centered intervention, and systematic assessment and monitoring of their progress.

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Nevertheless, the result should be interpreted within the limitations of a one-group pre-test/post-test design. Although the learners demonstrated statistically significant gains following ARAL implementation, the design does not completely rule out other explanations for the improvement, such as regular classroom instruction, repeated exposure to the tested competencies, maturation, or other learning activities. Thus, the results provide strong evidence of improvement following the intervention but should not be interpreted as definitive proof that ARAL alone caused the observed gains. There are still other factors that contribute to the improvement of performance. These findings support the potential of targeted academic recovery interventions in helping struggling learners address learning gaps and move toward expected levels of academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study establish that Key Stage 2 learners exhibited limited academic performance in English prior to the implementation of the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program. However, their proficiency levels showed substantial gains following the intervention. Statistical analysis of the gathered data confirmed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, providing empirical evidence that targeted tutorial interventions effectively bridge learning gaps in English literacy. These results align closely with the Department of Education's current strategic directive, which champions structured, data-driven remedial frameworks to assist struggling students in achieving grade-level competencies. While the ARAL Program demonstrates considerable

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promise as a supportive instructional tool, caution must be exercised in establishing direct causality. The observed academic gains cannot be attributed exclusively to the program; concurrent variables—such as ongoing classroom instruction, cumulative exposure to fundamental competencies, and complementary learning activities—may have collectively contributed to the learners' overall progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School Heads may sustain and strengthen the implementation of the ARAL program, particularly for learners who continue to demonstrate learning gaps in English.
2. Teachers and tutors may continue providing targeted and differentiated instruction based on the specific competencies that learners have not yet mastered.
3. Schools may conduct regular formative assessments, pre-assessments, post-assessments and periodic progress monitoring to identify learners who continue to experience difficulties.
4. Teachers and tutors may use the results of diagnostic and formative assessments to design individualized or small-group learning activities.
5. Schools may ensure that availability and appropriate use of age-and level-appropriate learning materials, activity sheets, intervention modules and other supplementary resources. Learning materials should be matched with the learners' actual reading and English proficiency levels to maximize the effectiveness of intervention sessions.

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6. Parents and guardians may be encouraged to provide continued support for learners' English and reading development at home.
 7. Schools may integrate successful ARAL practices into regular classroom instruction so that gains achieved during the intervention are sustained.
 8. The Schools Division Office may continue providing technical assistance, capability-building activities, and monitoring support for school heads, English teachers, and ARA tutors.
 9. Future studies may involve a larger sample and learners from several schools or districts to improve the generalizability of the findings.
 10. Researchers may also consider using a quasi-experimental design with a comparison or control group to provide stronger evidence regarding the causal effect of ARAL.
 11. Future research may further examine which specific components of the intervention—such as tutoring frequency, instructional strategies, learning materials, tutor characteristics, or parental involvement—contribute most strongly to learner improvement.
 12. Future researchers may also consider conducting a delayed post-test or follow-up assessment to determine whether the gains demonstrated after the ARAL intervention are sustained over time.

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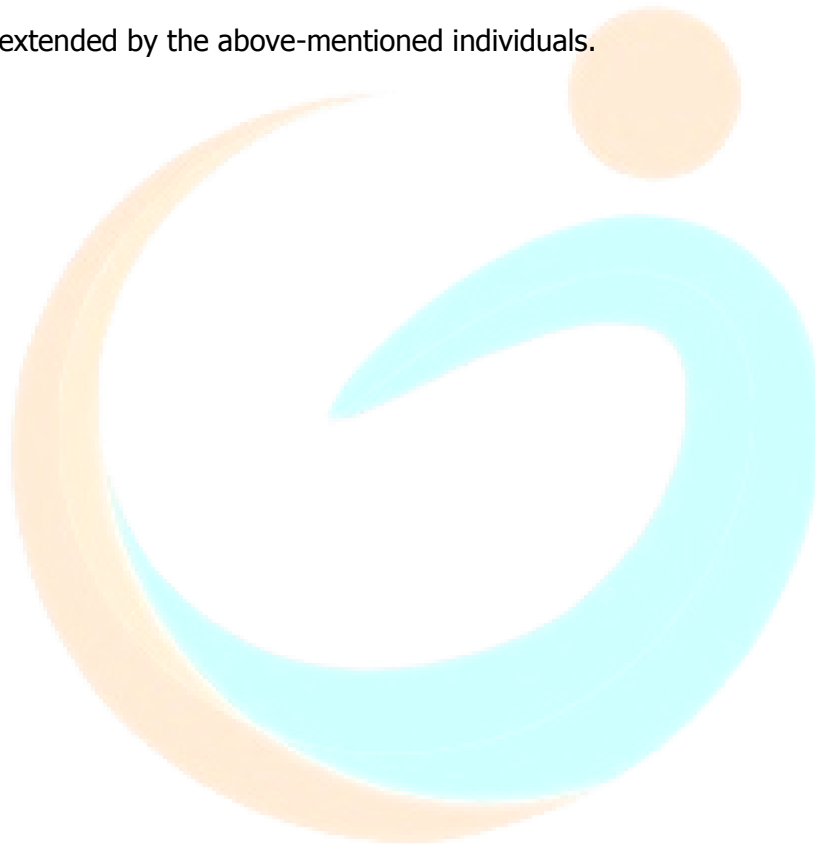
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AUTHOR'S PROFILE



MRS. EDILYN G. OQUIAS

Edilyn G. Oquias, born on November 21, 1980, in Manila, is a passionate and dedicated educator committed to fostering meaningful learning experiences among young learners. She was raised in Brgy. Kilim, Baybay City, where her passion for teaching and service began.

She completed her elementary education at Gabas Elementary School and her secondary education at Baybay National High School, where she actively participated in various school programs, helping shape her confidence and leadership at an early age. Through hard work and perseverance, she pursues higher education.

Edilyn earned her Bachelor Science of Agricultural Education from Visayas State University in 2001. Same year, she successfully passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), which marked the official start of her career in the teaching profession.

Her work experience includes teaching Grade 2 at Benedictine School from 2003 to 2005, where she developed foundational skills in teaching beginning reading and handling primary learners. She later worked abroad in Hsinchu Taiwan as Technical Assistance from

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2008 to 2017 where she enhanced her intrapersonal and computer skills, showcasing her flexibility and commitment to growth.

In September 2021, Edilyn joined the Department of Education, where she continues to serve as a dedicated teacher. Her various professional experiences have helped her grow into a competent and compassionate educator.

Driven by her desire for continuous learning and leadership in education, Edilyn pursued a Master of Arts in Education (MAEd), major in Elementary Education, at Western Leyte College. In 2024, she successfully completed the academic requirements (CAR) for the program, marking another important milestone in her journey as a lifelong learner and future school leader.

With her strong foundation in teaching, diverse work experience, and commitment to professional advancement, Edilyn G. Oquias continues to inspire her learners and colleagues alike as she strives to make a lasting impact in the field of education.

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