

Evaluating Learning Recovery Initiatives for Grade 12 Students: Evidence from an International School in Cavite, Philippines

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Abstract

Learning recovery has become a major educational concern in the Philippines due to persistent learning gaps and declining academic proficiency among senior high school students. This study evaluated the implementation and effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program (LRP) for Grade 12 students in an international school in Cavite. Specifically, the study examined instructional interventions, assessment practices, monitoring systems, and institutional support mechanisms that influence students' competency development and mastery of learning outcomes. Anchored on program evaluation and learning recovery frameworks, the study utilized a qualitative case study design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve participants composed of six Grade 12 teachers, two academic coordinators, one guidance personnel, and two Grade 12 students who experienced learning recovery interventions. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis through open coding, categorization, and theme generation. Findings revealed that the Learning Recovery Program contributed positively to students' academic engagement through individualized remediation, performance-based assessments, collaborative teacher interventions, and socio-emotional support mechanisms. However, several challenges affected the full implementation of the program, including inconsistent monitoring systems, heavy teacher workload, delayed intervention mechanisms, resource limitations, and flexible promotion practices that may contribute to progression without complete mastery of competencies. The study further revealed that while students demonstrated competence in specialized and practical subjects, gaps remained in higher-order thinking skills, independent learning, and sustained mastery across subject areas. The study concludes that the Learning Recovery Program possesses strong foundational practices but requires stronger institutional monitoring, standardized assessment benchmarks, and enhanced instructional support systems to maximize learning outcomes. Recommendations are proposed to improve early intervention systems, strengthen competency-based assessment, reduce administrative burden, and institutionalize systematic program evaluation practices.

Keywords: Learning Recovery Program, Program Evaluation, Senior High School Education, Learning Gaps, Educational Assessment

1. Introduction

The educational disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected student learning.

ning outcomes across the world. In the Philippines, prolonged school closures and the implementation of flexible learning modalities intensified existing educational inequalities and widened learning gaps among students. Recent national and international assessments revealed substantial declines in literacy, numeracy, and higher-order thinking skills among Filipino learners [1]. These findings raised concerns regarding students' readiness for higher education, employment, and lifelong learning.

The Second Congressional Commission on Education reported that the proportion of non-proficient learners dramatically increases in higher grade levels, with many Grade 12 students demonstrating inadequate mastery of expected competencies [2]. National reports also indicate that a significant number of senior high school learners continue to experience challenges in critical thinking, data interpretation, and applied learning despite progressing academically [3]. Such conditions highlight concerns regarding learning loss, competency mastery, and the possibility of mass promotion practices within schools.

In response to these educational challenges, schools implemented various learning recovery initiatives designed to support struggling learners and address academic gaps. Learning recovery programs typically include remediation sessions, differentiated instruction, intervention classes, competency-based assessments, and socio-emotional support mechanisms aimed at improving student performance and restoring foundational competencies [4]. However, the effectiveness of these interventions varies depending on institutional practices, instructional quality, monitoring systems, and available resources.

Program evaluation is essential in determining whether educational interventions achieve their intended goals. According to Fitzpatrick et al. (2022) [5], program evaluation systematically examines program implementation, effectiveness, and outcomes to identify strengths, limitations, and areas requiring improvement. In the context of learning recovery initiatives, program evaluation provides evidence regarding whether interventions genuinely support competency mastery or merely facilitate student progression without sufficient learning gains.

Senior high school education is particularly critical because Grade 12 students are expected to demonstrate advanced competencies aligned with college readiness, employment preparation, and lifelong learning skills. Ensuring mastery of competencies at this level is necessary to support students' successful transition to higher education or professional practice. Therefore, examining the effectiveness of learning recovery initiatives in senior high school settings is important in strengthening educational quality and accountability.

This study evaluated the Learning Recovery Program implemented for Grade 12 students in an international school in Cavite. Specifically, the study examined instructional interventions, assessment practices, monitoring systems, and institutional support mechanisms affecting the implementation of the program. It also identified strengths and challenges influencing the effectiveness of learning recovery initiatives in promoting competency mastery among students.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the Learning Recovery Program implemented for Grade 12 students?
2. What instructional and assessment practices support learning recovery?
3. What challenges affect the implementation of the Learning Recovery Program?
4. How effective is the program in promoting competency mastery among learners?
5. What improvements may strengthen the implementation of the Learning Recovery Program?

The findings of this study may benefit school administrators, teachers, curriculum planners, and educational policymakers by providing contextualized insights into the implementation of learning

recovery interventions. The study may also contribute to the improvement of institutional support systems and evidence-based educational decision-making.

2. Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design utilizing a program evaluation approach. Qualitative research is appropriate for examining participants' experiences, institutional practices, and contextual factors influencing program implementation (Creswell & Poth, 2023) [6]. The qualitative case study design enabled the researcher to explore in-depth perspectives regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program within a specific institutional setting.

The study also incorporated responsive evaluation principles, which focus on understanding stakeholder experiences and perceptions regarding educational interventions [5]. This approach allowed the researcher to examine how teachers, coordinators, support personnel, and students perceived the strengths and limitations of the program.

Research Participants

To strengthen the credibility and robustness of the study, twelve participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation and experience of the Learning Recovery Program. The participants included six Grade 12 teachers, two academic coordinators, one guidance counselor, and two Grade 12 students who previously participated in remediation or intervention activities. The teacher participants represented different subject areas, including specialized and academic disciplines, and possessed teaching experience ranging from five to fifteen years. The coordinators and support personnel had extensive experience in instructional supervision and student support services. Student participants were selected based on their participation in learning recovery interventions during the academic year.

Purposive sampling was utilized because it allows researchers to select participants with relevant experiences and substantial knowledge regarding the phenomenon being studied [7]. The inclusion of multiple stakeholders enhanced data triangulation and strengthened the trustworthiness of findings.

Research Instrument

Semi-structured interview guides were utilized as the primary data collection instrument in this study. The interview questions were designed to gather in-depth information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program. Specifically, the interviews explored participants' perspectives on program implementation and intervention practices, instructional and assessment strategies employed to support learners, monitoring and supervision mechanisms, student learning experiences, institutional support systems, and the challenges affecting the overall effectiveness of the program. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility in probing participants' responses while ensuring that all relevant areas aligned with the objectives of the study were adequately discussed. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility in probing participants' responses while ensuring alignment with the objectives of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study and ethical considerations. Informed consent was obtained before conducting the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted over a three-week period. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through online conferencing platforms

depending on participant availability. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription and analysis.

To strengthen data triangulation, the researcher also reviewed selected institutional documents related to the Learning Recovery Program, including remediation plans, monitoring forms, and assessment guidelines. Observational notes regarding institutional practices and learning environments were likewise documented during the study.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2023) [8]. Thematic analysis is a systematic qualitative method used to identify, organize, and interpret recurring patterns, meanings, and themes within qualitative data. The analysis began with familiarization of the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' responses. Significant statements and responses were then subjected to open coding to identify relevant concepts and ideas. Related codes were grouped into categories to establish meaningful connections among the data. Emerging themes and subthemes were subsequently identified to capture recurring patterns related to the implementation and effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program. Finally, the themes were interpreted and synthesized to generate meaningful findings aligned with the objectives of the study. Codes and themes were compared across participant groups to identify similarities and differences in perspectives. Data triangulation was achieved through the comparison of interview responses, institutional documents, and observational notes.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability strategies. Member checking was conducted by allowing selected participants to validate summaries of findings. Audit trail documentation and peer debriefing were also utilized to strengthen the reliability of interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles in conducting educational research. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Participants' identities were anonymized to maintain confidentiality and privacy. Audio recordings and transcripts were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher.

3. Results

Thematic analysis generated six major themes regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program.

Personalized Learning Interventions Enhance Student Engagement

Participants emphasized that individualized instructional strategies significantly contributed to supporting struggling learners. Teachers implemented differentiated activities, remediation sessions, one-on-one consultations, and performance-based tasks to address students' learning gaps.

Several teachers explained that individualized interventions helped students regain confidence and improve academic participation. Student participants also reported that personalized feedback and guided remediation activities enabled them to better understand difficult lessons and complete academic requirements successfully.

One teacher explained that individualized remediation allowed students to progress according to their own learning pace, particularly in specialized and technical subjects. Another participant highlighted that return demonstrations strengthened competency retention because students repeatedly practiced essential skills.

These findings support the work of Tomlinson et al., (2015) [9], who emphasized that differentiated instruction improves learner engagement and supports varied learning needs.

Collaborative Monitoring Supports Learning Recovery

Collaborative practices among teachers, coordinators, and support personnel emerged as a major component of the program. Participants described regular consultations, referral systems, and collaborative tracking of students requiring interventions.

Academic coordinators explained that teachers regularly identify struggling learners and coordinate with other subject teachers and support personnel to provide appropriate support mechanisms. Guidance and learning support services were integrated into the intervention process to address both academic and socio-emotional concerns.

Teachers emphasized that communication and collaboration improved consistency in monitoring learners' progress. Student participants similarly reported that regular follow-ups from teachers motivated them to complete intervention activities and improve academic performance.

The findings suggest that collaborative support systems contribute positively to learning recovery implementation. Sandar and Kalman (2022) [10] emphasized that collaborative professional practices strengthen educational recovery initiatives and instructional responsiveness.

Performance-Based Assessment Strengthens Competency Development

Participants consistently highlighted the use of authentic and performance-based assessments within the Learning Recovery Program. Teachers explained that practical demonstrations, immersion activities, project outputs, and return demonstrations were utilized to assess competency mastery.

Participants from specialized subjects emphasized that performance-based assessments provided more meaningful evidence of learning compared to traditional examinations. Students also reported that practical activities allowed them to apply concepts in real-life contexts, thereby increasing engagement and relevance.

However, several participants acknowledged that assessment adjustments were occasionally implemented to accommodate struggling learners. While such practices supported completion rates, some participants expressed concerns that flexible grading mechanisms might unintentionally allow progression despite incomplete mastery of competencies.

This finding aligns with concerns raised by the OECD (2023) [4] regarding competency-based assessment integrity and academic progression in post-pandemic education systems.

Teacher Workload and Administrative Demands Limit Instructional Effectiveness

Heavy teacher workload emerged as one of the major challenges affecting program implementation. Participants reported that extensive documentation requirements, preparation of reports, intervention monitoring forms, and administrative tasks consumed substantial instructional preparation time.

Teachers handling laboratory and specialized subjects explained that extended instructional sessions already required intensive preparation and supervision. Additional administrative responsibilities reduced opportunities for individualized instructional planning and consistent intervention follow-ups.

One participant stated that reducing paperwork would enable teachers to focus more on instructional improvement and student support. Coordinators likewise acknowledged that administrative overload affected the sustainability of intervention practices.

These findings support UNESCO's (2024) [11] report indicating that administrative burden contributes to teacher stress and reduced instructional quality.

Resource Limitations Affect Program Implementation

Participants identified limitations in instructional resources, laboratory facilities, and learning materials as barriers to effective implementation. Teachers from practical and technical subjects reported that shared laboratory facilities restricted students' opportunities for hands-on practice and individualized demonstrations.

Scheduling conflicts and limited access to specialized equipment occasionally delayed intervention activities and affected instructional continuity. Student participants similarly expressed that additional learning materials and extended practice opportunities would improve their confidence and competency development.

The findings indicate that resource limitations significantly affect the sustainability and quality of learning recovery interventions, particularly in specialized learning areas requiring practical competency development.

Delayed Interventions and Inconsistent Monitoring Reduce Program Effectiveness

Although intervention mechanisms were present, participants acknowledged inconsistencies in implementation and monitoring practices. Several teachers explained that interventions were often initiated only after students demonstrated substantial academic difficulties.

Participants also noted the absence of standardized mastery benchmarks and uniform monitoring procedures across subject areas. Consequently, intervention outcomes varied depending on teacher practices and available institutional support systems.

Academic coordinators recognized the need for stronger data-driven monitoring systems and earlier diagnostic assessments to prevent the accumulation of learning gaps. Student participants similarly suggested that earlier interventions could have improved their academic adjustment and performance.

The findings highlight the importance of proactive intervention systems and standardized monitoring frameworks in strengthening learning recovery programs.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Learning Recovery Program provided meaningful support mechanisms that contributed positively to students' academic engagement and competency development. Personalized interventions, collaborative monitoring systems, performance-based assessments, and socio-emotional support mechanisms emerged as significant strengths of the program. These findings align with current educational research emphasizing the importance of differentiated instruction, collaborative learning environments, and authentic assessment strategies in supporting post-pandemic learning recovery [1].

The implementation of individualized remediation strategies reflects learner-centered instructional approaches that accommodate varied student needs and support academic participation. Personalized learning interventions enabled struggling learners to receive targeted support and progress according to their learning pace. Similarly, performance-based assessments strengthened practical competency development by allowing students to demonstrate applied learning within authentic contexts. Such practices are particularly relevant in senior high school education, where learners are expected to develop higher-order and career-related competencies.

Despite these strengths, the study identified several institutional and structural challenges affecting program implementation. Heavy teacher workload, extensive administrative demands, inconsistent monitoring systems, delayed intervention mechanisms, and limited instructional resources reduced the

sustainability and consistency of learning recovery practices. These findings are consistent with recent studies suggesting that administrative overload and institutional limitations negatively affect instructional quality and teacher effectiveness [12].

A critical concern identified in the study involved flexible assessment and promotion practices that may unintentionally contribute to student progression despite incomplete mastery of competencies. Although compassionate and flexible assessment practices became common during educational disruptions, excessive leniency may weaken academic standards and compromise long-term learning outcomes. This concern reflects national findings regarding declining student proficiency levels in the Philippines [3, 2]. The study also highlights the importance of proactive and data-driven intervention systems. Delayed remediation often allowed learning gaps to accumulate before interventions were implemented. Strengthening diagnostic assessment systems, institutional monitoring mechanisms, and standardized competency benchmarks may therefore improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of learning recovery initiatives.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the Learning Recovery Program demonstrates strong foundational practices, improvements in instructional support systems, institutional monitoring, assessment rigor, and resource provision are necessary to maximize learning outcomes and ensure genuine competency mastery among Grade 12 students.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that the Learning Recovery Program implemented for Grade 12 students in an international school in Cavite provides meaningful instructional and support mechanisms that contribute positively to student engagement and competency development. Personalized learning interventions, collaborative monitoring systems, and performance-based assessment practices were identified as major strengths of the program.

However, the study also revealed several challenges affecting program effectiveness, including heavy teacher workload, resource limitations, delayed interventions, inconsistent monitoring systems, and flexible assessment practices that may contribute to student progression without complete mastery of competencies.

To strengthen the effectiveness of the Learning Recovery Program, the study recommends implementing early diagnostic assessments, establishing standardized mastery benchmarks, reducing excessive administrative workload, improving instructional resources, and institutionalizing systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Strengthening these areas may help ensure that learning recovery initiatives promote genuine mastery of competencies and support long-term educational success among senior high school learners.

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