

Perceived Effectiveness and Challenges in the Implementation of the Early Language Literacy and Numeracy (ELLN) and Its Effect on Academic Performance: Basis for a Proposed Training Program

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Abstract

This study determined the perceived effectiveness and challenges in the implementation of the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) Program and its effect on learners' academic performance in Rizal District, Cagayan. Specifically, it examined the effectiveness of the program in terms of instructional planning and design, teaching strategies and methodologies, and monitoring and evaluation practices. It also identified the challenges encountered by teachers and determined the significant differences in the implementation of the program and learners' academic performance among elementary schools. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents were Kindergarten to Grade 3 (K-3) teachers from different elementary schools in Rizal District. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean, frequency count, percentage distribution, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. Findings revealed that the ELLN Program was perceived as very effective, particularly in lesson planning, use of varied teaching strategies, and assessment practices. Learners demonstrated high academic performance, especially in numeracy and word recognition skills. However, teachers moderately encountered challenges such as lack of parental support, large class sizes, insufficient instructional materials, and limited time for remediation. The study also found that the implementation of the ELLN Program has a significant relationship with learners' academic performance, indicating its positive impact on literacy, numeracy, and overall academic achievement. It is recommended that continuous teacher training, strengthened parental involvement, and improved instructional support be provided to sustain and enhance the effective implementation of the ELLN Program.

Keywords: ELLN Program; Effectiveness; Challenges; Academic performance; Instructional practices; Literacy and numeracy; K-3 teachers; Rizal District; Cagayan

1. Introduction

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable development. UNESCO underscores that investing in early childhood education is one of the most effective strategies to reduce poverty, strengthen human capital, and promote lifelong learning [1]. Early experiences profoundly shape brain development, influencing future learning, health, and productivity [1].

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has consistently emphasized the importance of early education as a foundation for learners' academic success [2]. To address challenges in literacy and numeracy, DepEd launched the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) Program through DepEd Order No. 12, series of 2015 [3]. The program aims to capacitate Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers with pedagogical skills, provide instructional materials, and establish mentoring systems for continuous professional development [4,6]. Strengthening early literacy is crucial, as it serves as the foundation for all academic learning in later life [7,8].

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Aligned with the ELLN framework, DepEd introduced Bridging Primer 3, a contextualized reading material designed to strengthen Grade 2 learners' fluency and comprehension in English [8]. Anchored on the Enhanced Phonics Approach and Explicit Instruction, Primer 3 supports teachers in transitioning learners from oral language to reading and writing tasks [9]. Studies have shown that consistent use of reading primers can significantly enhance literacy outcomes in the early grades [10,12]. However, successful implementation depends largely on how teachers integrate these tools into daily instruction, often challenged by limited resources, heavy workloads, and varying levels of training [13–16]. Sustained mentoring, school-based monitoring, and availability of quality learning resources are vital to achieving literacy gains [17,18].

At the local level, Lattut Elementary School recognizes that reading difficulties among Grade 2 pupils hinder performance across subjects [24]. Integrating Primer 3 into daily lessons seeks to provide consistent exposure to literacy tasks that enhance comprehension and word recognition [15]. Yet, despite the nationwide implementation of ELLN, there remains a lack of research examining its connection with Bridging Primer 3 and its impact on learners' academic performance [16-18].

This study is motivated by two pressing concerns: the alarming literacy levels among Filipino students [19] and the absence of literature on the integration of Bridging Primer 3 within the ELLN framework. By investigating how teachers employ ELLN strategies and incorporate Primer 3 in Lattut Elementary School, the research aims to enhance instructional practices, strengthen teacher competence, and ultimately improve learners' literacy and numeracy outcomes. In doing so, it contributes to filling a significant gap in educational research and supports DepEd's thrust toward quality early grade instruction [20-21].

Considering that the program of ELLN is already widely known, its effectiveness remains underexplored especially in localized effectiveness and implementation challenges at the district level, particularly in Rizal, Cagayan. Despite the multiple studies that explored the professional education training of teachers in terms of literacy instruction, and ELLN outcomes, there is currently no existing related literature that specifically focuses on its impact on learners' literacy development both in reading and numeracy skills. This lack of prior research creates a significant gap that this study intends to address.

With these, in the scope of Rizal, Cagayan elementary schools, it is important to conduct a research study in order to investigate how teachers employ the ELLN program as prescribed by DepEd and how it is incorporated into their daily classes. Moreover, this study will also aid in assisting teachers through enhancing their daily instructional strategies in order to maximize the implementation of the ELLN projected goals. Subsequently, an enhanced skill set of teachers will result in quality education that will benefit the pupils in their early stage of studies. Lastly, it will contribute to educational research by proposing a training program to address the challenges encountered by elementary teachers in the implementation of the ELLN Program.

With these considerations, it is important to conduct a research study in Rizal District elementary schools to investigate how teachers employ the ELLN program as prescribed by DepEd and how it is incorporated into their daily classes. This study will also aid in assisting teachers through enhancing their instructional strategies to maximize the implementation of ELLN's projected goals. Subsequently, an enhanced skill set of teachers will result in quality education that will benefit pupils in their early stage of studies. Lastly, it will contribute to educational research by proposing a training program to address the challenges encountered by elementary teachers in the implementation of the ELLN Program, thereby bridging the research gap in localized contexts such as Rizal, Cagayan.

This study generally aims to determine the perceived effectiveness and challenges in the implementation of the early language, literacy, and numeracy (ELLN) program and its effect on the academic performance of elementary learners in Rizal, Cagayan. Specifically, it seeks to assess the program's effectiveness in terms of instructional planning and design, teaching strategies and methodologies, and monitoring and evaluation practices. It also intends to determine the level of learners' academic performance after the implementation of the program and to identify the challenges encountered by teachers in carrying it out. Furthermore, the study examines whether there are significant differences in the implementation of the ELLN program among schools and whether there are differences in learners' academic performance in relation to program implementation. Finally, it investigates the relationship between the implementation of the ELLN program and learners' academic performance, thereby providing insights into how effective delivery of the program influences student achievement.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the implementation of the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) Program in Rizal District, Cagayan. Specifically, it sought to describe how the program is carried out, identify the challenges encountered by elementary school teachers, and assess the academic performance of learners in relation to the program. Beyond these objectives, the design also enabled the researcher to examine whether there are significant differences in the implementation of the ELLN Program across elementary schools in the district, as well as differences in learners' academic performance that may be linked to how the program is implemented. In essence, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive view of both the effectiveness and challenges of the ELLN Program while establishing its relationship to student achievement.

2.2. Locale of the Study

The study was carried out in the Municipality of Rizal, Province of Cagayan, encompassing all elementary schools within the area. To provide context and clarity, a site map was utilized to illustrate the geographical location of the study area, ensuring that the scope and setting of the research were clearly defined. This allowed the researcher to situate the investigation within the local educational landscape and highlight the coverage of the study across the municipality's schools.

2.3. Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study are **Kindergarten to Grade 3 (K-3) teachers** from all elementary schools in the Municipality of Rizal, Cagayan during the school year 2025–2026. Selected through **purposive sampling**, all K-3 teachers across the district were included since they are directly responsible for implementing the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) Program, making them the most suitable participants. The schools represented in the study include Bural Integrated School, Cambabangan Elementary School, Dungan Elementary School, Duyun Elementary School, Gaddangao Elementary School, Gaggabutan Elementary School, Illuru Elementary School, Lattut Elementary School, Liuan Elementary School, Masi Elementary School, Mauanan Elementary School, Nanungaran Elementary School, Rizal Central School, San Juan Integrated School, Sinicking Elementary School, and Villa Cruz Elementary School, each identified by their respective school IDs.

2.4. Research Instrument

For data gathering, the study will utilize a structured research questionnaire developed by the researcher in line with the statement of the problem. The instrument is divided into two categories for K-3 teachers. The first category, consisting of 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale, is designed to assess the implementation of the ELLN Program. The second category, composed of 15 items on a 4-point Likert scale, focuses on the perceived challenges encountered by learners when Bridging Primer 3 is integrated into their daily classes. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the questionnaire will undergo validity and reliability testing. Content validation will be conducted by education experts to confirm alignment with study objectives and clarity of items, while a pilot test with a small group of Grade 2 teachers and pupils outside the actual respondents will be carried out. The responses will then be analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with a reliability score of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument produces consistent results across items.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

The study employed appropriate statistical tools to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage distribution, and weighted mean were used to evaluate the implementation of the ELLN Program, the integration of Bridging Primer 3, learners' academic performance, and the perceived challenges encountered by teachers. For interpretation, mean scores related to program implementation and integration were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, with values ranging from *very effective* (4.01–5.00) to *not effective* (0.01–1.00). Similarly, engagement with Bridging Primer 3 and perceived challenges were interpreted on the same scale but categorized as *always* (4.01–5.00) to *never* (0.01–1.00). To determine relationships among variables, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied, identifying whether significant correlations existed between the implementation of the ELLN Program, the integration of Bridging Primer 3, and learners' academic performance. All statistical findings were carefully interpreted and supported by relevant literature and prior studies.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1 Effectiveness of the ELLN Program in Rizal District as Perceived by the Teachers

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
A. INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DESIGN		
The lessons are well-thought-out according to the needs of learners.	5.00	Very Effective
Clearly defined and aligned with ELLN goals.	5.00	Very Effective
Instructional materials are at the appropriate literacy and numeracy levels for learners.	5.00	Very Effective
Strengthens foundational skills in reading and numeracy through activities.	4.95	Very Effective
ELLN approach is integrated well in lesson plans.	4.90	Very Effective
Category Mean	4.97	Very Effective
B. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES		
Teachers employ a variety of methods to develop reading skills.	4.95	Very Effective
Numeracy learning is made more exciting with interactive games.	4.95	Very Effective
The different learning abilities and lesson are adapted to suit learner's needs.	4.90	Very Effective
During ELLN instruction, learners are hands-on or actively engaged.	4.95	Very Effective
21st century skills in teaching promotes rigorous thinking and understanding.	4.95	Very Effective
Category Mean	4.94	Very Effective
C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PRACTICES		
The reading progress of students is routinely evaluated.	4.80	Very Effective
The right instruments are used to assess numeracy abilities.	4.88	Very Effective
The findings of assessments are utilized to enhance instruction.	4.88	Very Effective
Learners receive feedback on a regular basis.	4.82	Very Effective
The goals of ELLN are in line with monitoring tools.	4.94	Very Effective
Category Mean	4.87	Very Effective
OVERALL MEAN	4.93	VERY EFFECTIVE

The results of Table 1 show that the ELLN Program in Rizal District is perceived as highly effective, with an overall mean score of 4.93 across all indicators. Among the components, instructional planning and design ranked the highest with a mean of 4.97, highlighting well-structured lessons aligned with program goals and learner needs. Teaching strategies and methodologies followed closely with a mean of 4.94, reflecting the use of diverse approaches that foster active engagement. Meanwhile, monitoring and evaluation practices obtained a mean of 4.87, indicating consistent assessment and feedback mechanisms to support learner progress. These findings affirm that the program is effectively implemented, strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy skills and positively influencing academic

performance. The strong effectiveness of the program, as evidenced by the overall mean of 4.93, aligns with DepEd Order No. 12, s. 2015, which underscores structured planning, varied teaching strategies, and continuous monitoring as key to early literacy and numeracy development. This is further supported by Bernardo (2018), who emphasized that early literacy skills significantly impact academic achievement in the primary grades. Together, these findings confirm that the ELLN Program in Rizal District is consistent with established educational frameworks that prioritize foundational skills as essential for lifelong learning.

Table 2 Learners' Academic Performance After the Implementation of the ELLN Program

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Reading comprehension	3.73	High
Word recognition	4.12	High
Basic numeracy skills	4.18	High
Problem-solving ability	3.82	High
Mean Academic Performance	3.9	High

Table 2 indicates that learners' academic performance after the implementation of the ELLN Program achieved an overall mean of 3.96 (High), reflecting significant improvement in literacy and numeracy skills. Among the indicators, basic numeracy skills scored the highest at 4.18, followed by word recognition at 4.12, showing strong gains in foundational mathematics and reading abilities. Meanwhile, reading comprehension (3.73) and problem-solving ability (3.82), though slightly lower, still fall within the "High" category, suggesting areas where continued reinforcement is needed. Overall, the findings highlight that the ELLN Program effectively strengthened learners' core competencies, laying a solid foundation for future academic success while emphasizing the importance of sustained support in comprehension and problem-solving. These results are consistent with Bernardo (2018), who stressed that strengthening literacy and numeracy in the early grades leads to notable improvements in achievement, particularly in word recognition and basic math skills. Similarly, Garcia and Reyes (2018) found that targeted reading interventions enhanced fluency and comprehension among primary learners, underscoring the need for continuous support in comprehension and higher-order thinking skills. Together, these studies affirm that the ELLN Program's emphasis on foundational competencies contributes significantly to improved academic performance and prepares learners for more advanced learning tasks.

Table 3 Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the ELLN Program

Indicators	Mean	Rank
Lack of instructional materials	2.85	4
Insufficient training on ELLN strategies	2.95	3
Large class size	3.00	2
Limited time for remediation	2.85	4
Diverse learning abilities of pupils	3.00	2
Lack of parental support	3.15	1
Difficulty in assessing learners' progress	2.85	4

Table 3 reveals that teachers sometimes encounter challenges in implementing the ELLN Program, with results showing a moderate occurrence of difficulties. The most significant issue identified was lack of parental support (mean = 3.15), underscoring the crucial role of home involvement in program success. This was followed by large class sizes (3.00) and diverse learning abilities of pupils (3.00), both of which pose challenges to classroom management and differentiated instruction. Other factors such as insufficient training on ELLN strategies (2.95), lack of instructional materials (2.85), limited time for remediation (2.85), and difficulty in assessing learners' progress (2.85) were noted as secondary challenges, though they still contribute to the overall difficulty of sustaining effective implementation. These findings align with Torres (2020), who highlighted that large class sizes and limited resources hinder effective ELLN implementation, and with Manalo and Villanueva (2020), who emphasized that lack of parental involvement and weak

support systems remain significant barriers in Northern Luzon schools. Taken together, the results affirm that strengthening home-school collaboration, improving instructional support, and enhancing classroom conditions are essential to ensure the successful implementation of the ELLN Program and its positive impact on learners' academic performance.

3.1. Proposed Training Program

3.1.1. Rationale

The proposed training program is designed to address the challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of the Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy (ELLN) Program. It aims to strengthen teachers' competencies in literacy and numeracy instruction, improve classroom practices, and enhance learners' academic performance through targeted professional development activities.

3.1.2. Objectives

- To enhance teachers' skills in reading intervention and numeracy instruction.
- To improve instructional strategies and classroom management practices.
- To develop effective instructional materials and assessment techniques.
- To strengthen the implementation of the ELLN Program across Rizal District elementary schools.

Challenges	Activities	Persons Involved	Expected Outcomes	Timeline
Weak reading skills among learners	Reading intervention workshop	Teachers, Reading Coordinators	Improved literacy instruction and reading performance	First Quarter
Limited numeracy strategies	Numeracy enhancement seminar	Math Coordinators, Teachers	Improved numeracy teaching and learner performance	Second Quarter
Insufficient instructional materials	Instructional material development training	Teachers, School Heads	Development of contextualized and engaging learning materials	Third Quarter
Large class size and classroom management issues	Classroom management seminar	Teachers, Master Teachers	Improved classroom management and learner engagement	Third Quarter
Difficulty in assessing learners' progress	Assessment and evaluation workshop	Teachers, School Heads	Improved assessment practices and monitoring of learner progress	Fourth Quarter

Table 4 Differences in the Implementation of the ELLN Program Among Elementary Schools in Rizal, Cagayan

Elementary Schools	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value	Interpretation/ Decision
Bural IS	4.85	0.30	1.253	0.245	Accept Ho (Not Significant)
Cambabangan ES	4.90	0.25			
Dungan ES	4.88	0.28			
Duyun ES	4.87	0.32			
Gaddangao ES	4.92	0.20			
Gaggabutan ES	4.89	0.27			
Illuru ES	4.91	0.22			
Lattut ES	4.86	0.35			
Liuan ES	4.88	0.29			

Masi ES	4.90	0.26			
Mauanan ES	4.87	0.31			
Nanungaran ES	4.89	0.28			
Rizal CS	4.93	0.18			
San Juan IS	4.88	0.27			
Sinicking ES	4.86	0.33			
Villa Cruz ES	4.90	0.24			

Table 4 shows that the implementation of the ELLN Program across elementary schools in Rizal, Cagayan is consistently high, with mean scores ranging from 4.85 to 4.93. Rizal Central School recorded the highest mean of 4.93 (SD = 0.18), while Bural Elementary School had the lowest mean of 4.85 (SD = 0.30). Despite these slight variations, the computed F-value of 1.253 and p-value of 0.245 indicate no significant differences among schools, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This suggests that the program is being implemented uniformly across the district, reflecting shared practices and strategies that ensure equitable opportunities for learners to strengthen their language, literacy, and numeracy skills. These findings are consistent with Hosain and Manoos (2023), who reported that consistent implementation of the ELLN Program in South Luzon schools contributed to improved academic achievement, highlighting the importance of standardized practices across districts. Similarly, Santiago (2019) emphasized that strong instructional leadership promotes uniformity in program delivery, enabling schools to adopt shared strategies that enhance literacy outcomes. Together, these studies affirm that the uniform implementation observed in Rizal District sustains the effectiveness of the ELLN Program and promotes equitable learning opportunities for all learners.

Table 5 Differences in Learners' Academic Performance in Relation to the Implementation of the ELLN Program

Elementary Schools	Mean Performance	SD	F-value	p-value	Interpretation/ Decision
Bural IS	3.65	0.50	2.85	0.032	Reject Ho (Significant)
Cambabangan ES	3.95	0.42			
Dungan ES	3.70	0.48			
Duyun ES	3.80	0.45			
Gaddangao ES	4.20	0.38			
Gaggabutan ES	3.85	0.44			
Illuru ES	4.15	0.36			
Lattut ES	3.68	0.49			
Liuan ES	3.75	0.47			
Masi ES	3.90	0.43			
Mauanan ES	3.78	0.46			
Nanungaran ES	3.88	0.44			
Rizal CS	4.25	0.35			
San Juan IS	3.82	0.45			
Sinicking ES	3.72	0.48			
Villa Cruz ES	3.98	0.41			

Table 5 highlights that there are significant differences in learners' academic performance in relation to the implementation of the ELLN Program among elementary schools in Rizal, Cagayan. Mean scores ranged from 3.65 at Bural Elementary School to 4.25 at Rizal Central School, with Rizal CS recording the highest performance (SD = 0.35) and Bural ES the lowest (SD = 0.50). The computed F-value of 2.85 and p-value of 0.032 confirm that these differences

are statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that while the program is uniformly implemented, its impact on learners' academic performance varies across schools, likely influenced by contextual factors such as resources, teacher expertise, and community support. These findings are consistent with Hosain and Manoos (2023), who noted that although the ELLN Program is widely implemented, its effectiveness depends on contextual conditions like teacher competence, resource availability, and community involvement. Similarly, Estrella and Fabian (2021) emphasized that teachers' adaptation to literacy programs is shaped by local factors, including access to materials and parental support, which directly affect student outcomes. Together, these studies reinforce the conclusion that while program implementation may be uniform, differences in school contexts determine how effectively learners benefit from the ELLN Program.

Table 6 Relationship Between the Implementation of the ELLN Program and Learners' Academic Performance

Variables Compared	r-value	p-value	Decision @ 0.05	Interpretation
ELLN Implementation and Academic Performance	0.72	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant

Table 6 demonstrates a strong positive correlation between the implementation of the ELLN Program and learners' academic performance in Rizal District, Cagayan, with an r-value of 0.72 and a p-value of 0.002. Since the p-value is below the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant relationship between the two variables. This indicates that effective implementation of the ELLN Program directly contributes to improved learner outcomes. The findings are consistent with Bernardo (2018), who emphasized that strengthening literacy and numeracy instruction in the early grades leads to substantial gains in overall achievement, particularly in foundational skills. Likewise, Boholano (2020) highlighted the importance of teacher collaboration and reflective practices, noting that training in instructional material development and classroom management equips teachers to better address challenges in program delivery. Together, these studies affirm that prioritizing reading and numeracy interventions, alongside support in instructional materials development and classroom management strategies, can significantly enhance the consistency and effectiveness of ELLN Program implementation in Rizal District, ultimately improving learners' academic performance.

4. Conclusion

The study confirms that the ELLN Program in Rizal District, Cagayan is perceived as highly effective, particularly in instructional planning and design, teaching strategies, and monitoring practices, and is consistently implemented across schools. This has led to a high level of learners' academic performance, with notable gains in basic numeracy and word recognition, while reading comprehension and problem-solving also remain strong. However, teachers report occasional challenges such as lack of parental support, large class sizes, and diverse learning abilities, along with issues in training, materials, and assessment. While program implementation shows no significant differences among schools, learners' academic performance varies, suggesting that contextual factors like resources, teacher expertise, and community support influence outcomes. Importantly, the study establishes a significant positive relationship between program implementation and academic performance, affirming that effective delivery enhances learner achievement. To maximize impact, continuous strengthening through targeted training, improved resources, and sustained support is recommended.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests or non- financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Statement of ethical approval

The study was conducted with approval and in accordance with the standards of the college no ethical approval was required, as the research followed all applicable ethical guidelines. Ensuring respect for the respondents' privacy and confidentiality.

Statement of informed consent

I affirm that the respondents voluntarily agreed to participate after being fully informed about the purpose, nature, and potential implications of the study. Their responses have been collected with utmost respect for their privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with ethical research guidelines.

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