

General Review of the Spanish Language Arts TEKS

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The SLAR TEKS appear to follow a logical development and sequence. It is however necessary to update the introduction for each grade level and use more current research. You can use resources such as the Institute for Education Sciences Practice Guides which have reviewed the existing research for English learners and made it very easy to read and to cite. One of the recommendations includes using the term English learner in place of English language learner. This is a new term that has been adopted by the United States Department of Education and its research arm known as the Institute for Education Sciences.

The SLAR TEKS need an update for the writing section. We need to use more current research on the collaborative writing process and self-regulation. The work of Steve Graham from Arizona should be incorporated into the writing standards.

I have included some very specific examples for each of the grade levels so please read attached pages.

Thank you for this initial opportunity to reflect upon the SLAR TEKS.

SLAR Kindergarten

1. The introduction of the SLAR for Kindergarten could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
2. Under Beginning Reading Skills it is important to include the value of phonemes for reading. In our studies we found that the phoneme predicts future reading ability among this population of students. So students need to know the sounds which form syllables and words.
3. The statement in Section B conflicts what you are saying in section A.
4. Also under this section and the category of phonological awareness, it is important to sequence correctly the ability to rhyme. Students first must be able to identify a rhyme before they are able to generate a rhyme. Therefore the sequence should be changed in this section.
5. In Beginning Reading it does not make sense to focus first on decoding the 5 vowels. You cannot read with a focus solely on vowel sounds. You need to introduce vowels with consonants. The reading adoptions for kindergarten focus for many weeks on introducing vowel sounds thus delaying the ability to decode syllables and words. We need to be careful on how this is worded and interpreted.
6. When students are asked to identify forms of media you may want to consider electronic media such as computers. Radios are mentioned but not computers.

SLAR- First Grade

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for First Grade could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. In Beginning Reading we are referring to the syllables in Spanish as open and closed syllables. Spanish does not identify syllables in this manner because Spanish vowels never change unlike English vowels. We do divide words into syllables and have similar patterns but we should be careful regarding the terminology. We do not want instructors teaching open and closed syllables in Spanish. It is not necessary.
4. In reading strategies we need to update the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like “once upon a time” in Spanish.
5. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
6. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.
7. Under the section of spelling under section F, this will need to be re-visited to include the spelling progression of sounds, syllables word parts or morphological knowledge.
8. Under the Research and Gathering Information, you may want to consider the inclusion of electronic resources. Some may say it is too soon, but I think it is worthy of a discussion.

SLAR-Second Grade

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for Second Grade could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. In Beginning Reading we are referring to the syllables in Spanish as open and closed syllables. Spanish does not identify syllables in this manner because Spanish vowels never change unlike English vowels. We do divide words into syllables and have similar patterns but we should be careful regarding the terminology. We do not want instructors teaching open and closed syllables in Spanish. It is not necessary.
4. In the Beginning Reading Skills, I do not particularly promote the sounds of the letters B and V as the same. This is problematic for learning English and is considered a dialectical variation. In Spain and other countries these 2 sounds are taught as separate sounds. Many will debate this issue but as a linguist, I think it is important to teach the /v/ sound in its original form to help with spelling and writing in Spanish and English. In this way, when the students learn English they will not mispronounce words such as van, victory and visit.
5. Reading strategies section needs to be updated in the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like "once upon a time" in Spanish.
6. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
7. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.
8. Under the section of spelling under section F, this will need to be re-visited to include the spelling progression of sounds, syllables word parts or morphological knowledge.
9. Under the Research and Gathering Information, you may want to consider the inclusion of electronic resources. Some may say it is too soon, but I think it is worthy of a discussion. SLAR-

SLAR Third Grade

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for Third Grade could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. Reading strategies section needs to be updated in the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like “once upon a time” in Spanish.
4. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
5. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.
6. Under the section for vocabulary development it is important to teach explicitly the multiple meanings of words and create multiple opportunities for use.

SLAR Fourth Grade

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for Fourth Grade could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. Reading strategies section needs to be updated in the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like “once upon a time” in Spanish.
4. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
5. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.
6. Under the section for vocabulary development it is important to teach explicitly the multiple meanings of words and create multiple opportunities for use. In addition we want students to use electronic devices for determining the meanings of words.

SLAR Fifth Grade

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for Fifth Grade could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. Reading strategies section needs to be updated in the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like “once upon a time” in Spanish.
4. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
5. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.
6. Under the section for vocabulary development it is important to teach explicitly the multiple meanings of words and create multiple opportunities for use. In addition we want students to use electronic devices for determining the meanings of words.
7. One other concern is the inclusion of sustained silent reading. I worry that students will be doing this without much direction. Perhaps looking at incorporating Collaborative Strategic Reading Techniques developed by Sharon Vaughn and colleagues at UT-Austin might be incorporated into TEKS.

Middle School

1. The introduction section will need to be updated with current research.
2. The introduction of the SLAR for Middle School could include language regarding the transfer of skills from the native language to the second language. It is important to include the fact that students need explicit teaching of the transfer of the skills from first to second language. The research points to the fact that this does not occur without instruction.
3. Reading strategies section needs to be updated in the SLAR TEKS to include text structure techniques. These would include identifying signal words which indicate the text type and help to build metacognitive skills for reading comprehension. This goes beyond just identifying simple concepts like “once upon a time” in Spanish.
4. Once again under the writing process we need to include collaborative writing and include the work of Steve Graham.
5. We want students to have the opportunity to actively engage in reading and writing process. This means working with a partner or in small groups with much purpose and understanding.

High School

It will be important to use the term English Learner. It will be important to review the Institute for Education Sciences Practice Guides. Our research is mentioned in the meta-analysis in simple terms which can be very helpful when refining the SLAR TEKS.

It is also important for students to have the opportunities to engage in discussions and retelling of stories to provide multiple opportunities to use the English language.

When students are learning about English, it will be important to teach them the 6 syllable types of English. This is important for understanding English structure and English reading.

In addition the explicit teaching of cognates needs to be included during instruction.

ESOL I and II

It is important for English learners to understand the minimal pairs of sounds in English. This is helpful for listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is also helpful for challenging English sounds.

It helps students understand the sounds such as /sh/ in shoe and /zh/ in treasure. That is that the sounds are the same except for one feature and that is one is voiced and the other one is a voiceless sound. So you use your voice for one and for the other one you do not use your voice box.

See next page for examples please.

Minimal Pair Examples

Ch and J

F and V

B and P

C, K, and G

S and Z