



Intro to SALT and LSA Basics

Part 1 - Introduction

I'm Mary-Beth Rolland. I am a Speech and Language Clinician. I worked for 35 years in the Madison Metropolitan School District and a certain school district for a few years. Today we're going to talk about introducing you to some SALT and some Language Sample Analysis basics. The agenda we are going to cover today includes reasons you'd do Language Sample Analysis using SALT. We'll do some Sample Elicitation kinds of things. We'll do a Database Review. We'll do a Case Study Interpretation using the Reference Database, and then, without the Reference Database. I'll discuss how you could use SALT. And then, and the very end, I'll wrap up.

First of all, let's answer the question, "Why should you use a Language Sample Analysis?" First of all, and probably the most important thing, is it's an authentic measure of your speaker's oral language. It's a natural and functional language that your child, in your school district, is using, and it mirrors the context of the classroom for you. I can't stress this enough, that often when you're testing a child, or assessing a child, the tests that you're using really don't get at the oral language of your speaker in any way. And a language sample really is the only way you're going to find out how that child really uses oral language. It also provides a real range of measures which describe oral language performance, and creates a profile of strengths and weaknesses. It gives you vocabulary. It gives you morphology and syntax. It gives you discourse. It gives you rate and other measures. It doesn't give you just one thing, like how the child can repeat sentences, or how the child can put a sentence together given one word to create a sentence. So, it really is a strong profile versus just one single area.

It also augments all the standard, or formalized, measures. And while you would never qualify a student for service based solely on a Language Sample Analysis, it's something that's a very important part of any assessment that you're going to do. For best practices in the Madison Public Schools, we say, if you're looking at a student because you're suspecting that they have oral language difficulties, you can't turn in an assessment without a SALT Sample.

It's also developmentally a very sensitive measure. With increasing complexity as a child gets older, you can see the measure is sensitive to that. It effectively documents and substantiates the reasons for the referral. So, if you get a referral and the teacher is saying, "This child, his language is so much different than the other children in the room." You can then take the sample to the teacher and say, "Here's

what the child's doing? How does that match with what you're seeing?" Nine times out of ten the teacher says, "Wow, this is exactly what I'm talking about."

It's a culturally unbiased measure. It reduces over-qualifying students. Time and again we've seen that, when we've looked at kids that either Spanish-speakers or African-American-speakers, we can take out the dialect, or take out the bilingualism and say, "wow, the problem is not language here, at all," and make sure we don't qualify them based on those measures.

It also differentiated between several types of oral language deficits. For example, you can look at it and you can see that the child might have word finding problems, or might have formulation issues, or might have syntactical problems or vocabulary issues. You can see children that have discourse problems, or rate problems. You can look at all the different typologies of problems a child might have in oral language and can really hone in on what's going on with that specific child.

And it's very appropriate to use with most populations- Developmentally Disabled kids, Autism Spectrum Disorder, English as a second language, Learning Disability, Emotional Disability. You can use it with any population, essentially.

The other thing is, SALT also really helps you develop therapy goals, and it's repeatable, so it's not like you have to wait a year, two years, or whatever to give the SALT sample again. You give it three months later. You can do different sampling contexts. It's a really good way to be able to measure therapy and how effective it is. It also can document the progress you're having on therapy goals. You can use it for RTI, you know, Response to Intervention, and I'll show that later in the lecture, an example of RTI using SALT. I don't know if your school district is really into that right now, but our school district is really talking about that. So, I think it's a good way to use that. So, you not only develop your therapy goals, but you can measure progress on it.

And you can also assess for a generalization of skills you've been working on. So, say you've been asking questions, or you've been working on using correct syntactical forms, or whatever, you can use SALT to measure if the child actually is generalizing those skills in a specific format.

Another way is you can document the State Standards for oral language, reading and writing. Our state has really been pushing state standards, and I'm sure that most of you have heard about these. Wisconsin has their own state standards, but there are common core state standards. How does the Language Sample Analysis relate to that? Well, the common core state standards were developed in collaboration with teachers and school administrators and experts across the country to provide clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. The website's down there. You can go and look at those core standards. Most state, their standards are fairly similar, or aligned, fairly well with those state standards. I don't know about California's, but Wisconsin's are actually more detailed than the core State Standards that are on here. And they've been adopted by all but five states, and I know California has adopted these Core State Standards. They're common expectations of what all students need to learn, and they're necessary for college and work skills. They're in all the areas of reading, writing, social studies, math, speaking. And they're all evidence-

based standards. In our district, our curriculum is leaning towards measuring all that as measures of benchmark standards and benchmarks that are on our Report Cards.

So, to just give you ideas of what some of these Core Standards are for speaking and listening, and how SALT can help you measure those. For example, in Kindergarten, one of the Core Standards is for a Kindergartener to describe familiar people, places, things, events with prompting, support and providing additional detail. Well, a SALT conversational sample could do that very easily. So, if a Speech and Language child needs to meet that Core Standard, there's a way to do that very easily. In second grade, a child's supposed to be able to tell a story, a recounted experience with appropriate fact and relevant descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences. You could do a Narrative Sample and that would meet that Standard. They're also supposed to, in second grade, be able to produce complete sentences. Well, a Language Sample Analysis certainly would be able to measure that very easily.

In fourth grade, they're supposed to report on a topic or text, or tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner using appropriate facts and relevant descriptive details to support main ideas or themes, and speak clearly at an understandable pace. All those things are measured in SALT. You could use a Narrative Sample to measure those topics, or texts, or tell a story.

In sixth grade, children are expected to present claims-findings and sequence their ideas logically and use pertinent descriptions, facts and details to accentuate main ideas or themes and use appropriate eye-contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation. You could use the Narrative Story Retell Sample or an Expository Sample there to measure that.

And in ninth and tenth grade, you're supposed to be able to present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely and logically, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organizations, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task. An Expository Sample could be used there.

So, all these ways SALT can help you measure these things for the Core State Standards and are very appropriate. It's a way we showed our district that we needed SALT and that this was a good expenditure for our district to make so that our clinicians had SALT. That was one of the reasons they agreed to purchase it. That's another reason to use it. The website I gave you down there is for if you have an iPad or an iPod or an Apple computer, you can go to this website and it has the Common Core Standards. You could bring those up, and use those to help write an IEP goal, and add the way to measure it with these Standards, and you'd have your IEP goal all set and ready to go for that particular-aged child. I've used that, along with my standards, in my school district, to write what I consider, IEP Goals that are considered best practice. We've been developing those through a grant for our school district. They've actually been asked to present that around the country because they're supposedly some of the best ways to write IEPs using these standards.