



## Intro to SALT and LSA Basics

### Part 2 - Elicitation

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One thing about SALT that all of us in our district, when we've gone through training, and we've worked on, over and over and over, that we've found that's really important is that, to get the best sample possible, you need to elicit a good sample. So, there are some tips. Some of these sound like common sense. "Of course I know that!" "I've been doing this forever!" But when you get in there, you kind of forget. You go, "Oh, wait a minute. I forgot that." So, I'm just going to go through some of these, just to make sure to remind you about them.

Be sure and always allow sufficient time for you to describe the task to the child, and explain that it's going to be recorded. The digital recorders that we're using, the kids think are very cool. So that's really less imposing than the tape recorders used to be. Explain the task, what you're doing and take your time explaining it to them so that they understand it. Then, be sure and always follow the other speaker's lead. Let them do the talking. Remember, it's their Language Sample. I know we always want to help kids out and make talking easier, but the less you talk, the better it is for a good Language Sample. So, be an active listener. Show them positive regard. "Uhhuh." "Oh." Nods. Anything like that will really go a long way. Leaning forward and smiling at them is a really good thing just to let them know, especially on some of the Narrative where you're not saying anything. Making eye contact is a really good thing. Requesting clarification only if needed, if they're getting off-task, or whatever, but trying not to interrupt, if you can help it. Maintain low communicative pressure. Use a slow speaking rate. Ask only one question at a time. Sometimes we ask more than one question, and what happens is that then there are overlaps and interruptions, and that doesn't always make for the best sample.

Be patient. Don't be afraid to wait. I had one student once that somebody said, "Well, he never answers a question." So, Andy and I sat in a room, and I asked a question and I just sat there and waited, and lo and behold, five seconds later, five seconds, which is an eternity to wait for an answer, answered it. What was happening with this kid was he had a very, very slow processing time. No one ever waited for him to answer questions, so people thought he was stonewalling, and being obnoxious, whatever. It was just that he took a long time to think through and be able to answer something. He was getting in all sorts of trouble at school, because he couldn't answer questions quickly. So, the SALT Sample was the perfect thing, because the pause time in there was incredible. It really showed that this

child was not trying to be obnoxious, or trying not to answer. He just couldn't. He really had difficulty formulating his utterances and processing questions. So, remember, just be patient and wait, and kids will come up with the answers for you.

Use open-ended statement, not question. Say things like, "I wonder, I'd like to hear more, tell me more, what else?" Avoid specific questions. Don't say, "Did you like that." "Do you want to go?" No yes/nos. Avoid the "wh" questions, if you can. It shouldn't feel like a quiz to the kid. So, don't do those rapid-fire questions. If you follow SALT's Elicitation Protocols, the sample will be valid. I'll show you where those are on the website when we get more towards the end. The sample will turn out much more valid. What I would always do, even after doing lots and lots of these samples is, I would pull out my protocols before I did a sample and just read through it and have it with me every time, just to remind myself.

Time the open-ended samples to ensure sufficient utterances. On the Story Retells, you don't need to have that. This applies mostly to the Conversational Samples. You're going to need to have about five to ten minutes to get a sufficient number of utterances. Especially from a child who has a Language Disorder. It takes a lot longer to get fifty utterances out of a kid in that kind of a setting. In the Narrative Sample, Story Retell, you've got the book and that will be sufficient. In the Expository, there's enough of a structure there. You'll get enough of a sample.

Be sure and thank the child and let him listen to part of the sample, if that's appropriate. You can visit the training section, like I said, on the SALT website, which I'll show you. It's up on [saltsoftware.com](http://saltsoftware.com).

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