

Working With School Age Children Who Stutter: Practical Suggestions
for Assessment and Treatment

Rodney Gabel, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BRS-FD
Bowling Green State University
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Who is this guy?

- Rodney Gabel, Ph.D.
 - You can call me Rod.
 - BS and MS from Bowling Green State University
 - Ph.D. from Penn State University
- Certified SLP, Board Recognized Specialist in Stuttering.
 - Research, teach, and provide services in the area of stuttering.
 - I also stutter myself, which is a pretty important point of reference.

Key Points for Today

- The point of the talk today is to provide practical suggestions and functional examples. I want this to be as interactive as possible, though I will be sharing a lot of information.
- This is not a purely theoretical lecture, but contemporary thinking about stuttering will be shared.

Treatment in the Schools

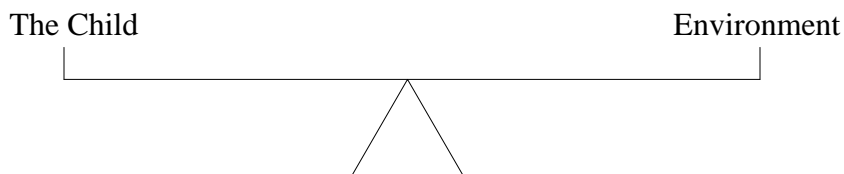
- The school setting is the best place to do therapy.
- This is where the child lives, works, and socializes.
- We do know that there are many reasons why therapy is difficult to deliver in the school systems.
- Some of these are related to the clients we serve, the nature of the training that therapists receive, difficulties related to the structure of the school system, the stuttering problem, the children we work with, and the therapeutic process.

Need for therapy

- Stuttering is a multidimensional problem.
 - Difficulty in producing fluent speech.
 - Negative affective, behavioral, and cognitive reactions.
- For those individuals who stutter into late childhood and adulthood, there can be many long term difficulties.
 - Reduced ability to communicate effectively.
 - Negative stereotype of people who stutter.
 - Reduced educational, social, and occupational opportunities.
- Speech therapy can help to improve a person's ability to cope effectively with the problem.

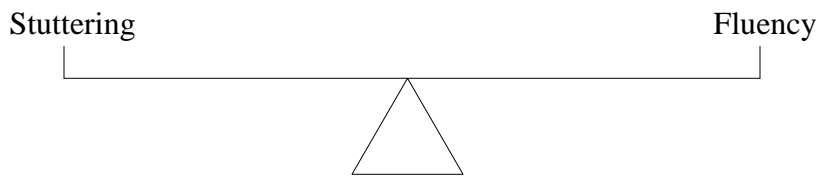
Treatment of Stuttering in the Schools

A Balance



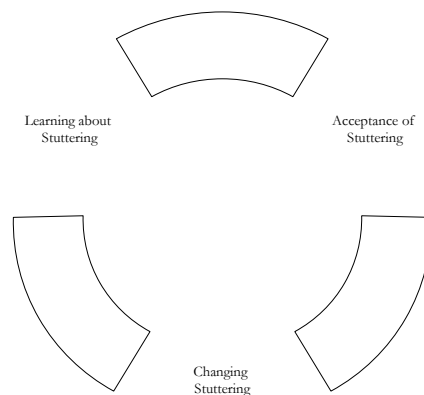
Treatment of Stuttering in the Schools

A Balance



Stages of Treatment

- Learning about stuttering
 - Educating the child, parents, and teachers.
 - Identifying the core behaviors of stuttering.
- Accepting stuttering
 - Talking
 - Counseling
- Communicating Easily
 - Dealing with the environment
 - Modifying stuttering and fluency



The Most Important Rule of Treatment

Therapy Should be FLMN....

But Meaningful

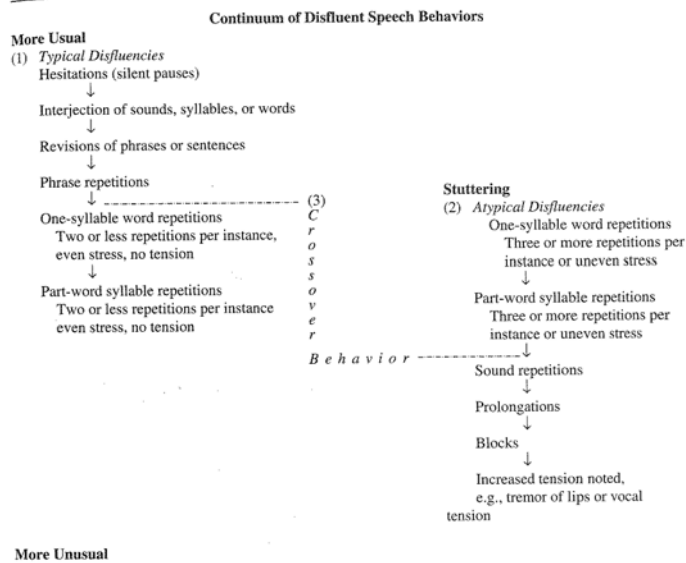
Thinking About Fluency

1. Temporal aspects of speech production
 - Pauses
 - Rhythm
 - Intonation
 - Stress
 - Rate
2. Rate of information flow
3. Effort with which the speaker speaks

Disfluency

1. The breakdown in fluency
2. All speakers experience disfluency in one way or another. A part of normal communication.
3. When it becomes excessive or “different” we will begin to define speech as stuttered.

FIGURE 1.1 Continuum of Disfluent Speech Behaviors. From R. Curlee, *Stuttering and Related Disorders of Fluency* (1999), p. 25. Reprinted with permission of Thieme Medical Publishers.



Identification of Stuttering

- Core behaviors
 - Blocks
 - Prolongations
 - Repetitions
- Feelings and Attitudes
 - Guilt
 - Sadness
 - Anger
 - Embarrassment
- Secondary Behaviors
 - Avoidance
 - Associated movements

Identification of Fluency

- How often are you fluent?
- When are you fluent? What kinds of situations allow you to be fluent?
- How does it feel when you are fluent?
- What are you doing that is causing or allowing fluency?
- What is going on around you?
- How might you apply this to your stuttering?
- How do fluent speakers sound?
- What other behaviors or types of communication feel fluent?

Understanding and Learning About Stuttering

- Helping the child learn about what she/he is doing.
 - Indirect and direct identification.
 - Use reward system. Make it tangible.
 - Feeling fluency, discussing movement.
- Steps to identifying and analyzing:
 - Most important thing is to talk about the child first.
 - Put stuttering into your own speech.
 - Help the child begin to talk about the problem.
 - Use their terminology. “Bumps”, hard speech, or stuttering.
 - Talk about where stuttering and fluency happens.
 - Where in the mechanism is the child stuttering? What is the glitch? How does it feel when you are fluent?
 - What’s happening?
 - Speech helpers

Hope and not Judgement

Discussion of both stuttering and fluency should not be simply evaluative, it should lead to a feeling of hope.

-----The child is not doing anything wrong (guilt) and they are not broken or wrong (shame)-----

Understanding and Learning About Stuttering

- Include parents and teachers.
 - Share information (e.g. NSA and SFA Literature).
 - Use of the internet.
 - Inservices in the community.
- Talking about it.
 - Weekly phone, email, or face-to-face contacts.
- Getting rid of the misconceptions.
 - What is stuttering?
 - Find out what the child thinks about stuttering.
 - Develop a portfolio or stuttering book
 - Have the child do the teaching

Learning About Stuttering

- The point of learning about stuttering is to *demystify* stuttering. Make it *touchable*.
- Start the process of making the disorder controllable.
- Increasing problem solving skills- making this a logical process.
- Making the child feel good about themselves, and their stuttering.

Acceptance of Stuttering

- Helping the child understand the nature of stuttering.
 - What is the nature of stuttering?
 - What are we actually doing?
 - What does it mean to you, what does it mean to the child?
- Open and easy stuttering.
 - Freezing.
 - Mirror work.
 - Being able to stutter openly and honestly.
 - Stuttering, paired with a tangible action.
 - Talking about it with other people, learning appropriate comebacks.

Acceptance of Stuttering

- Counseling- working on attitudes and negative feelings.
 - Clay models, drawings, using color codes for situations, and groups therapy. Can all help put stuttering into perspective.
 - Be a motivator and a mentor. You cannot be afraid of the problem.
- Be an advocate and help the child educate the people in his/her speaking environments.
 - Dealing with bullies, helping their teachers understand, and being open about their stuttering.
 - Helping the child and family find the necessary resources and services.

Acceptance of Stuttering

- Suggestions for attitude change/classroom management.
 - Calling a meeting. Let the child run the meeting, with you facilitating.
 - Writing an open letter.
 - I am different day.
 - Inservice staff.
 - Giving the class a lecture on stuttering, and how they might be helped by the group.
 - Role playing dealing with stuttering, and even dealing with others in their environment.

Acceptance of Stuttering

- The goal should be to help them cope better with their stuttering---AT SOME POINT!
 - With children, I feel like we can make changes, but it is just as important that we set the stage for the long lasting change that comes later in life.
 - We cannot cure this problem, but we can help.
 - Prevention of negative feelings and attitudes.
 - Helping them become a happier and healthier adult---who happens to stutter.

Changing Stuttering

- Learning ways to change stuttering and alter fluency so it does not fully hinder what the child wants to do with their talking.
 - Changing how they are able to handle their speech mechanism, through the use TECHNIQUES
 - Reducing negative behaviors
 - Modifying stuttering
 - Modifying fluency
 - Going for it or letting go
 - Changing how they approach the environment.

Modification of Stuttering

- Attacking avoidance
 1. Start with the easier situations, gain success, and then build from that.
 - Make a hierarchy, and then help the child discuss it.
 2. Do not procrastinate!!!
 3. Help the child make commitments to do things they may not prefer to do, and then help them follow through.
 - Encourage them to try and then follow-up with them
 4. Control apprehension and anxiety with positive self-talk and building perspective.
 - This is true for everyone- child and parents.

Modification of Stuttering

- Changing stuttering
 - Elimination of negative secondary behaviors
- Modifying stuttering
 - Cancellations
 - Slides
 - Bouncing
- Modifying fluency
 - Easy talking and light contact
 - Focus on smooth movements
 - Moving forward, not stalling or postponing
 - Avoiding time pressure and keeping a comfortable pace.