

Essential Speech Skills for School-Age Children Who Stutter


Presented by:

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Overview of the Presentation

- Stuttering Modification and Fluency-Enhancing Strategies
 - Stuttering Modification Strategies
 - Fluency-Enhancing Strategies
- Importance of Integrating both Approaches
- One Component of Stuttering Therapy
- General Description of the Therapy Process
- Working with Stuttering: Rationales, Methods, and Practice
- Working with Fluency: Rationales, Methods, and Practice



Highlighted Students



 **Alianna Ali**
www.youtube.com

 **Mark Allen, Ph.D.**
www.youtube.com

 **Antonio**
www.youtube.com

 **Antonio**
www.youtube.com

Stuttering Modification and Fluency-Enhancing Strategies

- Stuttering Modification Strategies
 - Work directly with stuttering behavior
 - Increase awareness, explore and decrease tension
 - Reduce struggle behaviors
 - Stutter in a more relaxed way
 - Decrease sensitivity, increase feelings of control
- (See Dell, 1993; Pines, 1997; Williams & Dugan, 2002; Van Riper, 1977)

Stuttering Modification and Fluency-Enhancing Strategies (cont.)

- Fluency-Enhancing Strategies
 - Change breath flow, voice production, and articulation
 - Increased confidence can lead to greater fluency
- (See Cooper & Cooper, 2003; Ruyven & Ruyven, 1999; Shames & Florence, 1986; Webster, 1986)

Stuttering Modification and Fluency-Enhancing Strategies (cont.)

- Importance of Integrating both Strategies
 - One Component of Stuttering Therapy
 - These motor skills are one part of a multi-dimensional approach
 - Therapy must also address cognitive, affective, linguistic, and social factors
 - Family, friends, teachers, and others must be involved
- (See Omals & Reardon, 2001; Gregory, 2003; Guller, 1986; Yavas & Herson, 2002)

Other Essential Components to School-Age Stuttering Therapy

- Learning about Speech Production and Stuttering
- Exploring Their Own Stuttering & Speaking Behavior
- Developing Healthy Attitudes towards Speaking & Stuttering
- Developing Problem-Solving Skills
- Transferring Learned Skills and Attitudes into Daily Life
- Taking Ownership of the Therapy Process

General Description of the School-Age Therapy Process

- Early Sessions: Learning about Speech and Stuttering
 - Learn about speech system
 - Identify and analyze how speech sounds are produced
 - Learn about and demystify stuttering
 - Explore student feelings and beliefs
 - Identify cognitive, linguistic, and social factors
 - Promote openness and acceptance of stuttering

by Jack's Stream Feeding
by David Tracking Friends

General Description of the School-Age Therapy Process (cont.)

- Stuttering Modification Strategies
 - Catching the Stutter
 - Relaxing the Stutter
 - Stile
 - Easy Stuttering
 - Cancellation

Working with Stuttering...

Relaxing the Stutter

Description

- Students watch the video and observe a stammerer on a word with 100% tension, observe the stammerer on the same word with 25% tension, and observe the stammerer on the same word with 0% tension. They are then asked to repeat the word with decreased tension.

(50% ~ 25% ~ 12% etc.)
(See Gumpert, 1999; Van Riper, 1973)

Rationale

- Identify, analyze, and change stuttering
- Students see they can stammer more easily
- Reduces sensitivity
- Increases control
- Develops ability to work with stuttering

(See Gumpert, 1999; Van Riper, 1973)

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Client Activity](#)
[Add Workbook from Model](#)
[Student Workbook](#)

Working with Stuttering...

Relaxing the Stutter

Description

- Students watch the video and observe a stammerer on a word with 100% tension, observe the stammerer on the same word with 25% tension, and observe the stammerer on the same word with 0% tension. They are then asked to repeat the word with decreased tension.

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Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Client Activity](#)
[Add Workbook from Model](#)
[Student Workbook](#)

Working with Stuttering...

Slide

Description

- Students watch the video and observe a stammerer on a word with 100% tension, observe the stammerer on the same word with 25% tension, and observe the stammerer on the same word with 0% tension. They are then asked to repeat the word with decreased tension.

(50% ~ 25% ~ 12% etc.)
(See Gumpert, 1999; Van Riper, 1973)

Rationale

- Stabilizes and decreases tension
- Increases speech control
- Increases confidence
- Helps manage moments of stuttering

(See Murphy, 2002; Baum & Cook, 2005; Van Riper, 1973)

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Client Activity](#)
[Add Conversation](#)
[Student Workbook](#)

Working with Stuttering...

Slide

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Conversation](#)
[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Stuttering...

Easy Stuttering

Description

- Students intentionally produce intentional words, syllables, or sounds, syllables, or words that are used before a moment of stuttering, during a moment of stuttering, or after a moment of stuttering.

Rationale

- Reduces tension
- Helps manage moments of stuttering
- Counter conditions struggle behaviors
- Promotes greater openness/acceptance

(See Dahl, 1993; Gengler, 2002; Murphy, 1999; Van Riper, 1973; Williams & Cook, 2007; Van Riper, 1982)

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice


[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Client Activity](#)
[Add Conversation](#)
[Student Workbook](#)

Working with Stuttering...

Easy Stuttering

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Add Therapist Instruction](#)
[Add Client Activity](#)
[Add Conversation](#)
[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Stuttering...

Cancellation

Description
The cancellation of a syllable or a couple of seconds after a moment of stuttering (to reduce the duration of the dysfluent), and then repeat the syllable or word again with less tension.

Rationale

- Increase feelings of control
- Dissociates concerns about stuttering
- Reduces tension
- Helps to "center" the speaker


(See Adams, 1979; Van Riper, 1973; Williams & Craig, 2002)

Working with Stuttering...

Cancellation

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

by Jack, Oral Reading
by Alex, Conversation
by Student Workbook



Working with Fluency...

Working with Fluency...

Description & Rationale

Teaching Method

Hands-On Practice



Working with Fluency...

Working with Fluency...

- Relaxed Breath
- Slow Stretched Speech
- Smooth Movement
- Easy Voice
- Light Contact
- Stretched Speech

Working with Fluency...

Working with Fluency...

Additional Fluency-Enhancing Strategies

- Linked Relaxation Rhythm
- Extra Intonation
- Nearly Natural Speech
- Natural Speech

Working with Fluency...

Relaxed Breath

Description
Students learn to use relaxed diaphragmatic breathing as they speak.

Rationale

- Promotes proper breathing patterns
- Facilitates preparation for other fluency skills
- Facilitates transition for other fluency skills


(See Adams, 1979; MacArthur, 1985; Craig & Cooper, 2003; Craig & Smith, 1997; Smith & Smith, 1997; Houston & Smith, 1999)

Working with Fluency...

Relaxed Breath

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Alex: Rationale](#)
[Art: Relaxed Breath with Voice](#)
[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Slow Stretched Speech

Description

Students prolong individual syllables to their normal duration. Components (in order): v, a, th (voiced), s and j.

Rationale

- Increase coordination of speech system
- Improve timing of articulation
- Increase control of muscle movements
- "Gender" speech production
- Posters improvements in speech fluency


Winn & Walsh, 2005; Alan Lee & Lyster, 1992;

Working with Fluency...

Slow Stretched Speech

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Alex: Therapist Instruction](#)
[Jack: Rationale Review](#)
[Art: Word Level](#)
[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Smooth Movement

Description

Smooth movement helps gentle transitions between sounds. Exaggerating and articulatory movements.

Rationale

- Abused movements may lead to stuttering
- Students may have difficulty producing certain sounds
- Excess and relaxed articulation
- Helps students gain greater speech control


(See Woodcock, 1996; Gregory, 1993; Wall & Myers, 1999)

Working with Fluency...

Smooth Movement

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

[Alex: Therapist Instruction](#)
[Alex: Workbook Substubs](#)
[Jack: Smooth Movement Chart](#)
[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Easy Voice

Description

Increases tension in the primary system of the vocal tract. Phonation of vowel sounds in an extremely soft and gentle manner.

Rationale

- Increase tension in the primary system
- Reduce hyperactive glottal attacks
- Reduce hyperactive glottal attacks


(See Cooper & Cooper, 2003; Hickey & Scott, 1999; Miller, 1999; Tompkins & Tompkins, 1999)

Working with Fluency...

Easy Voice

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- 1) [Alex: Rationale](#)
- 2) [Jack: Therapist Instruction](#)
- 3) [Peter: Workbook Words and Phrases](#)
- 4) [Student Workbooks](#)



Working with Fluency...

Light Contact


Description

- When producing stops
- (p, b, t, g, k, j) and affricates (tʃ, dʒ) and when producing fricatives (f, v, s, z, sh, zh, ch, j), the vocal tract is in contact with the vocal tract.
- When producing fricatives (f, v, s, z, sh, zh, ch, j), the vocal tract is in contact with the vocal tract.
- When producing fricatives (f, v, s, z, sh, zh, ch, j), the vocal tract is in contact with the vocal tract.

Rationale

- Certain consonants involve constriction
- Constriction naturally involves tension
- Tension may build and lead to stuttering
- Light Contact reduces articulatory tension

(See Greene, 2001; Riley & Coet, 1993; Rendon-Hernandez & Yarnes, 2014; Boyen & Murray, 1971; Wolf & Murray, 1972)




Working with Fluency...

Light Contact

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- 1) [Alex: Therapist Instruction](#)
- 2) [Student Workbooks](#)
- 3) [Jack: Word Level](#)
- 4) [Teaching an Unfamiliar Listener](#)
- 5) [Student Workbooks](#)



Working with Fluency...

Stretched Speech

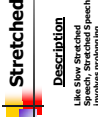
Description

- Like slow stretching speech, stretched speech involves prolonging the vowels and consonants of the previous speech rate to approximately one second per syllable.

Rationale

- Initial step toward more natural rate
- Slows down articulation
- Reduces tension
- Continues to help increase coordination
- Continues to "ground" speech production

(See Gail & Rebers, 1981; Finken, 1992; Bann & Dohy, 2007; Wolf & Murray, 1972)




Working with Fluency...

Stretched Speech

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- 1) [Alex: Therapist Instruction](#)
- 2) [Jack: Phoneme Bender](#)
- 3) [Alex: Light Contact Words](#)
- 4) [Student Workbooks](#)



Working with Fluency...

Linked Relaxation Rhythm

Description

- A rhythmic pattern in which relaxed continuous phonation is overlaid on successive syllables of the words.

Rationale

- Reduces tension and decreases
- Prevents tension from building
- Facilitates fluid, relaxed speech
- Reduces number of vocal initiations
- Decreases chance of stuttering

(See Bockstein, 1995; Murray, 2001; Stemberger & Green-Acherman, 1997)




Working with Fluency...

Linked Relaxation Rhythm

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- Jack: [Therapist Instruction](#)
- Pat: [Conversation](#)
- Alex: [Working with a Book](#)

[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Extra Intonation

Description
Students engage in role playing and raising the duration of their intonation enables students to speak in a free-flowing manner, which is an important skill in learning to speak fluently.

Rationale

- Shifts students out of monotone quality
- Moves modification toward natural speech
- Adds variation and range to speech
- Creates non-periodic cycles of relaxation

(See Shering, 2001; Starkweather & Givens, 1997)

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- Jack: [Therapist Instruction](#)
- Pat: [Phrase Level](#)
- Alex: [One Reading](#)
- Pat: [Conversation](#)
- Alex: [Teaching a Peer](#)

[Student Workbook](#)

Working with Fluency...

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Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- Jack: [Therapist Instruction](#)
- Pat: [Phrase Level](#)
- Alex: [One Reading](#)
- Pat: [Conversation](#)
- Alex: [Teaching a Peer](#)

[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Nearly Natural Speech

Description
This method involves increasing speech rate, reducing the exaggerated intonation, using more articulation and increasing certain stretches.

Rationale

- Uses fluency skills with sophistication
- Approximate natural sounding speech
- Maintains intonation / physical awareness
- Facilitates transfer of fluency skills


Working with Fluency...

Nearly Natural Speech

Teaching Method:
Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- Jack: [Therapist Instruction](#)
- Pat: [Conversation](#)
- Alex: [Telephone Call to Store](#)
- Dave: [Cards with Friends](#)

[Student Workbook](#)



Working with Fluency...

Natural Speech

Description
Natural speech is more similar to the speaker and sounds faster than Nearly Natural. It is a considerably produced speech modification.

Rationale


- Engages with high level of sophistication
- Involves a natural sounding speech pattern
- Used in conjunction with starting modification strategies

Working with Fluency...

Natural Speech

Teaching Method:
 Demonstration & Hands-On Practice

- 1) Jack: Therapist Instruction
- 2) Art: Oral Reading
- 3) Pat: Conversation
- 4) Adam: Conversation
- 5) Jack: Conversation
- 6) Alex: Teaching an Unfamiliar Listener
- 7) Alex: Play, Retrosial & Performance
- 8) Student Workbook



Questions & Comments



Speak Freely: Frequently Asked Questions

Is *Speak Freely*: Essential Speech Skills for School-Age Children Who Stutter a comprehensive therapy program?

No, it's not. *Speak Freely* is not intended to be a comprehensive program. While this resource is rooted in a multidimensional theoretical perspective of stuttering, it focuses entirely on one aspect of school-age therapy: that is, the development of stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies.

Given that *Speak Freely* only addresses the physical dimension of a child's stuttering, it's imperative that it be used together with additional therapy activities that target cognitive, affective, linguistic, and social aspects of a child's stuttering problem.

What age students can use these materials?

These materials are appropriate for students aged 7 to 18. The content and language style of the strategy descriptions, rationales, and teaching methods are designed to suit elementary, middle, and high school students.

Is this resource appropriate for preschool children who stutter?

No, *Speak Freely* is not appropriate for use with preschool children. See Scott Yaruss' web site for information on preschool stuttering therapy (www.stutteringcenter.org). The Stuttering Foundation (www.stutteringhelp.org) and The Stuttering Homepage (<http://www.jmu.edu/comdis/kusterstutter.html>) also have excellent information, resources, videos etc. regarding preschool therapy.

Can the strategies presented by *Speak Freely* be used with adults who stutter?

Yes. The same stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies can be used with adults. After therapists learn how to use and teach these strategies, materials can be modified for use with adults (e.g., by creating rationales and practice exercises that are age-appropriate).

Can these strategies be used with struggling readers or non-readers?

Yes. While it's convenient to use the written materials with children who read, the use of written materials is not imperative. Once therapists learn the various strategies, they can use them with any variety of therapy materials. Non-readers can also utilize the two Audio CDs which contain recordings of the entire Student Workbook and it's associated practice exercises.

Can *Speak Freely* be used with Down syndrome and/or cognitively disabled students?

This depends on the severity of the cognitive impairment. Generally speaking, many of these students are able to learn the various strategies. They tend to do well with the structured aspect of the therapy and

often enjoy using the different speech patterns. The most challenging part of therapy for cognitively disabled students has been related to maintenance and transfer. This may be due to the fact that using the skills, particularly in the beginning, requires a fair amount of focused attention.

Are these strategies helpful to children who clutter?

Cluttering is different from stuttering, and therefore one's overall approach to treatment will be different. Unlike stuttering, cluttering appears to involve disorganized speech planning. It's characterized by rapid and irregular rate of speech, excessive disfluencies, and often other symptoms such as language or phonological errors.

While the *Speak Freely* materials were not specifically designed to work with cluttering, they do involve a number of elements that help students who clutter. First, clutterers typically demonstrate reduced awareness of their speech, and the stuttering modification strategies such as "Catching the Stutter" and "Relaxing the Stutter" increase that awareness as students identify and analyze their speech behaviors. In addition, some students who clutter have difficulties with motor coordination and rhythm. During early stages of therapy, *Speak Freely* includes strategies that exaggerate various rhythmic patterns (e.g., Linked Relaxation Rhythm) and this can be helpful to children who clutter. Finally, over-articulating, tuning into the tactile sensation of speech production, and using a slow, prolonged rate can help students who clutter. Many of the fluency-enhancing strategies help clutterers to modify their speech in these ways (before gradually speeding up to normal rates of speech). Thus, *Speak Freely* materials can provide useful elements to cluttering therapy, but would need to be accompanied by intervention techniques that address the other aspects of cluttering noted above.

Are there some students for whom *Speak Freely* is not appropriate?

There may be. It's important to identify individual needs and tailor our therapy accordingly. For example, in certain cases it may be appropriate to spend less time on speech skill development and more time on affective and cognitive reactions to stuttering (e.g., desensitizing concerns about stuttering, reducing speech anxiety, addressing embarrassment and shame, promoting openness and acceptance, building self-confidence) and general communication skills (e.g., maintaining appropriate eye contact, resisting time pressure, using natural pausing and phrasing, developing self-advocacy skills).

Why are the stuttering modification strategies taught first?

Stuttering modification skills are typically taught first because doing so may (1) desensitize children's avoidance behaviors related to stuttering, (2) improve students' kinesthetic awareness of speech and speech tension, and thus allow them to repair moments of stuttering more easily, and (3) enable students to transfer learned skills earlier, and thereby experience the benefits of therapy sooner.

Do we have to teach the strategies in the order they are presented in the Student Workbook?

While the strategies are usually taught in the order presented by the Student Workbook, clinicians can modify this order when necessary. Some of the fluency-enhancing strategies do build upon each other and need to be presented in a relatively linear fashion. This will become apparent as one learns about the strategies.

Are students ever resistant to using a particular strategy?

While most students readily engage all strategies, occasionally a student might be reluctant to practice a particular skill. If this occurs, just give the child the time he/she needs. There is no reason to push anything. Some students might be resistant to practice the Stuttering Modification strategies because it involves stuttering in some way. Other students might be reluctant to practice the more exaggerated, slow speech patterns. If this occurs, make sure the student understands the rationale for learning and practicing the strategy, and then revisit it later.

If a student is resistant, it can be helpful to show him/her video clips of other students practicing the strategy that's being resisted. I've never had a student who didn't eventually demonstrate the willingness to learn all the strategies. That said, at the end of the treatment students may prefer to use particular strategies – and that's fine. We just want to make sure that they have as many options available to them as possible.

When and how do you work on the secondary characteristics of a child's stuttering?

Secondary characteristics are directly addressed early in therapy as students identify, explore, and change their stuttering with "Catching the Stutter" and "Relaxing the Stutter." When students practice "Relaxing the Stutter," they are encouraged to stutter in the way that they ordinarily would – this includes secondary characteristics. As they relax their tense speech behavior, they find that they can also reduce the magnitude and number of secondary characteristics. In addition, when students learn and use the fluency-enhancing strategies, secondary characteristics often decrease.

Much of the Audio CDs repeats what's in the Student Workbook. What's the rationale for this?

The two Audio CDs do include a word-for-word reading of the Student Workbook. Thus, it provides spoken models of all strategies and speech patterns. Therapists can play these recordings to students as they move through the Student Workbook. This reinforces what has been taught and allows clinicians to make simultaneous comments on different aspects of what is being presented.

Finally, given that speech-language pathologists in the schools are typically pressed for time, having the Student Workbook and its associated speech models on CD allows clinicians to learn these strategies by listening to the recordings during other activities (e.g., while driving etc.). This may sound trivial, but it's important that clinicians hear the speech models and practice them over and over so that they develop a high degree of skill using the strategies.

How do you help students to transfer their skills to the home environment?

When students' skills are well-developed, we need to help them create hierarchies of increasingly difficult speech situations, and then provide support (e.g., discuss, plan out, rehearse, go with them, etc.) as they transfer what they have learned into settings outside of the therapy room. Initially, it's helpful to choose a limited number of easier situations in which the strategies will be used (e.g., with particular people, in particular places, and/or at particular times). Gradually, speech skills should be used in increasingly difficult situations. As we do this, we need to enlist the help of others (e.g., teachers and staff at school and family members at home) and include them in the therapy process. Students need to feel comfortable with the way in which they modify their speech – ultimately, they will use the strategies that “feel right” to them.

The onus of carry-over should not be on the children alone. They need to be fully supported. We need to find ways to encourage, inspire, empower, and motivate our students – to help them see the value of being strong, effective communicators. Finally, parents, teachers, family, and friends should have realistic expectations. They should realize that (1) students will not be using their strategies all the time, and (2) there will be times when the skills breakdown. Indeed, the issue is not whether or not speech skills breakdown: It's how the child is able to manage it when it does.

What's the origin of these strategies? Is there any empirical evidence to support their use?

These stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies are drawn from the work of numerous respected specialists who have treated stuttering over the last forty years. This resource was created in an effort to present these well-established practices to clinicians and clients in an explicit, integrated, and user-friendly format.

To date, outcome data for *Speak Freely* has not been systematically evaluated. Unfortunately, this is true for most stuttering therapy materials. Indeed, when Bothe and her colleagues (2006) reviewed stuttering treatment literature published between 1970 and 2005, they found that only 39 studies met widely accepted trial-quality inclusion criteria. Furthermore, *only 9 of these involved school-age children*. Findings from these nine studies showed that improvements in speech fluency can be achieved when various therapy techniques (e.g., prolonged speech, gentle onset, light contact) are employed in the context of structured programs that also provide intensive practice and a variety of response contingencies (Bothe et al., 2006, p. 335).

While *Speak Freely* is a highly structured program and includes strategies similar to the techniques noted above, outcome data has yet to be assessed. Given the importance of evidence-based practice and the paucity of school-age efficacy studies that meet appropriate methodological criteria, there is clearly a need to conduct research that evaluates the effectiveness of the strategies presented by this resource.

Bothe, A. K., Davidow, J. H., Bramlett, R. E., & Ingham, R. J. (2006). Stuttering treatment research 1970-2005: I. Systematic review incorporating trial quality assessment of behavioral, cognitive, and related approaches. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 15 (4), 321-341.

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