

Excerpts from Charles Healey's *Journal of Fluency Disorders* Book Review of *Speak Freely: Essential Speech Skills for School-Age Children Who Stutter* (2008 Pre-Print Version).

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Given recent evidence in the stuttering literature that clinicians consider stuttering one of the most difficult communication disorders to treat and lack confidence in their skills in treating stuttering (Brisk, Healey, & Hux, 1997; Cooper & Cooper, 1996; Kelly, Martin, Baker, Rivera, Bishop, Kriziske, Stettler, and Stealy, 1997) there is always interest in finding therapy materials that will assist them in treating children who stutter. The *Speak Freely* resource materials fill that need.

The *Speak Freely* materials include a Therapist Handbook, an Instructional DVD, two Audio CDs, and a Student Workbook. The Therapist Handbook contains a brief literature base to support the rationale underlying each strategy used in the approach. It also provides step-by-step instructions for assisting a clinician in teaching each speech skill. The Instructional DVD supplements the written materials by providing excellent video clips of Allen teaching and implementing the skills with children who stutter along with the children demonstrating and practicing each specific strategy within various speech contexts. The two Audio CDs complement the material in the Student Workbook and a full list and title of the tracks can be found in Appendix C of the Therapist Handbook. Each track contains a short explanation of each strategy which is followed by samples of how each strategy sounds when practiced in simple speech contexts. The value of the CDs is hearing Allen's presentation and modeling of each fluency enhancing and stuttering modification strategy. The audio samples will be instructive for clinicians who have had little to no training in producing stuttering modification and fluency enhancing strategies. The audio samples would also be useful for clients who need to hear how a speech strategy should sound when working on their speech on their own.

The Student Workbook includes a brief explanation and rationale for each speech skill and is written at a level that should be easy for children to understand. Within each section for each strategy is an explanation of how to practice the skill along with a short list of words, sentences, and paragraph-length material that could be used during therapy or for home practice.

The written materials in the Student Workbook are easy to follow, child oriented, and are supplemented with graphic representations of how to produce a few of the fluency enhancing speech skills. The audio and video samples of each skill taught in the program are quite good and are a nice addition to the written materials.

I believe clinicians will find the *Speak Freely* materials particularly beneficial for children who stutter who have not been taught a variety of stuttering modification or fluency enhancing skills or have not been given proper training in the use of these strategies. The materials could also serve to improve clinicians' skills in teaching the strategies included in this program. For these reasons, many clinicians will find the *Speak Freely* materials useful. Instructors of courses on fluency disorders will find the audio and video samples useful when teaching speech-language pathology students each type of stuttering modification and fluency enhancing strategy.