

Stuttering Modification and Fluency-Enhancing Strategies

Methods for working with the physical dimension of stuttering have typically been divided into two categories: stuttering

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modification strategies and fluency-enhancing strategies (Gregory, 2003; Healy & Scott, 1995; Peters & Guitar, 1991). Stuttering modification strategies reduce physical tension during stuttering and enable people to stutter more easily. Fluency-enhancing strategies directly improve the fluency of speech.

Today, many stuttering specialists agree that these approaches have unique, complementary benefits, and that *both* should be incorporated into school-age therapy (Gregory, 2003; Guitar, 1998; Peters & Guitar 1991,

Healy & Scott, 1995; Manning, 2001; Ramig & Bennet, 1997; Reardon-Reeves & Yaruss, 2004; Wall & Myers, 1995.)

Stuttering modification involves working directly with stuttering behaviors. Therapy procedures help children increase awareness of stuttered speech, explore and decrease levels of physical tension, and actively change moments of stuttering. These skills enable students to reduce struggle behaviors and stutter in a more controlled and relaxed manner (Dell, 1993; Prins, 1997; Williams & Dugan, 2002; Van Riper, 1973).

Stuttering modification can also decrease sensitivity about stuttering, reduce negative reactions, and increase feelings of control, openness, and acceptance. As students carefully observe and work with moments of disfluency, they acknowledge and engage their stuttering rather than simply try to get rid of it.

Fluency-enhancing strategies include a variety of techniques that alter students' breath flow, voice production, and articulation (Cooper & Cooper, 2003; Runyan & Runyan, 1999; Shames & Florence, 1986; Webster, 1986). These skills promote more relaxed, more controlled, and more fluent speech. As children experience increased fluency, they often gain greater confidence about speaking. This confidence can diminish negative reactions and promote more freedom of speech.

School-age therapy that incorporates both stuttering modification and fluency-enhancing strategies offers the benefits of both approaches. Stuttered speech is directly modified and strong fluency skills are established. Thus, children develop a variety of options for successfully managing their speech.