Pausing: Reducing the Frequency of Stuttering

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Abstract

Pausing is a rate control speaking strategy which may significantly reduce the frequency of stuttering. While traditional fluency shaping approaches focus on within-word rate controls such as elongating vowel segments or slowing the onset of voicing, pausing focuses on reducing the between-word rate of speech without prolonging or altering articulation. While pausing between words often reduces the frequency of overt stuttering behaviors, data accounting for this phenomenon remain inconclusive. Several theories regarding the effectiveness of pausing are discussed. This article concludes by offering practical ways to teach pausing to adults and children who stutter.

Introduction

Speech-language pathologists teach speaking strategies or speech "tools" to provide people who stutter with productive ways to move forward through moments of overt stuttering, and to reduce the frequency of overt stuttering behaviors. Typically, stuttering modification approaches focus on teaching clients strategies to stutter less abnormally (Bloodstein, 1995; Dell, 2000). Fluency shaping focuses on increasing fluency (Guitar, 1998; Manning 2000) or decreasing the frequency of stuttering (Reitzes, 2006). Stuttering modification and fluency shaping strategies are often used in an integrated manner to manage stuttering behaviors (Conture, 2001; Guitar, 1998; Guitar & Peters, 2003; Healey, Scott, & Ellis, 1995).

A speaking strategy referred to as "pausing" has received much less attention than other strategies such as "pull-outs," "light contacts," and "easy onsets." Clinicians have used various forms of pausing in different ways. For example, when using a Van Riper (1973) stuttering modification strategy called a cancellation, the client is instructed to complete the word being stuttered on followed by a pause lasting approximately three seconds. During the pause, the speaker is to silently pantomime (recreate in a silent manner) the stutter. After pausing, the speaker repeats the stuttered word in a more forward-moving and less struggled fashion. Van Riper suggested that by pausing during a cancellation, the speaker utilizes a type of self-inflicted punishment so as not to reward him or herself for stuttering. Similarly, some clinicians instruct clients to pause briefly after a moment of stuttering as a time-out or punishment to reduce the frequency of stuttering (Costello, 1975; Prins & Hubbard, 1998). Van Riper also noted that the pause within a cancellation has a calming effect and encourages the speaker to confront, investigate, and monitor moments of stuttering.

Tonev (2004) suggests inserting long pauses into conversation, lasting 2-3 seconds, to relax muscle tension, to reflect on moments of stuttering, to mentally prepare for the next utterance, and to take

notice of listeners during speaking situations. Walton & Wallace (1998) and Reardon & Yaruss (2004) describe a pausing and phrasing strategy in which speakers are encouraged to pause at natural or normal places within conversations.

People who stutter experiment with and use pausing in different ways to achieve different goals. For example, during a discussion on an electronic mailing list , an adult who stutters suggested using long and exaggerated pauses to resist time pressure, to stay grounded in the moment, and to counteract the urge to increase speaking rate in response to moments of stuttering (Tereva, 2003). On the same electronic mailing list, another adult described an eclectic speaking approach in which he incorporates pausing with both voluntary stuttering and breathing strategies (Harkavy, 1998). To work on his own stuttering, the author employed between-word pausing with voluntary stuttering, pull-outs, and modified cancellations on a regular basis for approximately three years.

Pausing, as described in this paper, is derived from the work of Schneider (1995, 1998) and Reitzes (2006) and is a strategy in which the speaker is instructed to pause briefly between words to reduce the frequency of overt stuttering behaviors. By doing so, speaking rate is reduced but articulation is not modified or distorted.

Pausing Between Words

Speaking with pauses between words may, and often does, reduce the frequency of stuttering (Andrews, Howie, Dozsa, & Guitar, 1982; Finn, 1996; Reitzes, 2006; Schäfersküpper & Dames, 1987; Schneider, 1995, 1998). Tonev (2004) observed that pausing also reduces the frequency of secondary behaviors. One potential explanation for this phenomenon is that when pausing is employed, overt stuttering often decreases. When this occurs, there are simply fewer opportunities for the speaker to rely upon secondary behaviors. A study by Love & Jeffries (1971) found that people who stutter who appeared fluent when reading were found to utilize a significantly higher frequency of brief pauses when reading than a group of people who did not stutter. One interpretation of this study suggests that speaking with brief pauses between words may be associated with a reduction of stuttering behaviors. Also of note was that listeners who were trained for this study were not able to distinguish between stuttering and non-stuttering subjects. This finding suggests that some people who stutter are able to incorporate pauses into speech in "normal" or "natural" sounding ways.

Tonev (2004) observed that deliberate pauses, used as a speaking strategy to manage overt stuttering behaviors, are often much shorter in duration than actual moments of stuttering. In other words, Tonev found pausing to be less abnormal sounding than stuttering. Pausing deliberately between words is often more normal sounding than within-word prolongations (traditional fluency shaping) and actual moments of stuttering. Prosek & Runyan (1982) explained, "Therapy procedures which reduce rate to reduce stuttering may indeed add perceptibly different properties to the stutterer's speech. Decreased rate and increased pause time, however, usually will be preferable to the repetitions, prolongations, and hesitations typically associated with stuttering" (p. 33).

While traditional fluency shaping strategies focus on rate reduction by prolonging speech within words (e.g. Ingham, 1975; Ryan, 1974), pausing reduces rate by inserting space between words without slowing or distorting articulation. When using pausing, the frequency of pauses (the "silent time" or space between words) is increased to decrease the frequency of stuttering. Each word itself is said crisply and at a normal rate.

In general, each pause should last a fraction of a second and not exceed a full second in duration. For some people who stutter frequently with durations lasting several seconds or more (often referred to as "severe" stutterers), longer pausing times may be needed. Meltzer (1998) notes that pausing times will certainly vary across clients and suggests that a pause may last between half a second to five seconds or may be "as long as you need it to be" (Meltzer, 2006, p. 2).

Schneider (1995) suggests that speakers "pause after the first word of an utterance and [then after] every two, three or four words thereafter" (p. 335). Meltzer (2006) suggests pausing every four to seven words or when needed. In this article, pausing is recommended after the first word of a sentence and then after every one to five words thereafter or pausing after the first word of a sentence and then at linguistically appropriate boundaries (Reitzes 2006). By pausing early in the sentence, such as after the first word, the speaker may reduce the "domino effect" of stuttering in which one stuttering moment leads to additional stutters. Pausing after the first word of a sentence also enables the speaker to immediately assert control over the rate of his or her speech.

To practice an example of pausing, say the following sentence aloud while stopping or pausing briefly, for a fraction of second to a full second, at each comma: "Using, pausing, helps the speaker, to reduce, the frequency of stuttering, by slowing, the rate of speech. Pausing, is a tool, to help people, stutter, less often."

While the use of pausing often decreases the frequency of stuttering, it is not yet known how or why this occurs. Meltzer (1998) suggests that the purposes of pausing are to:

> (a) facilitate normal airflow, (b) allow time to modify moments of aberrant motor speech, (c) facilitate use of other fluency enhancing strategies such as easy voice onset, (d) promote a sense of control over speech, (e) allow for formulation of language and coding onto speech, (f) reduce time pressure (Haynes & Christensen, 1995), (g) enhance naturalness, and (h) reduce the avoidance 'fright and flight' response associated with stuttering. (p. 250)

Snyder explains:

> Some researchers hypothesize that pausing may effect overt stuttering behaviors on a linguistic level. With substantial research suggesting a link between deviant language skills and the presence of stuttering (Karnoil, 1992, 1995), it is tempting to suggest that the use of pausing enhances the production of more overtly fluent speech by altering (i.e., reducing) the linguistic load associated with speech encoding. Likewise, the frequent use of pausing may allow speech encoding to occur over smaller linguistic units, which has been associated with reduced moments of stuttering. (Andrews, Howie, Dozsa, & Guitar, 1982). (G. Snyder, personal communication, April 19, 2006)

Similarly, when grammatical complexity and the length of utterances increase there is a corresponding increase in the motor and linguistic planning demands placed upon the speaker (Amster & Starkweather, 2000; Peters, Hulstijin, & Starkweather, 1989; Starkweather & Gottwald, 1990). As Snyder suggests, pausing may allow the speaker to code smaller linguistic units, thus reducing opportunities for stuttering.

Healey & Adams (1981) suggest that pausing may coordinate phonation and articulation. They explain:

> …part-word repetitions and sound prolongations, the universally demonstrated characteristics of stuttering (Wingate, 1964), are caused by transient breakdowns in a speaker's coordination of phonation and articulation (Adams & Reis, 1971; 1974, Agnello, 1975; Perkins et al., 1976). The prolongation strategy, calling as it does for extended voicing combined with a reduced rate of articulatory movement, would facilitate the integration of vocalization and articulation, and thus promote fluency. Likewise, the pausing strategy could enhance the same integrations since the regularity, predictability, and simplification inherent in slow, rhythmic speech would make the coordination of phonation and articulation easier to achieve. (p. 12)

Traditional fluency shaping approaches are based on the belief that people who stutter learned how to speak, breathe and articulate incorrectly. Clinicians who practice traditional fluency shaping, in its strictest sense, believe they are re-teaching people who stutter how to speak (Webster, 1980). These clinicians begin by showing their clients how to slow the articulation or within-word rate of sounds and syllables. After prolonging the within-word rate of syllables to one or more seconds, clients move up the therapy hierarchy by practicing words, phrases, sentences, and spontaneous speech. The ultimate goal is speech that is "stutter free" (Franken, Boves, Peters, & Webster, 1992, p. 2) even if the end result is not always normal or natural sounding speech (Onslow & Ingham, 1987).

The between-word pausing approach described in detail later in this paper is based on the premise that people who stutter breathe and articulate correctly (Reitzes & Starkweather, 1999) and that re-teaching breathing and articulation is unnecessary (Reitzes, 2006; Schneider, 1995) and in some cases unproductive. When a moment of stuttering occurs, respiratory and articulatory function may appear impaired when they are being used as secondary behaviors. For example, when caught in a moment of stuttering, the speaker may attempt to talk during inhalation in the belief that it will facilitate moving through the stutter. This is not an example of irregular breathing or impaired respiration, but an example of the speaker using respiration as a secondary behavior to work through, postpone, or avoid stuttering. An adult who gets stuck on the /b/ sound in "bank" certainly knows how to articulate /b/ and may do so hundreds of times a day. The problem is not articulation. The problem the speaker faces is learning how to initiate and move forward through sounds during moments of actual or anticipated stuttering. Schneider (1995) explains:

> Fluency problems are characterized by periods of normal speech production interspersed
>
> with sudden episodes of speech 'breakdown.' Speakers who are prone to fluency breakdown also experience periods of normal speech function which range from seconds and minutes to days and weeks. Periods of normal fluency demonstrate that these speakers posses the physiologic ability to successfully plan and automatically execute fluent communicative speech. Therefore, the tendency for speech production breakdown to occur can be viewed as a sensitivity – for an otherwise normal system – to malfunction under certain conditions. (p. 334)

Schneider also notes:

> Traditional fluency shaping strategies reinforce the idea of being abnormal and the sense that to simulate normalcy you need to consciously control each articulatory gesture including respiratory function. This is simply not true. One cannot consciously regulate respiratory

function. Attempting to do so takes the speaker further away from their innate normalcy. (P. Schneider, personal communication, January 26, 2006)

People who stutter speak with increased levels of muscular tension (Bloodstein, 1995; Freeman & Ushijima, 1978; McClean, Goldsmith, & Cerf, 1984; Starkweather, 1987; Starkweather & Givens-Ackerman, 1997; van Lieshout, Peters, Starkweather, and Hulstijin, 1993) and also demonstrate increased muscular tension when attempting to avoid stuttering (Starkweather and Givens, 2003). Stuttering behaviors tend to increase when the speaker feels under time pressure constraints such as the need to speak quickly (Bloodstein, 1995; Schneider, 1995, 1998; Perkins, 1975, 1992; Perkins, Kent, & Curlee, 1991; Starkweather, 1987; Van Riper, 1973). Some clinicians and researchers have noted that inserting pauses into speech may be associated with a decrease in muscle tension and a decrease in feelings of time pressure (Haynes & Chirstensen, 1995; Reardon & Yaruss, 2004, Reitzes, 2006; Tonev, 2004). During a discussion on an electronic mailing list, one man explained:

> A few years ago, I purposely introduced pauses into my speech. It made such a difference…I found that I was a lot calmer - the hiatus seemed to remove much of the turmoil that accompanied my talking…It also allowed me to resist time pressure - something to which I had previously surrendered…[Using pauses] put me so much in control. (Badmington, 2006)

While pausing is a very useful tool to help people stutter less often, it is best to consider pausing as one part of a comprehensive treatment approach that focuses on all aspects of the client's stuttering problem (Reitzes, 2006). Speech tools such as pausing are certainly important, but working on the negative feelings and attitudes that surround the disorder is often considered the most crucial aspect of therapy (Dell, 2000; Murphy, 1999; Starkweather & Givens-Ackerman, 1997). When pausing is used, the clinician must strongly consider incorporating it into a therapy approach that also focuses on identifying, talking about, and learning about stuttering. Additionally, it is suggested that when teaching pausing, the clinician consider doing so in an integrated manner with other speech tools (Meltzer, 1998; Reardon & Yaruss, 2004; Reitzes, 2006) such as pull-outs, voluntary stuttering, and various types of easy or smooth initiations. The following sections discuss ways to teach pausing to adults and children that is derived from the work of Schneider (1995, 1998) and myself (Reitzes, 2006).

Using Pausing with Adults

Introduce the topic of pausing to adults by saying aloud a passage such as the following while pausing briefly (for a fraction of a second to a full second) at each comma:

> Pausing, is a, speaking strategy, that is used, to reduce, the frequency of stuttering. Pausing, occurs, between words, not within words. Each, pause, should last, a fraction, of a second, to a full second. Sometimes, the pausing times, may need to be, longer. Pausing, should not be used, to avoid, stuttering, but should be used, as a way, to reduce, the overall rate, of your speech. The, more you use, and practice, pausing, the more natural sounding, you may become.

When working with adults or young adults, begin by pausing after the first word in every sentence, and then after every one, two, three, four, or five words thereafter. After your model, ask the client to attempt to use pausing in the same manner that you have demonstrated. Continue having a discussion with the client while both of you use pausing. If the client has difficulty remembering to use pausing, discuss the matter directly. You may consider asking the client to use more frequent pauses such as

pausing after the first word of a sentence and then after every one or two words. This manner of pausing may also prove effective for clients who are experiencing a high level of stuttering.

It is also helpful to work out a signal system with the client to help him or her stay focused. For example, when a client is practicing pausing, but forgets to use the tool during a speaking turn, respond with a signal such as sticking up one finger as a reminder to use pausing. You may also inform the client when he or she is "on target" by giving an occasional "thumbs-up" sign. The client and clinician determine together how long during a session pausing will be practiced. For example, the client and clinician may choose to practice pausing for five minutes and then speak without pausing for five minutes. This provides the client the opportunity to compare the use of pausing to speaking using his or her natural rate of speech. As therapy sessions continue, support the client in increasing the periods of time spent practicing pausing.

Generally speaking, clinicians should speak using pausing when the client is doing so. However, at times the clinician needs to challenge the client by speaking with a fast rate. This provides the client with opportunities to focus on using pausing even when faced with a fast talking speaker. You may explain, "When I increase my rate of speech, you should try even harder to stay on target. Don't let my fast rate increase your rate of speech."

Tangentially, when the clinician increases rate, the client may become frustrated and make comments such as, "I can't get a word in" or "You are talking too fast for me." These are prime opportunities to discuss the option of talking openly about stuttering with a conversational partner. Suggest phrases to your clients to use during frustrating conversations such as, "Being a person who stutters sometimes makes it hard for me to enter into a conversation" and "I stutter and would like a turn to speak now."

If a client mentions that using pausing is difficult or sounds "weird," explain that learning a new speaking strategy takes time and practice. Consider tape recording or videotaping the client so he or she is able to clearly observe how the use of pausing reduces the frequency of stuttering. Keep in mind that some clients will be uncomfortable with seeing or hearing themselves stutter and may be opposed to recordings. Be patient with those who express such fears.

Pausing may also be used and practiced while reading. Provide the client with reading materials and a pencil, and instruct the speaker: "Insert commas after the first word in each sentence and then after every one, two, three, four, or five words thereafter." This type of visual aid is very helpful for some people who stutter. This exercise may also helpful for the occasional client who is reluctant to try pausing, or responds, "I don't have anything to talk about."

After becoming comfortable with using pausing in the therapy setting, the client needs to practice and transfer this skill to public speaking situations. Only after you have demonstrated the use of pausing in public should you ask your client to do so. Clinicians must model the behaviors they wish a client to use (Breitenfeldt & Lorenz, 2000; Dell, 2000; Ramig & Bennett, 1995; Walton & Wallace, 1998). This demonstrates that the speaking assignment is reasonable (Breitenfeldt & Lorenz, 2000). It is very empowering for a person who stutters to see the clinician using a speaking tool in public with people such as clerks and salespersons. This helps to legitimize the speaking strategy and make is safe.

It is also helpful to encourage clients to attend self-help meetings to practice pausing. One organization, the National Stuttering Association (NSA), has local self-help chapters across the United States. Many people who attend self-help meetings use their speaking time to practice strategies learned in speech therapy. Some participants even like to announce to the attending members the specific speaking strategy they are focusing on. While clients will benefit from meeting other people who stutter at NSA or other self-help meetings, clients will also benefit by having a "stutter friendly" speaking environment in which to practice pausing and other speech tools.

Using Pausing with Children

Children need to have a clear understanding of how and why pausing is used (Healey & Scott, 1995; Reitzes, 2006). To begin teaching pausing to children, explain (while pausing at each comma):

> Today, we are, going to learn, a, speech tool, called, pausing. Pausing, is when, you speak, by putting, many pauses, between words. Sometimes, when we talk, and when, we stutter, our muscles, our tongue, our throat, and our lips, get really tight. Pausing, will help, to loosen, everything up, so that we stutter, less often. And, remember, when you, use pausing, it is okay, if you stutter.

One way to introduce pausing is by using a children's abacus to demonstrate the tool (L. Caggiano, personal communication, March, 14, 2004). An abacus is extremely useful in helping students to comprehend and visualize pausing. A children's abacus may be purchased at toy stores and teacher supply stores, and consists of rows of beads that are easily moved from side to side by sliding along smooth bars (see Figure 1 for an illustration of a children's abacus).
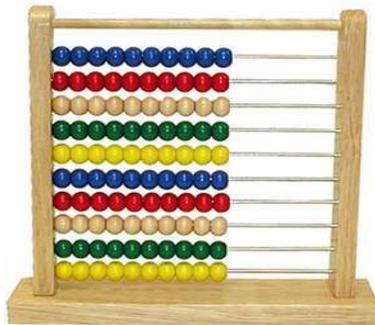
(Figure 1 – an abacus for children)

At first, it is best to "over-teach" the tool by asking students to pause after every word during practice activities. One way to do so is by engaging students in talking about their favorite movies. Begin the game with a strong model of the tool by using the abacus while simultaneously saying, "My, favorite, movie, is, Star, Wars. I, remember, the, first, time, I, saw, it. It, was, like, it, was, yesterday. My, favorite, part, was, when…" Each time you say a word, simultaneously move a bead from one side of the abacus to another. This will force you (the speaker) to pause briefly between each word. Be sure that you demonstrate a correct model of pausing. Move only one bead per word. Remember, pausing occurs between words and should not disrupt the within-word articulation rate of a word. Each word needs to be said crisply and at a normal rate. For example, a multi-syllabic word such as "telephone" should be said crisply, without prolonging the word, while using only one bead. Remember, if students stutter, that is okay. You are not rewarding the absence of stuttering – you are rewarding a child for attempting to use a speech tool.

If students move one bead per syllable, stop them and explain, "You are doing a great job. Now let's make sure that we only use one bead per word." For example, if the child said the word "octopus" by using three beads (one bead per syllable), demonstrate to the student that the word in question (octopus) receives only one bead and is said crisply, without prolonging it. Sometimes I state, "Let's do this together." I then take the child's finger and say a sentence which contains several multi-syllabic words while simultaneously moving the beads from side to side. This is done so students receive a strong model of pausing and begin to understand that all words receive only one bead and are said crisply. Then I ask the student to try it on his or her own.

After each child has had an opportunity to practice pausing, ask questions such as, "How does pausing change your speech?" and "When you use pausing, what happens to your stuttering?" Many, if not most students seven years of age or older will recognize that while using pausing, their own speech and the speech of their peers contains fewer moments of overt stuttering. Some children as young as five year olds will clearly understand that when they speak using pausing, overt stuttering is reduced.

Continue practicing pausing after every word with other games and activities. When you feel that students are able to pause after every word, remove the abacus and continuing practicing. Explain to students that using the abacus is similar to using training wheels (Reitzes, 2006), "Once you learn how to ride a bike, you take the training wheels off. Once you learn how to use pausing, you take the abacus away."

Play a fun game called "My Favorite Things" without using the abacus. In this game, announce a topic such as favorite foods or favorite televisions shows, and model an example sentence such as (commas indicate pausing), "My, favorite, show, to, watch, on, television, is, Bugs, Bunny." Then announce, "I used pausing after every word. To stay in this game, you must remember to pause after every word and you must think of a television show that no one has named. The last player left in the game is the winner." Then everyone take turns using pausing in complete sentences. It is best if, on occasion, you speak with an exaggerated fast rate so students have the opportunity to "catch" you forgetting to use the tool. Students will enjoy catching you (Schneider, 1998). If students are having a lot of difficulty remembering to use pausing, briefly re-introduce the abacus to help them refocus.

If a student is reluctant to try pausing or simply reluctant to talk, take out reading materials that are commensurate with or slightly below the child's reading level. Add pausing marks (commas) to the text using a pencil. Read a few sentences to the child while pausing briefly at the commas. (When reading, you should not be using the abacus.) Then ask the student to read while pausing briefly at the commas.

Do not be surprised if some students are uncomfortable with using pausing. What the listener perceives as improved communication, the speaker may experience as frustrating and foreign. If students make comments such as, "My speech sounds weird" or, "I hate talking this slow," speak frankly and openly about their concerns. For example, you may say, "Sometimes when we learn a new skill we need to over-learn it," and, "The more we practice pausing the more normal we will sound." Take time to explain, "I would never ask you to use pausing all of the time, but it is my job as your speech teacher to make sure that you practice pausing enough so that you can use it when and if you want to."

When working at the phrase level of speech, Ramig et. al (1988) suggest playing "Simon Says" by "inserting a pause between 'Simon Says' and 'touch your toes'" (p. 5). You may also play this game by inserting pauses after "Simon" and at other appropriate places (i.e. "Simon, says, stand on, one foot.").

There is no exact system or recipe for progressing from pausing after every word to pausing in a "natural" or "normal" sounding manner. One way to move up the pausing hierarchy is to announce, "We will now practice using pausing after the first word in every sentence and then after every one, two, three, four, or five words." At first, teach and practice this "chunking" method of pausing by using reading materials. Choose a book or other reading material and insert commas after every one, two, three, four, or five words. Ask students to take turns reading while briefly pausing at the commas. When you feel students are ready, ask them to read while using pausing without inserting commas.

It may also be helpful to re-introduce the abacus at this point to visually demonstrate this "chunking" style of using pausing. To demonstrate a strong model, talk while saying one, two, three, four, or five words per every bead you move on the abacus. For example, if you choose to talk about a weekend trip, you may say (while pausing at the commas), "This, weekend, I went, to the park, with my friend, and we went out, for dinner and a movie…" Then give each student a turn to speak using the abacus. If a child becomes frustrated and is unable to practice pausing in this manner with the abacus, simply move on.

Another way to use pausing is by asking students to pause after the first word in every sentence. For some students, focusing on one pause per sentence enables them to use the tool effectively. Explain (using pausing):

> We, are now going to work on pausing after the first word in every sentence. You, may also pause at other spots in the sentence that you find helpful. Be, sure and pause, after the first word of each sentence.

To practice pausing in this manner, ask students to talk about a favorite activity they do with their families. You need to demonstrate a strong model by speaking first and pausing after the first word in every sentence and then at other comfortable locations. For example, say "My, favorite food is pizza. Once, a week, my family rents a movie, and orders pizza. We, take turns, choosing the movie..." Then ask students to discuss family activities while using pausing in the assigned manner.

When working with a group, you may challenge your students by playing "The King of Pausing" (Reitzes, 2006). In this game, use a watch or stopwatch to time students to see who can use pausing in the assigned manner for the longest amount of time. The student who wins is given the title "The King of Pausing." Students enjoy playing against each other and will also enjoy playing against their speech teacher.

Within Word Pausing

While this paper has described the use of deliberate pausing as a speaking strategy utilized between words, Schneider (1995, 1998), and Reitzes (2006) have noted that pausing may also be utilized within words. Schneider explains:

In addition to using this strategy to reduce the frequency of stutters, it can also be used to resolve stuttering blocks [Schneider 1995, 1998]. For example, when saying the word "stop" the speaker may feel stuck on the "s." In such a situation, the speaker may put a small pause after a gentle "s" and then say "top." In this manner, pausing may be used to break long words into syllables when. (P. Schneider, personal communication, January 19, 2006)

It is not recommended to teach clients to pause within words, but do not fault them for doing so if it appears productive and useful for the particular client (Reitzes, 2006). For example, one elementary school student explained that when caught in a stutter, he would briefly pause and then continue through the word. If he were stuck on the word "soon," he would say the "s," then pause, and complete the word by saying "oon." By pausing within a word, articulation was halted momentarily. The child was then able to move forward without relying on his usual contingency of secondary behavior such as eye blinking and head nodding. While the student was not taught to use pausing in such a manner, doing so was productive for him.

Of course, pausing within words may prove unproductive for some people who stutter. For example, one sixth grade student attempted to use pausing within words, but when doing so, demonstrated great difficulty re-initiating speech. This student's use of within-word pausing lead him to have silent blocks followed by struggled initiation of speech. In this situation, within-word pausing was not productive, and it was recommended that the student cease utilizing it.

During one therapy session, a 15-year-old student visiting from another program attended to mentor a 12-year-old student. The older student explained that he "invented" and "discovered" a way to deal with difficult sounds. He explained that he often stutters on words that begin with /p/, /d/, and /b/ (plosives). The younger student replied, "Me too." The 15-year-old then instructed the younger student to, "Say the first letter of the word with a pop sound and then say the rest of the word. Like this, say 'paper', by saying 'p' . . . 'aper'." The younger student looked surprised because he had practiced pausing between words in speech class, but not within words. Rather then discourage the students from using such a technique, I focused on helping them to experiment with it in a way I felt would be more productive. I suggested that instead of making a "pop sound," they attempt to say the initial sound more easily. I modeled this approach.

Pausing as a Postponement

Some people who stutter may pause before an anticipated stutter or during a silent or audible block. For some, this pause allows the feeling of stuttering to pass. Additionally, this pause often allows the speaker to gently or easily initiate speech or work through a moment of stuttering. Some clinicians have criticized the use of pausing as a postponement. While it may seem counterintuitive, using pausing as a brief postponement facilitates forward moving speech for some people who stutter. However, if using pausing as a postponement leads to unproductive behaviors such as increased avoidances or difficulties initiating speech, then the clinician and client need to reconsider how pausing is used.

Pausing Combined with Other Speaking Strategies

Children and adults who use pausing will generally recognize that while the tool may reduce the frequency of stuttering, it certainly does not eradicate moments of stuttering or provide a cure. Clients of all ages have asked, "What do I do when I use pausing and still stutter." This is an exceedingly fair

question that needs to be addressed during therapy. Remind clients that pausing is only one speech tool at their disposal and is used to reduce, not eradicate stuttering.

There are many ways that pausing be used in conjunction with other speaking strategies. For example, one elementary student remarked that pausing was his favorite speech tool to use and that when he stuttered, he would use a stretch-out or a bounce-out to move forward through moments of stuttering (Reitzes, 2006). When you feel it is appropriate, work with clients to integrate pausing with other speech tools and to experiment with different combinations of speech tools.

Acknowledgments:

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