

Focus on Fluency™

A Tool Kit for Creative Therapy



by **Kristin A. Chmela, M.A., CCC-SLP**

Board Recognized Specialist in Fluency Disorders

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About the Author

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This Kit is Dedicated to...

My SFA family – I have learned so much from all of you;
My family – Your love and support has always guided me through;
June Campbell – A mentor, colleague, and friend like no other;
Dava – Because you always knew.

— Kristin

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How to Use This Tool Kit

The purpose of *Focus on Fluency*[™] is to provide SLPs who are working with students who stutter, ages seven to thirteen, a “box” of resource materials. It is a set of practical tools to assist SLPs every day in executing therapy goals.

Focus on Fluency[™] is based on a multidimensional theoretical basis, whereby factors related to stuttering problems are considered and addressed in the treatment process (Smith, 1999). The overall goal of therapy is learning to communicate effectively. The SLP encourages students to become confident and assertive communicators, while assisting them in learning to produce speech that is forward moving with little or no tension. *Focus on Fluency*[™] has five topic areas, not order-specific, that you can choose to include in your student’s treatment plan. Although this *Tool Kit* is organized and simple to follow, there is nothing simple about stuttering therapy. Not only are the ways kids stutter dynamic, but so are the attitudes and feelings about the problem (Chmela & Reardon, 2001).

***Focus on Fluency*[™] addresses five topic areas:**

Education provides activities to teach students about the normal process of speech, stuttering, breathing, relaxation, and visual imagery.

Desensitization involves activities that encourage development of healthy attitudes and feelings about stuttering.

Basic Communication focuses on tools such as *Eye Contact*, *Wait Time*, *Pausing*, and *Turn-Taking* to improve communication and speaking skills.

Fluency Shaping involves an easy, relaxed approach to help students speak more smoothly.

Stuttering Modification includes *Pull-Out*, *Cancellation*, and *Fake Stutters* to help students change the way they stutter.

Each section of the book begins with an explanation of the topic area and why it helps. Activities and games provide assistance to clinicians in the teaching process. There is an informal *Decision-Making Guide* that may help clinicians as they review assessment results and plan treatment. While an area of treatment may be relevant, not all activities within an area may be appropriate. SLPs should use clinical judgment to determine relevant activities for each individual student.

How to Use This Tool Kit (Cont.)

While many students learn to use these tools quite easily, the transfer, generalization, and maintenance of these tools may be much more challenging (Gregory, 2003). It is imperative that students understand what tools are, why they help, and discover personal ways to use them. It is also critical that clinicians help students develop self-monitoring skills, consistently practice the tools outside the therapy setting, and utilize skills independently (Campbell, 2003). This *Tool Kit* encompasses a three-pronged approach to help students use tools successfully.

Visual Prompts, or symbols for each tool, are on various card decks and materials. These Visual Prompts remind the student to use the tool or tools targeted during various activities in therapy. Remove Visual Prompts as the student begins to independently remember the tools at various levels of situational context, discourse structure, and semantic complexity (Healey, Scott-Trautman, & Susca, 2004).

Self-Charting/Partner-Charting provides an opportunity for the student to monitor his/her use of tools (Campbell, 2003). Students tally their productions during therapy activities (*Self-Charting*), or students monitor each others' productions (*Partner-Charting*). The clinician may also use the charting card to tally the student's responses. Specific cards are found on pp. 55, 57, 59, 61, 68, 73, 77, and 79.

Prepare *Contract Cards* weekly based on the current therapy focus to assist the student with rehearsing skills in other communicative environments. Students complete short assignments with an opportunity to discuss progress. A sample of a completed *Contract Card* is on p. vii and a blank, reproducible contract is on p. viii. Specific cards are found on pp. 55, 57, 59, 61, 68, 73, 77, and 79.

Learning to be an effective communicator involves exercising a combination of tools as well as determining which tools are most relevant for a particular student. Students will help the clinician understand what works best for them.

It is my hope that *Focus on Fluency™* will provide creative ways for clinicians to make stuttering therapy more successful and help students to achieve their most important goal, which is to become the best communicator he or she can be.

Materials: Materials for the activities in each section of the book are in the *Tool Kit*. Each student would benefit from having a journal. Students may provide their own journal, or make a journal by printing the journal page from the CD-ROM.

Contract Card

Name: Sam Date: 5/1/2006

Goal:

Sam will use eye contact with Mrs. Gold
(Student) (Tool) (Helper)

at her desk when defining 5 science words.
(Location) (Activity)

How did it go?

Student: *I used eye contact during speech today.*

Parent Teacher/SLP/Other: *We made eye contact 5 times.
Excellent eye contact. I am observing it more in the
school environment.*

Self-Charting/Partner-Charting Card

Name: John Date: 5/6/2006

<u>Eye Contact</u> Activity #1	<u>Wait Time</u> Activity #2	<u>Turn-Taking</u> Activity #3
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

Contract Card

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Goal:

_____ will use _____ with _____
(Student) (Tool) (Helper)

at _____ when _____
(Location) (Activity)

How did it go?

Student:

Parent Teacher/SLP/Other:

Self-Charting/Partner-Charting Card

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

_____	_____	_____
Activity #1	Activity #2	Activity #3