
The impact of pseudostuttering experiences on SLT students' learning

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Abstract

Studies have shown that a significant number of Speech and Language Therapy students report feeling less competent in the area of fluency. In light of this, a small number of researchers have reported that participation in a pseudo-stuttering exercise can enhance fluency modules and be a beneficial learning experience for Speech and Language Therapy students. However, there is limited research to support this claim.

Aim: To investigate the impact of a pseudo-stuttering experience on students’ learning and the implications for future clinical practice. This study used a qualitative methodology to facilitate an in-depth exploration of the experiences of the participants. Two focus groups were conducted in which a total of 16 SLT students discussed their experiences. The focus groups were transcribed and coded with the aid of NVivo9 software. The data was analysed using principles of grounded theory. Analysis of the data identified three themes relating to the students’ experiences of pseudo-stuttering: Stepping into their shoes, Learning from experience and Implications for clinical practice.

The students reported that their experience was not truly reflective of a PWS’s experience. Nonetheless, they considered it as an opportunity to “Step into someone else’s shoes” which resulted in reports of increased empathy for PWS by some. Empathy has been shown to facilitate the development of positive client-clinician relationships which in turn impacts on therapy outcomes. The participants identified practical changes they will make to clinical practice following the experience. The findings suggest that participation in a pseudo-stuttering exercise can be a valuable learning tool for SLT students. Furthermore, this study considered important ethical issues that previous research has overlooked.

Keywords: Pseudo-stuttering; Clinical; Education; Students

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