

Rationale for Student's Experience in Speech Therapy Questionnaire

"The pain of staying the same must be greater than the pain of change!"

Dr. J. Scott Yaruss

I attended an excellent workshop on stuttering presented by Dr. Yaruss. He uses a questionnaire for students who stutter to determine their attitudes towards and "readiness" for treatment. He explained that the pain of staying the same, or continuing to stutter, must be greater than the pain of change for change to actually take place. In other words, the great effort required for a person to be driven to make difficult changes that affect positive results must be lessened by the thought of staying the same.

As I pondered that thought, I saw how this holds true for students who have been in articulation therapy for prolonged periods of time without making much progress. This is particularly true for upper elementary and middle school students.

I developed this questionnaire to evaluate an upper elementary student who had been in speech for many years and was growing somewhat hostile and closed to therapy due to lack of progress. His responses to the questionnaire validated the fact that change was not that important to him, and that the pain of change was still too great. With parental consent, I dismissed this student based on Dr. Yaruss' line of thought. His parents understood that his dismissal was not permanent and that therapy could be reinstated any time he was ready for change.