Stuttering: Finding the Cause and the Cure

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Introduction

In the Summer of 2020, I began a research volunteer position at the Fluency Bank lab. After establishing myself as a volunteer, I was offered a paid position. My advisor then agreed to become my mentor and I now do my own research using the data owned by Fluency Bank .

Lab Members

Fluency Bank	CLASP
Allison Godsey	Mike DiGiacomo
Camila Lopez	Nicolette Contella
Carly Rosvold	Taylor Trent
Caroline Ventor	Gianna Robey
Christina Kim	Naomi Flores
Emily Rothman	Emily Swecker
Jade Chen	Hanna Gaskin
Jessica Mooney	Erin Greenstein
Josie Kalbaugh	Taylor Kenyon
Mary Petrosino	
Natalie Harvey	
Raina Lynch	
Rebecca Rollman	
Samantha Boas	
Tania Martinez-Equizabal	
Victoria Aloba	
Yuberkys Solla	

Image taken from http://languagefluency.umd.edu/people.html . My name is listed first under the Fluency Bank Lab members section.

Site Information:

Fluency Bank Lab

University of Maryland, 0220 Lefrak Hall

Dr. Nan Bernstein Ratner

The mission of the Language Fluency Lab at the University of Maryland, College Park is to understand the development of fluent speech production and the acquisition of language.

Issues Confronting Site:

We are working to find causes and treatment processes for stuttering. The cause of stuttering continues to be unknown. The lab is currently waiting to hear back about the renewal of the grant which will hopefully enable us to continue evaluating children in person when it is safe to do so.

Activities:

I was responsible for transcribing files of children who stutter for research purposes. Once transcribed, these files were analyzed for many different aspects such as; Speech Rate, Mean Length of Utterance, etc. After working with the data, I decided to conduct my own research project on Response Time Latency (RTL) between parent's and children who stutter and the correlation between recovery and persistence.

Impact:

By transcribing files that follow children in a longitudinal study we can evaluate files for possible factors that may contribute to the recovery or persistence of stuttering in children. There is no known cause for stuttering and we do not know how to cure it. We hope analysis done on these files might help to solve some ambiguity surrounding stuttering.

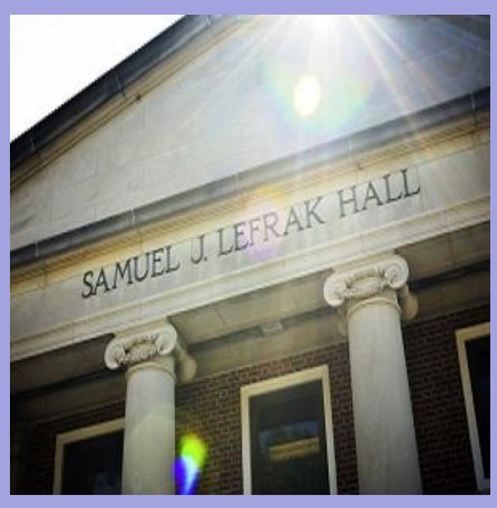

Photo taken from https://hesp.umd.edu/Projects/Applied%20Clinical%20Research Fluency Bank Lab located inside. All moved to virtual for now.

Discussion:

My involvement in the Fluency Bank lab has allowed me to become more involved in the field of Speech Language Pathology. I know that the skills I have learned will aid me in my career. Next year, I will hopefully have the opportunity to work with children one on one in a clinical setting. This will help me to practice my clinical skills and will further advance my career. The opportunities that have stemmed from this volunteer position continue to push me and further my involvement in the community of Speech Language Pathology.

Future Work:

April 6th, 2021, I submitted my individual research to the ASHA convention. I will find out if it is accepted in July. If the work is not accepted, I will continue to analyze files of children who stutter for response time latency. I will submit this research to other conventions and eventually hope to have it published. I will also continue to follow these children throughout their visits in an effort to identify trends in recovery and persistence of stuttering and the validity of therapeutic suggestions made to parents.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank Dr. Merck and Dr. Holtz for encouraging me to find a research opportunity.

I would like to thank Dr. Ratner for taking me under her wing and granting me patience and constant support.

I would like to thank Dr. Novick and Dr. Goupell for admitting me into the HESP undergraduate honors program and promoting my success in future research endeavors.