Why and how are speech-language pathologists infusing video game experiences into stuttering therapy?

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STUTTERING:

Stuttering is a **disfluent speech disorder** in which "sounds, syllables, or words are repeated or prolonged, disrupting the normal flow of speech" (National Institution on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2010, p. 1).
In addition to speech difficulties, those who stutter often report a multitude of other life difficulties such as **stress**, **anxiety**, and "**a greater cognitive load for emotional regulation**" (Rothbart, et al., 2011, p. 212).

VIDEO GAMES:

A recent survey by the Entertainment Software Association (2021) revealed that **67%** of adults and **76%** of children reported to be players of video games.

Researchers have started to investigate the possibilities of **potential learning and/or clinical gains** as a result of infusing video game playing and discussions into the classroom or therapy setting (Baranowski et al., 2016; Baranowski et al., 2008; Carras et al., 2018; Granic et al., 2014).

METHODS:

- Qualitative research approach
- Semi-structured interviews with speech-language pathologists
- Participant perspectives and examples
- Data analysis to identify key themes

Playing and discussing video games during stuttering therapy seems to allow for <u>important conversations</u> between clients and clinicians.
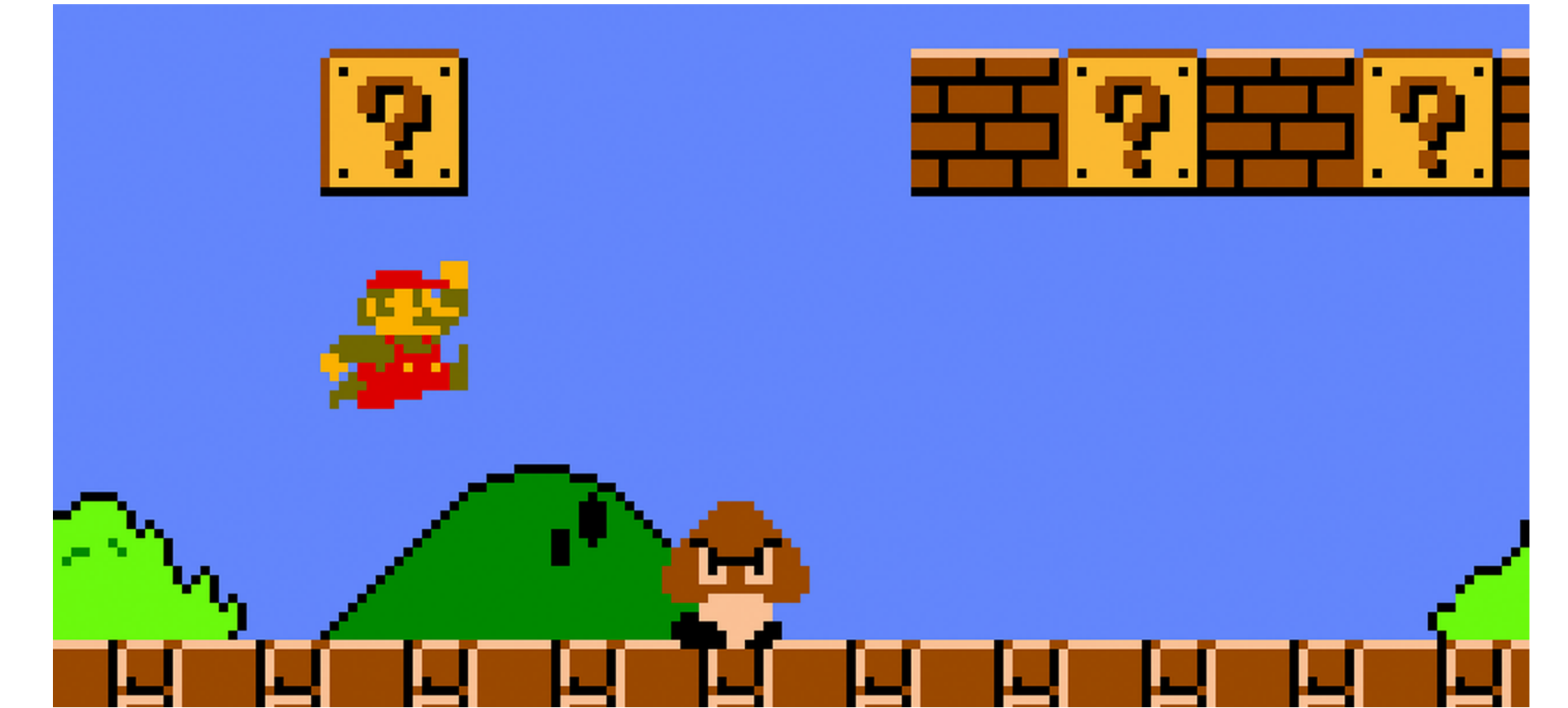
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PRELIMINARY RESULTS:

- **Reflecting and Problem-Solving**

*"I worked with an 8-year-old, and we played video games with levels. **And when he got stuck on a level, we took a break and I asked, "Where are you stuck?"** and we talked about being stuck in the video game. We mentioned different strategies that we can use in the video game to get unstuck. And then I took that idea of strategies over to his speech and told him how sometimes we get stuck during speaking situations and there are strategies that we can sometimes try in those situations."*

- **Discussing Thoughts and Feelings**

CALL OF DUTY.

"I knew this 13-year-old liked to play Call of Duty. I asked him if his stuttering was a Call of Duty character, which character would it be? And he said, "It would be John the Sniper." And I asked, "Why that character?" And he told me that John is the character who dies, gets eaten by dogs, and is never found again."