

# Communication and Electricity only Operate in a Circuit: Growing Social Language

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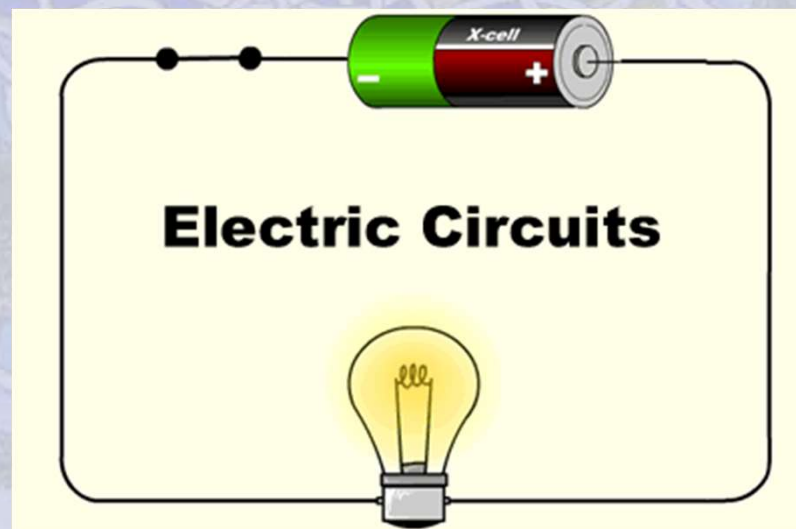
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# ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT

- A circuit is a complete path in which electrical current flows
- Continuity is of critical importance in a circuit; any break in the circuit will prevent electrons from flowing through it
- Must be a continuous, unbroken loop

- Circuits (Con't)
  - If circuit is broken, its conductive elements no longer form a complete path
  - .....leading to disruption in the flow of energy



# What is our Circuit in the Social Language of children who are D/HH?

- Conversation!
- A complete path
- A continuing flow of energy.....
- ....that is subject to disruption if not maintained

# UCLA Study (2009)

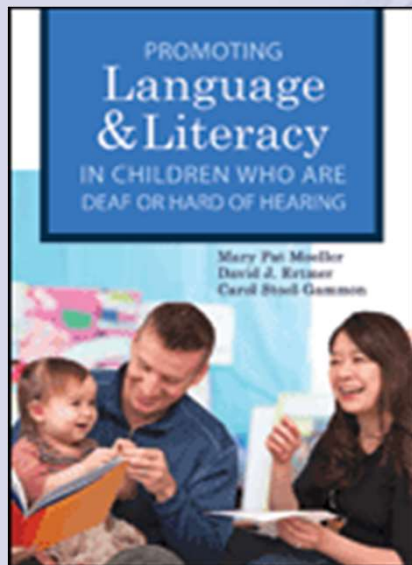
- Studied 275 families of children ages 0 – 4 with typical hearing
- Recorded adult speech, child speech, and television
- Looked at effect each of these had on child's language development

# UCLA Study Results

- Back-and-forth conversation contributed the most to the child's future language score
- Back-and-forth conversation contributed six times more than did adult speech alone
- Adult monologues (1-sided conversation or reading book to a child without his participation) weakly linked to language dev.
- TV viewing has no effect on language dev.
- Did not include children who were D/HH

# A.M. Robbins. Auditory-Verbal Therapy: A Conversational Competence Approach.

In: Moeller, Ertmer & Stoel-Gammon (Eds):  
*Promoting Language and Literacy in Children who  
are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.* Brookes Publishing:  
2016.





# Why Conversation with Children who are D/HH?

Conversation is where  
language lives in the real  
world.

# Why Conversation with Children who are D/HH?

In the real world,  
communication is never  
isolated from its continuous  
flow of energy as we  
connect with other people.

# Conversation Developmental milestones I

- 0-3 mos. Demonstrates turn-taking by cooing  
Social smile to communication partner
- 3-6 mos. Takes turns by vocalizing  
Joint attention; Maintains eye contact
- 6-9 mos. Copies facial expressions  
Calls to get attention
- 9-12 mo. Participates in verbal routines  
Repeats actions that are laughed at  
Vocalizes to call and respond to others

# Conversation Developmental milestones II

12-15 mo. Imitates others; Initiates routines

15-18 mo. Responds to adult conversation attempts

18-21 mo. Uses speech in response to speech

Improves ability to stay on topic

21-24 mo. Practices verbal schema, e.g. book reading

Plays with familiar convers frames, e.g. going to restaurant

Uses 2 – 3 word utterances to comment/tell information and to acknowledge/answer others

# Conversation Developmental milestones III

24-30 mo. Takes 2 turns in conversation

Verbally introduces & changes topics

Requests clarification

30-36 mo. Uses “polite” intonational patterns when interacting with others

Responds to requests to clarify

Apologizes by saying, “I’m sorry”

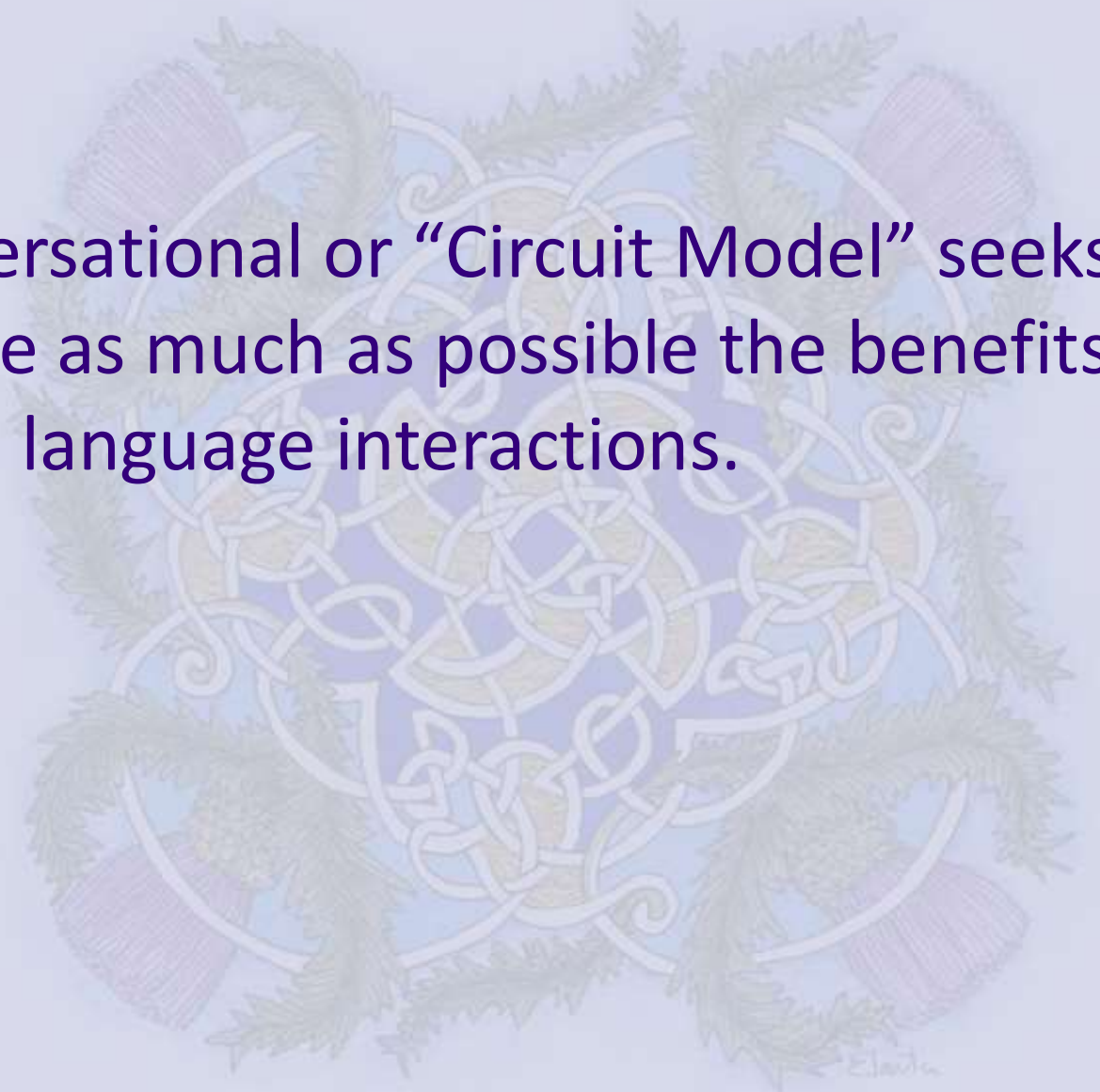
36-42 mo. Takes 4 – 5 conversational turns

Uses early narratives (event chains)

Uses fillers to acknowledge partner e.g., “uh-huh”, “ok”, “yeah”

# Why Conversation with Children who are D/HH?

Therapy by nature is contrived, but  
it's the price we pay for the value  
of purposeful intervention.



A Conversational or “Circuit Model” seeks to replicate as much as possible the benefits of real-life language interactions.

# Examples of Practices leading to potential mismatch

- Emphasis on imitation
- Activities that are not genuine communication
- Routines
- Following child's lead
- Attention paid to child whenever he speaks
- Desire to read child's communicative intent may override .....
- Attempts to minimize child's frustration
- Parent sensitivity to child's needs



# To Avoid Potential Mismatches

- Therapy practices not “good” or “bad” on their own
- Question of implementation
- Always dependent on age and stage of child
- Constant need to adjust our level to child’s level
- I’ll do anything for a child that he CAN’T do for himself.
- Establish routines then break them

# Characteristics of a Circuit Model of EI

- Give & Take/Ebb & Flow/Back & Forth/Throw & Catch
- Expectation for Participation
- Expectations raised when child successful
- Emotional/Supportive platform
- Create the platform!

# Getting it Right: How to support conversational (circuit) skills I

- Adults comment as much as they question
- Expect child to take his turn, using appropriate cues:
  - eye contact
  - expectant pause
  - sabotage
  - feign misunderstanding;
  - parent models rather than child imitating

# Getting it Right: How to support conversational (circuit) skills II

- Child and Adult switch roles
- “Sender” role has a different skill set than “Receiver” role
- Parent utilize signature tunes in their speech
- Specific guidance on reading books to child
- Authentic provocation
- Equal Time Pie
- Use of music, which is invitational

# Rules exist but.....

- Requirements within conversation at any point in time may be shifting
- The back and forth occurs rapidly
- Can practice scripts but these are inadequate to achieve full carry-over
- Difficult to predict or replicate the exchange and nuances
- Rules may be broken intentionally, which carries its own meaning

# Conversational rules and roles



# Why a Conversational Circuit Model?

- Other Benefits:
  - New words in context; redundant cues to meaning
  - Supports use of mental state words/ToM (Moeller & Schick, 2006)
  - Reunites words & their corresponding emotions (Robbins, 2015)
  - Sets the foundation for literacy:
    - Narrative chains
    - Dialogue
    - HOTS (Inference; Reading Between the Lines)

# Targets of Tasks

- Taking another's perspective
- Indexical features; emotion in the voice
- Conversational rules
- Phonological awareness through word play, humor, poetry
- Drill and skill for rapid, intensive practice
- Story conventions and narrative; connecting threads that link story elements



# Barrier Game; Authentic Purpose; Taking Another's Perspective



## Descriptive Language – Age 5

“ Put the girl to....so the head....make the yellow – blonde um girl...um of hair....blonde girl hair....touch it...the....blond girl that has a black headband ...um....put her face...um put her face on...IN the sky.”

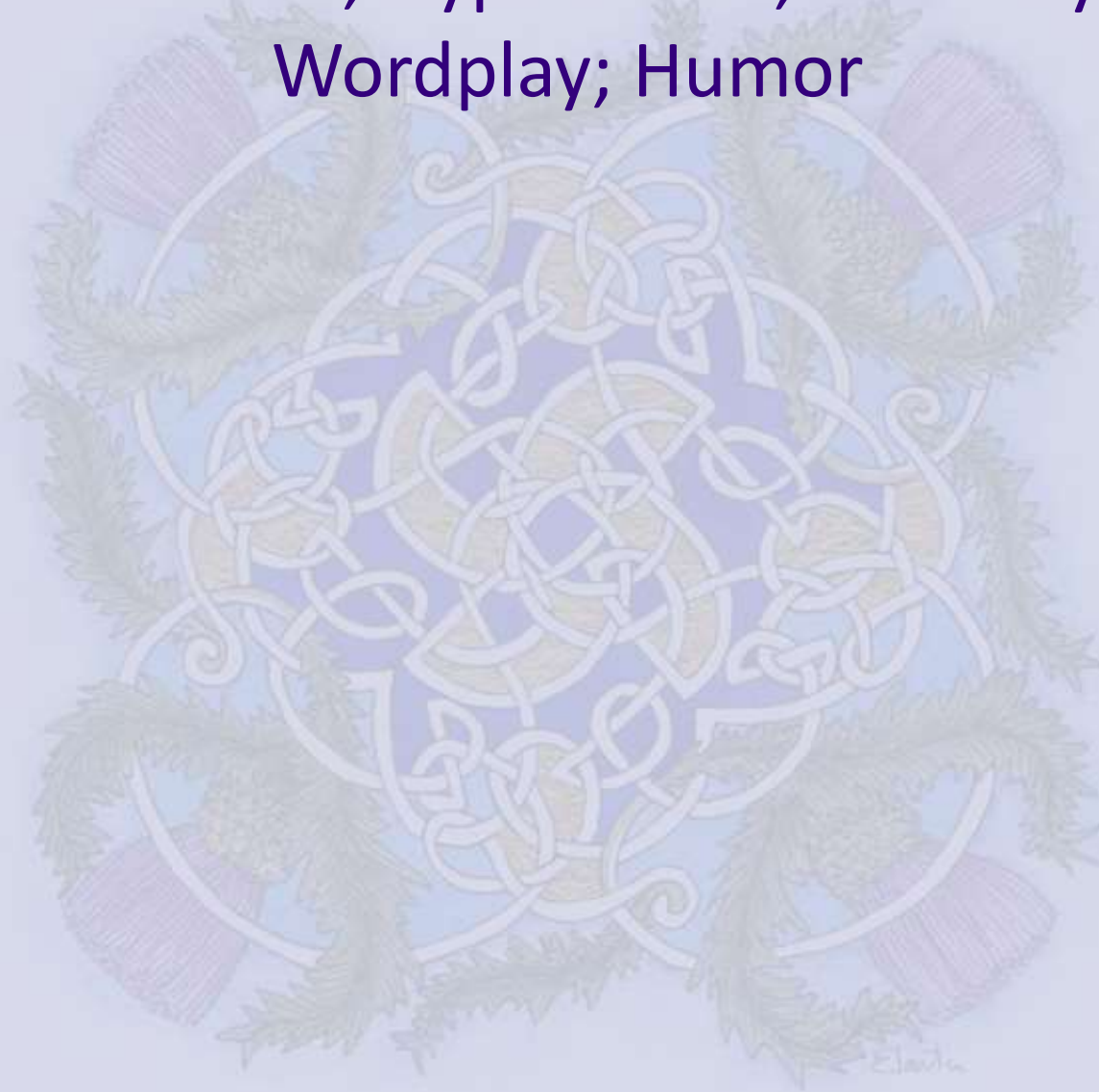
# Narrative Links; Story Conventions



# Taking Other's Perspective; Describing Mental States; Auditory-Only Opportunities



# Poetry: Prediction; Hypotheses; Auditory Closure; Wordplay; Humor

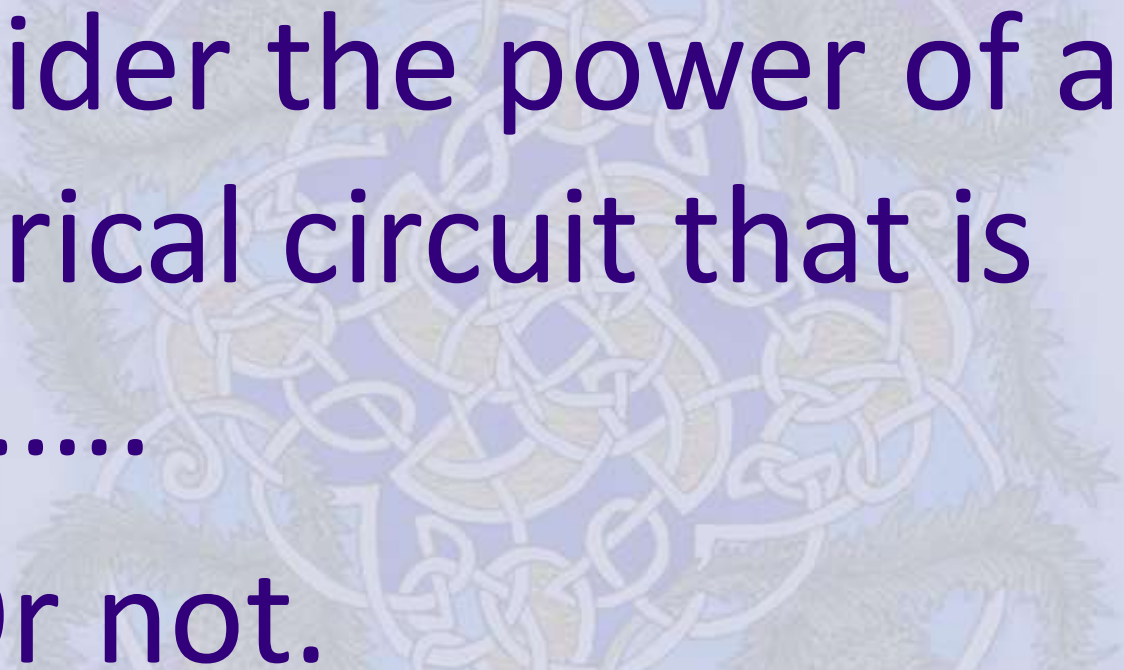


# New word meanings; Synonyms in Conversation




# Rapid Practice Letter Encoding





Consider the power of an  
electrical circuit that is  
live.....  
.....Or not.





For a child and family, consider  
the power of a conversational  
circuit that is live.....

.....Or not.

**THANK YOU**

# Grice's Rules of Conversation

- Make your contribution as informative as is required
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required
- Don't say what you believe to be false
- Be relevant (Topic maintenance)
- Avoid ambiguity
- Don't say that for which you lack evidence
- Be brief

# In adults with conversational competence

“How was the new Mexican restaurant?”

Non-observance of a rule is intentional by the speaker and is recognized as such by the listener

- Make your contribution as informative as is required