# "What I'm going to need you to do is…" Analyzing Teacher Talk to Improve Accessibility

Jessie Henderson, Mentor: Dr. Andrea Word

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Overview

Clear, effective communication is essential in a classroom setting, especially for students who are nonnative speakers of English. For this project, researchers analyzed baseline transcripts of teacher talk gathered from secondary classrooms across five regional partner districts. Designing Instruction for Academic Literacies (DIAL) training sessions were held in the summer of 2024 to prepare teachers to improve the accessibility of instructional talk. And design of instructional talk. Additional transcripts will be analyzed in fall 2024 and spring 2025 to determine the effectiveness of the training.


Dynamics of Instructional Language
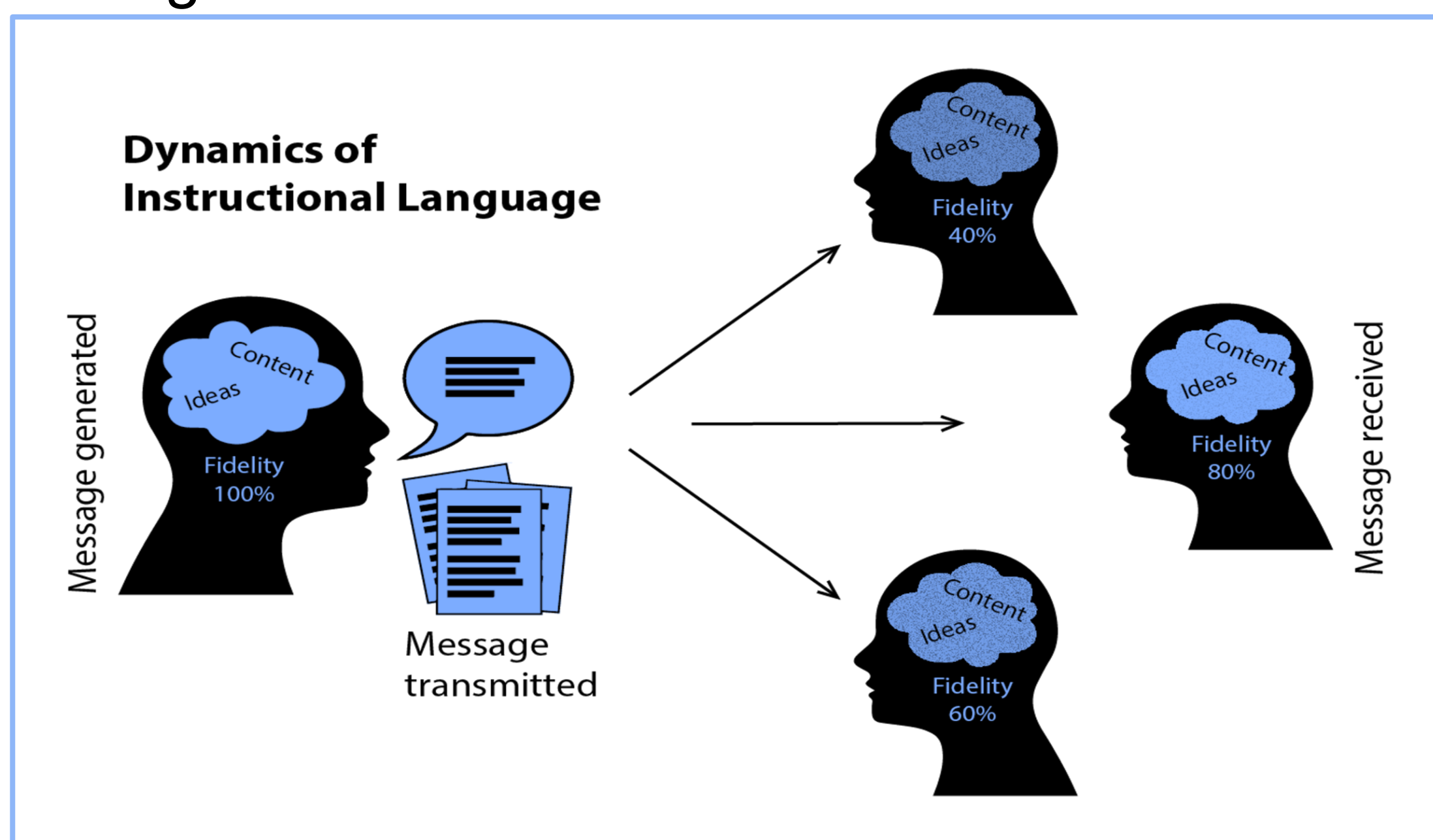
Training

Purpose:

- Increase teachers' awareness of how their language choices affect student understanding

- Identify problematic word choices and phrasing

- Instruct teachers on how to design language for accessibility.

- Reduce students' cognitive load therefore increasing fidelity of understanding

- Reduce teachers' loads by creating more time during the lesson

Original Language

So, what we are going to do is, we're gonna take a look back at the work you did weeks ago, when you were just starting the unit thinking about "Why do I need to wear a helmet when I ride my bike?" What I want you to do is to reread what you wrote last time and then you are going to rewrite. You're gonna make a new prediction, what are you going to see today?
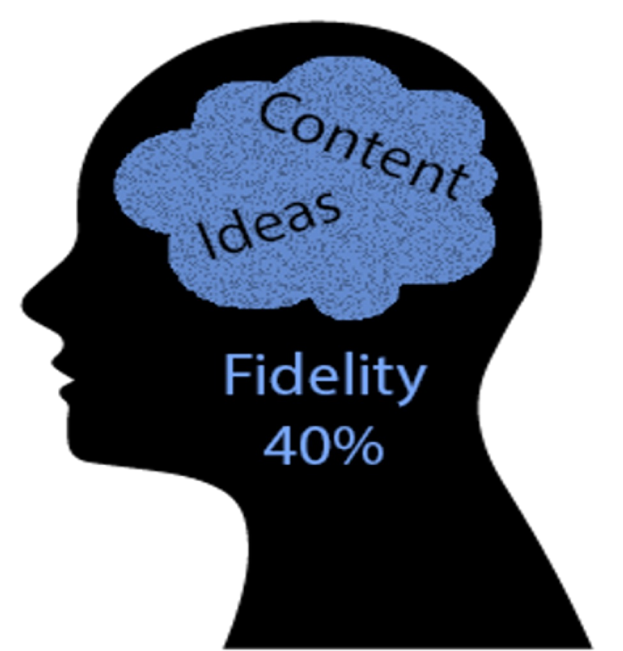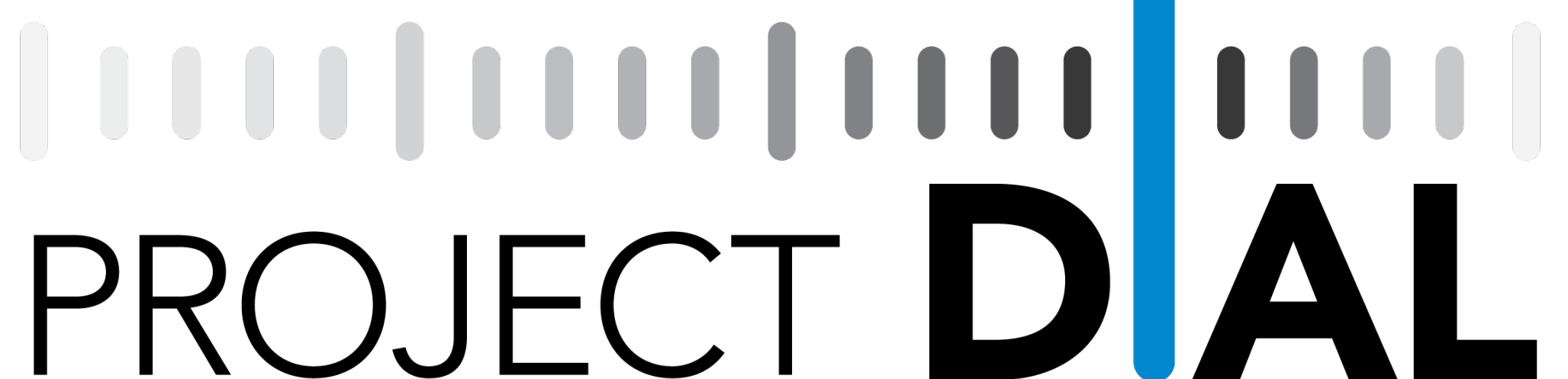

DIALed In Language

Get your lab journal. Think back to the question from Unit 6: "Why do I need to wear a helmet when I ride my bike?" Review your earlier answer. (pause) Today, you'll make a new prediction.
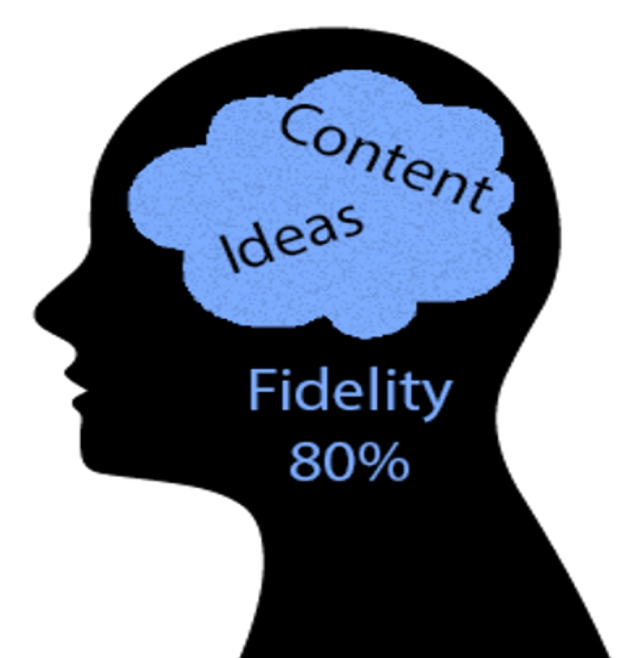
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

PROJECT DIAL

Impact

Designing teacher talk to be lesson-centered creates a more accessible experience for these students thereby increasing what they can learn. Students understand more of the lesson when teachers use language that reduces the irrelevant information and inaccessible language the student has to make sense of.

References (A list of the KEY references, if applicable)

Gharbavi, A. & Iravani, H. (2014). Is teacher talk pernicious to students? A discourse analysis of teacher talk. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences, 98,* 552 – 561. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.451

Sweller, J. (2017). Cognitive load theory and teaching English as a second language to adult learners. *Contact Magazine,* 5 – 10.