

Thinking like a writer

understandable?

specific?

interesting?

factual?

accurate?

Efficiency

The ratio of useful work to
the resources (processor
& storage) expended.

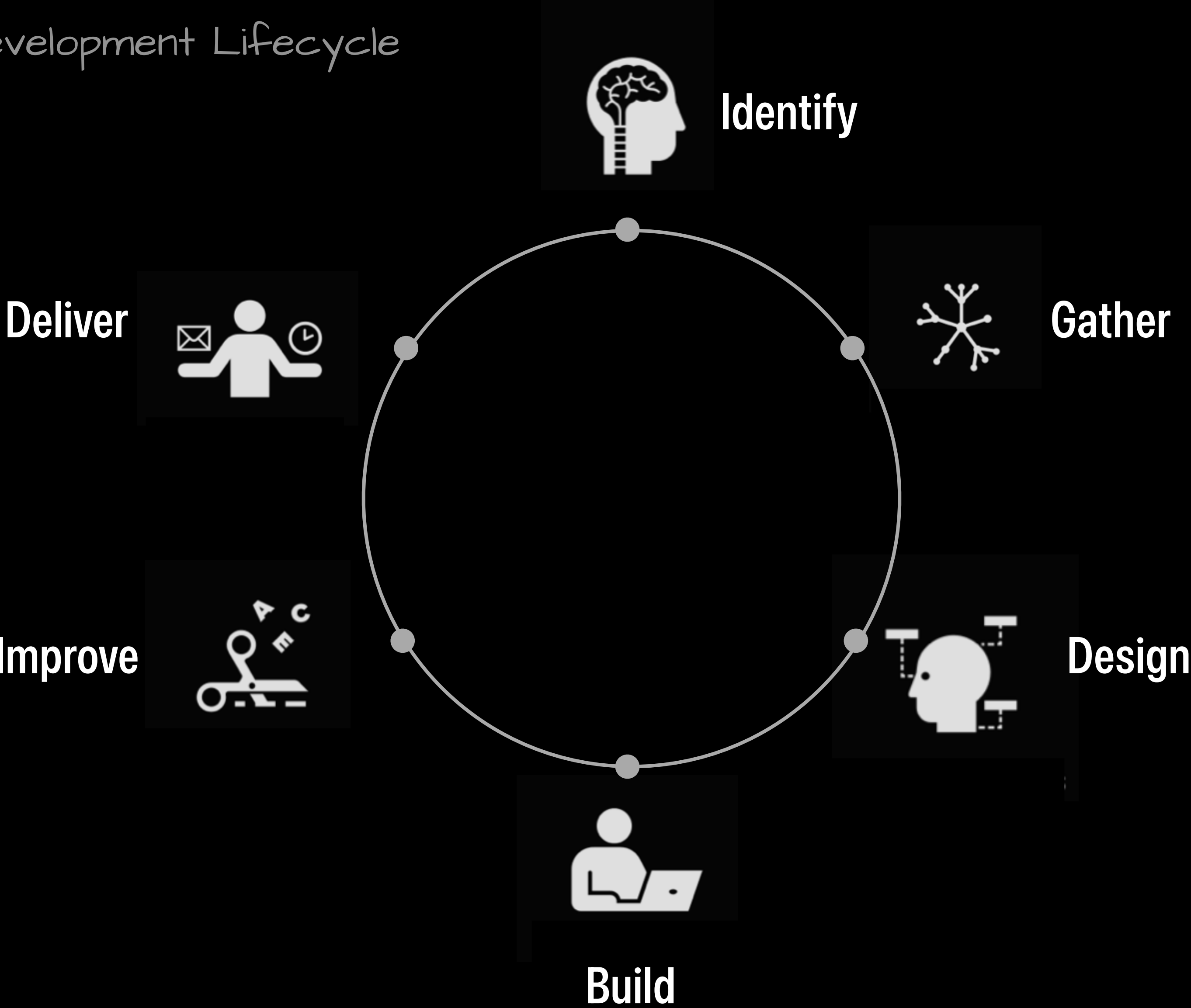
Achieving the intended impact in the
least amount of time

High intended impact Short time	High intended impact Long time
Low intended impact Short time	Low intended impact Long time

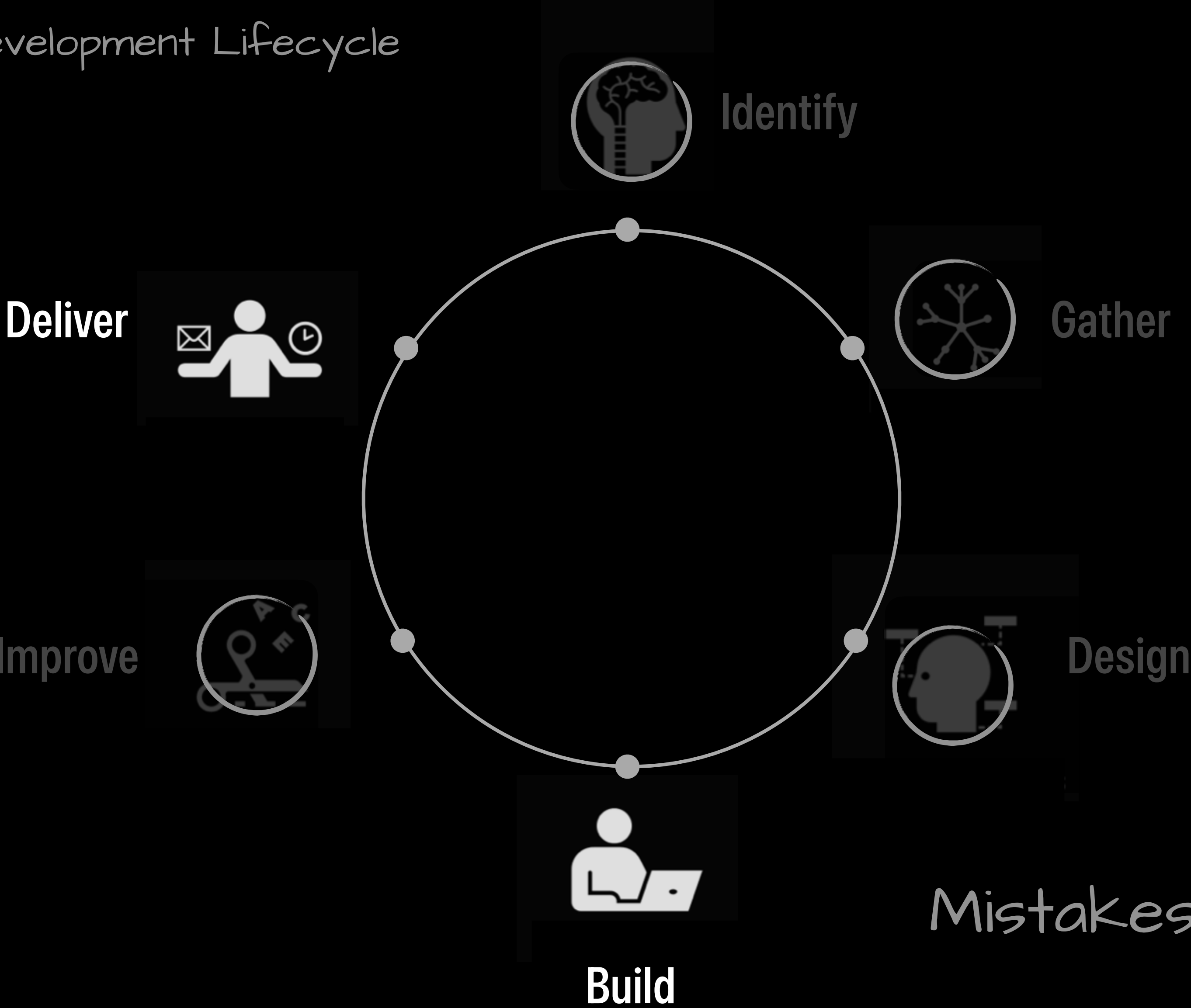
MODEL

The Communication Development Lifecycle (CDLC)

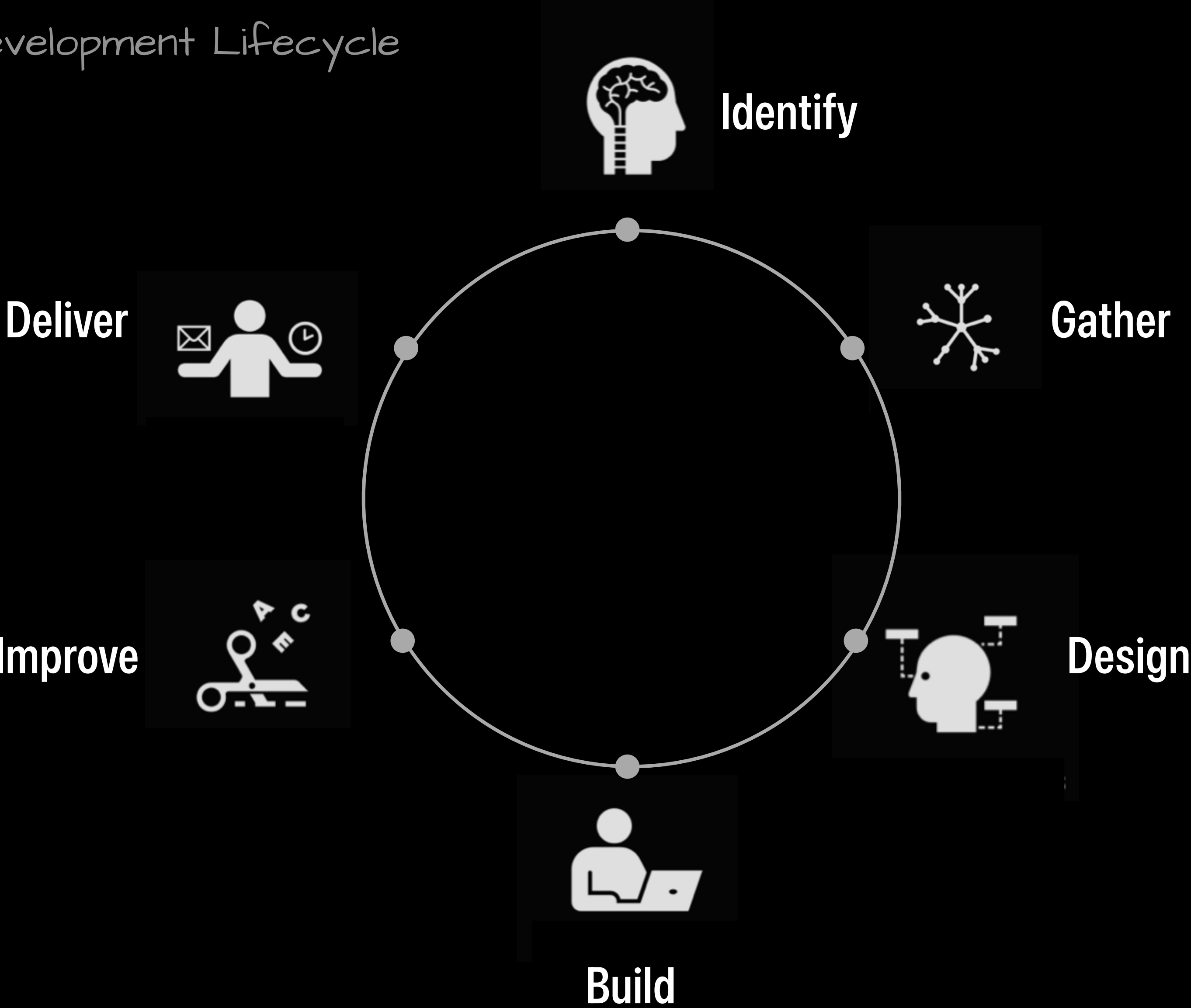
The Communication Development Lifecycle



The Communication Development Lifecycle



The Communication Development Lifecycle



- ☐ **IDENTIFY** Do you know who the message is for and the purpose of the message?
- ☐ **GATHER** Do you have all the information you need to include?
- ☐ **DESIGN** What is the best mode for the message? What steps/elements will make it understandable?
- ☐ **BUILD** Do you follow the conventions for the mode?
- ☐ **IMPROVE** What can make the message easier to understand and more reliable to act on?
- ☐ **DELIVER** Are all the items provided and in the way they were asked for?

THE BIG IDEA

Create the intended impact in the least amount of time.

Structure

Speeds building

Speeds retrieval

Speeds understanding



Sentences

Paragraphs

Documents

Talks

My first day in Halifax will always be
remembered by me.

I'll always remember my first day in
Halifax.

ACTIVE

The programmer chose the
best data structure.

PASSIVE

The best data structure was chosen
by the programmer.

(Generally)

Having people or things doing something

Making sentences vary & flow, like music.

Removing modifiers. Or making them a metric.

... ~~much~~ more.

... 34% more. ✓

(Always)

What am I trying to say?

Say that.

(Always)

How can I make this flow better?

"Murder your
darlings"

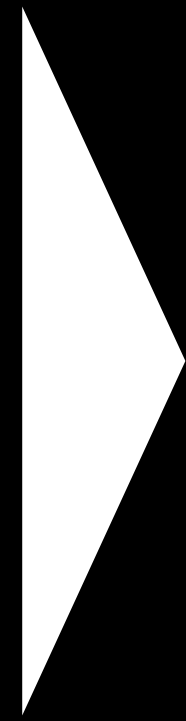
Structure

Sentences

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Talks



Technical paragraphs are units with one topic/thought.

Technical paragraphs can have only one sentence.

Technical paragraphs (generally) are no more than seven lines long.

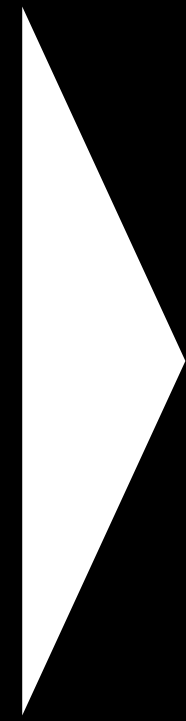
Structure

Sentences

Paragraphs

Documents

Talks



Hunt > Scroll > Skim

Scannability

Makes structure more obvious

Structure signals

➤ Send

▼

🗑 Discard

📎 Attach

✍ Signature

⋮

From:

Andrew Cochran (an704416@dal.ca) ▼

⌵

To:

Bcc

Cc:

Subject:

Priority ▼

Calibri (Body) ▼

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B

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Memorandum

To:

From:

Date:

Subject:

cc:

Memorandum

To: Mikylah Gillis
From: Andrew Cochran
Date: February 8, 2023
Subject: Sentences and paragraphs added to structure
cc: Anjali Chaudhary
Rahul Macwan
Vamsi Utlal

The lecture on information efficiency will include sentence structure and paragraphs.

We'll also look how conventional structures have signal meaning, such as memos, letters, reports, and others.



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Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

January 24, 2023

Jessie George
Director, Professional Programs
Goldberg Computer Science Building
6056 University Avenue
Halifax, N.S. B3H 1W5

Dear Jessie George:

Re: Seminar about communication structure



Sincerely,

Andrew Cochran
Instructor, Faculty of Computer Science
647.202.7200
ac@dal.ca

cc: Andrew Rau-Chaplin, Dean

Enclosure: FCS research seminar topic proposal - V3

Structures in Technical English for Computer Science

January 25, 2023

Andrew Cochran
Dalhousie Faculty of Computer Science

Structures in Technical English for Computer Science

January 25, 2023

Andrew Cochran
Dalhousie Faculty of Computer Science

Structure

Sentences

Paragraphs

Documents

Talks

- ☐ Are you using a structure to assemble the ideas and build the message?
- ☐ Have you picked the best structure to speed the intended impact?
- ☐ Are you using the conventions for the structure you picked?
- ☐ Does the structure contain only essential information that's factual, accurate, and easy to follow?
- ☐ Are you thinking about the "ticking clock" of how long the receiver will spend finding what they need?

THE BIG IDEA

**Structures make building &
retrieving messages easier.**

THE BIG IDEA

**When thinking like a writer,
use structure to achieve the
intended impact faster.**

References

- [1] "6. Efficiency," *Interaction Design Foundation*, [Online] Available at: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-glossary-of-human-computer-interaction/efficiency> [Accessed 29 Jan, 2023]
- [2] P. Clark, *Murder Your Darlings*, New York: Little, Brown, Spark, 2020
- [3] T. Ewald, *Writing in the Technical Fields*, 3rd ed., Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2020