

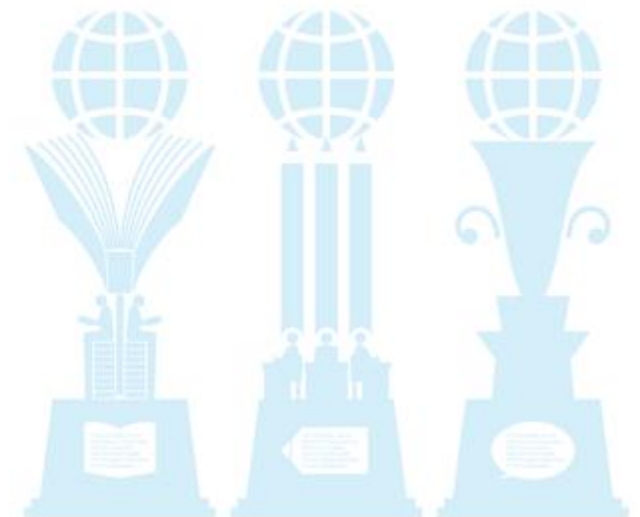
Adapting Tests to the Local Context

Professor Barry O'Sullivan
British Council, UK



Overview

- **Validation**
- **Localisation**
- **Rethinking Localisation**



the title that never was

LANGUAGE TESTING = VALIDITY



Validity & Validation

Validity

A theoretical model which underpins a test, defining the relevant elements which should be addressed by the developer

Validation

The process of gathering information, based on an underlying model (of validity) to support the decisions to be made based on test performance

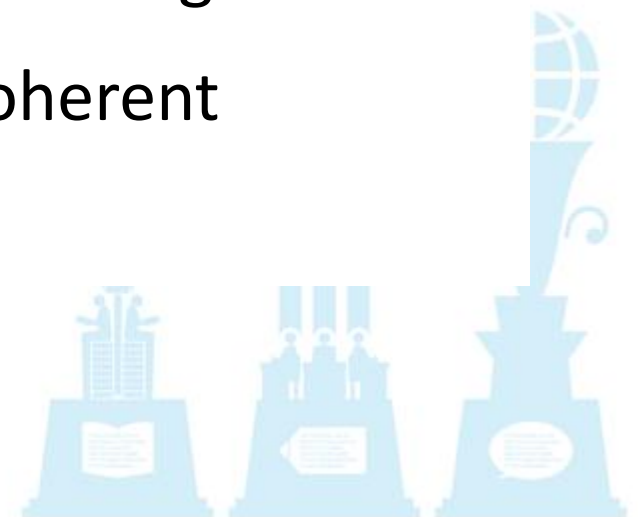


Validity to Validation

A theory of validity is only of practical value if it is translatable into a coherent theory or 'model' of validation which can then be operationalised through a set of validation procedures.

O'Sullivan & Weir, 2011

Current thinking is that the evidence gathered through a validation exercise should be presented as a coherent argument.

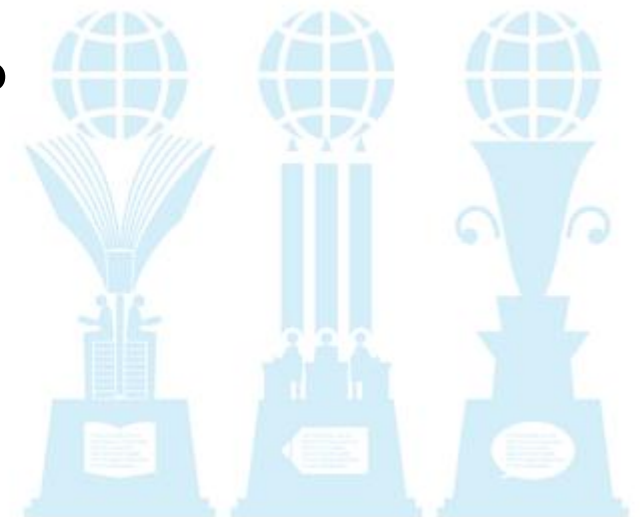


Validation. But for Who?

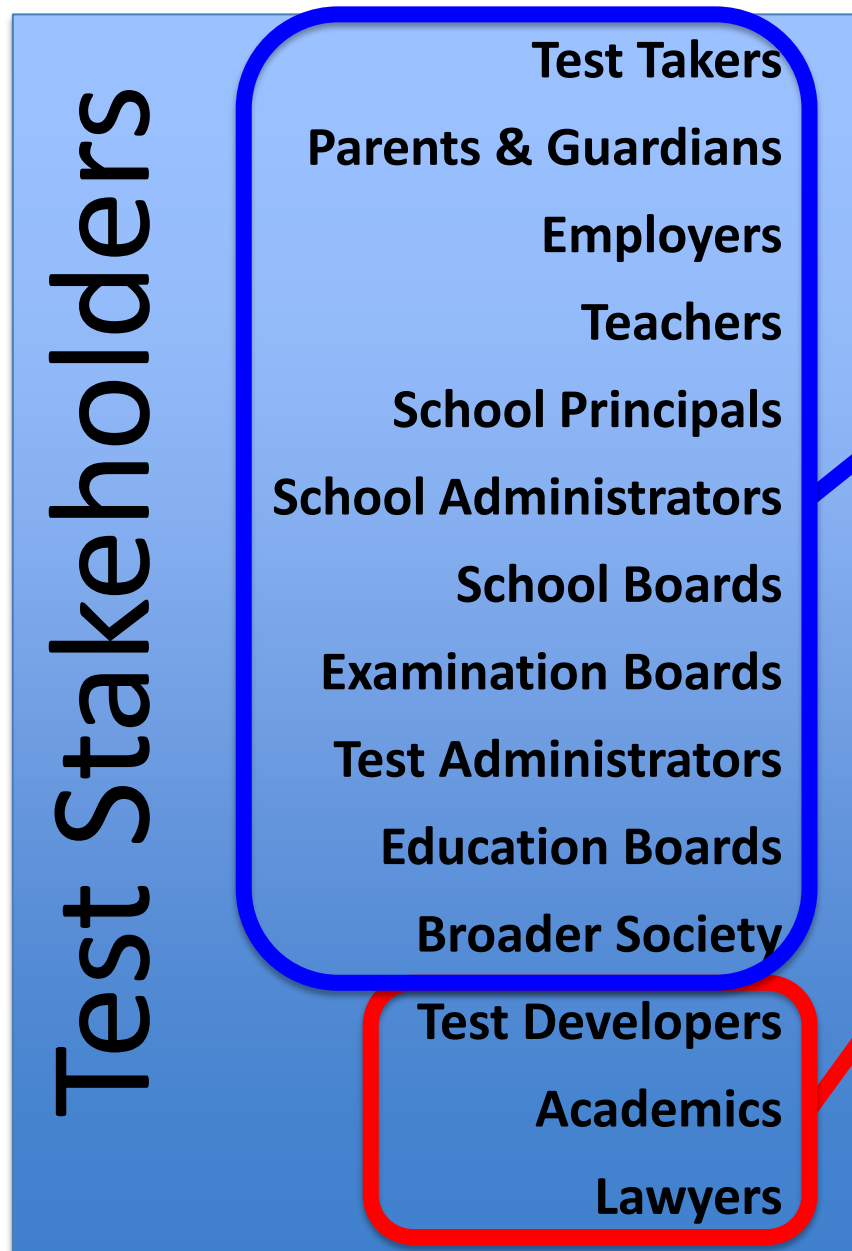
A validation argument is based on a theory of validity and on a theory of argument building. BUT, an argument will have at least these two critical elements:

What am I trying to convince people of?

Who am I trying to convince?



Validation. But for Who?



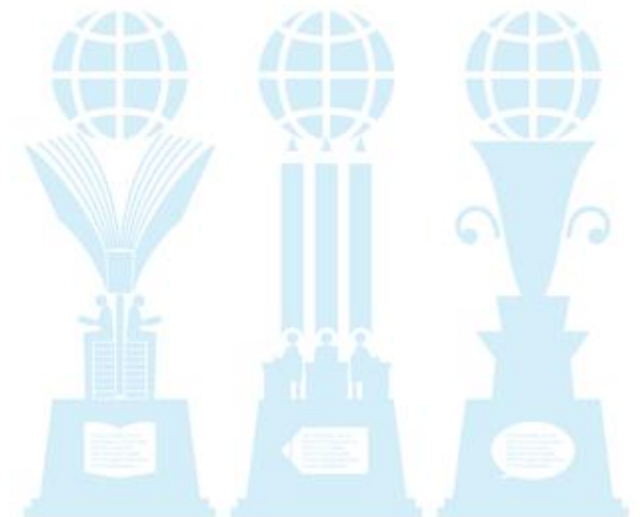
We currently do not even consider these!

Traditional validity arguments focuses more or less exclusively on these



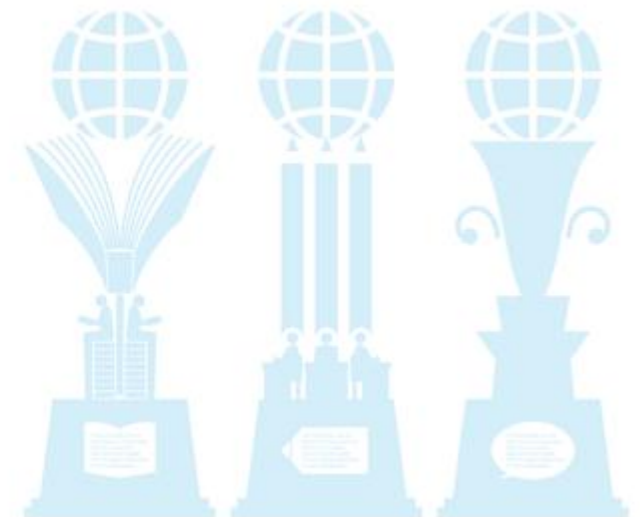
Rethinking Validation Arguments

A validation argument is only of value when it is accessible to all stakeholders. This means that we should develop different validation arguments (based on the same evidence) for each of the different stakeholder groups

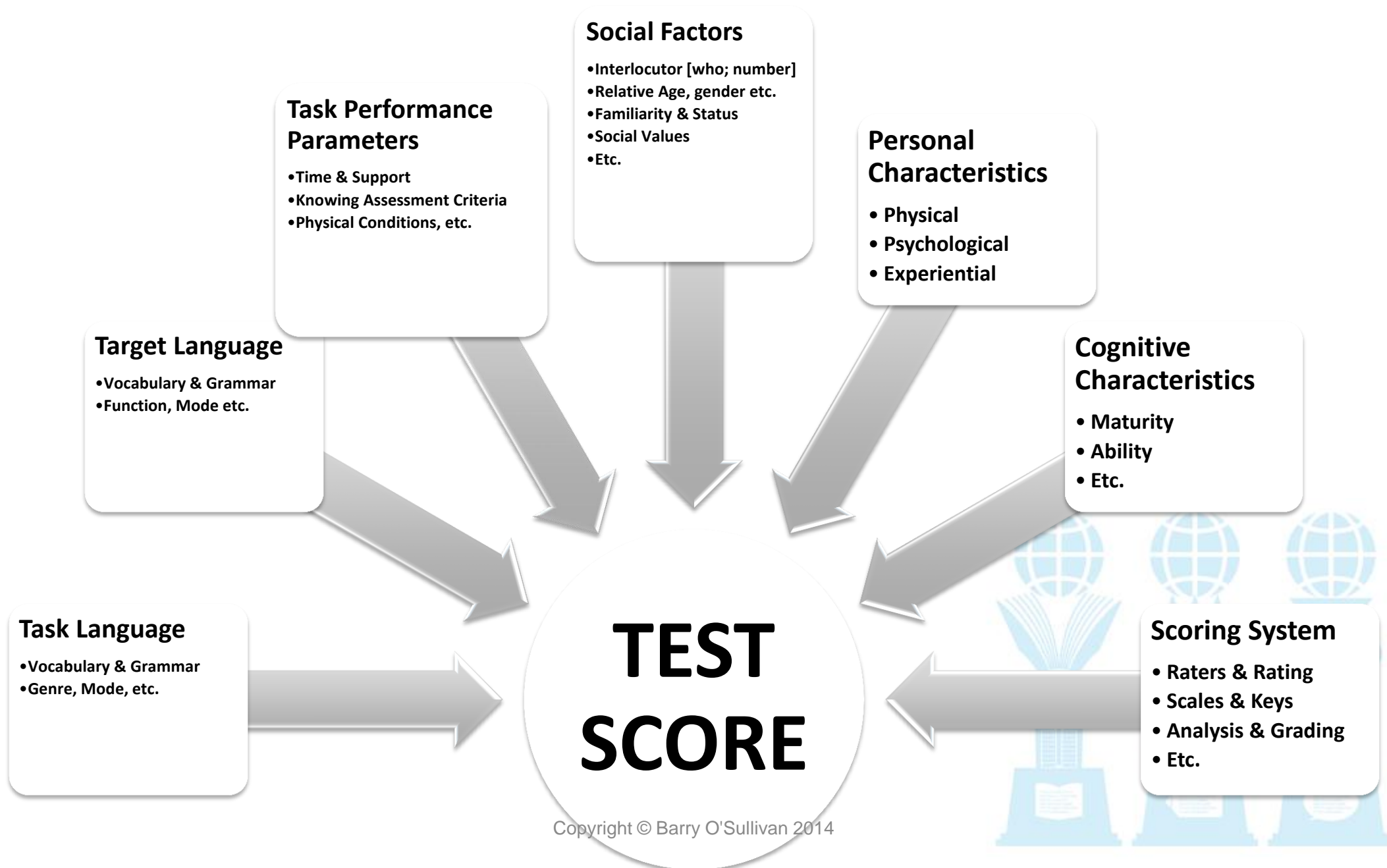


focusing on the test taker

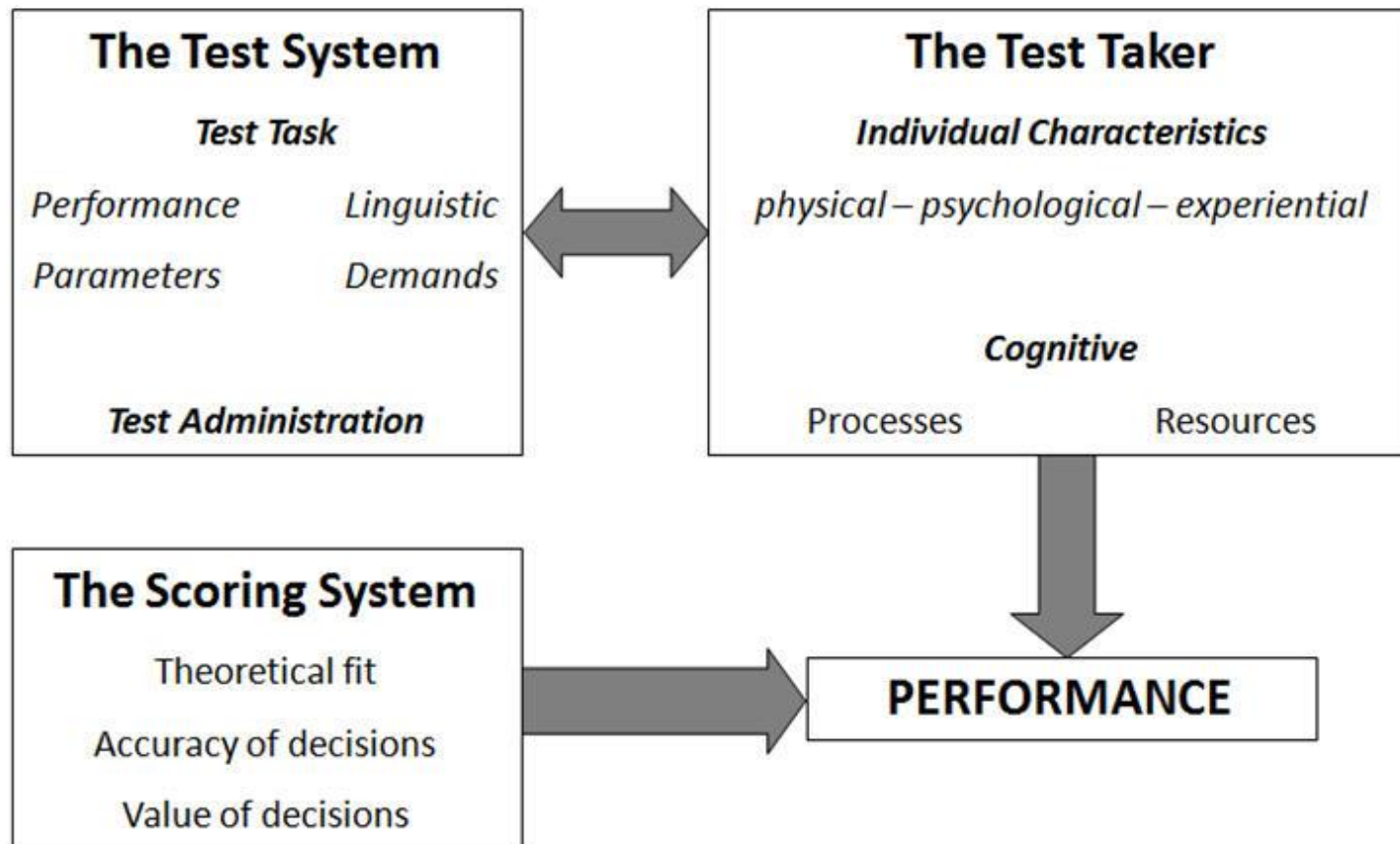
A VALIDATION MODEL



Development Decisions?



Creating a Model – The Test



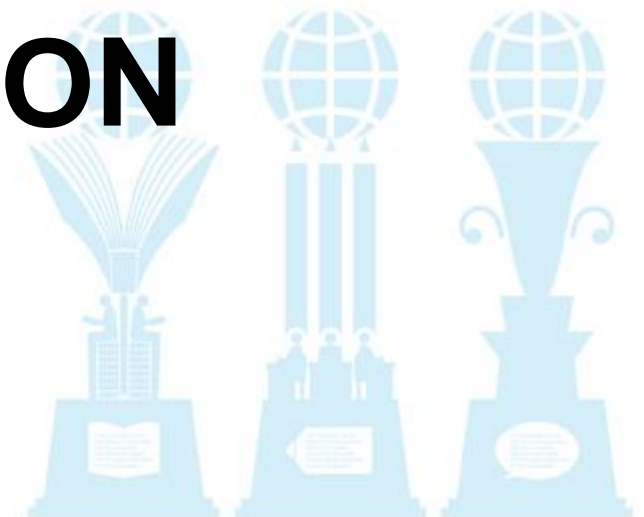
O'Sullivan 2011

but there must be more ...



applying new thinking around validation

THINKING LOCALISATION



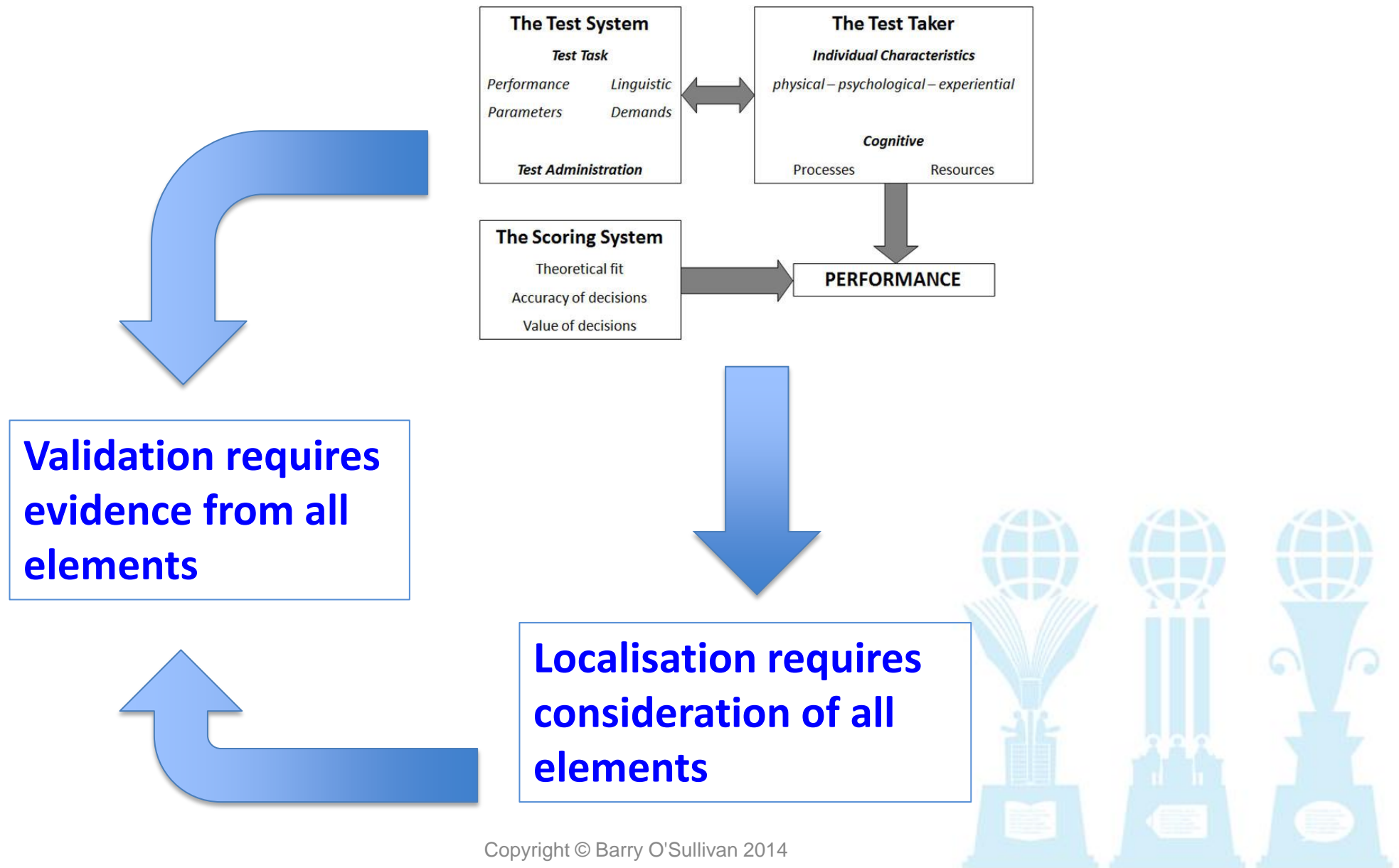
Defining Test Localisation

Localisation is required when we are testing a well defined population within a well defined context in order to make decisions that will apply only to that context

O'Sullivan (2013)



The Model Underpins Everything



Localisation & Validation

Demonstrating appropriate localisation is a critical aspect of validation



Localisation can only happen when we are aware of and take account of the test-taker in the context of the social domain



Localisation is therefore a recognition of test consequence and social values as a critical aspect of the test development and validation process



All of this suggests ...

**Re-conceptualise the current interpretation of Messick's
concept of Consequence**



**Consequence as a
guiding source for
test design**

**Consequence as a
source of validation
evidence**

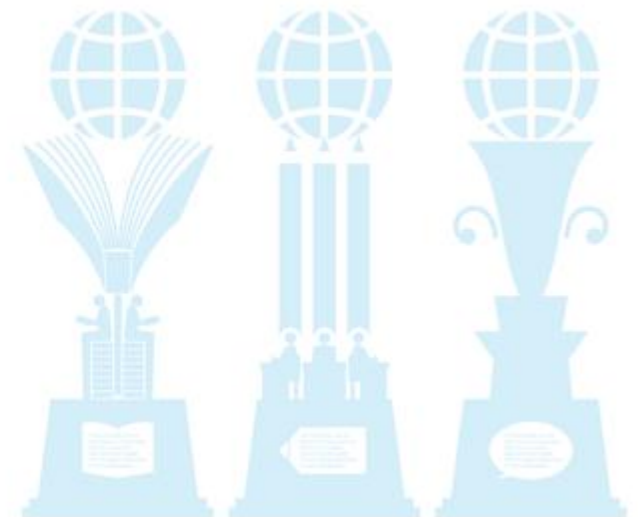


**Allowing us to operationalise consequential evidence
for the first time**

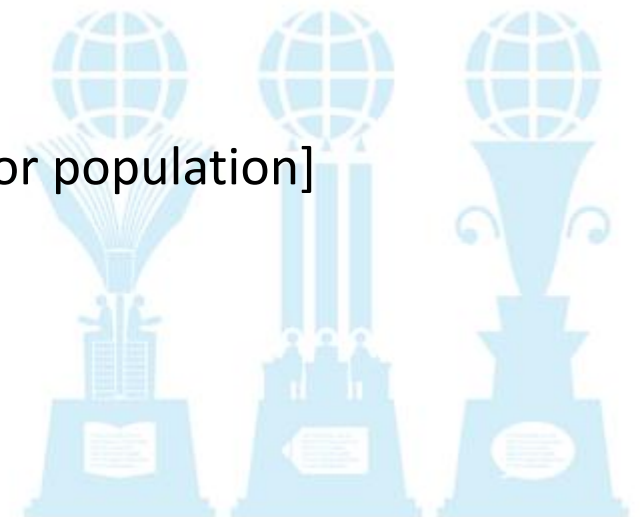
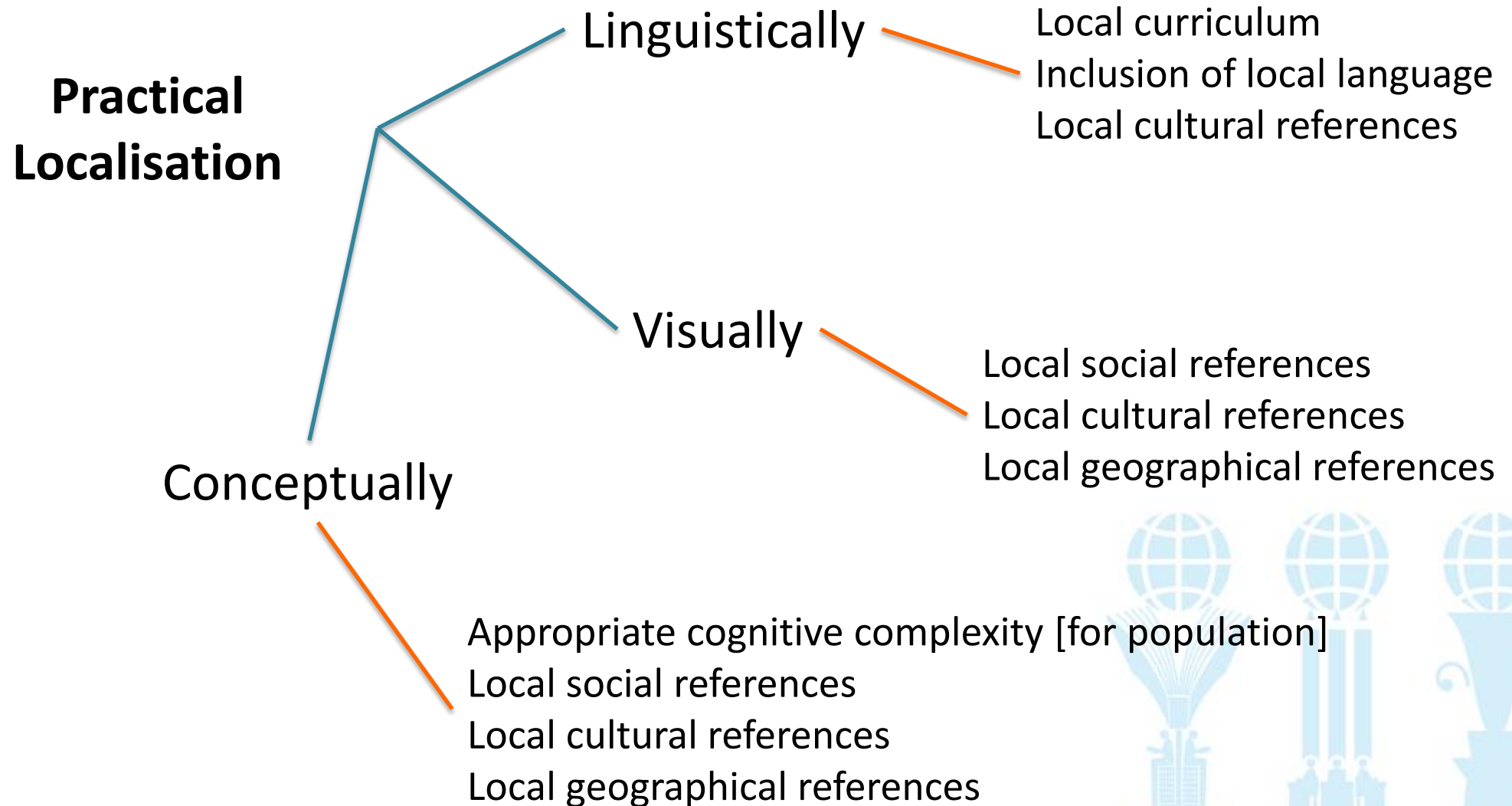


refocusing on the test taker in context

DOING LOCALISATION



Nature of Localisation

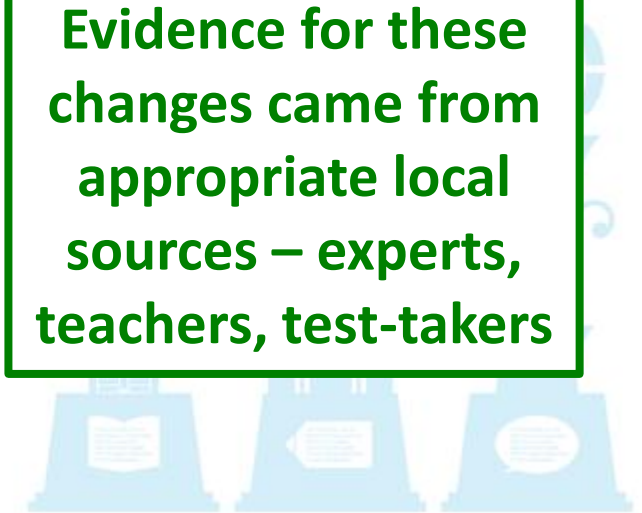


Case Study – suggested changes



Changes mainly in areas of learner's Social, Cultural and world experience

Evidence for these changes came from appropriate local sources – experts, teachers, test-takers



Localisation – Practical Issues

Cost

Change means cost in terms of external input, training, quality assurance, systems development, delivery and monitoring

People

Identification, training and nurturing of local expertise [assessment; technology; management; administration etc.], managing stakeholder identification & inclusion

Resource

Technical – hardware and software + skills; financial; political/social

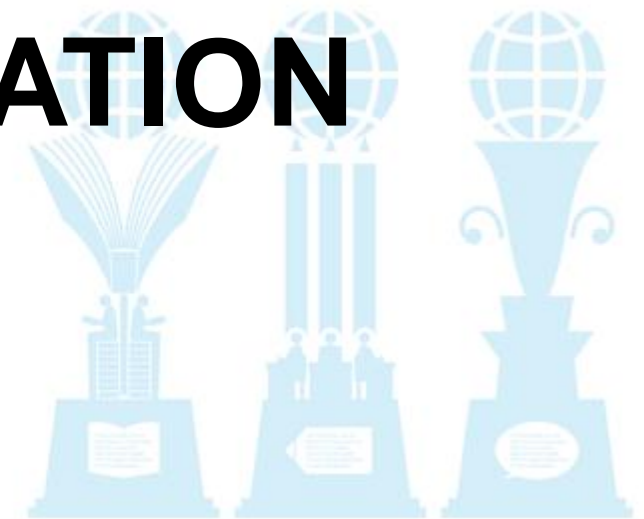
Sources

Traditional expert advisors – but we need to consider a broader range of sources



where to next?

RETHINKING LOCALISATION

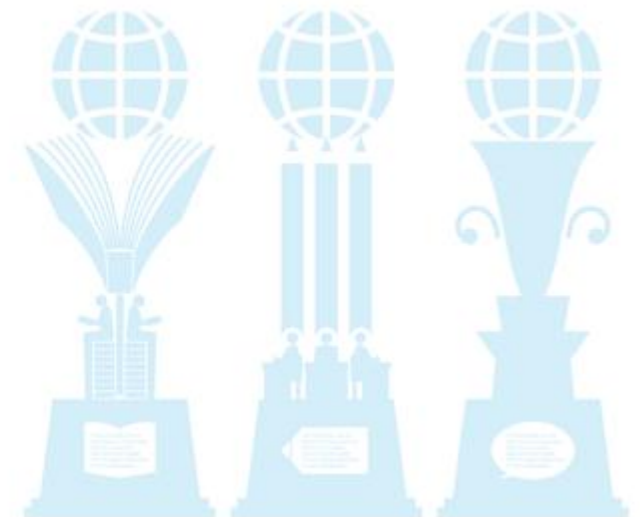


Is the Concept Appropriate?

The theoretical definition of validation is too limited

So, the current definition of localisation may also be too limited

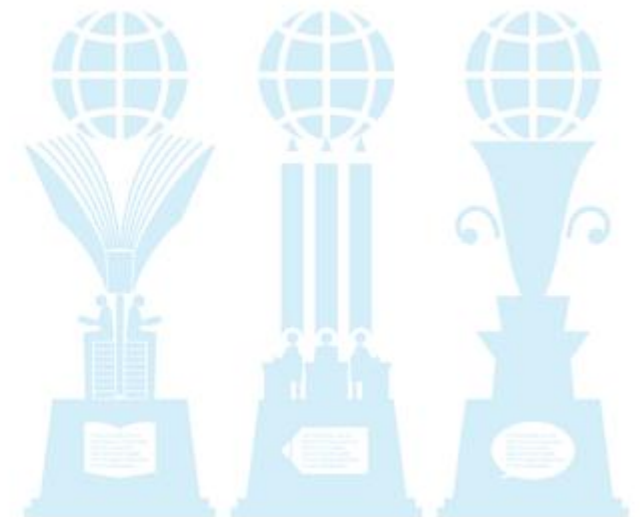
How are stakeholder needs or expectations reflected in localisation?



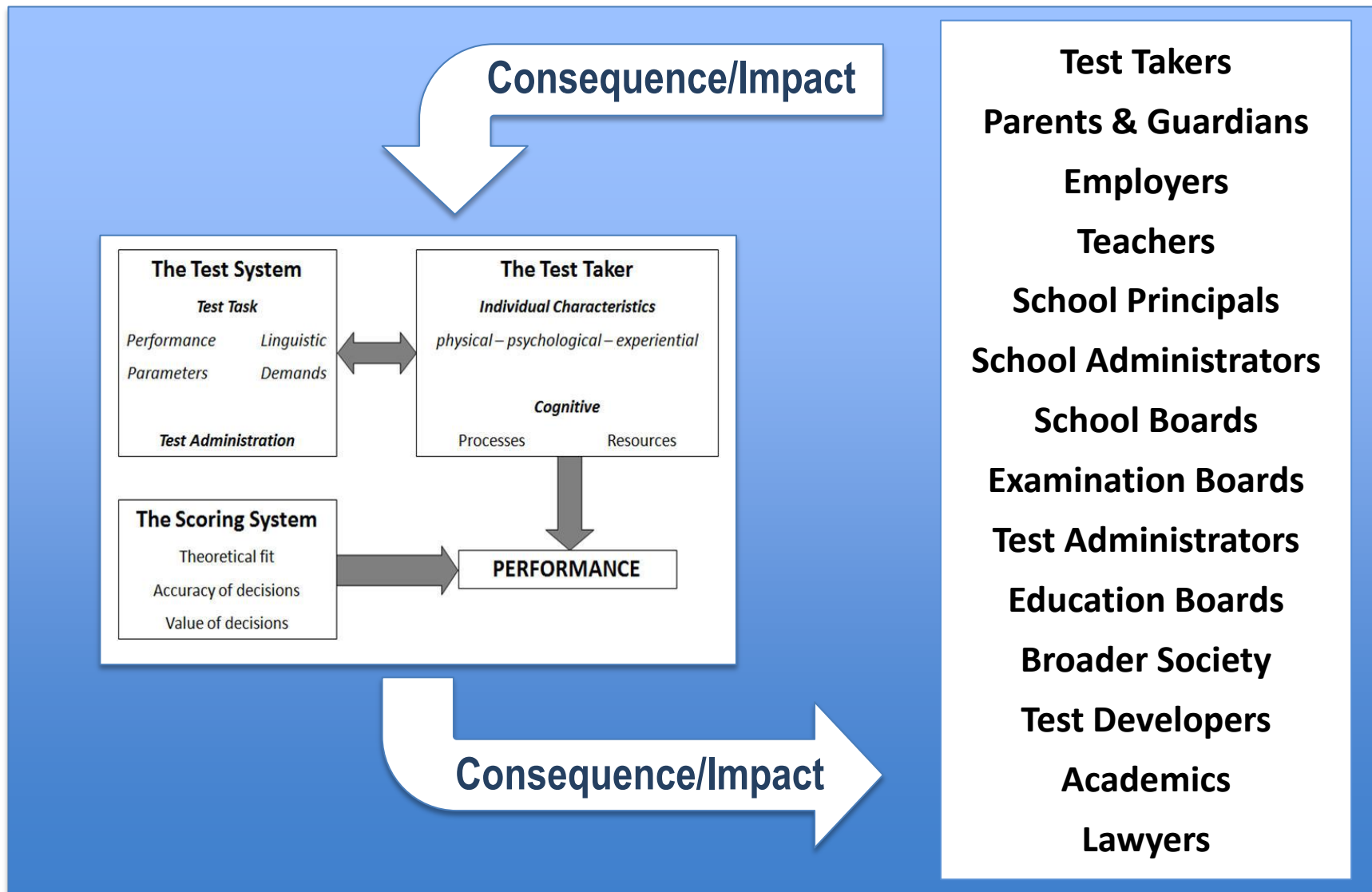
What will this mean?

Implementation of concept of social values in test development – suggested by Messick as an aspect of validity but never really operationalised

Focusing reporting of validation evidence to stakeholders in an appropriate way



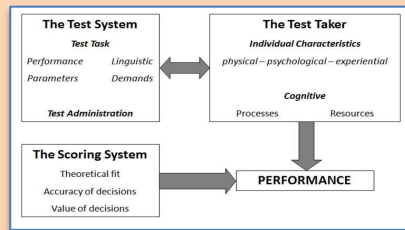
Rethinking Consequential Evidence



Broader Society

**Examination
Boards**

Test Taker



Teachers

**Schools
Boards
Principals
Administrators**

**Test
Administrators**

Lawyers

**Education
Boards**

**Parents &
Guardians**

**Test
Developers**

Employers

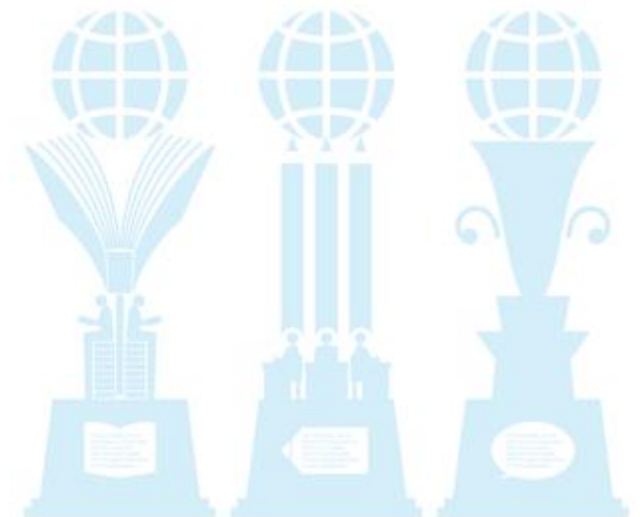
Academics

Rethinking Communication

If we wish to report directly to stakeholders we cannot use a language they do not fully comprehend

Similarly, we must deliver our communications in modes accessed by these stakeholders

The question is: who will perform the communication?



A Strategic Approach



To Sum Up

- **There is a link between localisation and consequence and validation and development**
- **We should take into account appropriate or critical stakeholders in identifying sources and consequences of impact**
- **We should include appropriate or critical stakeholders in the communication of validation evidence**



Thank You

barry.o'sullivan@britishcouncil.org

