

# Enhancing the roles of test users and test takers in language testing

Lia Plakans  
University of Iowa  
lia-plakans@uiowa.edu  
ALTE 52<sup>nd</sup> Conference 2018  
Salamanca, Spain

# Why involve stakeholders?

Situates  
language testing  
in test use

- Informs test development
- Important in validity

Direct impact  
and benefit

- Builds mutual respect
- Testing – learning cycle

Assessment  
literacy

- Embedded and sustained professional development

# Outline of Presentation

I. Connecting to the testing cycle

II. Example 1: Rubric development

III. Example 2: Partnerships

IV. Conclusion

# The Basic Testing Cycle

(*Manual for Language Test Development and Examining*, ALTE, 2011, p.20)

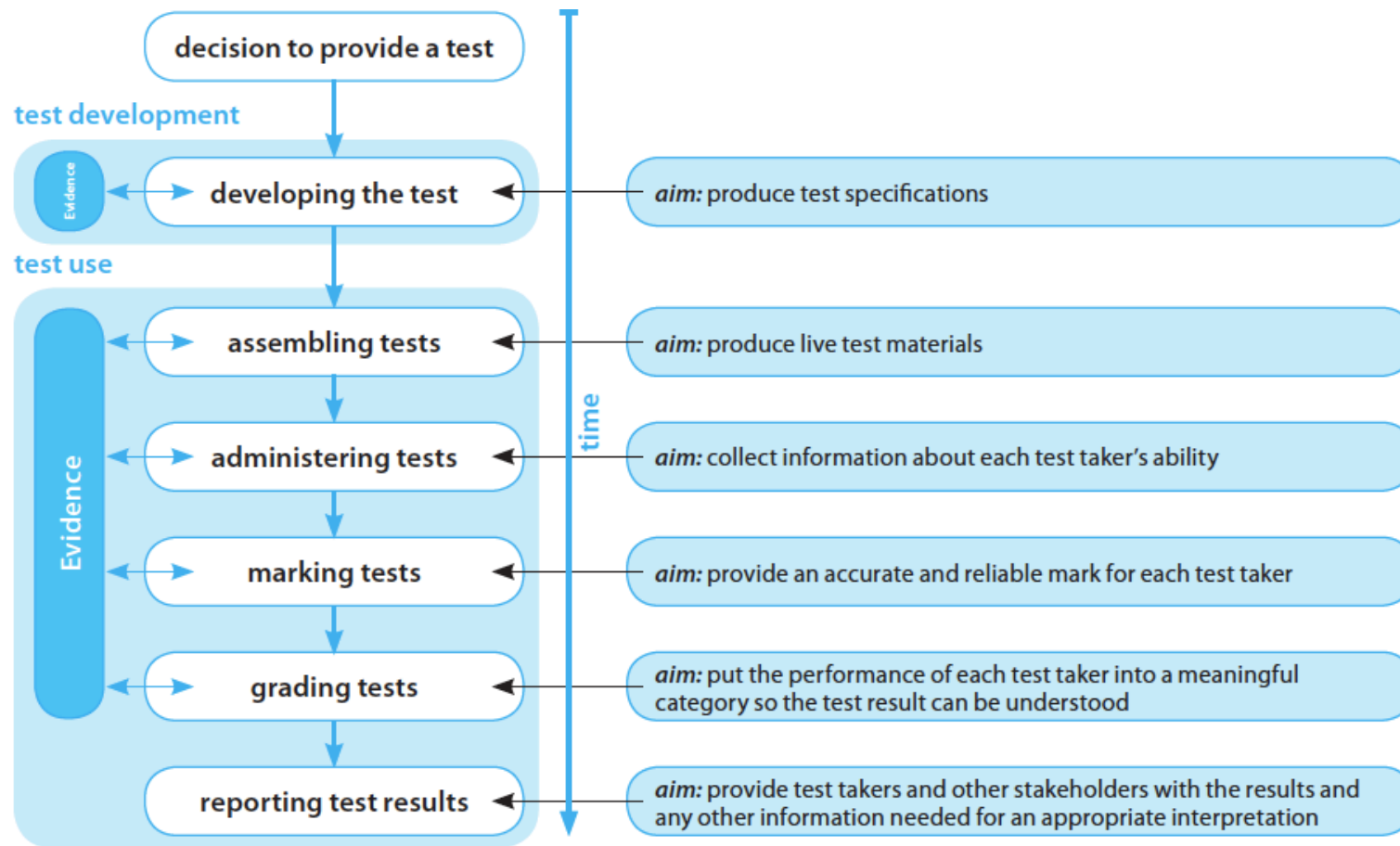


Figure 5 The basic testing cycle

# The Basic Testing Cycle

(*Manual for Language Test Development and Examining*, ALTE, 2011)

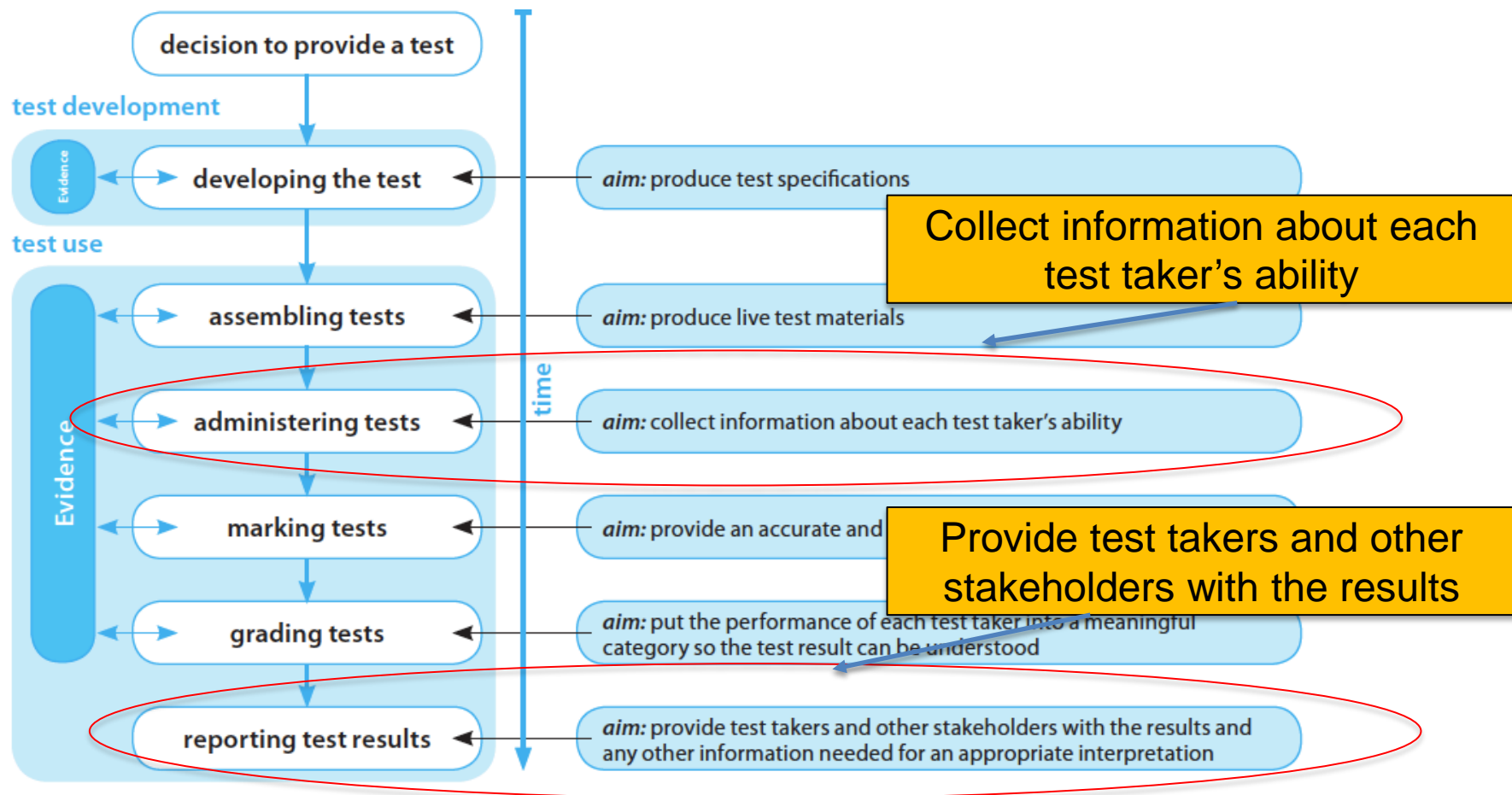


Figure 5 The basic testing cycle

# The Basic Testing Cycle

(*Manual for Language Test Development and Examining*, ALTE, 2011)

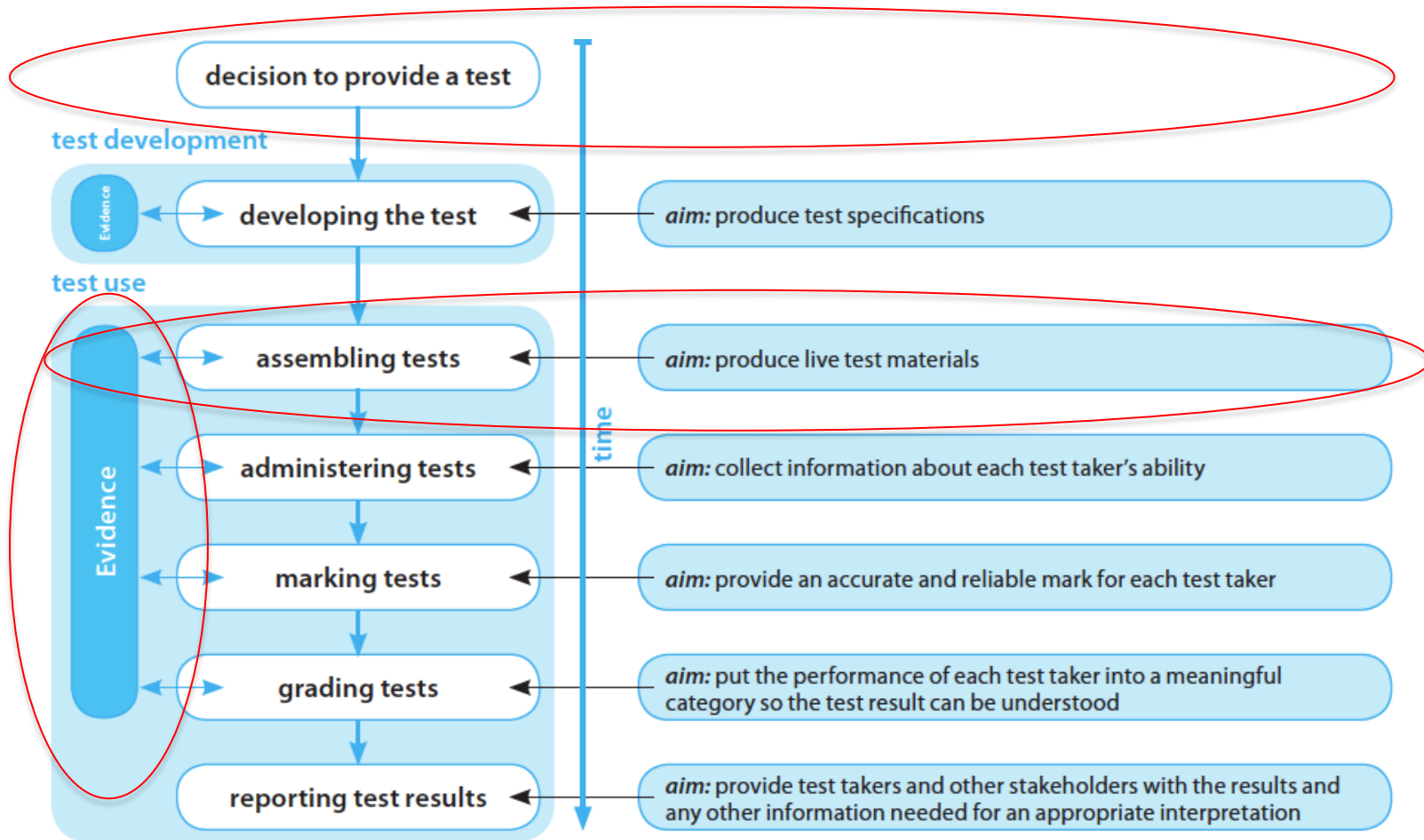


Figure 5 The basic testing cycle

# Example 1: Rubric Development

(Becker, 2016)

- Research study to explore student engagement in rubric development
- Adult ESL writing course
- Experimental design with four classes
  - Class 1: Created their own rubric
  - Class 2: Practiced scoring writing with a rubric
  - Class 3: Saw a rubric before submitting writing
  - Class 4: Control group (no treatment)

# Example 1: Rubric Development

(Becker, 2016)

- Class 1 created a rubric:
  - Look at models: review good and poor work
  - Think about how writing should be assessed
  - Discuss and agree upon criteria
  - Articulate levels of quality
  - Create a draft rubric
- Class 2 practiced scoring with a rubric:
  - Review benchmark essays with rubric
  - Practice scoring with partner



# Example 1: Rubric Development

(Becker, 2016)

- Summary writing task
- Results
  - Students who created or practiced with a rubric had significantly higher quality writing than other groups
  - Those creating a rubric also had significantly higher quality than those who practiced scoring with a rubric
- Implications
  - Learning through rubric sessions

# Example 2: Partnerships

- Community-based participatory research (CBPR)
  - A collaboration of researchers and community partners through all stages of research

"seeks to reconnect action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in **the pursuit of practical solutions of pressing concern to people**". (Bradbury & Reason p.226)
- CBPR originates in applied health sciences
- Fits well with pragmatic approach in language assessment cycles

# Community-Based Participatory Research

(Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008)

- Steps in CBPR:
  - Initial engagement of partners
  - Identifying research questions together
  - Data collection
  - Analysis and interpretation of data
  - Feedback and results, emphasis on application
- Promotes **co-learning and capacity building** among all partners

# Community partner

- Rural school district with a dual language program (bilingual Spanish/English)
- Dual Language Program enrollment (2017-2018)



Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5
Enrolled	70	60	80	80	50	50

# Defining Issues

- Partnership:
  - Dual Language Program Coordinator
  - Primary School Principal
  - University team
- Identified research questions together.
  - Reviewed dual language assessments as well as purposes and problems
  - Major question emerged
    - Led to two development projects

# “How do we know our assessment system is working?”

## Current assessment system in DL program

<b>Reading in English and Spanish</b>	(1) Curriculum-based measure of reading subskills in English & Spanish	Grades K - 5
<b>Academic and language proficiency in Spanish</b>	(2) Reading vocabulary, and writing, aligned to state standards	Grades 3 – 5
	(3) Oral proficiency assessment	Grades 2, 5, & 8
<b>English Proficiency</b>	(4) Four-skills standardized English assessment	Grade 2-12

## Validity & efficiency study of assessments in use

# Project 1: Assessment of young learners' oral skills in Spanish

- After tracking the assessments over two years, issues arose with
  - Standardized oral interview assessment delivered via computer
  - Repeated problems with Grade 2 (age 7)
  - 33% of learners did not have scorable performances
- Project underway:
  - Developing a young learner Spanish assessment with teachers



# Project 2: Local norming

- School adopted a Spanish version of standardized English reading measure (curriculum-based measure)
  - Teachers reported concern in using the published norms
    - Norms are percentiles supplied by test developer
    - Test used to diagnose “risk” for reading difficulties
    - Over-identifying reading problems
- Project underway:
  - Collecting data to develop local norms for dual language learners
  - Follow up study of of local norm use and effectiveness



# Challenges in Stakeholder Engagement

## Stakeholders

- Dynamic changing contexts
- High need with time constraints

## Partnerships

- Maintaining & sustaining
- Aligning needs and expertise

# Conclusion

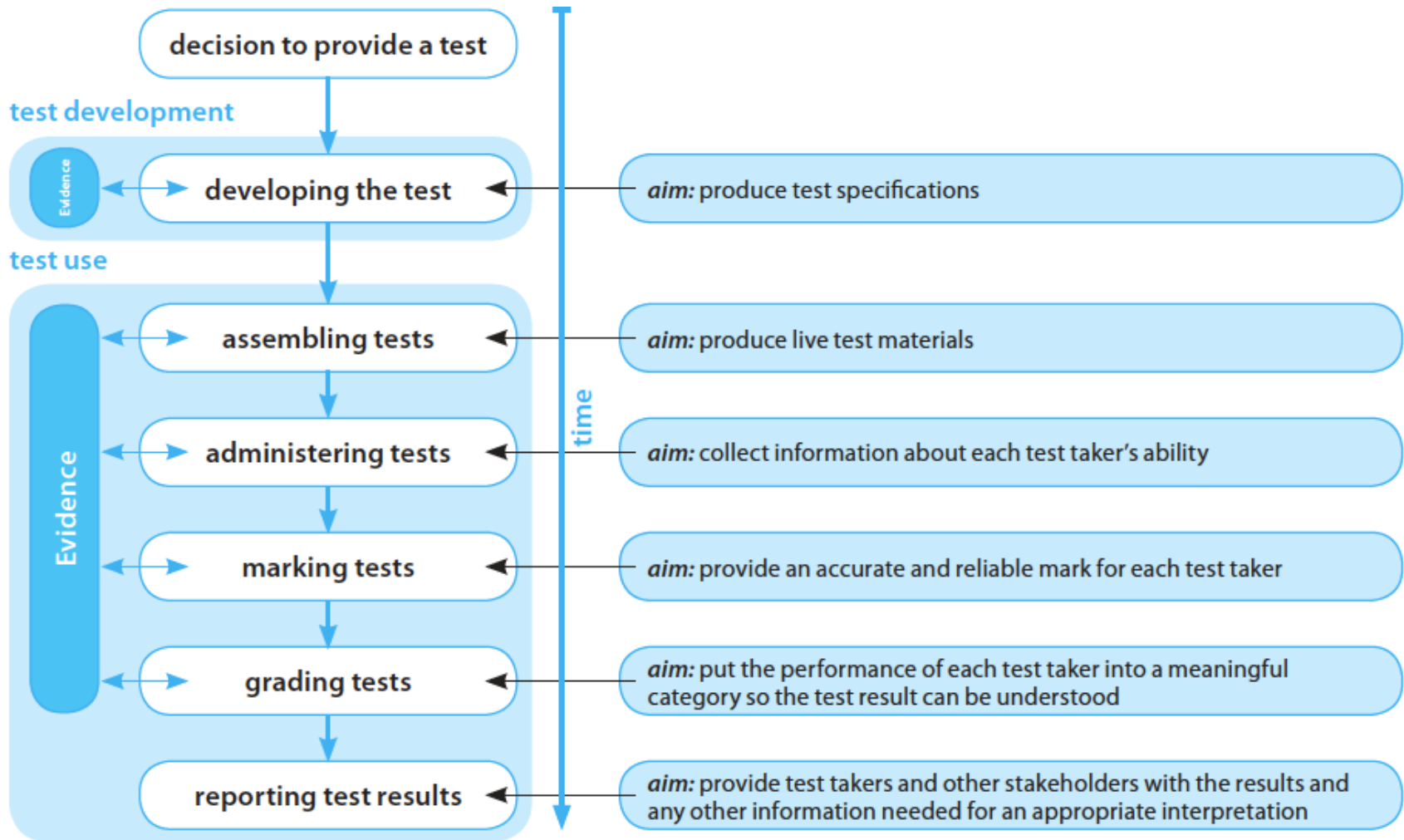
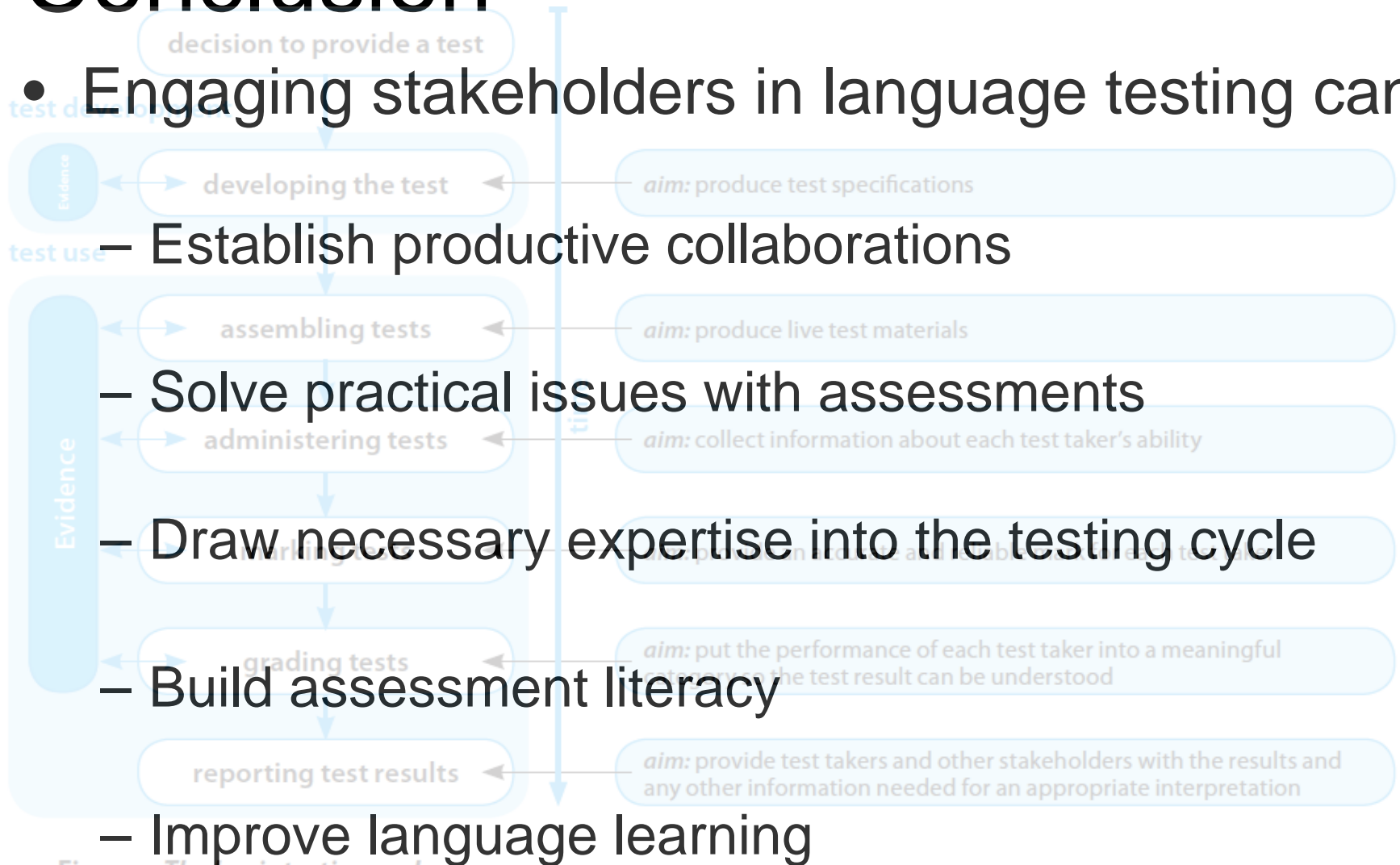


Figure 5 The basic testing cycle

# Conclusion

- Engaging stakeholders in language testing can:



- Establish productive collaborations

- Solve practical issues with assessments

- Draw necessary expertise into the testing cycle

- Build assessment literacy

- Improve language learning

Figure 5 The basic testing cycle

Thank you! [lia-plakans@uiowa.edu](mailto:lia-plakans@uiowa.edu)

