



Synergies, tensions and other dangerous things

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Are we having fun yet?



Either, neither, both

- **The real world: what makes people tick; what makes people move, what makes them happy**
- **Does resolving tension lead to synergy?**
- **Does synergy lead to progress?**
- **Most presentations dealt with tensions**
 - **Government policy makers vs. test developers**
 - **Global vs. Local**
 - **Intended consequences vs. actual consequences**
- **These tensions were generally regarded as negative**

Tensions

- **Newton's 3rd law of motion**
For every tension there is potentially an equal synergy
- **Complexity theory**
Complex adaptive systems evolve through oscillations between attractors
- **Need both synergy and tension for progress**
- **Need to consider components within which tensions and synergies operate**

Sources of synergies and tensions in language assessment

Component	Points for synergy and tension
Why?	Intended consequences, decisions to be made
Who?	Stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test developer• Test user/decision maker• Other stake holders
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domain of generalization• Areas of language ability to be assessed
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision rules• Development procedures• Elicitation procedures• Scoring/reporting procedures
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development time• Administration time• Scoring and reporting time