

# Putting Software Testing Terminology to the Test

## M.A.Sc. Seminar

Samuel Crawford, B.Eng.

McMaster University  
Department of Computing and Software

Fall 2024

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- The Need for Standardized Terminology
- The Lack of Standardized Terminology

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- Research Questions
- Methodology

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# The Need for Standardized Terminology

- Engineering is applied science
- Scientific fields use precise terminology



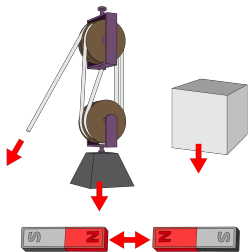
SOFTWARE  
ENGINEERING

# The Need for Standardized Terminology

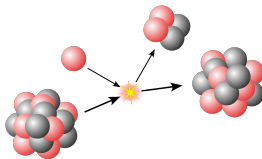
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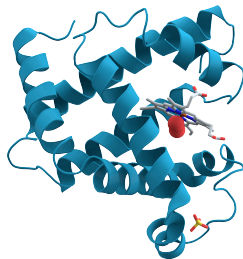
SOFTWARE  
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Penubag and Ramey (2010)



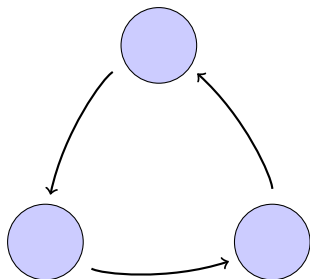
Kjerish (2016)



AzaToth (2008)

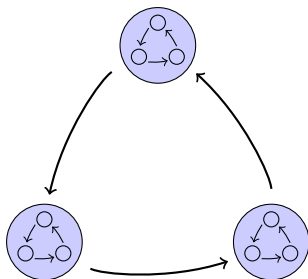
## Interorganizational

Schools, companies, etc.



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## Intraorganizational

Kaner et al. (2011, p. 7) say  
“complete testing” could require the  
tester to:

- discover “every bug”,
- exhaust the time allocated,
- implement every planned test,
- ...

# The Lack of Standardized Terminology

## “The Problem”

- Unfortunately, a search for a systematic, rigorous, and complete taxonomy for software testing revealed that the existing ones are inadequate and mostly focus on the high-level testing process rather than the testing approaches themselves:
  - Tebes et al. (2020) focus on *parts* of the testing process (e.g., test goal, test plan, testing role, testable entity) and how they relate to one another,
  - Souza et al. (2017) prioritize organizing testing approaches over defining them, and
  - Unterkalmsteiner et al. (2014) focus on the “information linkage or transfer” (p. A:6) between requirements engineering and software testing and “do[] not aim at providing a systematic and exhaustive state-of-the-art survey of [either domain]” (p. A:2).



# Unstandardized Standards

## “The Problem” (cont.)

- Tours “guide[] testers through the paths of an application” by following a structure that is:
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- Load testing is “conducted to evaluate the behaviour of a test item under anticipated conditions of varying load” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 5; 2017, p. 253), such as:
  - loads “between anticipated conditions of low, typical, and peak usage” (2022, p. 5)

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  - loads that are as large as possible (Patton, 2006, p. 86)

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“Okay testing team, we want to conduct alpha testing on our product. What’s our timeline? Budget? Sample size?”



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# Research Questions

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## Research Question 3

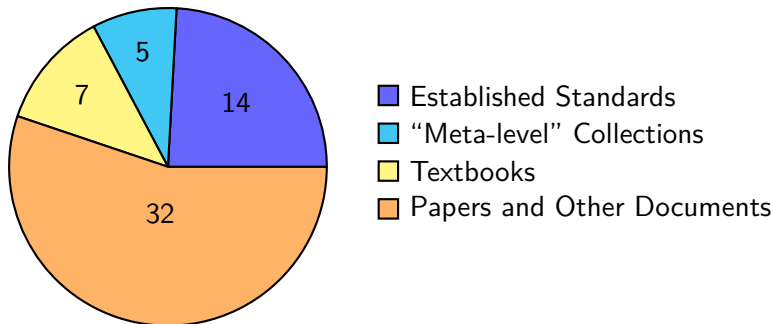
Is it possible to resolve/reduce any of these discrepancies systematically?

## Research Question 1

What testing approaches does the literature describe?

Literature Review Time!

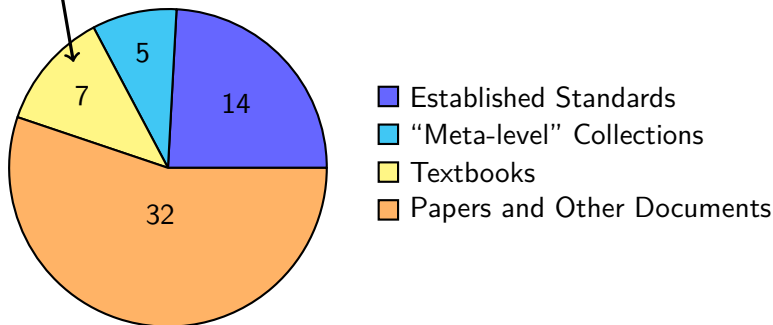
# Methodology: Sources



Summary of how many sources comprise each source category.

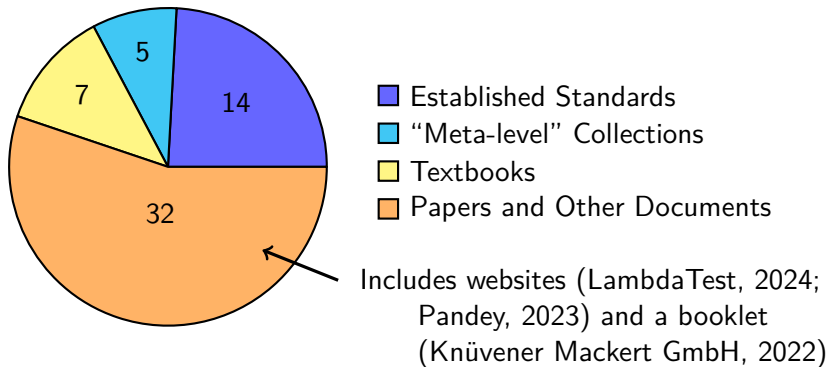
# Methodology: Sources

Textbooks trusted at McMaster were our ad hoc starting points  
(Patton, 2006; Peters and Pedrycz, 2000; van Vliet, 2000)




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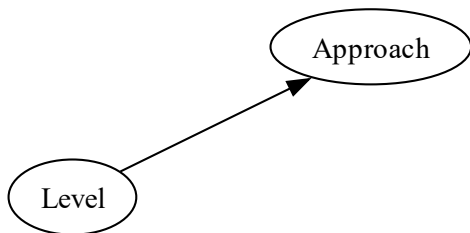




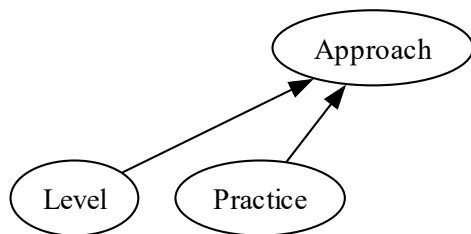
Approach

**Approach:** a “high-level test implementation choice” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 10) used to “pick the particular test case values” (2017, p. 465)

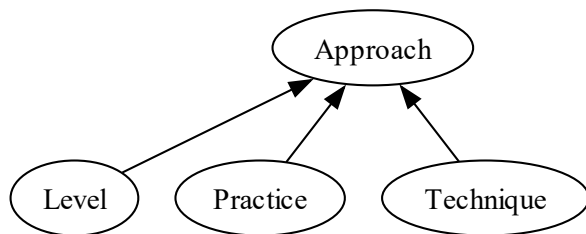
# Methodology: Categories



**Level:** a stage of testing with “particular objectives and ... risks”, each performed in sequence (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 12; 2021, p. 6)

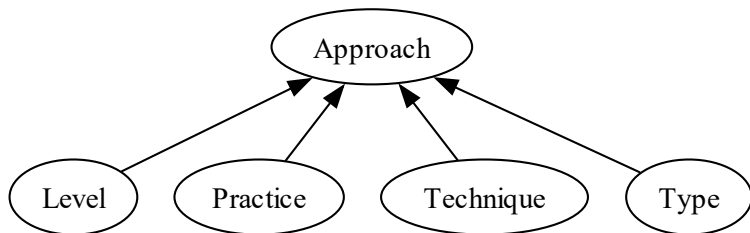


**Practice:** a “conceptual framework that can be applied to . . . [a] test process to facilitate testing” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 14; 2017, p. 471)



**Technique:** a “defined” and “systematic” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2017, p. 464) “procedure used to create or select a test model, identify test coverage items, and derive corresponding test cases” (2022, p. 11)

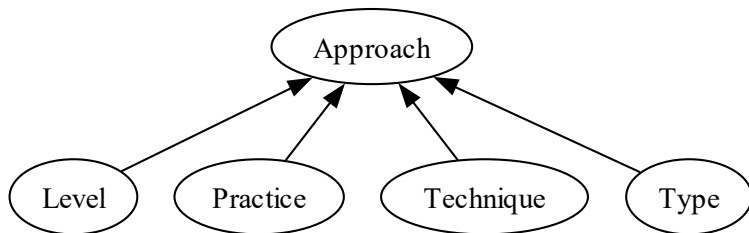
# Methodology: Categories



**Type:** “Testing that is focused on specific quality characteristics”  
(ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, p. 15; 2021, p. 7; 2017, p. 473)

# Methodology: Graph Notation

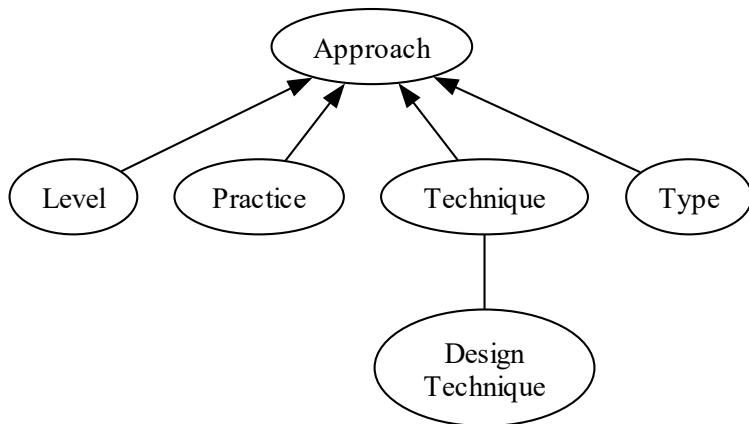
## Relations



Arrows point from a *child* node to a *parent* node.

# Methodology: Graph Notation

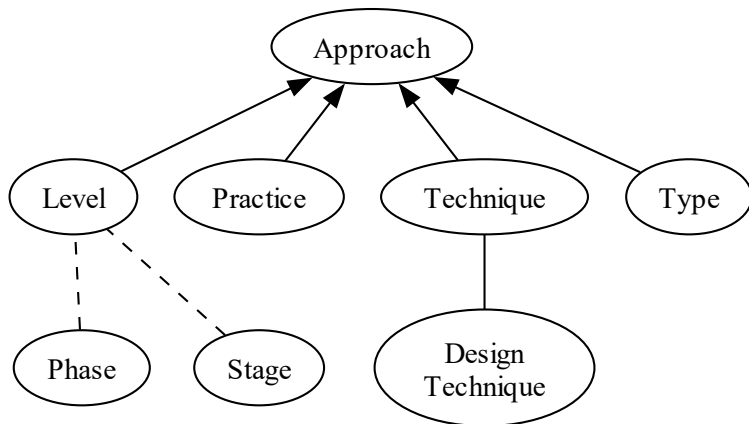
## Relations



Lines without arrowheads connect *synonyms*.

# Methodology: Graph Notation

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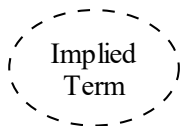


Dashed lines indicate a relationship is *implied*.

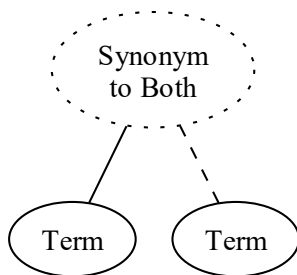


# Methodology: Graph Notation

## Terms

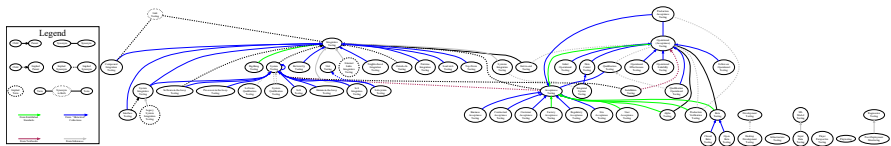


Dashed outlines indicate a term is *implied*.

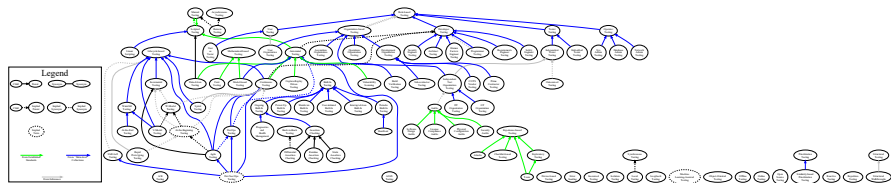


Dotted outlines indicate a term is a *synonym* to more than one term.

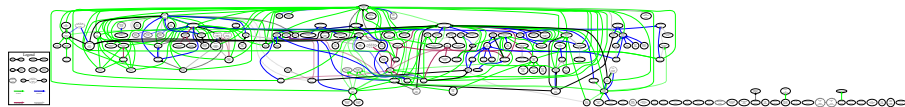
## Graph of Test Levels



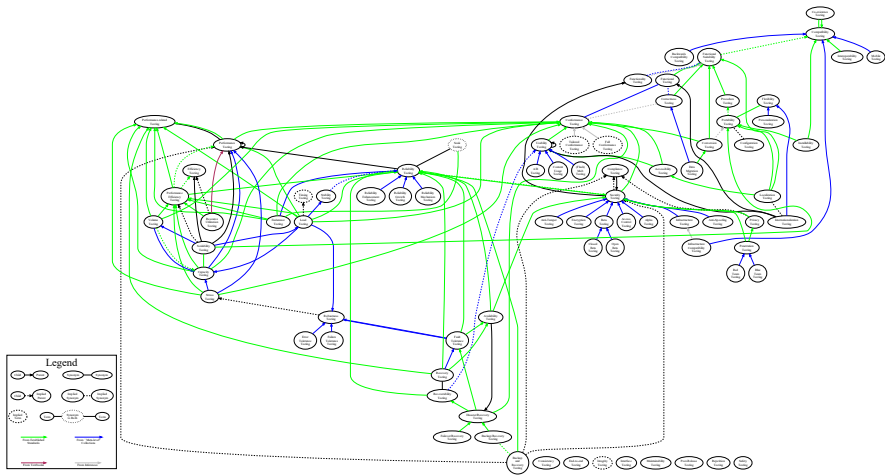
## Graph of Test Practices



# Graph of Test Techniques

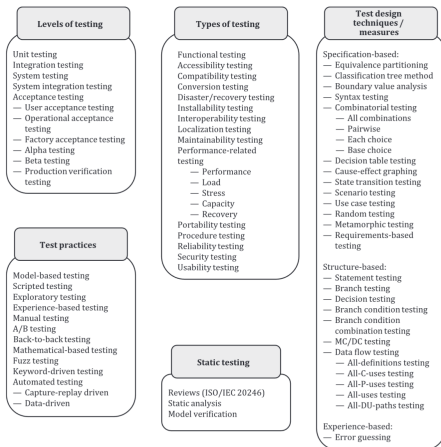


## Graph of Test Types



# Methodology: Graph Notation

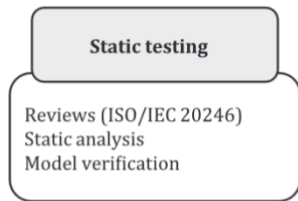
## Static Testing



Example test approach choices (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022, Fig. 2).

# Methodology: Graph Notation

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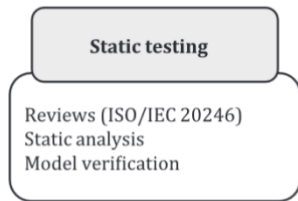


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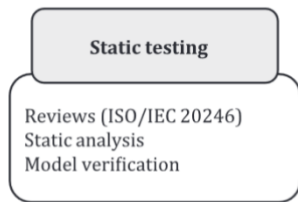
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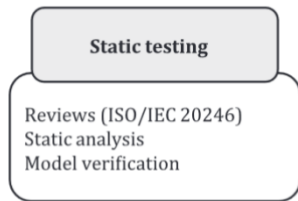
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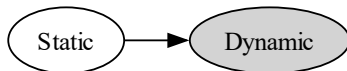
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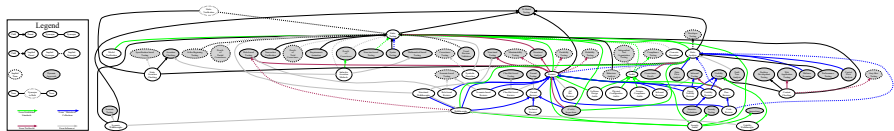


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- While our focus is on dynamic testing, we include static testing in our research for completeness
- Static testing *is* quite distinct from dynamic testing, but this does not necessarily make it an orthogonal category
- When considering static testing in isolation, terms with gray backgrounds are related *dynamic approaches*



## Graph of *Static* Test Approachs



# Methodology: Procedure

## Approaches

- A row is created for each test approach, such as the following which is based on (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2022)

Name	Category	Definition	Parent(s)	Synonym(s)
A/B Testing	Practice (p. 22)	Testing “that allows testers to determine which of two systems or components performs better” (p. 1)	Statistical Testing (pp. 1, 35), ...	Split-Run Testing (pp. 1, 35)

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- This information is gathered from sources by looking for
  - Glossaries
  - Testing-related terms
  - Terms described *by* other approaches
  - Terms that *imply* other approaches

- It seems that the existence of a software quality implies the existence of a test type associated with it

# Methodology: Procedure

## Other Information

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- Some test approaches use shared or complicated terminology

# Methodology: Procedure

## Other Information

- It seems that the existence of a software quality implies the existence of a test type associated with it
- Some test approaches use shared or complicated terminology
- For each of these, we record its
  - Name
  - Definition
  - Precedence for a related test type (only for qualities)
  - Synonym(s)



# Methodology: Procedure

- Recording these data in a consistent format allows for graphs to be generated according to a certain logic

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## Research Question 2

What discrepancies exist between descriptions of these testing approaches?

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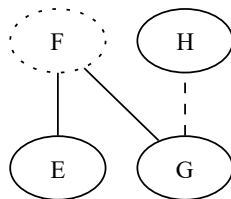
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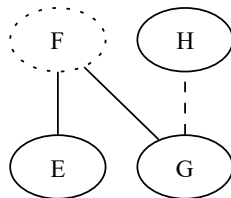
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H	X



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- The following four are the most prominent examples of the ten identified automatically:

## ❶ Invalid Testing:

- Error Tolerance Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 45)
- Negative Testing (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024; implied by ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 10)

## ❷ Soak Testing:

- Endurance Testing (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 39)
- Reliability Testing (Gerrard, 2000a, Tab. 2; 2000b, Tab. 1, p. 26)

## ❸ User Scenario Testing:

- Scenario Testing (Hamburg and Mogyorodi, 2024)
- Use Case Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 48) (although “an actor can be a user or another system” (ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 20))

## ❹ Link Testing:

- Branch Testing (implied by ISO/IEC and IEEE, 2021, p. 24)
- Component Integration Testing (Kam, 2008, p. 45)
- Integration Testing (implied by Gerrard, 2000a, p. 13)



# Acknowledgment

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- The past and current Drasil team have created a truly amazing framework!

Thank you!  
Questions?

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