Let's Stop Talking About Schools

Why the Concept Has Damaged the Profession

If you outnumber the enemy ten to one, surround them.

If you outnumber them five to one, attack them.

If you outnumber them two to one, divide them.

If you are equal, then find an advantageous battle.

If you are fewer, defend against them.

If you are much weaker, evade them.

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What's Wrong with the Schools?

- "Seven principles" okay, but also common sense
- However, a tree should be judged by its fruit:
    - No one claims membership in other schools
    - The concept started the schism in software testing
    - The only papers on schools are by CDTs (and are unremittingly negative about other schools)
    - The most prescriptive pronouncements emanate from CDTs (just follow them on Twitter)
    - Builds a Tower of Babel by re-naming established terms (e.g., "checking" vs. "verification")
    - Often used as an excuse to be exceptionally rude
    - Has been used to establish an orthodoxy
- To quote Bret Pettichord, schools "can be used to dismiss ideas you don't agree with," which is usually what I see

Strategies: a Better Way to Think

- Strategy: "a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal, usually over a long period of time"
- Schools: "a group of persons who hold a common doctrine or follow the same teacher"
- When you choose to belong to a school, you are bound to its doctrines/teachers
- When you choose strategies, you do so to serve your needs and those of your stakeholders

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Test Strategies

- Analytical: e.g., risk-based and requirement-based
- Model-based: e.g., stochastic or statistical testing
- Methodical: following a pre-planned methodology, e.g., failure-based, checklist-based, and quality-based
- Process/standard-compliant: e.g., IEEE 829 standard or Agile methodology like test-driven development
- Dynamic: an approach more reactive to events and conditions than pre-planned or pre-designed
- Consultative or directed: test coverage driven primarily by outside (non-tester) advice, guidance
- Regression-averse: reuse of existing test material, extensive automation of tests, standard test suites
- For more details on strategies, see my recorded webinar at www.rbcs-us.com/software-testing-resources/185

To Contact RBCS

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