

Title: CSQE Primer
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Reviewed By: Eva Freund

As one of the early takers of the CSQE examination I entered the examination room with a notebook stuffed with copies of articles and extracts from varied publications. These were supplemented with notes taken at a study session organized by a colleague. Looking around the room I saw that some individuals had wheeled carts filled with reference books. I wondered if they really expected to have the time to search for the correct answer to a difficult question.

The CSQE Primer contains everything I had and much more. The material is organized to follow the CSQE Body of Knowledge (BOK). The layout of each page makes the material easy to read and easy to follow. The ample margins provide space for personal notes. The authors make no assumptions about the reader's prior knowledge and thus everything is defined, explained, and illustrated.

Each section of the primer addresses a different section of the CSQE BOK. Each chapter contains descriptive information on the identified models, techniques, and processes. This is followed by a list of recommended readings and multiple choice questions (answers are contained in the index). One reader may choose to answer the questions in order to determine which sections need further study. Another reader may review the material and then answer the questions to determine their own level of knowledge and comprehension. As stated in the Preface, "This text is designed to provide...a review of fundamental knowledge and skills. It is also...a Primer for those interesting in taking the certification examination."

This Primer has several strengths. These include:

- Identification of the authors of the many definitions, checklists, and templates
- Prolific references to consensus standards
- Identifies the cognitive level at which the sample questions will be written

The primer would be stronger if the authors had used IEEE Standard 1012, *Software Verification and Validation*, rather than 1059 which was a Guide to Software Verification and Validation and was withdrawn several years ago. Had they used IEEE Std. 1012-1998, the Primer might have included the concept of integrity levels. This concept states that the breadth and depth of V&V tasks is determined by the level of impact of a software or system failure. The Primer also would have described the criteria for evaluating documentation such as requirements and design documents as well as for doing requirements traceability.

If I were taking the CSQE examination tomorrow, I would take this book and *Software Engineering: A Practitioner's Approach* by Roger S. Pressman.