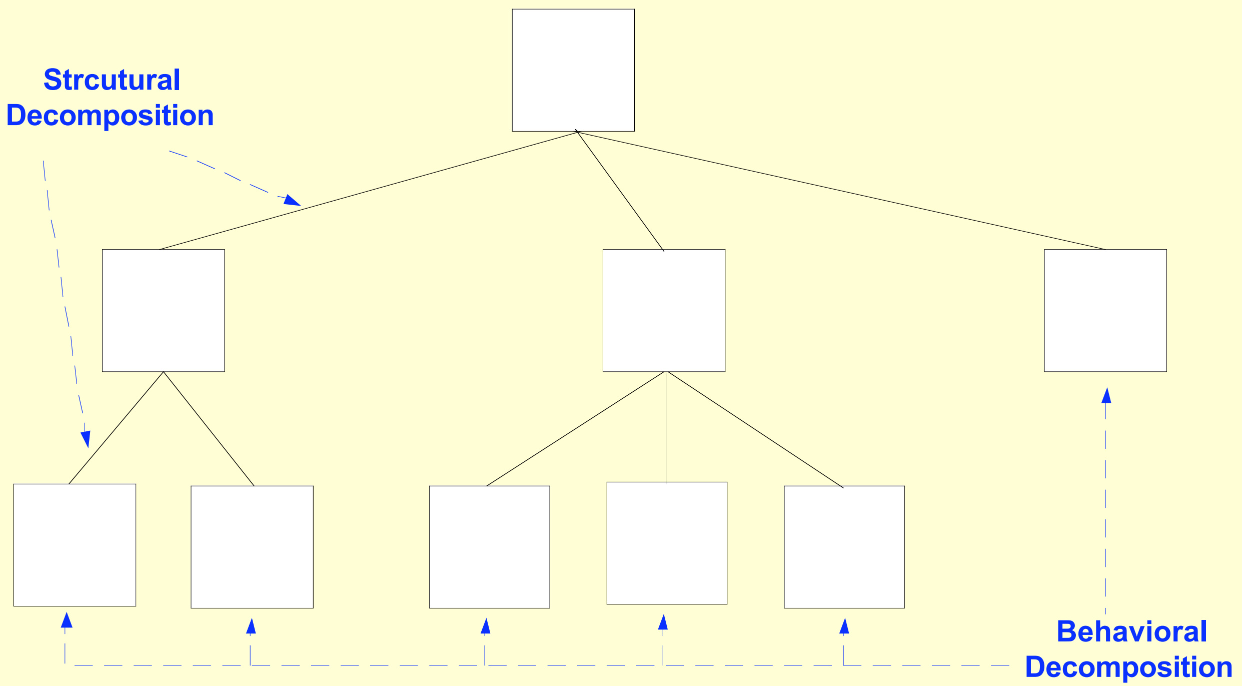
CMSC 611: Advanced Computer Architecture

Design Languages

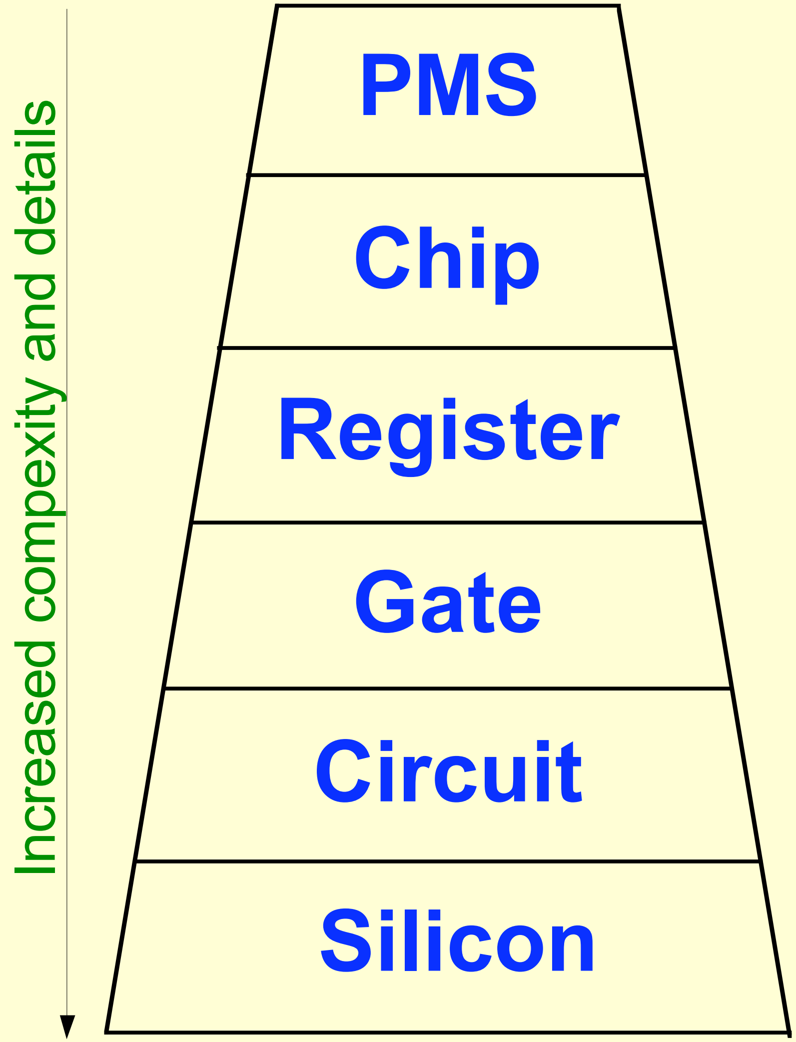
Practically everything adapted from slides by Peter J. Ashenden, VHDL Quick Start
Some material adapted from Mohamed Younis, UMBC CMSC 611 Spr 2003 course slides

Abstraction Hierarchy of Digital Design

- Digital designers often employ abstraction hierarchy, which can be expressed in two domains:
  - Structural domain: Components are described in terms of an interconnection of more primitive components
  - Behavior domain: Components are described by defining the their input/output responses by means of a procedure



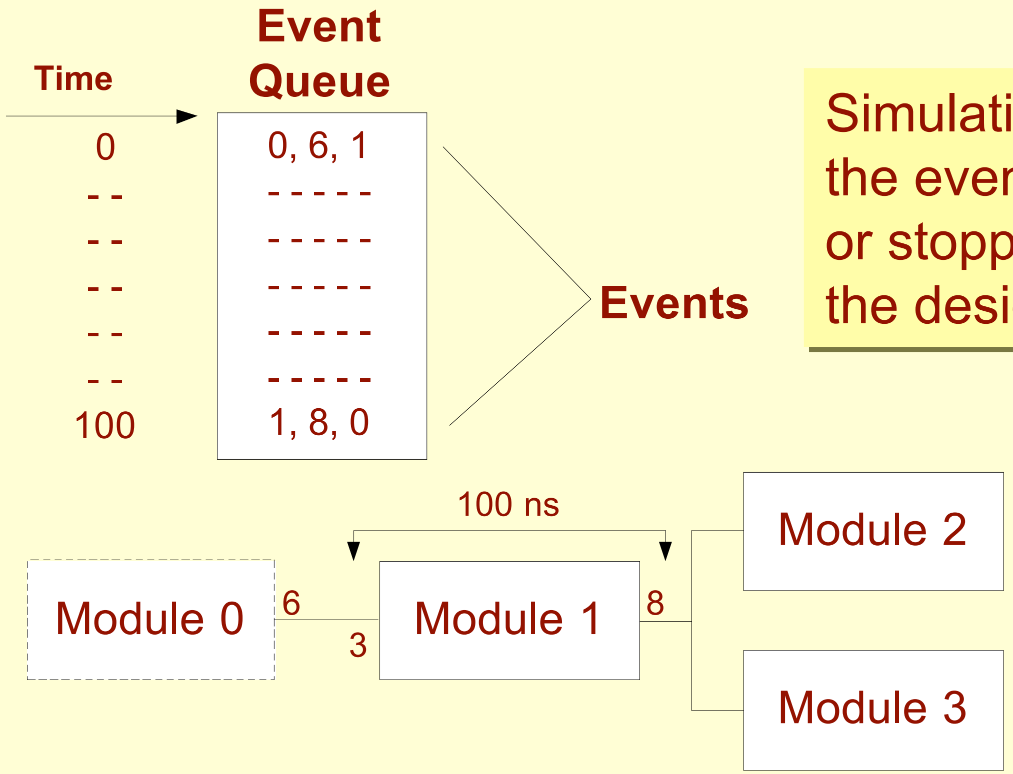
Design's Levels of Abstraction



Level	Structural Primitive	Behavior Representation
PMS	CPU, memories, buses	Performance specifications
Chip	Microprocessor, RAM, UART	I/O response, algorithms
Register	ALU, counter, MUX	Truth table, state table
Gate	AND, OR, flip-flop	Boolean equations
Circuit	Transistor, R, L, and C	Differential equations
Silicon	Geometrical objects	Process specifications.

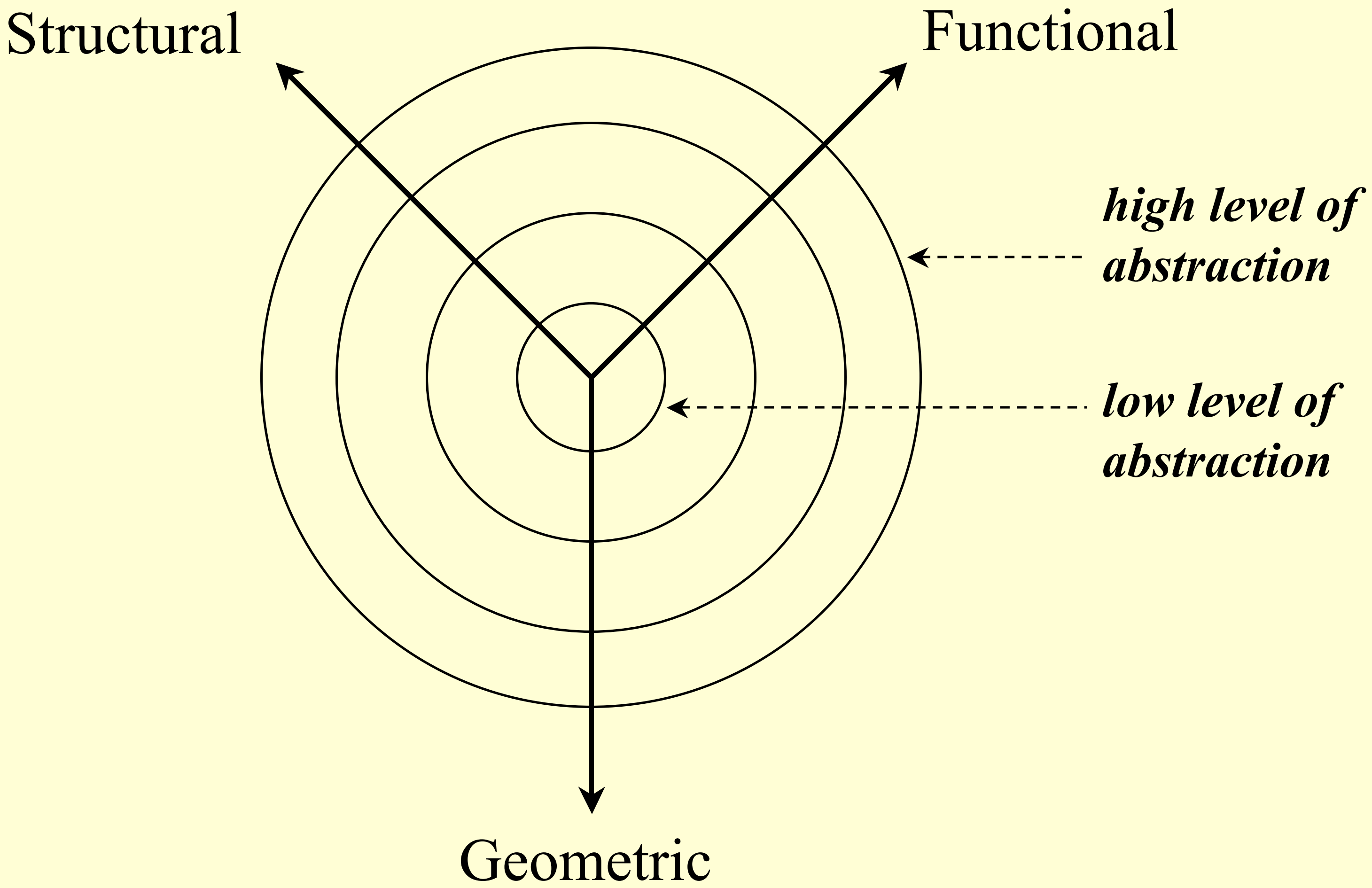
Design Simulator

- Device behavioral model is represented by procedure calls
- Events within the simulator are kept in a time-based queue
- Events stored as three-tuples (Module #, Pin #, New logic value)
- Depending on the behavioral model of a module, the handling of an event usually trigger other events that will be inserted in the event queue



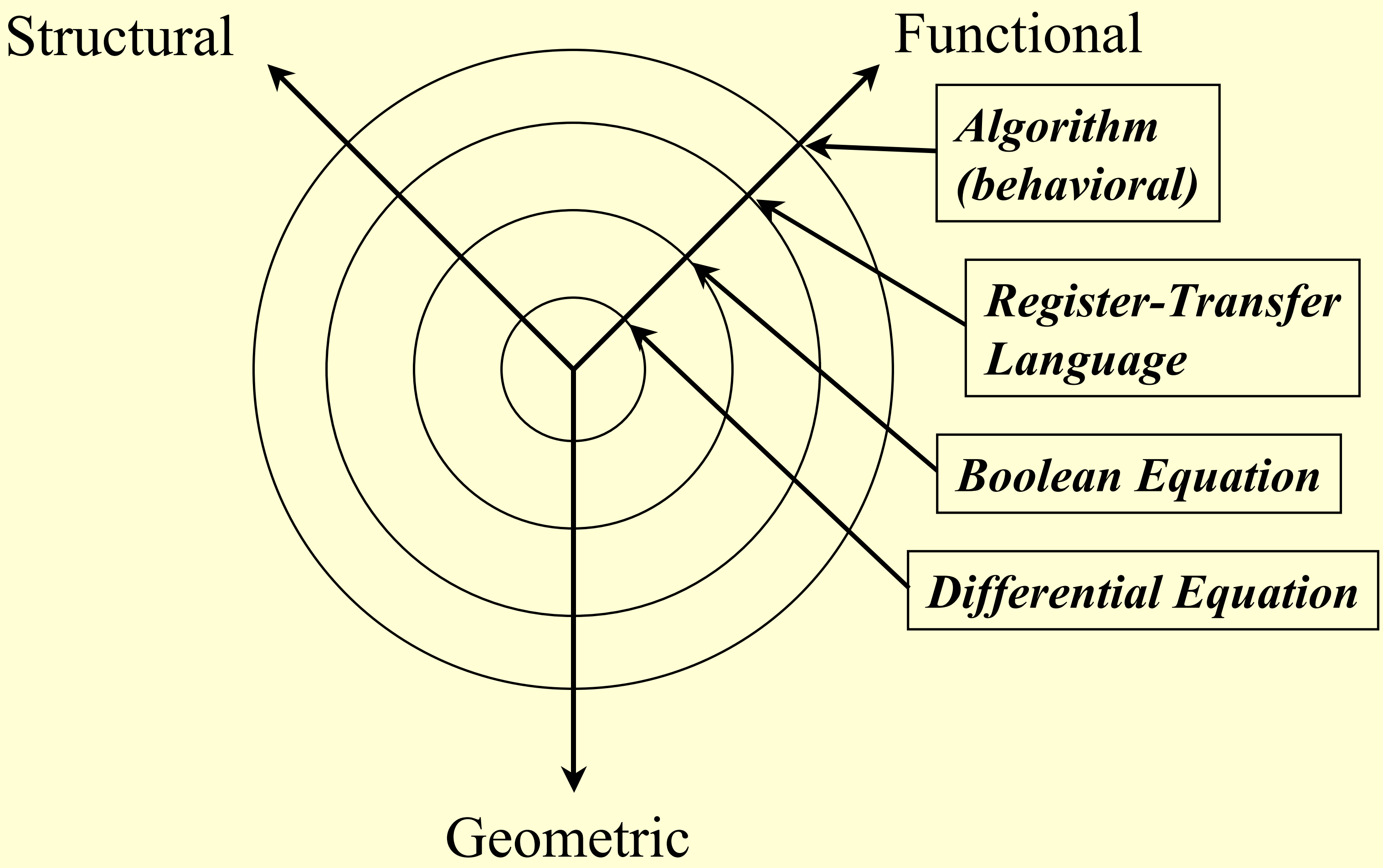
Simulation continues until the event queue is empty or stopped externally by the designer

Domains and Levels of Modeling



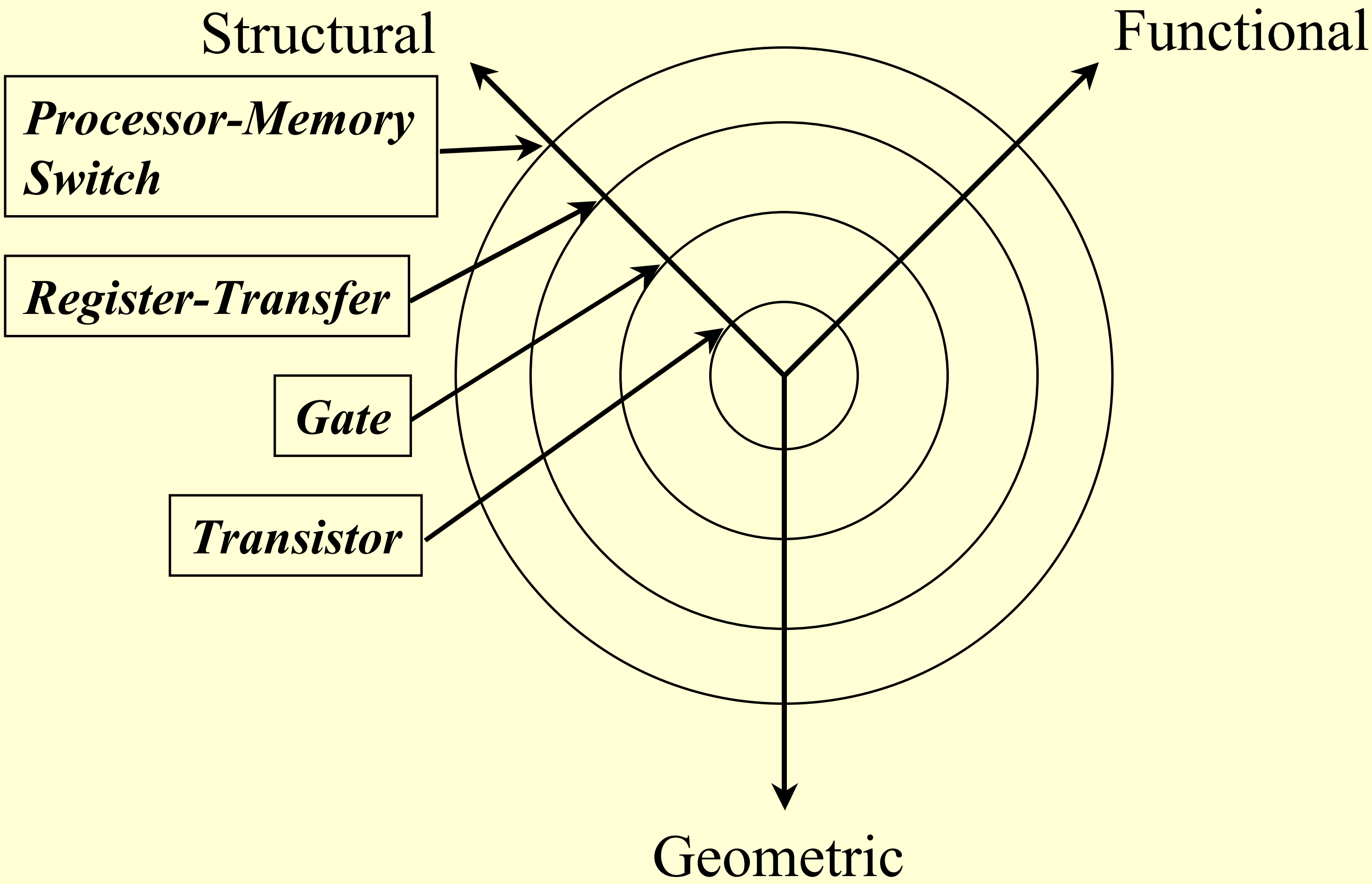
"Y-chart" due to Gajski & Kahn

Domains and Levels of Modeling



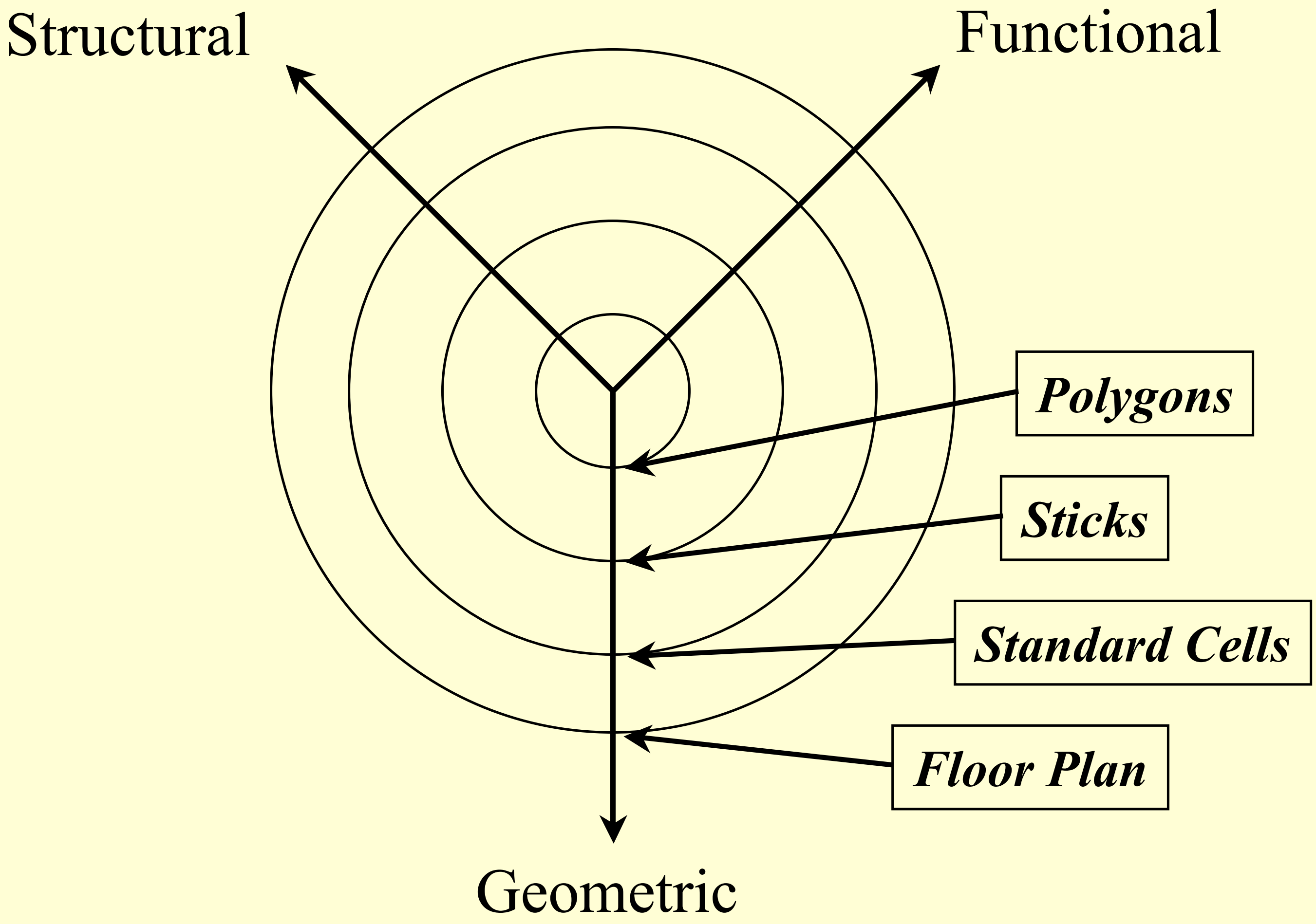
"Y-chart" due to Gajski & Kahn

Domains and Levels of Modeling



"Y-chart" due to Gajski & Kahn

Domains and Levels of Modeling



“Y-chart” due to Gajski & Kahn

Hardware Design Languages

- A hardware design language provides primitives for describing both structural and behavioral models of the design
- Hardware design languages are useful in
  - Documenting and modeling the design
  - Ensuring design portability
- Every hardware design language is supported by a simulator that helps in:
  - Validating the design
  - Mitigating the risk of design faults
  - Avoiding expensive prototyping for complicated hardware

VHDL & Verilog

- VHDL and Verilog are the most famous and widely used hardware design language
- Focus on VHDL:
  - Interfaces, Behavior, Structure, Test Benches
  - Analysis, Elaboration, Simulation, Synthesis

Modeling Digital Systems

- VHDL is for writing models of a system
- Reasons for modeling
  - requirements specification
  - documentation
  - testing using simulation
  - formal verification
  - synthesis
- Goal
  - most reliable design process, with minimum cost and time
  - avoid design errors!

Modeling Interfaces

- *Entity* declaration
  - describes the input/output *ports* of a module

entity name — *port names* — *port mode (direction)*

```
entity reg4 is
    port ( d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk : in bit;
           q0, q1, q2, q3 : out bit );
end entity reg4;
```

punctuation

reserved words — *port type*

VHDL-87

- Omit **entity** at end of entity declaration

```
entity reg4 is
    port ( d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk : in bit;
           q0, q1, q2, q3 : out bit );
end reg4;
```

Modeling Behavior

- *Architecture body*
  - describes an implementation of an entity
  - may be several per entity
- *Behavioral* architecture
  - describes the algorithm performed by the module
  - contains
    - *process statements*, each containing
    - *sequential statements*, including
    - *signal assignment statements* and
    - *wait statements*

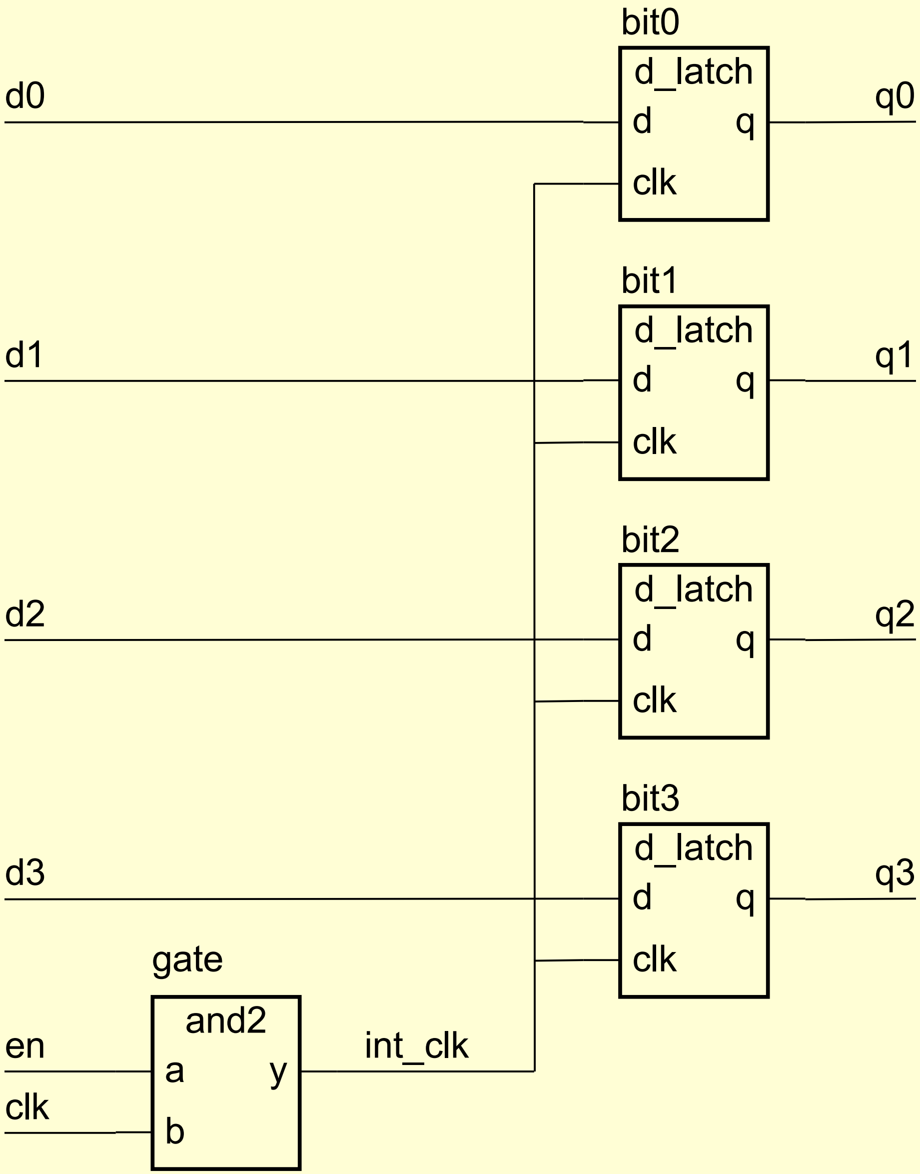
Behavior Example

```
architecture behav of reg4 is
begin
    storage : process is
        variable stored_d0, stored_d1, stored_d2, stored_d3 : bit;
    begin
        if en = '1' and clk = '1' then
            stored_d0 := d0;
            stored_d1 := d1;
            stored_d2 := d2;
            stored_d3 := d3;
        end if;
        q0 <= stored_d0 after 5 ns;
        q1 <= stored_d1 after 5 ns;
        q2 <= stored_d2 after 5 ns;
        q3 <= stored_d3 after 5 ns;
        wait on d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk;
    end process storage;
end architecture behav;
```

Modeling Structure

- *Structural* architecture
  - implements the module as a composition of subsystems
  - contains
    - *signal declarations*, for internal interconnections
      - the entity ports are also treated as signals
    - *component instances*
      - instances of previously declared entity/architecture pairs
    - *port maps* in component instances
      - connect signals to component ports
    - *wait statements*

Structure Example



Structure Example

- First declare D-latch and and-gate entities and architectures

```
entity d_latch is
    port ( d, clk : in bit;  q : out bit );
end entity d_latch;

architecture basic of d_latch is
begin
    latch_behavior : process is
    begin
        if clk = ‘1’ then
            q <= d after 2 ns;
        end if;
        wait on clk, d;
    end process latch_behavior;
end architecture basic;
```

```
entity and2 is
    port ( a, b : in bit;  y : out bit );
end entity and2;

architecture basic of and2 is
begin
    and2_behavior : process is
    begin
        y <= a and b after 2 ns;
        wait on a, b;
    end process and2_behavior;
end architecture basic;
```

Structure Example

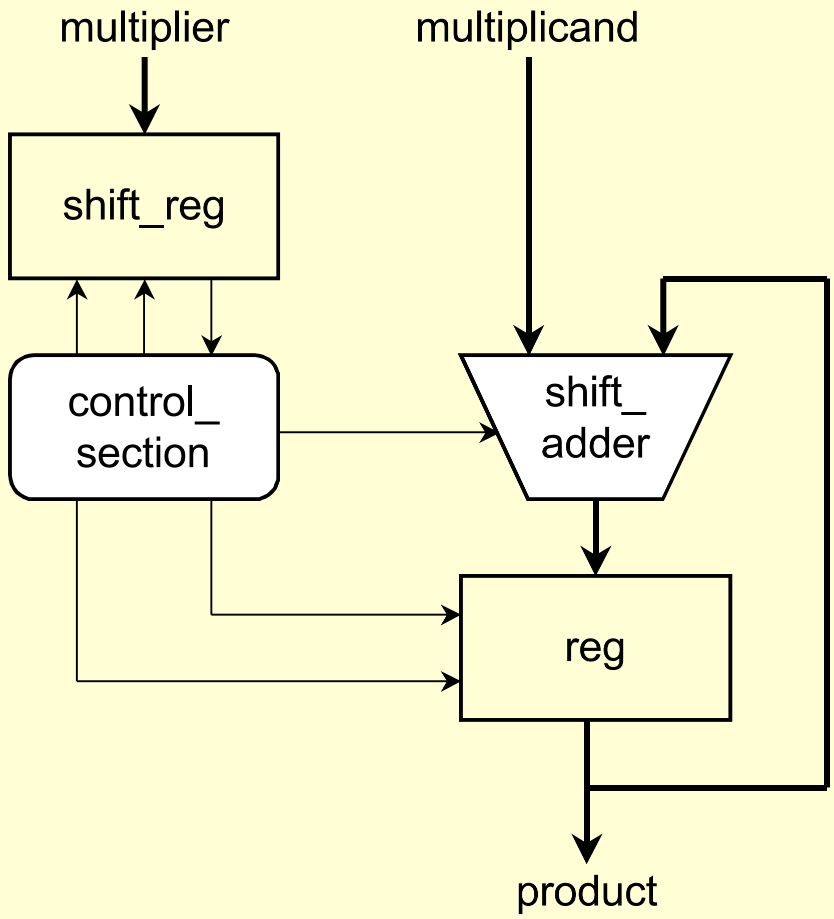
- Now use them to implement a register

```
architecture struct of reg4 is
    signal int_clk : bit;
begin
    bit0 : entity work.d_latch(basic)
        port map ( d0, int_clk, q0 );
    bit1 : entity work.d_latch(basic)
        port map ( d1, int_clk, q1 );
    bit2 : entity work.d_latch(basic)
        port map ( d2, int_clk, q2 );
    bit3 : entity work.d_latch(basic)
        port map ( d3, int_clk, q3 );
    gate : entity work.and2(basic)
        port map ( en, clk, int_clk );
end architecture struct;
```

Mixed Behavior and Structure

- An architecture can contain both behavioral and structural parts
  - process statements and component instances
    - collectively called *concurrent statements*
  - processes can read and assign to signals
- Example: register-transfer-level model
  - data path described structurally
  - control section described behaviorally

Mixed Example



Mixed Example

```
entity multiplier is
    port ( clk, reset : in bit;
            multiplicand, multiplier : in integer;
            product : out integer );
end entity multiplier;

architecture mixed of mulitplier is
    signal partial_product, full_product : integer;
    signal arith_control, result_en, mult_bit, mult_load : bit;
begin
    arith_unit : entity work.shift_adder(behavior)
        port map ( addend => multiplicand,  augend => full_product,
                    sum => partial_product,
                    add_control => arith_control );
    result : entity work.reg(behavior)
        port map ( d => partial_product,  q => full_product,
                    en => result_en,  reset => reset );
    ...
```

Mixed Example

```
    …
    multiplier_sr : entity work.shift_reg(behavior)
        port map ( d => multiplier,  q => mult_bit,
                   load => mult_load,  clk => clk );
    product <= full_product;
    control_section : process is
        -- variable declarations for control_section
        -- …
    begin
        -- sequential statements to assign values to control signals
        -- …
        wait on clk, reset;
    end process control_section;
end architecture mixed;
```

Test Benches

- Testing a design by simulation
- Use a *test bench* model
  - an architecture body that includes an instance of the design under test
  - applies sequences of test values to inputs
  - monitors values on output signals
    - either using simulator
    - or with a process that verifies correct operation

Test Bench Example

```
entity test_bench is
end entity test_bench;

architecture test_reg4 of test_bench is
    signal d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk, q0, q1, q2, q3 : bit;
begin
    dut : entity work.reg4(behav)
        port map ( d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk, q0, q1, q2, q3 );
    stimulus : process is
    begin
        d0 <= '1';  d1 <= '1';  d2 <= '1';  d3 <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        en <= '0';  clk <= '0';  wait for 20 ns;
        en <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        clk <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        d0 <= '0';  d1 <= '0';  d2 <= '0';  d3 <= '0';  wait for 20 ns;
        en <= '0';  wait for 20 ns;
        …
        wait;
    end process stimulus;
end architecture test_reg4;
```

Regression Testing

- Test that a refinement of a design is correct
  - that lower-level structural model does the same as a behavioral model
- Test bench includes two instances of design under test
  - behavioral and lower-level structural
  - stimulates both with same inputs
  - compares outputs for equality
- Need to take account of timing differences

Regression Test Example

```
architecture regression of test_bench is
    signal d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk : bit;
    signal q0a, q1a, q2a, q3a, q0b, q1b, q2b, q3b : bit;
begin
    dut_a : entity work.reg4(struct)
        port map ( d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk, q0a, q1a, q2a, q3a );
    dut_b : entity work.reg4(behav)
        port map ( d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk, q0b, q1b, q2b, q3b );
    stimulus : process is
    begin
        d0 <= '1';  d1 <= '1';  d2 <= '1';  d3 <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        en <= '0';  clk <= '0';  wait for 20 ns;
        en <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        clk <= '1';  wait for 20 ns;
        …
        wait;
    end process stimulus;
    ...
```

Regression Test Example

```
    …
    verify : process is
    begin
        wait for 10 ns;
        assert q0a = q0b and q1a = q1b and q2a = q2b and q3a = q3b
            report ”implementations have different outputs”
            severity error;
        wait on d0, d1, d2, d3, en, clk;
    end process verify;
end architecture regression;
```

Design Processing

- Analysis
- Elaboration
- Simulation
- Synthesis

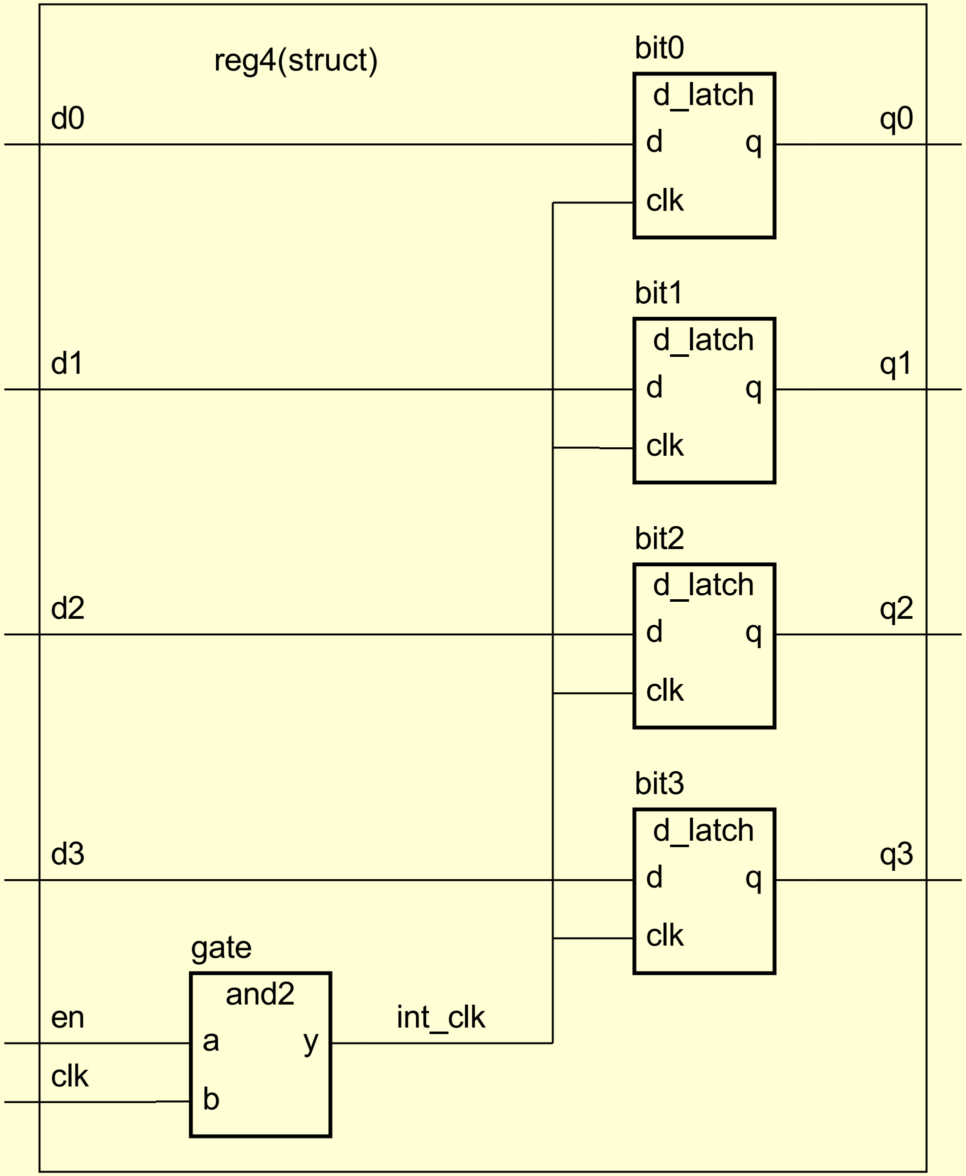
Analysis

- Check for syntax and semantic errors
  - syntax: grammar of the language
  - semantics: the meaning of the model
- Analyze each *design unit* separately
  - entity declaration
  - architecture body
  - …
  - best if each design unit is in a separate file
- Analyzed design units are placed in a *library*
  - in an implementation dependent internal form
  - current library is called work

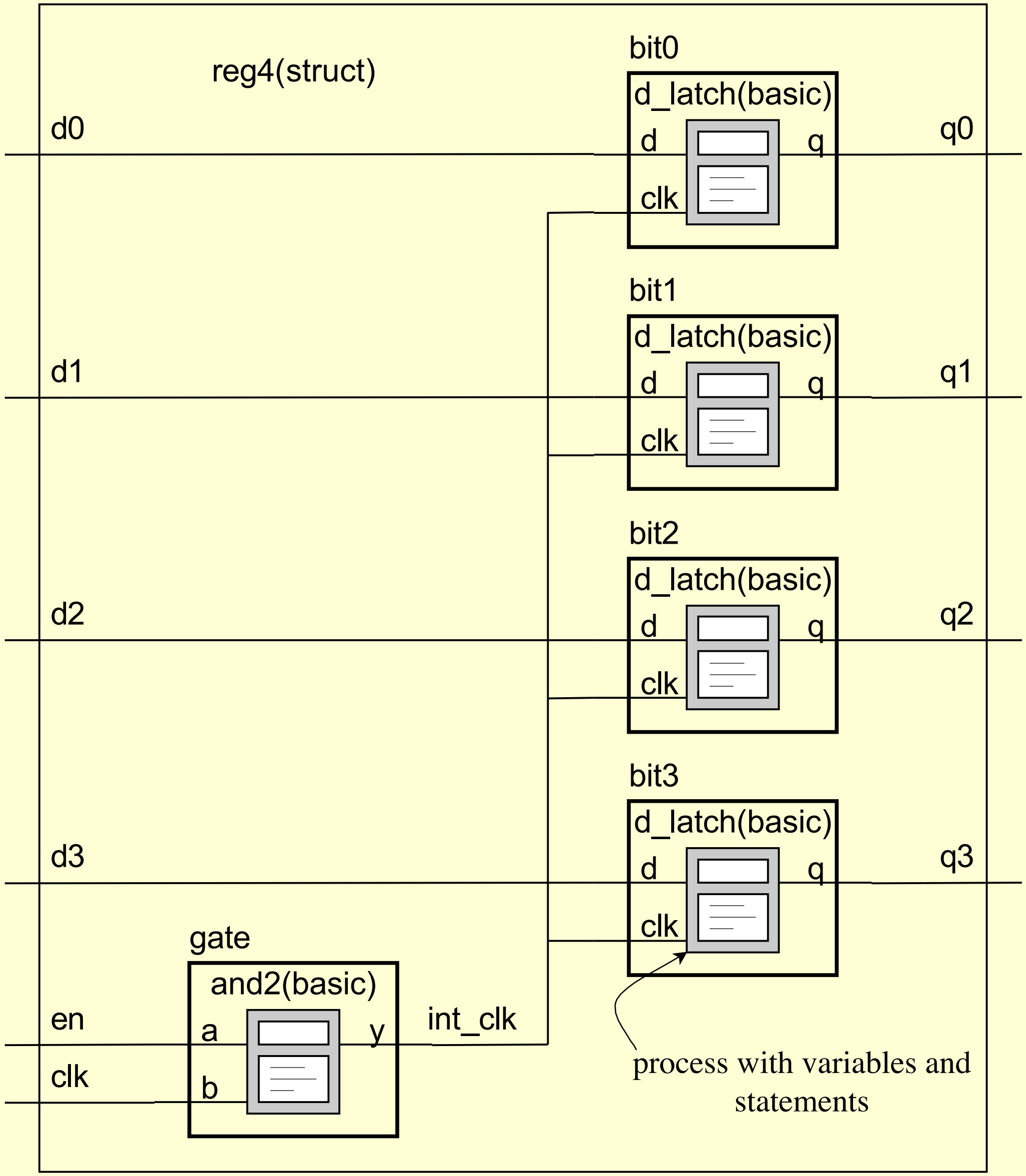
Elaboration

- “Flattening” the design hierarchy
  - create ports
  - create signals and processes within architecture body
  - for each component instance, copy instantiated entity and architecture body
  - repeat recursively
    - bottom out at purely behavioral architecture bodies
- Final result of elaboration
  - flat collection of signal nets and processes

Elaboration Example



Elaboration Example



Simulation

- Execution of the processes in the elaborated model
- Discrete event simulation
  - time advances in discrete steps
  - when signal values change—*events*
- A processes is sensitive to events on input signals
  - specified in wait statements
  - resumes and schedules new values on output signals
    - schedules *transactions*
    - event on a signal if new value different from old value

Simulation Algorithm

- Initialization phase
  - each signal is given its initial value
  - simulation time set to 0
  - for each process
    - activate
    - execute until a wait statement, then suspend
      - execution usually involves scheduling transactions on signals for later times

Simulation Algorithm

- Simulation cycle
  - advance simulation time to time of next transaction
  - for each transaction at this time
    - update signal value
      - event if new value is different from old value
  - for each process sensitive to any of these events, or whose “wait for …” time-out has expired
    - resume
    - execute until a wait statement, then suspend
- Simulation finishes when there are no further scheduled transactions

Synthesis

- Translates register-transfer-level (RTL) design into gate-level netlist
- Restrictions on coding style for RTL model
- Tool dependent

Basic Design Methodology