Learning Journal Template

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Course: Software Project Management (SOEN 6841)

Journal URL: https://github.com/AmishNavadia/SOEN-6841-Amish-Navadia

Dates Rage of activities: 17th March 2025 to 30th March 2025

Date of the journal: 30th March 2025

1. Overall Course Impact

This course had a significant and lasting impact on how I understand and approach software project management and engineering. Prior to this, I viewed project management as largely administrative. However, this course helped me realize that **a successful software project is rooted in deep planning, measurable metrics, structured collaboration, and adaptability** across lifecycle stages — from **initiation to closure**.

Key Insights & Transformations:

- I learned to break down projects using **Work Breakdown Structures** and plan effectively **using top-down and bottom-up techniques.**
- The variety of estimation methods — **Delphi**, **Function Point Analysis, and COCOMO II** — gave me a clearer understanding of aligning effort with scope.
- Concepts like **Earned Value Management**, **risk prioritization**, and **configuration** audits equipped me to handle large-scale software projects more confidently.
- The distinction between lifecycle models like **Waterfall** and **Iterative** clarified how flexibility (or lack thereof) affects project risk and rework.

❖ **Challenging Component:** Initially, I believed that good software engineering was primarily about technical execution. However, after learning how **scope creep, weak estimates, or poor configuration control** can sabotage even well-coded projects, I realized the importance of **project foresight, team alignment, and structured governance**. This shift in mindset was one of the most profound learnings for me.

2. Application in Professional Life

The knowledge gained throughout the course has had practical and immediate relevance in my current work environment.

Detailed Real-Life Applications:

- I used **Delphi estimation** during our sprint planning sessions, which helped build consensus and manage expectations better.
- Introduced a **project risk register** that uses probability-impact scoring to drive mitigation strategies for potential blockers.
- Improved our development process by adopting **traceability matrices** to link requirements to test cases and documentation.
- During a recent project involving cross-team collaboration, I implemented **configuration control mechanisms** to manage code versions, reducing merge conflicts or traceability.

❖ **Challenging Component:** Looking ahead, the course prepared me for **long-term leadership roles** such as Technical Project Manager or Agile Delivery Lead. The exposure to **CMMI levels, project quality metrics, and risk management techniques** empowers me to grow into roles that require not just delivery, but also **governance, maturity model implementation, and cross-functional orchestration**.

3. Peer Collaboration Insights

Peer collaboration throughout the course was a cornerstone of my learning experience. Our group discussions, shared assignments, and class debates consistently brought out diverse perspectives that enriched my understanding.

Specific Peer Contributions::

- A peer introduced the concept of applying **Goldratt's Critical Chain** method for buffer planning, which I've since explored in my own scheduling strategies.
- Another classmate's experience with **project estimation in agile contracts** highlighted how industry constraints influence estimation techniques — something I hadn't considered before.
- Group reviews **of risk management strategies** helped refine my ability to assess risk exposure practically and collaboratively.
- Peer-led walkthroughs of **WBS construction and configuration management practices** clarified how documentation and baseline control operate in real-world project environments.

This exchange of ideas not only deepened my knowledge but also improved my communication, negotiation, and teamwork abilities.

4. Personal Growth

The course has led to notable personal growth. I've transitioned from an execution-only mindset to one that is **strategy-oriented, risk-aware, and documentation-driven.**

Areas of Substantial Development:

- I've become more analytical and proactive — using tools like **EVM** and **risk matrices** to forecast issues instead of reacting to them.
- My technical decisions are now backed by **measurable planning** and **quality assurance**, rather than assumptions or experience alone.
- I've also developed the habit of continuous **reflection** and **improvement**, particularly by using lessons learned during project closure phases.

❖ **Challenging Component:** Previously, I hesitated to lead planning meetings or present timelines. Now, with structured models and real confidence in tools like **Delphi estimation, configuration audits**, and **quality metrics**, I can step into those leadership spaces with assurance. The course helped me recognize that growth is not just about skill, but also about **mindset and structure**.