Learning Journal – Week 4

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Course: SOEN-6841 Software Project Management

Journal URL:

Week 3: 11th February, 2024 to 17th February, 2024

Date: 15th February, 2024

Key Concepts Learned:
This week began with Chapter 5, which is Configuration management, which is the management of controlling and documenting the changes to a software project. There are various functions of configuration management, which I shall further tag as CM, like to define baseline components, control the configuration, status accounting of configuration, and auditing. It is mainly needed in SPM as software is very easy to change and change is very common in such a project.

Next, we started with Chapter 6, which is Project planning, which consists of scheduling, budgeting, manpower planning, communication planning, quality planning and so on. There are 2 approaches to this: the top-down approach where time is broken down into smaller durations and tasks are assigned to them, and the bottom-up approach, where the tasks are broken down and time is assigned to the tasks. Using work breakdown structure, or WBS, a calendar based or activity based schedule is created. Project planning is very necessary to keep the project on track.

Application in Real Projects:
Most software projects tend to very complex and huge in size. It is also very common that a client's requirements are constantly changing during the entire development process. Due to this, it is very important that configuration management is done to make sure that actual code is properly tracked. It is applied in many real life scenarios for version control (sites like Github, BitBucket etc) where we need to keep track of every change. It is also used for change control, where we can track why a change was requested and who approved it. Some more applications of configuration management are auditing, compliance, release management, and for collaboration and communication.

When it comes to project planning, it is not possible to achieve a successful project without proper project planning. If there is no planning, it is very likely that the project is broken down into proper task, there is not enough or too much time allotted to a project and so on. Work breakdown structure is very much needed to make sure that we are not dividing the project into too small of a task. It is used to allocate budget also, which means that without proper planning, it is possible that a project will go into a loss. Other applications in real project of

project planning are resource allocation, scheduling, quality assurance, time management etc.

Peer Interactions:
This week we had a pitch presentation which was to be done on Thursday, in person, in class. For this, we had a meeting with all the team members to discuss how to best approach this. We brainstormed to come up with ideas on how we could engage the audience, to come up with a dynamic beginning and ending and to finalize the content of the presentation.

Challenges Faced:
This week the challenge faced was mainly in the project. To come up with a dynamic presentation which would engage the audience was a difficult task. Moreover, considering the fact that so many projects are similar to each other, we had to stand out with our project. Finally, we came up with some questions that we could ask to the audience, and finalized what points we wanted to focus on.

Apart from this, personally I found configuration management to be a challenging concept to understand. Hence, more time was put into learning that chapter and to understand it thoroughly.

Personal development activities:
This week, individually, I studied chapter 5 and chapter 6 through the presentations and the reference book provided and finished the exercises given for chapter 5 and 6 within the reference book. With the exams coming up in the next week, I have also begun with the revision of the earlier chapters.

Goals for the Next Week:
In the upcoming week, I plan to revise chapters 1 to 6 to prepare for the exams. The goal is to study everything taught as deeply and as thoroughly as possible. I'll be starting with Introduction to SPM, followed by Project Initiation management, software project effort and cost estimation, then risk management, configuration management, and project planning. I plan to make notes of all the points I have forgotten and missed while studying and make sure I do not forget to cover any concept.