**Learning Journal Template**

**Student Name:** Arik Kantesaria

**Course:** Software Project Management (SOEN 6841)

**Journal URL:** <https://github.com/Arik39/SOEN6841_SPM>

**Dates Rage of activities:** 6th October 2024 to 26th October 2024

**Date of the journal:** 2nd November 2024

**Key Concepts Learned:**

I learned concepts from Chapter 6: Project Planning and Chapter 7: Project Monitoring and Control this week. Chapter 6 teaches the fundamentals of project planning, creates a baseline for project analysis, and describes top-down and bottom-up scheduling. Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and the critical path method were useful in learning how resources can be allocated effectively. Chapter 7 was dedicated to the monitoring and control of the project. Besides that, Earned Value Management (EVM) was seen as the tool used to monitor project realization against the schedules and budget baselines and methods to act upon deviations.

**Application in Real Projects:**

Techniques of planning and monitoring from this week can realistically help many real-world projects meet scope, time, and budget parameters considerably. For example, in a recent project, I worked on a task breakdown using a simplified version of WBS. The project involved some software that needed independent development and testing of its modules. By allocating resources, WBS helped in finding dependencies so that no delay may occur due to the overlap of a task. Also, EVM, as mentioned in Chapter 7, would have been useful for reporting on budget and schedule variances. Unfortunately, this assumes access to correct and regularly updated data. In a living, dynamic project environment, most the of times the requirement changes day by day and baseline may need to be updated almost every day.

**Peer Interactions:**

Discussion with peers helped me understand pragmatic challenges in managing interdependent tasks in project schedules, an important point in Chapter 6. One of them shared his experience where task dependencies delayed one of his projects, an important consideration in finding out the critical path at the very outset. It further enhanced my understanding regarding ripples in a schedule due to delay in a task and the need for contingency planning.

**Challenges Faced:**

Understanding EVM calculations was challenging, as calculating variances accurately depends on real-time data that might not always be readily available. In live projects, especially those with frequent changes, applying EVM effectively requires flexibility to adjust the baseline as new data comes in. For example, on a software development project, due to unforeseen technical complications or scope changes in the middle of the project, revisions within some EVM calculations are not able to measure accurate progress. It was also difficult for me to differentiate when to use a top-down and when a bottom-up scheduling method since both techniques vary in effectiveness based on a project's scope and level of detail. I still need more practice with both methods in various scenarios to feel confident in making a right approach.

**Personal development activities:**

This week, I extended the reading to have a deeper understanding of the tool project management tools. I reread some guides and tutorials online teaching about scheduling software. I took from the reading how to apply Chapter 6 concepts using tools like Microsoft Project and Asana in creating a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and Gantt chart. Reading was so helpful to understand how those tools support effective planning and scheduling.

**Goals for the Next Week:**

For the coming week, my objectives will be to better understand EVM calculations, practice the creation of baseline schedules with WBS and Gantt charts, and discuss methods of resource allocation with my colleagues to understand how different types of projects affect resource planning.