

Learning Journal 3

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Course: SOEN 6841: Software Project Management

Journal URL: https://github.com/DP8801/SOEN_6841_SPM.git

Dates Range of activities: 7th Feb to 21st Feb, 2025

Date of the journal: 23rd Feb, 2025

Key Concepts Learned:

Chapter 7: Project Monitoring & Control

Project monitoring ensures that the project stays on track by comparing actual progress against the baseline plan. I learned about Earned Value Management (EVM), which combines cost and schedule performance indicators to measure project progress. Understanding EVM gave me a clearer perspective on tracking cost variance (CV) and schedule variance (SV).

One of the key takeaways was the difference between monitoring and control:

- Monitoring involves collecting data on project performance.
- Control means taking corrective action based on variances observed.

A new concept I explored was slack and buffer management, which helps optimize project schedules by removing unnecessary delays.

Chapter 8: Project Closure

Project closure is a critical phase where final deliverables are verified, project documentation is archived, and lessons learned are recorded. One crucial aspect is conducting a post-mortem review, which identifies successes and challenges for future projects.

A valuable insight was understanding the importance of source code version management and archival processes to maintain traceability. I also learned about measured metric data filtration, which ensures that only relevant project data is retained for analysis.

A real-world example I found was how NASA archives its project data to improve future space missions. This practice reduces redundant mistakes and enhances project efficiency.

Application in Real Projects:

- **EVM in Agile Development:** While Agile methods don't traditionally rely on EVM, I realized that burn-down charts and velocity tracking serve a similar purpose in tracking progress. By combining Agile sprint tracking with EVM techniques, project managers can get better insights into cost and time efficiency.
- **Project Closure Documentation:** At my workplace, I applied some of these learnings by suggesting a better knowledge transfer process to ensure smooth project handoffs.

Peer Interactions:

A significant part of this period was our test covering Lectures 1-6 on February 20th. This was an opportunity to revisit and consolidate concepts from project initiation, planning, estimation, risk management, and configuration management. Through peer discussions, we clarified doubts on critical path analysis, cost estimation techniques, and risk mitigation strategies. I found discussing past exam questions and working through case studies with my classmates to be incredibly helpful.

Another key interaction was regarding our project pitches, which were delayed due to a heavy snowstorm. The delay caused some uncertainty in team planning, but it also provided an opportunity to refine our pitches. During the extra time, we engaged in peer reviews, exchanged constructive feedback, and improved our project plans based on suggestions from teammates and the professor. This experience reinforced the value of adaptability in project management.

Challenges Faced:

1. Exam Preparation & Time Management: Balancing project pitch preparation and studying for the test on Lectures 1-6 was a challenge. I had to strategize my study schedule to cover all essential topics effectively.
2. Project Pitch Adjustments: With the delay due to the snowstorm, we had to adjust our project pitches. Incorporating last-minute feedback while maintaining clarity and confidence in our presentation required additional effort and coordination.

Personal development activities:

- Reviewed past lecture notes and worked on mock questions generated by ChatGPT to prepare for the test efficiently.
- Practiced project pitching techniques, focusing on clear articulation and persuasion to make a stronger impact.
- Attended a webinar on effective project presentations, which provided valuable insights on structuring pitches and handling Q&A sessions confidently.

Goals for the Next Week:

1. Analyze my exam performance to identify areas for improvement and reinforce key concepts.
2. Refine my project documentation to incorporate the feedback received from the professor and peers.