

Learning Journal

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Course: Software Project Management

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Key Concepts Learned:

Over the past few weeks, we've been busy with our learning - doing exams, and projects, and looking at new materials. We spent time learning Chapters 7 and 8 from our textbook especially. These chapters gave us useful information and ideas that helped us understand the topic better. In this part of my learning journal, I'll talk about the important ideas and things I learned from Chapters 7 and 8. I'll explain the new ways of thinking and opinions I came across. Let's explore what we've learned together.

Chapter 7 looks at the tricky parts of keeping an eye on projects, especially ones about software. It points out that projects can be shifty and unexpected. This is different from usual factory work. Even though factory tasks often go in a predictable order, software projects have an unpredictability that needs constant watchfulness. This section stresses the importance of clear process models in software projects. These models help reduce confusion and promote stability. They work like a guide, detailing the steps needed to finish tasks and aid planning. Plus, these models let us compare project processes and products to industry standards. This way, teams can monitor work rates, expenses, and timing. Software projects can be tricky. Sometimes, teams don't have clear instructions right from the start. They guess what needs to be done. But these guesses can change over time. This makes managing a project hard; it's full of uncertainty until things become clear. This part talks about how we can keep a close eye on projects and control them better. It says we can use 'buffers' in our plans and budgets to manage risks. We can also balance resources to get the most out of our project schedules. And if things go off course, we can take decisive steps to fix problems. It mentions the Earned Value Management technique, too. This is a useful way to check how well a project is doing and spot potential issues. We can see these indicators on the project's dashboard. Overall, Chapter 7 underscores the complexities of managing software projects in the face of uncertainty and highlights the importance of employing effective tools and techniques for successful project monitoring and control.

One challenge in software projects is unclear rules, causing teams to guess what may change as work continues. This vagueness causes trouble managing and controlling projects, as it forces teams to deal with unknowns until things are clear. To fix these problems, the chapter discusses different tools and methods for monitoring and controlling projects. These include using extra time and money to handle risks, balancing workloads to plan projects well, and fixing problems that make plans change. Earned Value Management is also shown as a useful tool for checking project progress and finding possible troubles through signs on a project dashboard.

Key Points:

- Reflection on the project journey, recognizing moments of anxiety, discovery, and success.
- Importance of project closure to signify the successful completion of project objectives.
- Scope of software projects, including development, customization, integration, maintenance, or specific phases of the software development life cycle.

- Completion and handover of project deliverables to the customer as per the contract.
- Activities involved in project closure, such as tying up loose ends, releasing resources, and preparing lessons learned reports.
- Management of source code and project data, including archiving for future reference and statistical analysis.
- Considerations for source code management during project closure, ensuring the deployment of the correct software version.
- Importance of organizing project data correctly for archival, avoiding the inclusion of extraneous data and ensuring easy retrieval for future projects.

Application in Real Projects:

After reading these two chapters which look in detail at the management of Software projects (Chapters 7 and 8 Project Monitoring and Control, Chapter 8 Project Closure, and Data Management) a lot of the work that Hutchins outlines about dynamic aptitude and adaptability applies to project management and learning and project management. Many projects are nonlinear in their scope, size, and schedule, allowing the project manager enough flexibility to adapt to all the contingencies that arise. To complete and close projects successfully (just like in Chapter 7), I learnt how to monitor the key deliverables and milestones associated with the project, mitigate risks, and manage the drivers of project outcomes. Additionally, these areas of focus on project closure and data management remind us that we need to step back and think about what we are trying to accomplish with our projects and collect lessons learned, in addition to putting documents and data in order. Not only will I reflect on these important areas of focus as they are discussed, but I will look forward to discussing the application and how we, as a class, put these points and areas of focus into the real-world arena of professional implementation.

Peer Interactions & Collaborative Learning:

Last week I had a couple of notable experiences with my teammates that illustrate what it can be like to work in teams. Our group project was coming to a head and my teammates, and I started slicing up the work. I was given the feasibility study and the solution proposal. My colleagues got the project plan, risk assessment and budgeting documents. In dividing up the work like this we all took some ownership as individuals of the different components of the assignment. We had deadlines to meet so we worked this way with the intention of covering everything. By working together on solving problems, nurturing ideas, and crafting proposals, I learnt from each team member about his or her individual strengths and area of expertise. It was helpful when we applied different skill sets and divergent perspectives in tackling the complex problem and recognizing our blind spots and assumptions. We were constantly discussing our project aspects, comparing notes and errors, which prevented having to run back and forth, and saved us a great deal of time, while allowing us to explore various solutions. Throughout the teamwork, my colleagues' various contributions to the project shaped my understanding of the requirements of the project and its objectives. We learnt from each other's strengths through sharing the best practices and constructive feedback, and we solved problems together. We would continue to work closely with each other and learn from each other's experiences.

Challenges Faced:

Balancing the midterm exam preparation with the other aspects of our project's current phase was mainly a nightmare. Coping with these two responsibilities required impeccable scheduling and prioritizing to consider the academic success as well as the progress of my project. Moreover, the

interplays between various sections of this project were difficult, given that each part depended on some tasks which had to be completed beforehand. In future, I need to do more to enhance my time management abilities besides obtaining an improved explanation of project dependencies to deal with such difficulties intelligently.

Personal development activities:

The past week has concentrated on studying for the mid-term exam which took up a lot of my time. That is why I didn't engage in any personal development activities other than my academic ones. Nonetheless, I realized a remarkable success in our improved communication and mutual comprehension after thinking about the course project advancement and interacting with my fellow mates. We have worked together as a team over the last few weeks to build a groupthink type of cohesion and enhance effective communication among ourselves. This alignment and synergy became very apparent to us, especially during the recent weeks where we successfully worked on various aspects of the project thus proving how fruitful it was to lay a solid foundation for a strong team. Going forward, I intend to keep this spirit alive while using it for personal development as well as professional growth.

Adjustments to Goals:

As I look back at my goals from the previous week, what stands out is that my focus was on preparing for the midterm exam. I have made significant headway in reviewing chapters 1 through 6 and enhancing my comprehension of the course materials; however, there are still specific areas that need more clarification. With an exam coming up, I will revise my goals to dedicate more time to clearing any remaining doubts and reinforcing crucial ideas. Besides, I will give priority to working on exam questions to improve test-taking skills and build confidence for the examination. This shift shows how much better I now understand the requirements of this essay and how important it is for me to be thoroughly prepared to achieve my academic goal.

Goals for the Next Week:

The goals I have for next week are, to delve into my comprehension of the contents of Chapters 7 and 8 by way of classroom talks and extra materials. Also, I will concentrate on taking our course team project to another level as well as preparing for a poster presentation required by our lecturer. This will incorporate refining project deliverables and rehearsing for the presentations to ensure that we make a perfect showcase of our work.