Learning Journal 1

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Course: SOEN 6841 Software Project Management

Journal URL: https://github.com/Rafsan4084/SOEN-6841_Software-Project-Management-Fall2024

Dates Range of Activities: 09 September 2024 - 21 September 2024

Date of the Journal: 21 September 2024

Key Concepts Learned

In this period, I focused on several important concepts in software project management, particularly during the initiation phase and various estimation techniques. These topics provided a strong foundation for understanding how projects begin and how to predict effort and cost accurately.

Key areas include:

- **Project Charter and Scope**: Understanding how projects are initiated with a clear charter and well-defined scope. This includes setting boundaries for the project and outlining what is included/excluded from the development process.
- **SMART Objectives**: The importance of setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound objectives to guide the project successfully to completion.
- **Effort and Cost Estimation Techniques**: A major focus was on estimation techniques like Function Point Analysis (FPA) and COCOMO, as well as expert judgment methods like Delphi. These are essential for accurately forecasting project costs and scheduling.
- **Project Scheduling:** I learned how to break down project work into tasks and estimate timelines. This is crucial for setting a baseline schedule and managing dependencies between tasks

Application in Real Projects

The learnings from this week are highly applicable to real-world projects, particularly in the early stages where proper scoping, budgeting, and objective-setting are crucial. For example, ensuring that all projects start with a well-defined project charter can significantly reduce miscommunication and align stakeholders from the outset. Similarly, setting SMART objectives helps ensure that project goals are clear, practical, and achievable within the set timeline. Moreover, the cost estimation techniques such as COCOMO and Function Point Analysis provide structured approaches to forecast project costs and effort. These techniques can be

applied to improve resource allocation and risk management, which is critical in managing large-scale software projects. Using methods like Delphi can help teams establish realistic estimates and timelines by leveraging collective expert knowledge.

Peer Interactions

This week, I engaged with my peers in discussing different estimation techniques and their real-world applications. Our discussions explored how methodologies like Function Point Analysis and Delphi are applied in various project scenarios. Peer feedback allowed me to understand how estimation techniques differ based on project type, helping me see how Function Point Analysis is more suited to user-driven projects, whereas Delphi works well in uncertain environments.

Challenges Faced

One challenge I encountered was gaining a deeper understanding of the cost and effort estimation techniques, particularly Function Point Analysis and Estimation by Analogy. These methods require a deep understanding of project characteristics and applying them in real projects can be complex. Another challenge was understanding how to factor in uncertainties while estimating, which is critical for avoiding inaccurate predictions.

Personal Development Activities

To address these challenges, I devoted additional time to reviewing academic literature on cost estimation techniques and their applications in software development. I also explored supplementary materials on how large-scale software projects utilize COCOMO and Delphi for estimation. These activities are crucial for my growth as a project manager, enabling me to gain a deeper understanding of cost forecasting.

Goals for the Next Week

For the upcoming week, my primary focus is on deepening my understanding of algorithmic cost modeling and exploring its applications in modern software projects. I also aim to refine my understanding of project initiation techniques, particularly how risk management is integrated during this phase. My goal is to further enhance my practical knowledge of estimation methods and their applications in real-world scenarios.