**Learning Journal**

**Student Name:** Amal Saji

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**Key Concepts Learned:**

During the seventh week focus was given to understand Project Closure in a software project.

* As a project concludes, its overall success is determined by factors such as status reports and customer feedback. During the development process there might have been situations of uncertainty, new discovery, etc. Despite the challenges and setbacks, even when the project seems to be a failure, reaching the closing stage signifies that the obstacles were overcome and the goals have been achieved. In the context of software development project, it is essential to ensure that all the deliverables, such as the tested software product, user manuals, training and implementation are done before the deadline. Additionally, documentation of project proceedings and data collection for statistical analysis should be kept in a central repository prior to closure.
* During software development, the code gets updated frequently as new features are added and bugs are fixed. This creates many versions of the code. It's important to keep track of these changes carefully so the right version gets delivered to the customer. A system is used to record all these changes, but if developers don't update their own files regularly, there could be mismatches between the delivered code and the instructions for how to use it. To avoid problems, both the code and the instructions need to be accurate and up-to-date.
* Saving past project information is important for both companies offering services and their own teams. This information helps estimate how much effort, time, and money future projects will take, and how good the quality will be. Using past data like a scorecard builds trust with clients, helps teams work faster, makes project goals clearer, and saves time and money on future projects. Statistical methods for quality control depend on past data to set goals and estimate new projects. This also helps identify and fix problems during a project. But to make best use of this saved data, it needs to be organized carefully. This can be done by project size, industry, what programming language was used, and how the project was run. This way, companies can easily find the most relevant information for new projects, making the saved data much more helpful.
* The iterative development process, though popular, can create challenges in software development. Releasing new versions quickly can be essential, but it can lead to rushed decisions at the end of each development cycle. Ideally, features should be prioritized based on importance and ease of development at the start of the cycle, not crammed in at the last minute due to pressure. Focus on including the most important features that can be built quickly, then add others if time allows. Most importantly, quality should never be sacrificed to meet deadlines.
* The more we learn throughout our lives, the better we become at things. This is especially true for projects, where experience helps us get more done. Working on projects is a great way to learn new things, both for the people on the team and for the whole company. If we write down the lessons we learn from projects, like better ways to do tasks, manage projects, solve problems, and negotiate, we can remember them and use that knowledge on future projects. By putting all the project documents together in one place, such as those about managing projects, the project itself, and the contracts, it's easier for everyone in the company to learn from each other and remember important information even after a project is finished.
* When a project wraps up, the project manager needs a plan to move the team and equipment to new jobs. This means quickly assigning people to other projects and returning any special tools or computer programs that were only used for this project. Sometimes project managers get so focused on finishing their current project that they forget to plan for the end. If they don't move the team and equipment quickly, the company ends up wasting money because the resources aren't being used effectively.
* Project managers often forget about complex, unorganized data (unstructured data) which is most of the information in projects. In factories, for example, data is very clean and organized (structured data) which makes it easy to use computers to manage things. Project work, however, is trickier because it's always changing and can't be easily measured. In the future, project data might be more organized, like pre-built car parts that can be snapped together. But for now, project managers need to carefully sort through all this messy data and make sure they understand it correctly so they don't make mistakes when evaluating projects.

**Reflections on Case Study:**

The case study explains how the SaaS software company ends its projects. When the project got completed, the people who worked on it are assigned new projects by a manager who oversees all the projects. All the documents and code from the project are stored in a dedicated branch of the configuration management system for version control. This area becomes the official version of the software, like a snapshot in time. Even though they planned carefully, there were problems with version 6.0, especially with the part that lets people schedule appointments. Because of this, they had to change the project plan and take out another feature to make sure they could finish successfully.

**Collaborative Learning:**

This week we were able to discuss and delve into the significance of project closure, emphasizing its major role in ensuring the completion and success of any project. We discussed the importance of formally documenting the project's achievements, lessons learned, and any remaining tasks to ensure a smooth transition to subsequent phases or projects. We also discussed the need for comprehensive stakeholder communication to obtain feedback and closure approval, to facilitate the acknowledgement of project completion. Additionally, we explored strategies for conducting post-implementation reviews to assess project performance and identify areas for improvement in future endeavors. We also acknowledged the necessity of closure activities in cultivating accountability, knowledge transfer and organizational learning.

**Further Research/Readings:**

On additional reading, I could find out that project closure is more than just finishing tasks. Evaluating project goals versus results helps understand what worked well and what needs improvement. Also, storing project documents like contracts and reports is important for future use and legal reasons. Project closure also frees up resources like people and equipment for new projects. It's important to consider how people feel about ending the project, both the team and those involved. This smooths the transition and helps keep relationships positive for future work together. Finally, celebrating successes and recognizing the team's contribution during closure can boost morale and create a culture of appreciation within the organization

**Adjustments to Goals:**

I plan to focus on understanding the details of documenting project achievements, lessons learned, and remaining tasks in a structured manner. Additionally, I intend to explore effective strategies for stakeholder communication and obtaining closure approval to ensure project completion is acknowledged comprehensively. Moreover, I aim to delve deeper into conducting post-implementation reviews to evaluate project performance and identify actionable insights for future projects. Additionally, I also plan to implement these steps during our project completion.