Cobb, C. G. (2015) – Chapter 7: Agile Estimation

🧩 Overview

In contrast to the more deterministic mindset of Chemuturi's methods, Cobb explores how estimation fits in **agile environments**, where adaptability and **team empowerment** are central. He emphasizes that **accuracy in agile means frequent recalibration**, not rigid prediction.

🔁 The Agile Estimation Mindset

- Accept that uncertainty is **part of the process**, not a flaw.
- Planning becomes **rolling-wave**: short-term plans are detailed; long-term plans are coarse and evolving
- The **goal isn't precision—it's transparency and responsiveness**.

📐 Core Estimation Techniques in Agile

- **Story Points**
  - Relative estimation unit that compares task complexities.
  - Emphasizes size and effort without tying directly to hours.
  - Allows teams to **focus on value delivery**, not micromanaging time.
- **Planning Poker**
  - Team-based estimation game where each member "bets" on effort using Fibonacci scales.
  - Designed to **encourage discussion** and mitigate bias from senior voices.
- **T-shirt Sizing**
  - For very early-stage estimation: tasks are sized as XS, S, M, L, XL.
  - Useful when granularity isn't needed yet.
- **Velocity**
  - The team's delivery rate (e.g., story points per sprint).
  - Helps predict future progress based on actual historical performance.

📊 Reporting Tools

- **Burn-down Charts**: Track how much work remains vs. time
- **Burn-up Charts**: Show progress toward goal.
- **Cumulative Flow Diagrams**: Visualize bottlenecks and work-in-progress.

🧠 Agile Estimation Insights

- Encourage **collaboration** between business and technical team members.
- Estimation should be fast, **non-intrusive**, and part of sprint rituals.
- Always estimate **as a team**, to enhance shared ownership.

🎯 Takeaway

Agile estimation is not about avoiding estimates—it's about **redefining them** to suit a dynamic, customer-centric, iterative environment.