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Learning Journal 3
Chapter 1-6 Focus on Chapter 3 & 4

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Course: SOEN 6841 – Software Project Management

Journal URL: https://github.com/prakashy003/SPM-Learning-Journal

Dates Rage of activities: 06/02/2025 – 20/02/2025

Date of the journal: 21/02/2025

Key Concepts Learned

This week, I studied Chapters 1 to 6 as part of my midterm preparation. While I had previously covered Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6, I had to completely study Chapters 3 and 4, which focus on effort estimation and risk management. Chapter 3 introduced different effort estimation techniques like function point analysis, wideband Delphi, and the COCOMO model, each providing a structured way to estimate project effort and cost. Chapter 4 emphasized risk management strategies, including risk identification, assessment, and mitigation. Risk assessment involves identifying potential project risks, analyzing their likelihood and impact, and prioritizing them based on severity. Risk management strategies include avoidance, mitigation, transference, and acceptance. I also revisited key topics from earlier chapters, including project lifecycle phases, project scope definition, configuration management, and project scheduling. Understanding these concepts collectively gave me a comprehensive perspective on software project management.

Application in Real Projects

Effort estimation plays a crucial role in project success, as underestimating effort can lead to delays and budget overruns. Learning about estimation techniques has given me insights into how companies approach project planning. Similarly, risk management is essential in ensuring that projects run smoothly by identifying and mitigating risks early in the lifecycle. Risk management also involves setting up contingency plans and response strategies to minimize the impact of unforeseen risks. I now see how iterative project development models allow for continuous risk assessment, making projects more adaptable to unforeseen challenges. Additionally, configuration management ensures that software changes are tracked systematically, preventing issues related to version control and regressions.

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Peer Interactions

I engaged in discussions with my peers on effort estimation challenges and debated the pros and cons of different risk mitigation strategies. We analyzed real-world project failures that stemmed from poor estimation and lack of risk assessment. Collaborating on case studies helped reinforce my understanding, as we collectively identified risks and proposed mitigation strategies. Additionally, I learned from a peer who shared their experience applying function point analysis in an internship project, which gave me a practical perspective on how these techniques are used in industry.

Challenges Faced

Balancing my midterm preparation while learning new concepts was a challenge, as I had to allocate extra time to fully grasp Chapters 3 and 4. Effort estimation techniques, particularly COCOMO and function point analysis, were difficult to understand at first due to their mathematical complexity. Risk assessment was also challenging, as it required analyzing various factors like probability and impact to determine mitigation strategies. Additionally, prioritizing risks and determining appropriate response strategies took considerable effort, but reviewing examples and discussing with peers helped clarify these concepts.

Personal Development Activities

To enhance my learning, I explored additional resources on effort estimation and risk management beyond the course material. I attended study group discussions and worked through practical exercises related to project estimation. Watching case studies on software project failures provided further insight into how poor planning and risk management can lead to project setbacks. Additionally, I practiced using estimation techniques on past project data and created a risk assessment plan for a hypothetical project to apply what I learned.

Goals for the Next Week

Next week, I plan to explore Chapters 7 and 8 and summarize key takeaways. I also aim to apply risk assessment techniques to a personal project to gain hands-on experience. Engaging in further discussions with peers on estimation methodologies will help refine my understanding and improve my ability to apply these concepts in real-world scenarios.