Learning Journal

**Student Name:** Priscila Aramouni

**Course:** SOEN 6841 - Software Project Management

**eBook Referenced**: Software Project Management: A Process-Driven Approach

(by Ashfaque Ahmed, CRC Press, 2012)

**Journal URL:** [Link](https://github.com/priscila-aramouni/concordia/blob/0e957d03b3940df6f85db5d4c7eb78c7f5dcaf8a/soen-6841-software-project-management/learning-journal.docx) to file on GitHub

**Week 1:** Jan 18 – Jan 24

**Chapters:** 1, 2, 3, 4

## Key Concepts Learned

### Chapter 1 - Introduction to Software Project Management

#### What is a project?

A project is a set of activities that consumes resources, budget, and time to produce stated goals.

#### What is a software project?

A software project is a specific type of project focused on developing or maintaining software products, applying both project management and software engineering principles to achieve goals efficiently.

#### What processes are involved in a software project?

* Evolving processes beyond a project: a continuous improvement process that runs above projects at the organizational level.
* Project management processes (project initiation, planning, control, monitoring, and closure): these are management processes.
* Software development life cycle (SDLC) processes (requirements, design, build, testing, maintenance, etc.): these are the development processes that build the application.

#### How are people, processes, tools, and technology integrated in a project?

People, processes, tools, and technology are integrated in a project by aligning organization-level processes, managing customer expectations, adapting project manager's style, collaborating with the project team, optimizing supplier management, and strategically selecting technology based on project requirements, skill availability, and productivity considerations.

#### What are the characteristics of a good project manager?

A good project manager should possess a blend of general project management skills and domain-specific expertise.

Also, a successful project manager should be creative. He must be able to understand it’s environment and how it should be planned and executed.

#### What are the subprocesses in project management processes?

Processes: initiation, planning, monitoring, controlling, and closing.

Subprocesses of initiation: Defining charter, scope, and objective.

#### What management metrics are measured in software projects?

In the case of software development projects, the management metrics are the productivity data for the projects. The software work product quality data are the technical metrics.

### Chapter 2 - Project Initiation Management

#### How is a project initiated?

Project initiation most often happens with a kick off meeting involving the project manager and the stakeholders. They define the project charter, project scope, and project objectives. A preliminary effort and cost estimate is chalked out. A preliminary sketch for the project schedule is also made so that a tentative duration for the project can be established.

#### What is a project charter?

Project charter is made by the top management of the organization for starting a software project. Project charter basically defines the purpose for starting the project.

#### What is project scope?

A detailed project scope is developed to define boundaries of the project. The scope will include what functionalities are needed in the software product to be developed. It will also define level of quality needed in the software product.

#### What are project objectives?

The project should have a set of well-defined objectives that must be met. If clear project objectives are set at the project initiation, it would help the team understand the importance of the project and will help them do their best to achieve the goals.

#### What project activities are performed during project initiation?

* Estimate Initial Project Size
* Estimate Initial Project Effort and Costs
* Estimate Initial Project Schedule
* Create Initial Project Plan
* Feasibility Study
* Quality Planning

### Chapter 3 – Software Project Effort and Cost Estimation

#### How is an effort estimate for a project made?

Effort estimates involve careful planning to optimize high-cost human resources' time and allow service providers to bill customers accurately for the actual effort put into projects. It is used to assemble the project team based on required skills and budget constraints.

What are the different effort estimation techniques.

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#### How is a cost estimate for a project made?

A cost estimate for a project involves converting the effort estimate into man-months, applying a standard man-month rate, and accounting for additional costs (expenses for hardware, management costs, software tool acquisition costs, training costs…)

Salaries of software professionals are a major cost driver, and project managers must ensure staff productivity for a favorable return on salary expenses. Salary variations and differences in productivity levels among professionals complicate cost calculations.

#### What are the different cost estimation techniques?

* Cost Factor Analysis
* Activity-Based Cost Estimation

#### How is a schedule estimate for a project made?

The schedule duration is determined as the difference between the project start date and end date.

Effort and schedule are not equal in terms of time, especially in scenarios with parallel processes, which is why effort must be calculated before the schedule.

#### How is a resource estimate for a project made?

A resource estimate is made by first obtaining a list of tasks, identifying required skills and experience for each task, and matching them with available resources.

The amount of work for each task is calculated based on the organization's productivity factor and time duration. The number of resources required is determined by dividing the volume of work by the productivity and time duration for task completion.

### Chapter 4 – Risk Management

#### What is a risk on a project?

A risk on a project refers to unforeseen or unplanned events that have the potential to badly impact components such as budget, time, resources, quality, and technology.

Risks can be categorized as external or internal, where internal risks arise from aspects dealt with by the project team, while external risks are influenced by environmental factors beyond the project's control.

#### What kinds of risks exist for a project?

* Quality Constraints
* Resource Unavailability
* Disinterest
* Attrition
* Scope Creep
* Cost Constraints
* Bad Negotiation
* Unrealistic Estimate
* Human Error
* Poor Management

The above can be divided into the following categories:

* Budget
* Time/Schedule
* Resource
* Quality
* Technology

#### What kind of impact may risk have on a project?

Risks are dynamic and can occur at any stage, such as schedule delays, budget overruns, rework requirements, or disruptions due to unexpected events like team members falling sick.

The impact of a risk is assessed considering both its severity and likelihood of occurrence. Risks with high probability and high impact are prioritized, while those with low impact and low probability are given lower priority.

#### What strategy is needed to deal with risks?

Project managers need to formulate mitigation strategies for manageable risks. However, for unmanageable risks, external assistance is relied on, and strategies focus on addressing the consequences.

## Application in Real Projects

In my real-world experience as a full-stack developer within a SCRUM team, the project management concepts learned during this week's studies were regularly applied in our agile workflow. Despite not being a project manager myself, the team collaborated closely to integrate these concepts. We held the following meetings during our iterations:

- **Program Increment Planning:** Deadlines and objectives are reviewed, and effort is estimated by voting on tickets and checking the team’s capacity to handle them.

- **Daily Stand-up:** Team members share any roadblocks encountered, what they did, and what they will be doing. This ensured daily synchronization and progress tracking.

- **Backlog Refinement:** Backlog is reviewed to make sure it contains the appropriate prioritized items, making sure the team is still on track for delivery.

- **Sprint Review and Retrospective:** “Thorns (negative outcomes) and roses (positive outcomes)” are discussed, risks are identified, and the appropriate action items are created for mitigation.

Integrating these concepts helps organize the workflow and somewhat document the process. Though it is beneficial, it requires time away from development and can sometimes be tedious to maintain.

## Peer Interactions

Teams have been assigned this week. We’ve created a WhatsApp group to get to know each other and familiarize ourselves with the topic of “Community Volunteer Coordination Platform”.

## Challenges Faced

This week’s learning journal and assignment took me about 10 hours in total.

Next week I will attempt to timebox to finish things more quickly.

## Personal Development Activities

A dedicated GitHub repository was established to serve as a central hub for the material related to this course. This repository will serve as a valuable resource, facilitating access to course material and collaborative efforts.

## Goals for the Next Week

* Have a solid understanding of the assigned project topic and understand how the material being learned applies to it.
* Finish the journal and assignments more quickly.
* Ask the professor if there is a more efficient way to be filling out the journal.