Learning Journal

Student Name: Tania Sanjid

Course: Software Project Management [SOEN 6841]

Journal URL: https://github.com/taniasanjid/SOEN-6841-SPM.git

Week 2: Jan 28 – Feb 3

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Key Concepts Learned: This week's learning was about the important process of effort and cost estimation in software project management, covering multiple software methodologies as well as development models. In Chapter 3, the items covered were Function Point Analysis (FPA) for initial estimates and an in-depth look at the Constructive Cost Model (COCOMO) for systematic project prediction. Terms such as "effort adjustment factor" and "scale drivers" became new vocabulary in this field that is crucial in COCOMO estimation. Estimation approaches in Agile are different from the Waterfall model; the Agile approach emphasizes an iterative nature while scheduling and costing.

Application in Real Projects: Using these ideas for figuring out time and cost in actual projects can make planning budgets and organizing resources better. However, it can be tricky to fit these ideas to the specific needs of a project or how a company works. Still, these methods can help lower risks and make projects run smoother.

Peer Interactions: Insightful peer discussions in our group discussion indicated that theoretical estimation models needed to be considered with practical experience. We shared some experiences and they approached us with ways we would best use these scenarios on our various projects, thus enhancing understanding about the same.

Challenges Faced: It was difficult to understand how projects using Agile, could be estimated so vaguely, in sharp contrast with a more sequential approach of the Waterfall model. For a better understanding, I need more references on these methodologies.

Personal Development Activities: To reinforce my course experience, I watched some tutorials on Agile and Waterfall that concentrated on estimating efforts within flexible project setups.

Goals for the Next Week: Next week's target is to delve into COCOMO II further and how it suits various types and sizes of projects. Additionally, I will assess software tools built for project estimation to determine their practicability and effectiveness.

Reflections on Case Study/Coursework: The results of a feasibility study about project estimation showed that wrong predictions can be disastrous while reiterating the inclusion of risk analysis in estimates. The learning gained from this theory assisted me in becoming even more convinced about the necessity for contingency planning.

Collaborative Learning: Among various collaborative exercises held this week, simulations of computing cost estimations via COCOMO were priceless as they acknowledged that estimating software effort is a very collaborative process and emphasized how crucial peer reviews are in improving estimates.

Further Research/Readings: I went through some other materials on advanced estimation techniques and the history of the COCOMO project, which added to my awareness of its flexibility and currency amidst today’s assorted software project landscapes.

Adjustments to Goals: Looking back at what I planned to learn last week, I've got a good start on how to use tools for making project estimates, but I'll need more time to get to know all their different parts. This has helped me decide what to focus on learning next week.