

## Software Engineering Project Management - Reflection

<https://tbrays.github.io/e-Portfolio/>

<https://github.com/tbrays/e-Portfolio/tree/Software-Engineering-Project-Management--ePortfolio>

The Software Engineering Project Management module covers the principles and practices of managing software engineering projects, including planning, estimation, risk, development methodologies, user experience and quality assurance. This reflection follows the What, So What, What Now format suggested by Rolfe et al. (2001).

### **What?**

My initial reaction to this module was negative. I was apprehensive about group work and with only four students enrolled, I was unsure how it would work. After the first lecture, all four of us were placed in a single group. I was assigned to Group One with Todd, Ben, and Karl. Todd initiated contact and arranged the first meeting. Todd, Ben, Karl and I completed the group contract.

The first seminar was promising. The tutor provided a strong introduction, spoke from experience and answered questions confidently. This gave the impression that the module might be more engaging than expected. I also began reading *The Mythical Man-Month* (Brooks, 1995), which helped shift my thinking about project management.

The group met twice a week and began examining project methodologies. One member had daily experience with Agile, and given the evolving scenario, we agreed to adopt an Agile approach.

As with earlier modules, some tasks were poorly written or outdated. Unit 2 instructed us to read an unspecified section of a 2020 Behaviour Driven Development source. The reading list provided no matching title. Unit 5 asked for an article by Anton and Nuciu (2020) without including the title, again making it difficult to locate. Unit 4 reused the same task wording across two sections, increasing confusion.

I found the second discussion forum topic interesting. It linked psychology with user interface design, a subject I enjoy.

During the second half of the project, I focused on the presentation task to ensure I could ask questions if needed. The brief was inconsistent, it said to continue from Unit 6 and assume some units were already manufactured, while the case study stated that Synful had chosen a different specification and that complaints arrived within days. Based on our plan, we would not have entered production at that stage, so the instructions were difficult to reconcile. Despite this, I completed the task and enjoyed building the PowerPoint. Recording the voice-over was challenging but gave me a reason to learn OBS and DaVinci Resolve, which I had been meaning to explore.

### **So What?**

This module challenged some of my assumptions. I began with a dislike for project management and group work. However, after engaging with the reading and seminars, I saw that these areas have practical value. The Mythical Man-Month was particularly influential in helping me understand the real-world complexity of estimating and managing software projects. Hearing the tutor share personal experience during the seminar also gave credibility to the content.

Working in a small team with regular meetings went better than expected. Our use of Agile helped us stay on track and adapt to changing requirements. Having a team member with practical Agile experience made a noticeable difference. Kennedy et al. (2024) argue that agile practices support team wellbeing and contribute to successful project delivery.

Although some learning materials lacked clarity or up to date references, the tutor's availability and clear responses helped address issues quickly and kept the module on track.

Despite those frustrations, I enjoyed the second discussion forum as it allowed me to explore an area, I find particularly interesting, the connection between psychology and interface design. This focus reinforced ideas from Hassenzahl (2005), who argues that user satisfaction often stems from emotional engagement rather than functional usability alone. It also prompted me to consider how user experience principles can be integrated into project planning to improve outcomes.

Producing the video presentation was uncomfortable at first, but it gave me a reason to learn new tools. Working with OBS and Resolve helped build my confidence in a new area of digital media. This task became an unexpected positive outcome of the module. Applying these tools helped me follow effective multimedia principles. Mayer (2021) argues that well-structured visuals combined with clear narration support audience understanding by reducing cognitive load and highlighting key information.

This experience reinforced how easily time management can collapse when work pressure increases. I neglected formative tasks while focusing on the group project and it took a lot of effort to recover once the assignment was complete.

### **What Now?**

In future modules, I will take a more proactive approach to time management by setting a clear plan that balances group work with individual tasks and reviewing progress regularly. I will raise any unclear or missing materials early, so I can stay focused and make better use of my time. This approach will help me stay on track and work more efficiently across all areas of study.

I plan to continue using OBS and Resolve to build presentation skills, as I can see this being useful for future assignments or professional work. Although I was reluctant at first, the task pushed me to learn tools that I now feel comfortable using.

I will also keep an open mind when approaching topics I am not drawn to. This module showed that even areas I usually avoid can contain useful, practical knowledge if I engage properly. I will apply this mindset to other units that involve business related content.

Finally, I will continue to explore how psychological insights can improve interface design. This is an area I enjoy and may focus on more in future projects. The discussion forum showed that technical work can benefit from human centred thinking, and I intend to apply that in my future development work.

## References

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