SOEN 6841 – SOFTWARE PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Name: Joshua ONYEMA, *40293065*	*Date of the Journal:* 18th February, 2025
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Key Concepts Learned

This week, I explored Configuration Management and Project Planning, two essential aspects of Software Project Management. I learned about project planning artifacts, Agile models, the Critical Path Method (CPM) for software projects, Goldratt's Critical Chain Method, communication management, supplier management plans, and resource allocation.

A key takeaway was understanding the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and different approaches to project planning, such as bottom-up and top-down planning. WBS helps break down a project into smaller, manageable parts, making it easier to allocate resources and monitor progress. I also gained insights into configuration management techniques, which ensure that software systems remain consistent and controlled through versioning, change tracking, and documentation.

I also explored how CPM and Goldratt's Critical Chain approach help identify dependencies and manage resources efficiently. These methods are crucial for ensuring projects are completed on time while balancing constraints such as budget, personnel, and deadlines.

Application in Real Projects

My previous experience with SUDOEMR and Open-Source Healthcare projects on GitHub gave me firsthand exposure to version control systems, which are a fundamental part of configuration management. Working with GitHub and other version control tools helped me understand change management, baseline tracking, and issue resolution processes, which are necessary to maintain consistency in large-scale software projects.

I now understand the importance of resource allocation and scheduling in project planning. Without proper planning, projects can suffer from delays, resource mismanagement, and scope creep. By applying techniques such as bottom-up and top-down planning, project managers can ensure that tasks are well-structured and dependencies between activities are efficiently managed.

Peer Interactions

This week, I worked with my team of four on our Financial Literacy App project, where we applied project planning principles. Through this collaboration, I gained insights into breaking down tasks into smaller components using WBS, allocating resources effectively, and managing dependencies. We also discussed different Agile models and how iterative planning can be useful in managing uncertainties during the project lifecycle.

Our discussions helped me see how communication management plays a vital role in project success. We assigned responsibilities based on expertise, ensuring that each team member had a clear role. This process mirrored real-world project execution, where planning and teamwork are crucial to meeting project goals.

Challenges Faced

The main challenge I faced this week was understanding how different planning methods (top-down vs. bottom-up) are applied in various scenarios. It was difficult to determine which approach would be most effective for specific types of software projects. Additionally, the Critical Path Method (CPM) was complex due to the need to identify dependencies and determine which tasks were critical to the project's timeline.

Another challenge was grasping configuration management in large-scale projects, particularly how Change Control Boards (CCBs) function in approving or rejecting changes. Since configuration management requires strict control over software versions and updates, ensuring proper baseline tracking and rollback mechanisms was something I needed to study further.
To overcome these challenges, I revisited the textbook and lecture slides, which helped clarify the differences between planning techniques and the role of configuration management in risk mitigation. I also discussed these topics with my peers, which provided additional insights into how these principles are applied in professional environments.

Personal Development Activities
I read the Software Project Management textbook and studied lecture slides to deepen my understanding of Configuration Management and Project Planning. These resources helped reinforce key concepts such as resource allocation, project scheduling, and risk mitigation strategies. Additionally, I explored case studies on Agile planning methods to understand how modern software teams implement iterative planning and manage changing requirements. I also reviewed examples of configuration management in DevOps environments, particularly how Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) pipelines incorporate version control, testing, and deployment strategies. By actively engaging with these materials, I improved my ability to differentiate between various planning methods and apply them in real-world scenarios.

Goals for the Next Week
Next week, I plan on prepping for exam 1 while also studying Chapters 7 and 8, which cover Project Monitoring & Control and Project Closure. Since these topics are crucial for understanding how projects are successfully executed and completed, I plan to focus on Learning about project tracking methods such as Earned Value Management (EVM), Understanding key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring project progress, Exploring best practices for closing a project efficiently, including documentation and stakeholder communication, By reviewing these topics in advance, I aim to strengthen my understanding of how projects are monitored and finalised in real-world software development environments.