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Journal Entry Week 3

Engaging with users and/or stakeholders is a crucial part of the job duties for a product owner. While each and team member should feel comfortable enough to take the responsibility of asking questions and communicating openly with all project entities, it is necessary for the product owner to keep communication open, and update clients with any new breaking changes, completions, blockers and so on, and also to accept feedback and any recommendations or new features from the client(s) into consideration as well. The ability to engage, listen, understanding the needs of your client well enough to exceed their expectations and sometimes even interpret what it is the client is wanting into an agile plan is one of the most useful tools a product owner possesses.

User stories, when done correctly, and filled out, are extremely beneficial to everyone in every department that collaborates on the project. They are most useful to those on the Scrum team but can be used to answer questions about other connected projects as well. Currently, I am on the Scrum team at SNHU for a project that involves us migrating from physical servers to cloud based servers for all of the universities data. This is a LENGTHY and complicated project as it involves moving all of our data from hundreds of servers and databases into new ones. Which is then complicated more by changing names to the new server, database, table, and column names. We also have roughly 8,000 reports we have created for the university, used by advisers, human resources, sustainability, financial aid, and every other department. The scrum team I am on is responsible for redeveloping the stored procedures and reports for the enterprise semantic layer. When my team, several years ago, before I started, was changing to the agile method, the product owner and scrum master told the project team to just put something in the user stories, and not to worry if they were incomplete. Thus, I spent my first three months working here, updating user stories with the information needed for them to actually be useful. This has taught me how valuable user stories are, especially considering the job ahead for the scrum team without them.

The interviews and meetings were a critical part of understanding what needed to be put into the user stories. I did struggle at first, as I was doing as I always do, and overcomplicating it. I kept wanting to link all of the users as one, due to each item the user mentioned, and my connecting it to a filter. I did this so much that I even reached out to my scrum master and met with her and talked it through. I found that just by engaging in back-and-forth conversation with her, I was able to answer all of my own questions. That is why it is SO important to attend and engage in these interviews and meetings.