Agile Certified Practitioner (ACP) Exam Prep
Chapter 10 - Continuous Improvement

Workbook
# Continuous Improvement

## Domain Tasks

1. Tailor & adapt the project process by periodically reviewing & integrating team practices, organizational culture, & delivery goals in order to ensure team effectiveness within established organizational guidelines & norms.

2. Improve team processes by conducting frequent retrospectives & improvement experiments in order to continually enhance the effectiveness of the team, project, & organization.

3. Seek feedback on the product by incremental delivery & frequent demonstrations in order to improve the value of the product.

4. Create an environment of continued learning by providing opportunities for people to develop their skills in order to develop a more productive team of generalizing specialists.

5. Challenge existing process elements by performing a value stream analysis & removing waste in order to increase individual efficiency & team effectiveness.

6. Create systemic improvements by disseminating knowledge & practices across projects & organizational boundaries in order to avoid re-occurrence of identified problems & improve the effectiveness of the organization as a whole.
Continuous Improvement

Retrospectives Are Key

- Improved productivity
- Improved capability
- Improved quality
- Improved capacity
Continuous Improvement
Retrospectives Steps

- Set the stage
  - Check-in
  - Focus on/focus off
  - ESVP – Participants anonymously associate themselves with an identity on slip of paper Explorer, Shopper, Vacationer, Prisoner
  - Working Agreements
- Gather data
- Generate insights
- Decide what to do
- Close the retrospective
  - Plus/delta – Franklin T
  - Helped, hindered, hypothesis
  - Return on time Invested
  - Appreciations
Continuous Improvement

Pre–Mortem

- Retrospective tool to solve problems BEFORE project is complete.
- Rules:
  - Set aside 2 hours of uninterrupted time.
  - All stakeholder MUST be present.
  - The Pre–Mortem must be a face–to–face meeting.
  - One person does nothing but take notes.
Continuous Improvement
Pre-Mortem Process

- Spend 1st hour listing every possible problem.
- Pick top 10 problems.
  - Focus on show-stoppers.
  - Pick problems likely to happen.
  - Discard problems you have no control over.
- Spend the second hour creating solutions.
  - Create a proactive solution for problems.
  - Define a backup plan.
Questions and Answers
Review Questions:

1. Which of the following is NOT a task found in the continuous area?
   A. Tailor and adapt the project process by periodically reviewing and integrating team practices, organizational culture, and delivery goals.
   B. Improve team processes by conducting frequent retrospectives and improvement experiments.
   C. Seek feedback on the product by incremental delivery and frequent demonstrations.
   D. Maintain a visible, monitored, and prioritized list of threats and issues in order to elevate accountability, encourage action, and track ownership.

2. Which of the following is NOT a step in the retrospective process?
   A. Set the stage
   B. Generate insights
   C. Close the retrospective
   D. Review the results

3. All of the following EXCEPT ______ attend the scrum retrospective?
   A. The product owner
   B. The scrum master
   C. The development team
   D. The customer

4. When using the ESVP exercise what does the S stand for?
   A. Skeptics
   B. Shoppers
   C. Scouts
   D. Sycophants

5. When using the ESVP exercise within a retrospective, which of the roles is eager to discover new ideas and insights and wants to learn everything they can about the iteration/release/project?
   A. Explorers
   B. Shoppers
   C. Vacationers
   D. Prisoners
6. Within the ESVP exercise, which of the roles will look over all the available information, and will be happy to go home with one useful new idea?
   A. Explorers
   B. Shoppers
   C. Vacationers
   D. Prisoners

7. When using the ESVP exercise, which of the defined roles are not interested in the work of the retrospective, but are happy to be away from the daily grind and may pay attention some of the time, but they are mostly just glad to be out of the office?
   A. Explorers
   B. Shoppers
   C. Vacationers
   D. Prisoners

8. Which of the following is NOT a rule for pre-mortems?
   A. The Pre-Mortem is 2 hours of uninterrupted time.
   B. All stakeholder MUST be present.
   C. The scrum master must lead the meeting.
   D. One person does nothing but take notes.

9. As a PMI member you have a responsibility to follow PMI's code of Conduct. It is critical that you know this code them emphasizes which of the following?
   A. Ethics, morality, honesty, and responsibility
   B. Respect, morality, honesty, and transparency
   C. Responsibility, transparency, ethics, morality
   D. Responsibility, honesty, respect, fairness

10. You are brought into the organization as a consultant to help the organization both implement Scrum and tailor it to the organization. What advice should you give this organization FIRST?
    A. It is critical that the organization tailors any agile methodology to how the business works.
    B. The organization should tailor the process in a pilot environment first.
    C. The organization should try Scrum based on the rules before attempting any customization.
    D. It is critical that the organization uses process tailoring as part of its adoption process.
11. You are called on to help your team conclude its retrospective. Which of the following are tools you likely might choose to use?
   A. ESVP, Planning Poker, Remember the Future, Triple Nickels
   B. Color Code Dots, Triple Nickels, Mad Sad Glad, Ben Franklin T
   C. Appreciations, Return on Time Invested, Ben Franklin Ts, Helped Hindered Hypothesis
   D. Team radar, Appreciations, Locate Strengths, Return on Time Invested

12. Which of the following is the BEST definition of an agile information exchange?
   A. A focused face-to-face communication tool to facilitate knowledge sharing.
   B. A tool designed to convey project information electronically.
   C. A communication tool designed to promote transparency.
   D. A tool designed to accurately resource utilization.

13. Each of the following is NOT a common practice considered part of continuous improvement?
   A. Paired programming
   B. Retrospectives
   C. Planning poker
   D. Daily stand-ups

14. Your team has just completed its sprint review and begun its retrospective. Which of the following represent the best order of steps?
   A. Set the stage, gather data, generate insights, decide what to do, and close the retrospective.
   B. Determine the goal, gather data, set the stage, generate insights, and close the retrospective.
   C. Gather data, set the goal, generate insights, decide what to do, and close the retrospective.
   D. Set the goal, generate insights, decide what to do, and close the retrospective.

15. You are acting as an Agile Coach and have been asked by your client when they should collect lessons learned. What is the BEST answer to this query?
   A. During the retrospective.
   B. During the sprint review.
   C. Throughout the project.
   D. Only when the project struggles.
Answer Key:

1. D  
LGd course manual p. 256 - As a domain for the PMI-ACP Exam, Continuous Improvement has six tasks that are organized in a single group. These tasks include: Tailor and adapt the project process by periodically reviewing and integrating team practices, organizational culture, and delivery goals in order to ensure team effectiveness within established organizational guidelines and norms. Improve team processes by conducting frequent retrospectives and improvement experiments in order to continually enhance the effectiveness of the team, project, and organization. Seek feedback on the product by incremental delivery and frequent demonstrations in order to improve the value of the product. Create an environment of continued learning by providing opportunities for people to develop their skills in order to develop a more productive team of generalizing specialists. Challenge existing process elements by performing a value stream analysis and removing waste in order to increase individual efficiency and team effectiveness. Create systemic improvements by disseminating knowledge and practices across projects and organizational boundaries in order to avoid re-occurrence of identified problems and improve the effectiveness of the organization as a whole.

2. D  
LGd course manual p. 257 - Every Retrospective uses the same basic four-step process. These steps include setting the stage, gathering data, generating insights, and closing the Retrospective.

3. A  
LGd course manual p. 257 - The Retrospective is attended by all the members of the Development Team plus the Scrum Master. The Product Owner does not attend the Retrospective to allow the team to talk openly and honestly about how the project is going. The Scrum Master attends primarily in the role as a facilitator and begins the meeting by checking in with each member of the development team.

4. B  
LGd course manual p. 258 - In the ESVP exercise each participant anonymously reports his or her attitude toward the retrospective as an Explorer, Shopper, Vacationer, or Prisoner (ESVP). The retrospective leader then collects the results and creates a histogram to show the data.
5. A
LGd course manual p. 258 - Within the ESVP exercise explorers are eager to
discover new ideas and insights. They want to learn everything they can about
the iteration/release/project.

6. B
LGd course manual p. 258 - Within the ESVP exercise shoppers will look over all
the available information, and will be happy to go home with one useful new idea.

7. C
LGd course manual p. 258 - Within the ESVP exercise Vacationers aren't
interested in the work of the retrospective, but are happy to be away from the
daily grind. They may pay attention some of the time, but they are mostly glad to
be out of the office.

8. C
LGd course course manual p. 259 - Pre-Mortems typically have just a few rule: The Pre-Mortem is 2 hours of uninterrupted time. All stakeholder MUST be present. The Pre-Mortem must be a face-to-face meeting. One person does nothing but take notes.

9. D
PMI's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct focuses on Responsibility,
Respect, Fairness, and Honesty.

10. C
LGd course manual p. 256 - A good rule with any new process or method is to
implement the basic process before attempting any customization. This allows
the team to understand how the basic process is supposed to work, learning its
specific ins and outs before attempting any customization.

11. C
LGd course manual p. 259 - The final step in the process is to close the
Retrospective. The facilitator has a number of engaging methods they can use
to summarize the outcomes of the Retrospective. Examples include: Plus / Delta
or Ben Franklin T;
Helped, Hindered, Hypothesis; Return on Time Invested; and Appreciations.
Each of these exercises is focused on getting the team to describe positive outcomes of the Retrospective.
12. A
LGd course manual p. 259 - Agile information exchanges facilitate knowledge sharing. They are face-to-face methods not focused any kind of resource optimization, but instead are focused on the exchange of information.

13. C
LGd course manual p. 256 - Many agile practices aid in continuous improvement. Some of which include ideas like paired programming, retrospectives, sprint reviews, other demonstrations, daily stand ups, team boards, and others.

14. A
LGd course manual p. 257 - Every Retrospective uses the same basic four-step process. These steps include setting the stage, gathering data, generating insights, and closing the Retrospective. What each step looks like in a practical sense is largely defined by the team.

15. C
LGd course manual p. 256 - Lessons learned represent a common term used by PMI. They represent those key lessons that often transcend a single project or phase. The team should constantly be looking for these keys whenever they occur as opportunities to improve.