# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep 93 - C170 Tips with Maria Schenk and Jessica Galterio - mix

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Welcome to the IT Audio Series. I'm Jessica Galterio and I've been a program mentor with WGU since 2015. Today I have with me Maria Schenk from the Data Management Data Analytics Group, who has been with WGU since 2013. Thank you for joining me today, Maria.

Thanks for having me. I'm happy to have a chance to be here.

Tell me a little bit about C170, Data Management Applications. What is this course about?

This course covers database design. Also students are exposed to the Structured Query Language, SQL, they learn how to write queries to create database objects, and also to retrieve data from databases.

Perfect, and what are the key resources that are used in this course?

This course uses by-book lessons. Those lessons include interactive activities and verbs. We also have a performance assessment in this course that gives students a chance to actually practice SQL with the real life type project that they complete, where they get to design and build a database.

That's such great practice too.

Yes, they get a lot of practice in this course.

Perfect. What are some common barriers that students run into in this course?

One of the main barriers that students run into is that they feel when they start the course that they need to memorize all of the SQL commands, and they really don't have to because of the nature of the objective assessments. But that's one thing where they get really overwhelmed feeling that they have to memorize everything. Another barrier that some students face is that they transfer in C175, which is the foundation's course that comes before this course.

When they do that, they sometimes feel overwhelmed when they come into the course.

Oh, okay. That's interesting. For students that are in that situation, what would you recommend to them?

Sometimes it's best for them to go back into their degree plan, go into the C175 course and review a little bit of the content, not the whole content, but the lessons that cover database design and intro to the database concepts. It's just a couple of lessons, but often that gives them the feeling that, I'm ready for this, and they just feel fine after that. But that's not always necessary because some students that do transfer in C170, they feel okay with the knowledge that they come in with.

C170 does include lessons that cover those concepts that refresh the students memory to some of those concepts. It's not absolutely necessary, but if a student is feeling really overwhelmed, sometimes that's the best thing to get them to filling. You know what? I'm ready for this.

That's such great advice. I do think that sometimes you do have to take a step or two backwards to really move forward in a more meaningful way.

Yes, exactly. That's sometimes just the best thing for this course. Another barrier that some students run into in this course is that they feel unsure about starting the project and just some apprehension with it. It's just really better to just jump in and start doing it. It goes very well after that. But sometimes there's a little hesitant at the beginning.

Definitely. Well, that's human nature. It can be hard to get started on things that we think are going to be hard. Do you recommend that students work through all the content and take the objective assessment first?

Students do it in both ways in this course. A lot of students want to complete the 58 questions and multiple choice away. They feel more comfortable with that, and that's completely fine. Other students feel that working through the project will help them. It does in many cases help because the things that you do on the performance assessment also come up as questions on the multiple choice assessments. You can really do it either way, and I see students successfully do it in either way every day. It depends on just how student feels about it.

It does seem that the best way is to go through the lessons first, and all the interactive exercises, and labs within the lessons before starting either going to complete the performance assessment or to take the pre-assessment and then fill in any weaknesses, or gaps, and then take the objective assessment.

Perfect. Give us your top tips for each exam, for the objective assessment, and then again for the performance assessment. Is there anything in particular that students should be looking out for?

Yes. With the 58 question objective assessment, very important to go through the lessons and do the exercises in lab, and take the pre-assessment. Some students report that the pre-assessment is slightly less difficult than the objective assessment. So it's a good idea to have a buffer when you take and pass the pre-assessment. Aiming for maybe a score of 75 percent. On the performance assessment,

it's a good idea to have gone through the lessons again with that, but to also read the normalization case study. It's a short case study that walks through the normalization process and moving a data set from unnormalized to first normal form, first normal form to second, and then second to third normal form. This is the first piece of the performance assessment. When students go through that normalization case study, it's very helpful for getting off on

the right foot with part A of the performance assessment. That document is found in the course announcements, course tips. It's a recommendation to go through that before starting the performance assessment. Another thing to keep in mind when completing the performance assessment, many students will use SQL Fiddle to check their code. They have to do that for the project. SQL Fiddle is a tool that is stateless.

It's important to remember that the program doesn't remember anything from one execution to the next. It's important to put your statements in the window one after the other. For example, if you have a customer table, and in that table you have a customer ID. Then you want to create a second table that has a foreign key linking back to the customer ID in the customer table, you have to have the code for the customer table placed first in the window. Otherwise, you'll get a foreign key error,

cannot create the foreign key, and that's a very common problem students face. Something to look out for when you're working on Part B of the project where you're creating the code.

I think that's great advice. I asked that foreign key error.

Yes, comes up quite a bit.

But that's a great tip. Thank you. What would you say excites you about this course the most? What can students take from this course and put into their real life in their everyday IT?

This course is extremely exciting in that students come out of this course knowing how to code SQL, and that is a very valuable skill in the IT world. They get a lot of hands-on learning in multiple ways through the course lessons, but also in completing the project. They really come out of this with another tool that they have in their tool belt. This is a skill that many employers are looking for. I would say that, that's really exciting.

Students that come out of this course with this skill are poised to do jobs where they're designing databases, maybe a database architect. There also have skills that are important in the data analytics field. Literally, every person in IT has to have an understanding of databases because they're so valuable to an organization. This is really just a very exciting course.

Wow, absolutely. Thank you so much for all of your guidance today. I'm excited about this course now. I really appreciate it and thank you to our listeners. Be sure to check out our other episodes of the IT Audio Series.

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