# Transcript: D194 Tips with Erik Anderson and Jessica Galterio

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Speaker # 1: Jessica Galterio

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Speaker # 2: Erik Anderson

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Jessica

Welcome to the IT Audio Series. I'm Jessica Galterio and I've been with WGU since 2015. Today I have with me Erik Anderson, Who has been with WGU since 2013. Thank you for joining me today, Erik.

Erik

Thank you, Jessica. It's pleasure to be here.

Jessica

Today We are going to talk about D194. Erik is a course instructor for this course. Erik, why don't you tell me a little bit about this course? What's the goal for this course?

Erik

Sure. D194 is called IT Leadership Foundations. This is an introductory course. It's mainly for business students or IT students in the business realm. This should be one of the first ones the take as far as business goes. This course, what We're looking at is, how do leaders, formal or informal, conduct themselves? How do they read other people? How do they run meetings? What are the skills or characteristics they exhibit?

That's the main purpose of this course. As an IT student, maybe you're not looking at leadership for yourself, but you will be working with other leaders, so understanding why they're doing what they're doing or when they are conducting meeting, the things they're trying to accomplish will help you in your IT role.

Jessica

That's all very interesting. What type of assessment does this course have?

Erik

This course has a performance assessment, but two tasks to it. Both tasks are very different from one another. You don't need to do task 1 and then task 2, you can do them in either order. The assessments themselves, as far as format, there's no given format. We have students Who have turned in text documents or business memos or APA format. We've even had students turn in PowerPoint presentations.

I see evaluators in evaluation management like, what do you prefer? What do you see? They like all of it. They feel as pretty refreshing that they're grading a writing assignment and they're getting it in a creative format, which is absolutely fine with me.

Jessica

That's nice. That's really cool. What are some common barriers that students run into with this course?

Erik

The first task, you're taking a Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. This is run by the company, Gallup that runs Gallup polls. The students will take that and they get the top five strengths that they have as a person. The first task as you take that reflect upon it in a task, what did you learn about yourself or the things you already knew or things you didn't know that maybe you recognize now after taking this and seeing your strengths.

That it has students create a smart goal on developing a leadership skill because of what they learned in the StrengthsFinder assessment. One of the biggest things I see as far as students getting their first task kickback them is, not properly writing a smart goal or writing a smart goal that's not on a leadership skill. They think the big thing is the smart goals. It's not something that has been going through grade school and high school and things like that, that's been really covered. This might be the first time they've seen smart goals and it does throw students off. We have videos, We have text, We have all kind of offerings, here's how you write smart goals, but that seems to be the biggest barrier for the first task.

Jessica

Interesting. That is definitely a new concept, but I'm glad that there are resources that explain that acronym and how students can apply that and write smart goals. That's really great.

Erik

I run a cohort on Mondays that I walk students through one week I do task 1, the other week I do task 2 and I walk them through, here's a smart goal, here's an example, here's what you do with each of the sections. That seems to help a lot of students as far as clearing up what a smart goal is or how it's formatted.

Jessica

That's sound super helpful. Now if you can, give me your top tips for the two tasks.

Erik

The first task, the big thing is be honest. When you're taking this Gallup's StrengthsFinder test, there's no right or wrong answers. This is just Who you are, so be honest with it. All point of this course is to get better as a person, as an employee, as a potential manager, as someone Who's helping a team do better or turn things around. Be honest with it, learn what your actual strengths are. Then when you do reflect on it, it's easier to write about if you're honest with yourself like, I know there's things here that I didn't recognize till I saw my strength and now looking back over it these are characteristics that I do good or bad.

Jessica

Interesting.

Erik

These are characteristics I do. Be honest. That's one of the big things is. Don't try to give the answers you think someone else may want to see or hear because there's no wrong or right answer for your strengths. The smart goal, try to make it something you would actually do. You don't have to do it. Some students come and ask, "Well, how do I prove that I did my smart goal or completed them." Take the opportunity to do something good for yourself outside of school, outside of work. Here's some way to better yourself. You have an opportunity in a structured manner to develop yourself, to make yourself better. I think that's a great opportunity of this course and I see students use that as a springboard to better themselves. That's task 1 as far as some tips for that one. Task 2, the big thing is when you're watching the video, when you're reading email and forming your response, there's a lot of material in the textbook. Try to use keywords, try to use concepts from the textbook in here.

I see students look at the situations, talk about the people. I see them searching for words and being very verbose about what they're seeing. In Chapter 3, there's a word for that. Well you just spent three sentences describing, there's a word for that. It's not like either of these tasks have a word count, just need be two pages, 300 words training. Can you get across your point of view or what you're trying to say.

There is no limitation on words or no requirement for words. Learn some language, learn some of the lingo and then when you're in meetings and talking to people and they're bringing the stuff up, you've read it, you've wrote about it, you've thought about it. This is all for your benefit to make you a better person.

Jessica

It probably will help students come from a place of power too, when you can understand where maybe your leaders are coming from, will help you navigate the message that you want to get across or the goals that you have.

Erik

Absolutely.

Jessica

That's great. Now, what excites you about this course?

What I really like about this course, I said this before is there's no right or wrong answers. For the first task you learned your top five strengths. You write about here's a personal goal I want to accomplish to help me develop a leadership skill. There's no wrong answer here. As long as you justify what you're saying, you're right and you're going to be marked right and you're going to pass that task. The second task, again, there's no wrong or right answers. There's a bunch of people in a meeting. Part of the questions is like, Who's the informal leader here? Who's the formal leader? What traits do you see in an exhibit? There's so much that you can pull from that, that there's no right or wrong answers as long as you're justifying what you're saying. This is the informal leader, this is why. You're right. There's no preset right or wrong answers for this. I really like that there's a lot of freedom here for the students to show their point of view, what they're seeing, what past experience they have, they can bring into this and really explore that in these tasks.

Jessica

That is really cool. I feel like it's an interesting opportunity that WGU students might not have otherwise with our competency-based education, there are right or wrong answers. Here's an opportunity to get the credit you want and the task completed and stretch the boundaries a little bit.

Erik

Absolutely.

Jessica

That's great. Well, Erik, thank you so much for all this valuable advice. I know that it will help a lot of students out there.

Erik

I'm glad to be here or any help with this course.

Jessica

Great. Thank you all for listening to the IT Audio Series.

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