# Transcript: IT Pod - EP 168 - CCNA 3 - Jeff Ferdinand and Jessica Galterio - mixdown

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Speaker # 1: Jessica Galterio

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Speaker # 2: Jeff Ferdinand

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Jessica

Welcome back 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 Jeff Ferdinand, from the Cisco team, who has been with WGU since 2013. Today we're going to wrap up our CCNA mini series with an episode specifically about how to review for the exam for CCNA.

Jessica

Jeff, thank you for joining me again today.

Jeff

Thank you for having me.

Jessica

We're so happy to have you. This is a tough exam and this is something a lot of students need help with. How would you recommend that they review once they're ready to really prepare for the exam?

Jeff

Once they've worked through all the materials, there are a few different steps for review. We have a two-week review guide that we recommend where we basically put the items that we know are a focus on the exam based off the Cisco topic guide.

Items that we know just or a larger portion of it, or items that people tend to have more challenge with internalizing. That is a good place to start because that'll give them a two-week reference point and items to make sure that they're solid on.

Jessica

Yeah.

Jeff

The other for review is, that topic guide is very important and they should have been utilizing that as they move through. They want to utilize that to study too and just in general. But for review, it's excellent because it gives a person the chance to basically check things off to take that and sit down with it even halfway through and then definitely at the end a few days before sitting for the exam, take that topic guide, run through the line items and check it off. Read each item if you're comfortable with it, answer the question or if it says describe, you can describe it, if it says configure and verify, you know how to configure and verify. If you can do that, you check it. If you hesitate for any reason, you don't check it. Then for each one of those that you didn't check, you go back and do review on. But that brings everything to mind when you work through it that way and be very quick way to do so. We do have documents that will help you in the student folder in regards to checking that. We also, for that topic guide recommend, because as you study you're taking things in constantly. One of the things that we can do to break that up is to see where you're at and for you to see how you've put everything together to see patterns and just to see how things interrelate is delay things out. A guided way to do that is to take that topic guide, those six topics. Write the first topic down, and then take some time. This is more of a time intensive exercise. Write down what you know and have associated with that. Lay it out, do that for each of the six topics and then compare that to the Cisco topic guide, and you're looking for anything missing or out of place. But that gives student a chance to see the patterns, see the overall information, to lay things out instead of taking things in, and to provide themselves a very personalized review guide at that point. That probably really helps them figure out what they need to focus on too like you said.

Jessica

Because if you can't quickly get everything right in those different topics, then there are going to be some ones that need your focus.

Jeff

Yes. That more or less rocks the boat, because instead of what a person has been doing is reading, watching videos, and perhaps doing some little labs, perhaps doing the Packet Tracer. But a lot of it is intake, and this allows us to lay things out, see where we're at, see what we know and how we've attached things to see the patterns, to see how things interrelate. Like I said, we give that very personalized review guide.

Jessica

That's a great jumping point for having a meeting with you or the other course instructors in the group.

Jeff

I've gone through this, I know exactly what I need help with. It is, because at that point, you've gone through this, you come to us with that, you're going to get a lot more focused information. Even if you drop a note, you set up a call and you say, "Hey, I've gone through this and I'm just apparently weaker in these areas so I need more review on these areas," then we can point you to that. We can give you extra information. We can give you extra resources that are more focused specifically to what you're trying to review. Instead of having to go in and try and get it generalized, we can give you some more specifics. Also, just a quick heads up. We do have some documents that will match those topics to the relevant sections in the WGU course material, and also the line items to the relevant sections in the WGU course material so that it will save you a lot of time in looking.

Jessica

Perfect. But say if you touch base with us, we can also give you some specific resources to your situation and what you're trying to review. You can say heads up like IPv6, it's just not clicking, what's going on? What am I missing?

Jeff

Or quality of service, those types.

Jessica

I love that, that's great. Do you have some general tips for when students are actually taking the exam?

Jeff

Yes. Whiteboard use. We've mentioned that previously. Whiteboard is excellent. You're subnetting chart, put those down, be prepared for that. When you're actually taking the exam, take a deep breath, relax. Cisco has a couple of items that you want to be aware of. One, they're very specific and very detailed. You need to be detail-oriented on the questions and the answers because you can read a question, if you miss a key word, you'll answer that question based on what you read.

Jessica

[inaudible 00:05:55] Yes.

Jeff

It'll make sense and you'll feel good about it because you answered correctly based on what you read, but not correctly based on what was written. You want to make sure that you're detailed. You also need to be aware that Cisco sometimes gets layered. What I mean by that is that, you will need to know information that they want specifically stated in the question.

Jessica

Wow.

Jeff

For example, subnetting. Subnetting comes into a lot of questions and it's not that you're going to be specifically asked on what is subnetting? How do I do this subnetting? You need to know subnetting to answer this question and when I say do subnetting first, then do this. Then you can say, what's the answer here? You have to be aware that, hey, I have to incorporate this information to actually get the correct answer.

Jessica

Right.

Jeff

That's what I mean by layered. The other thing is there is no going back and that's a very important one to our group. That's a tough one. Repeat that. There is no going back on Cisco exams. Once you submit a question, you are done with it.

Jessica

Is there a way to bookmark them on the exam or when you see the question that is when you answer it?

Jeff

That is when you answer it.

Jessica

Got it.

Jeff

Once you submit it, it's gone, you're done with it. Like with a lot of other exams where you can bookmark it, you can come back to it later. Once you submit your question, you're moving on. You submit it, let it go on and move on to the next, and that's something that keep in mind because it's very different than a lot of other exams. Now that's where the whiteboard comes in. Because if you've put material down on that and that can help you, and as you're going through the exam or something strikes a note and you're like, I wanted to write that down and you can do that as well. You do have the time to [inaudible 00:07:29] and that is something to keep in mind as well which is interesting. We have a longer exam this time with more questions. But I have heard less people stating that they didn't finish or they weren't able to get through all the questions as compared to the previous exams. It may not be as important now, but if you are feeling that you're running over on questions, then you're going to want to start paying attention to time. Something that I did on exams previously was a five-minute rule, and honestly for this exam I'd probably do two to three minute rule.

Jessica

Okay.

Jeff

So a loose eye on the clock, and if I'm going two to three minutes, I would say two minutes on this exam. If I'm going over two minutes on a question, then I need to start being fully aware of how much time I'm spending on it, because most of the questions are probably going to take less than a minute, multiple choice, depending. The other thing. If you have never taken a Cisco exam and if you go to the student folder, we've got links to the Cisco question tutorial, which will give you the format and style of the Cisco questions so you get a chance to see those prior to actually sitting for the exam.

Jessica

That's helpful.

Jeff

I think that's pretty much the tips for the exam. Don't panic. Just relax. One good tip. I mean, they're all good tips, but another good tip is look at it like work. You've been studying, you've been doing this for a while. This is not some one-off. You're going in, you do this and you just do it. You go into work, you just do it. You don't worry about it every day. You don't worry about it that day so much because you know what you're doing, and if you've been studying, you've done your review, it's the same idea. Feel like this is just part of work or part of a study session. This is just going in and do on it, as opposed to making it up to something really big, large obstacle you got to go through. This is more of just part of the process. You just go in to it like you're going to work. This is just something I'm doing and done.

Jessica

I love that tip because there is inevitably your blood pressure rises a little bit, you're breathing gets a little tighter when you sit down for an exam. If you can really prepare for that animal response to not happen as much as possible, or prepare how to handle those nerves. It really helps put you in a position where you can get the noise out of your head when you sit down and take the exam.

Jeff

Yes.

Jessica

Now, I know you mentioned earlier in the first episode about additional resources. Are there anything additional as far as practice tests or review that students can look at?

Jeff

Some that we recommend that are out of the scope of what we currently have, but that are out there Bozon is excellent and I believe they still have a money-back guarantee.

Jessica

Wow.

Jeff

That's a practice exam, something to look into. There are a lot of video resources and I believe we have a lot of Udemy courses available through WGU as well that you can access, and if you're unsure about that, you drop us a note, or just take a look at the community board there for us. Yeah, thank you, Chatter. In the folder, we do have recommendations for books and videos as well. But for practice exams, Bozon measure up, both pretty good I'd recommend Bozon

Jessica

if I had to recommend another one, it would definitely be Bozon, and tutorial mode is excellent. Videos, Keith Barker has always been one of my favorites and he's got a full set on these YouTube pages, extra.

Jeff

Like I said, we've got the Udemy courses I believe that you can access as well. Then I do recommend more than one resource. In the course materials, we've got text, we've got video, we've got labs. But it is good to utilize Packet Tracer for extra lab, and just blend with things. It is good to see other videos as well to get a different perspective on what's going on.

Jessica

Yeah, that's a callback to our first episode definitely. If you can diversify the resources and practices that you're looking at, it's going to help you in the long run?

Jeff

Yes.

Jessica

Jeff Is there anything else that we didn't cover that would help students prepare for this exam.

Jeff

I think that's pretty much it. It is important and especially at CCNA level, the topic guide is your friend, and that's what you want to study too, that's what you want to use as your check-off list. Don't forget the two week review guide, but that topic guide is your main focus to make sure you're comfortable with everything on it. That if it says describe, you can describe it. If it says configure, you can. If it says explained, you can, and that you understand each one of those line items. Also percentages. The topic guide gives percentages on what to focus on and what not to. Well, not necessarily what not to, but it gives you which ones are going to be more of a percentage, on our current exam, those first three topics, 65 percent of the exam.

Jessica

Wow.

Jeff

You'll also see in there outside of those first three topics, wireless. Wireless is important, and wireless actually runs through the first five topics. You'll see wireless items in each one of those topics. If nothing else, you want to make sure you're solid on those first three topics and sell it on wireless. Even if you get more in-depth there, you want to make sure that you're solid on Topic 3, that's 25 percent.

Jessica

Wow. That's the big one.

Jeff

First two are 20 percent each and 25 percent, and then you've got the Topic 4, which is 10 percent, Topic 5, which is 15, and Topic 6, which is 10 percent. Topic 6 is automation programmability, which a lot of people worry about because they're not as familiar, but keep in mind it's only 10 percent. Your main focus would be those three to make sure you're solid. Of course you don't want to neglect those other three because that adds up to what, 35 percent and that can be an issue. But if you're very concerned about it and that's where you're feeling very weak, don't let it get to you. Just make sure you're solid it on the majority of the exam and be good to go.

Jessica

Perfect. Well, Jeff, thank you so much for sharing all this expertise with myself and with the listeners and the IT Audio Series, and thank you for listening. Be sure to come back for more episodes that can help you in the IT Audio Series.

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