# Transcript: IT Pod - EP 171 - MSITM Capstone wtih Jaynee Farmer and Lavendar Boyles

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

Hi. This is Lavendar, a program mentor in the MSITM program here at WGU. And with me today is Jaynee Farmer, course instructor for our capstone. Today, we are going to discuss your capstone and how to prepare for that call to get your capstone topic approved.

The capstone should be the student's final course. It's a report about a project, and a lot of what you learn throughout the program will be applied here, so it's important that you save it to the very end. I always tell students to pick something that they've done or a project they're familiar with and keep it simple. Is that right, Jaynee?

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

Yeah, that's absolutely right. We do tell students to pick something that they've already done in their current work or a past job, something that they're very familiar with. Now, you don't have to have been at the level of you did everything. We are writing from an IT management point of view. So if you're loosely involved with the project and you just understand how it works, that's a great project.

Now, also, if you've never had a project, you've not been in IT before, you've just not really worked on projects, we can help you there as well. We can work within your parameters, what you're doing now, what you really want to do, maybe a job you want to have in the future. We can help you pick a project that's within that realm that you're comfortable doing. And that way you have a capstone that's done well, too.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

Good. So when should students start on their capstone, or when should they start getting into the capstone mode?

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

Well, we want you to start thinking about the capstone when you enter that final term. But as far as starting it, it should be the very last course. You can come to us with an approval call request when you're 3/4 through C783, which is your Project Management course. We do want you that far through that course because it's going to help you with the capstone. And we see that people might struggle if they don't get that far through that course.

What I tell students is, is when they're ready to take the test, when they feel like they're getting close to taking that project management test, is when you might want to start scheduling your approval call with your course instructor. I will tell you that if it's another course that's the next-to-last course, we do actually want you just to finish that one. All courses before C783 should be finished before capstone C783. You can be up to the point where you're wanting to test.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

Sounds good. So what should students do first?

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

The first thing that you want to do is you want to email your assigned course instructor and ask for the tips and tricks for capstone. What you'll get sent is a knowledge that you have to do the 30-minute phone call. You will get all of your forms, your templates. Those are also out in the knowledge base, so we do tell you that they're out there anyway so you can always access them even before you get that.

We do request that you not fill out the approval form before that call. It's very important that you talk to us first and make sure that the project that you're thinking about is appropriate. Because they're not always appropriate for what we're doing with the capstone. So email us. Book the 30-minute call. It is required. It is required that it be 30 minutes, so don't book a 15-minute call. Book a 30-minute call with your assigned instructor.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

And how much time should students plan to work on their capstone?

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

I tell students that it does take around two weeks. That's the time frame that I typically see. That is average for our students. I've seen them do it in a weekend. I've seen them do it six months. But average is two weeks.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

I usually-- as a program mentor, I usually tell students at least a month, six weeks. But they could get it done considerably--

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

Absolutely.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

--faster if they wanted to.

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

Absolutely. And you know the students really well, so I will tell students that having that conversation with their PM is a really good way to go. You know, how have you performed in the past when it comes to writing? Are you a fast writer? Are you more of a slower writer where you really think about things before you put them on the paper? And knowing you and how you work through performance assessments and writing is very integral information for the capstone. And the PM and the student conversation is just as important there in how you work through those. So if, as a student, you know that you take a little bit longer thinking through a performance assessment or that writing is more of a struggle or that you just like to write in great detail, you may need a month, and so you want to plan for that.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

OK. What additional advice do you have, closing advice for our students?

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

My big advice is that-- use those templates. They are approved by the master's capstone evaluators. We did work with them in developing them. The evaluators are used to them. They're used to seeing it. And they're expecting that format, so we want you to actually write in those templates. We want you to use them.

The other things that I can think of is this is about a project, but it's not about a project. And I know that sounds really stupid, and I tell students every day that sounds silly. But it's more about your ability to talk about a project. So if you don't remember every detail, it's OK. We're asking you to stay at a very high level, and you can make stuff up. As long as it fits what you're talking about in the project, it's OK. This is about your ability to talk as an IT manager. So remembering that keeps you from being stuck on the reel, and it keeps you making progress.

The other things that I can tell you is Grammarly is very important. The capstone evaluators do use Grammarly to check your submission, and it will cause it to come back if you do not use Grammarly. So at the very least, use the free version. WGU did get you guys a discount. We have the link to that, and you certainly have that access. And it will save you a lot of angst because oftentimes your content will pass, but your professional communication comes back. It's odd to have that happen when you you've gone through the program and maybe didn't have that finding before, and now all of a sudden, the evaluators are using Grammarly and you have it. We do tell you you need to at least use the free version for Grammarly.

The other thing is APA. You have to cite in APA 7. That is very important. The capstone evaluators want everything to be buttoned up. It needs to be perfect. This is a master's capstone. They want these things to look great. So make sure that you are using APA 7 for any citations.

Speaker #2 (Lavendar Boyles):

All right. Wow. This has been a really informative podcast today. I hope everyone has learned more about what to expect when they're starting a capstone. Thank you for joining us today.

Speaker #3 (Jaynee Farmer):

Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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