# Transcript: It podcast – ep 62 – C951 Intro to ai with denece meyer and tim ashre

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Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Hello all. This is DeNece Meyer. I'm here with Jim Ashe. I'm a Program Manager from the BSES Program. Jim is a course instructor on the C951 Intro to Artificial Intelligence Course. Today we want to answer a few questions that students have about exactly how to approach this course. How to get through this course and really be successful working with your program mentor and the course instructor within the course. Jim are you here?

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

I am. Thank you so much for inviting me DeNece. Oh well. I'm exited to talk about 951.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Great. Well, we have some great questions that students have come to me with and I really wanted to get your answer on this so we can better know exactly how to have students use this course and be successful. What's the best approach for students starting this course?

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

I think with this course and probably most of our performance assessments, particularly for the computer science students, 950, for instance, satisfaction out of them too, and the Capstone even, is first to understand what's actually required. I know that some of those task requirements that they list can sound very daunting and you can interpret those at a very high level. But the rubric that I gave you really is just a checklist in about getting things done, and so we want to understand what it is you actually have to do to pass and then build out from there. For that reason, we've made these alternative set of directions, explaining each rubric item section by section, and made some videos to help with this. I think one of the issues, particularly better students run into sometimes is scope creep. They interpret it one way and it grows from there and they take on something or interpret it as a lot more difficult than it needs to be.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Great answer. I think a lot of my students too they struggle with exactly what is the rubric mean and where are we going to go with that on each. I like those points and those bullet points on them.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

You don't know where you're going to want to go if you want to get there, and you to look at an efficient task, don't try to pick out a job and then make it fit the requirements, look at the requirements and then get your job to fit that. Also, I think you want to avoid making this in AIML course or a Capella Sim Course. Those are some of the tools we use to illustrate the artificial intelligence stuff. But you don't have to go super in-depth with the technical stuff of that. That could be a course on its own. That's another thing students want to avoid. They want to look at it as trying to the best way to get those done with the tools that they're provided and not get too down with the technical aspects of it. Also look at course chatter, a lot of great advice there. Of course, talk to your course instructor, it's what we're here for, email or appointments.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Exactly. That brings me to the next question that I have, a really good point. I have a lot of students who will start that Intro to Artificial Intelligence and they really don't know a lot about the course, and we'll be talking about reaching out to your course instructor. What is truly the best time for a student to reach out to their course instructor within that course?

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

When you have questions. One reason I'm so glad we're doing this podcast is we're friendly. We see where that were accessible. It is our job to help you with questions of this course, and we do like to talk to students about questions that they have. I sometimes get emails like I'm sorry, is it okay if we make an appointment? Yes. If you're not sure, particularly if you're not sure what you actually need to do. Remember, I just said you want to make sure you understand what it is you actually have to do. The last question, if you don't, you're not sure about some of those requirements, talk to us about it. A quick conversation often clarifies a whole lot, and so often at the beginning, if you're looking at it and you may be overwhelmed or you're not sure where to start or the best approach, set up a 15 minute, 30 minute appointment with your course instructor and make sure you're getting started on the right path.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

That's a great point because I always tell them the sooner you get to the course instructed, the more you understand the whole task. You don't have to wait until you've gone through all of the learning resources to get there.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

You don't have to wait till you're stuck.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

No.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

You can preemptively meet to get those questions answered and get started on the right foot.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Great point. That's really something I think that time stressing over whether or not you're going in the right direction can be solved by one call with the course instructor.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Yes. We do try to help students with any technical questions. I mentioned the chat bot code that's used and the Capella Sim, which is a virtual robot program that gets used. Those have some technical aspects too. We are happy to help students with that as well. But it's not a MIL course or a Capella Sim course. Those are tools we use for the course. It's usually best if you can, to send that information ahead of time in an email. If you need to share a file, put it in your Google, drop your Google box and send us a link to it, and so we can evaluate it there. Often as technical things are small details that are hard to catch and a live call given the breadth of different types of things that we see. But we do help our students with those. But to keep them, I'm a mathematician, not a programmer, and I have programming experience. I look at these things, but it's not really my area of expertise. Also, anytime, of course the submission has been returned. If you think of submission is going to pass, go ahead and submit it.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Yes.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

If you think you know what it is, I think it's better for us to respond. We're not here to evaluate, that's something that needs to be clarified. Though sometimes students are like, "Can, you look at this and tell me it's going to pass?" Well, just submit it. Let the evaluator tell you what needs to be fixed.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

I would like to let students know, throw it up against the wall and see what sticks. But the one main thing about a performance task of any kind, is you want to make sure when you come back on the re-evaluation that you're only fixing the areas that need to be corrected. I think that's the best time to get with the course instructor and to see where that particular point or that particular program went a little off. Because a lot of times when you fix one point, it might fix a lot other issues that are in there. That is always my thing. Reach out to the course instructor if you see that task come back, but make sure that you're only correcting what needs to be corrected.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Once it's a green, you're done. Yeah. When we say throw it to the wall, but if you're in doubt, don't submit it. I think if you're for sure it's not going to pass because there are sections which are dependent on others. Do make sure that at least you think you've met the minimal requirements. That's the gray area absolutely. You'll get meaningful feedback if you put meaningful work into it, I think it'll gave you more direction. But there are these dependent sections which will rely on other parts, and oftentimes will get sent back as red, and it'll say when section A is complete, then we'll look at this. That's not really meaningful feedback, is not going to help you efficiently get through it. But after it's been submitted in, then we can look at that definitely focusing on what needs to be fixed that should give you specific feedback about what's missing or what's wrong.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Great point. I really liked that in making sure we understand what the difference in the evaluator versus the course instructors are. The next question students come to me all the time is we all know that Intro to Artificial Intelligence used to have two tasks in it. Now they've added a task 3. Students are always like, "Why did they add an additional task?" Or I'd tried to explain to them, this is something that's really going to help you with your capstone topic. Not necessarily do it, but it helped you to get to that direction. Does task 3 help with the capstone or not?

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Well, I like how you put that. It helps you go in that direction. It's not directly step 1 in your capstone, but it indirectly link to your Capstone. It introduces the student to machine learning and how it can be used to solve a problem. For this project, you need to discuss totally hypothetical made-up situation about how some machine learning could be used to solve some business problem. You'll have a project scope and a budget and stuff like this, and then you'll discuss how it'll be done. But for your capstone, you're actually going to do it, and so you need something you'll actually have access to. It introduces you to the idea, gives you some ideas about how machine learning can be used to solve a problem and it plan set seed up until task 3. There's nowhere really in their degree plan where they had to study or look at machine learning. Students were walking into their capstone and they're like, oh, machine-learning. What's that? Well, that's not right. We introduce students to the concept here and how it can be used to solve problems, and that's what it's for. You can take what you do for this task 3 and turn it into your capstone. But really I think it's best just to pick out something that's best for passing task 3, and then carry what you learned over and then pick out something that's best for your capstone.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Well, you've answered another question that my students have. They're always asking me, do I have to use the same topic? I'm like, no, you don't have to.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Absolutely. Choose whatever's best for this and then whatever's best for that. Each type of hypothetical, you're going to be talking about hypothetical business situation in the budget, and then for your capstone project, you're actually going to need the data to actually do it. Well, you don't need to worry about budget and this hypothetical stuff. You have a part where you have to display the data and then predict stuff with the data, descriptive and inferential statistics. But it's an application of that. Those projects are inherently different. They're connected, that they're using machine learning to solve a problem. I think it is best to just go whatever you feel like doing for task 3, and then go into the capstone with a better understanding how machine learning can be used to solve problems and then pick out a topic then.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

I know a lot of students say that the materials for the first two tasks are better than what they found in task 3. That's some point of frustration. I just wanted to get a little bit more explanation from you on that.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Well, the stuff for task 1 and 2 is better in part because we've had those for a while. Those were all course instructor created, and keep in mind that developing the learning resources is not really something that of course instructors have time for. They have the expertise, but it's not officially part of their job, and so we often do this when there is a need and there was a need for task 1 and 2, and so we did that. Stuff is in development for task 3, be patient and it'll come out. We do have a template that's really helps students, but that's stuff is in development. We hope to have more in the future. I'm really happy that they're excited, and maybe a little spoilt with our task 1 and task 2 resources. But when students have gotten bogged down with task 3, I think often it's just the openness of the problem because you pick out what you want to do. It's a creative process. You're almost writing a story, and that can be a little overwhelming. If you are in doubt just set up an appointment with your instructor and talk about some ideas. Just get the ball rolling.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Well, great point and thank you so much Jim, for joining me today on this podcast for us to dig around a few questions. I do want students to know that there is more to come on and we'll dig deeper into these three tasks, but I have enjoyed our podcast today and I hope this is helpful. Thank you for joining me.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

That was helpful for me. Thanks for having the questions and I look forward to doing it again.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Have a great day.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

You too Denece.

Speaker #2 (DeNece Meyer):

Bye-bye.

Speaker #3 (Jim Ashe):

Always a pleasure. Bye-bye.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

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