# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep 19 - C954 Urban Legands

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

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

WGU, is IT audio series, flexible, portable, profound.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Hello and welcome to our podcast. This is Lavender. I'm a program mentor in the MSITM program. That's the Masters of Science Information Technology Management. With me today is Jerry Geyser. He's a course instructor also in the MSITM program. Today we are talking about a course in this program called information technology management or C954.

It is an objective assessment course meaning, to pass the class, you need to pass the test. When I describe this course to students, I tell them it's an everything basket of any technology you might possibly need to research or refer to in the various courses throughout this program. I like to have students completed in their first term. It's like a leveling class. It brings everyone up to the same technology understanding, terminology, current events, current business practices, so on and so forth. If you have experience, great, if you don't, this is going to help give you some of that background info that will help fill in the blanks. However, I found students struggle with this course. There is a lot of information to get through to prepare for the exam.

Jerry, he's here today to help answer some of the basic questions I get about this course, and the best way to get through the material in a timely manner. Thanks for joining me today, Jerry.

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

Thanks for having me, Lavender.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Now this is like the first question I get from students. They open this course, they look at the book and they're like, "Wow, why is there so much reading?"

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

That's absolutely a great question. You alluded to it earlier, is that it's a leveling course. Our students have a variety of background for the MSITM. There's information technology people who come from engineering, security backgrounds, business backgrounds, project management backgrounds. This course does a brief introduction of all of those things. The material needs to be able to cover that, so that as a student, you have exposure to the possibility of walking into any environment, and being exposed to legacy systems. All the way up to having a dialogue about how to put it in new and innovative technologies, and being comfortable with any of those environments.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

You bring up a lot of good points. Another question I get is, is there a shortcut? Can I use the CPT, the course planning tool, or the pre-assessment to just go in and study the areas I need to, or why could I or why couldn't I do that?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

To answer the first question, there is no shortcut. I always tell students we have to read all the material. There are different weighted sections, and there are ways to attack it. But the book is actually divided into two sections. When I talk to students about this, when I have some one-on-one conversations. The book is divided into information technology or terminology, and information security. Think about it is, if you had your engineering hat on, that counts for about 22 percent in the exam. Then the other 78 percent is about business, and how as an IT manager, or director, or CIO, you're going to interact with the business to help the business achieve its goals. When you read the material, what you're going to do is all the material's going to reinforce what you've read. Chapter 12 builds on 11, 13 builds on 12, so on. Then 16 goes back, rebuilds on 11,19 builds back on 11 through 15. Then the same premise goes throughout the book. Actually when you start applying personal principles, you start looking at it and it's not a lot of material that you're consuming, it's the same material just with different terms.

As far as the CPT is concerned, and the CPT is a great tool to gauge your readiness with. Its 13 questions that tells you how ready you are as far as the material. But it definitely does not tell you that you're ready to sit for the high-stakes exam.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

No shortcuts.

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

No shortcuts.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Then students will start reading the material, and I will do quizzes at the end. But some of those quizzes are really long. Should they go through all of that while they're working on the reading? Or how do you recommend they use the quizzes?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

That's good great question. The quizzes are very long, and they ask a ton of questions, but the questions are somewhat repetitive. I think the questions developed by the manufacturer were designed to help reinforce it. Ideally what you would want to do is answer all of the questions and see that you are comfortable with them. But if you're finding the questions to be repetitive, think you necessarily need to keep answering the same question if you really do understand the answer.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Good advice. There's a section in the book, I think it's to be the business section, where they talk about business leaders, and what they say in their philosophies, and how people just don't really memorize that. But some have found that it's better to memorize before they take the test. What's your advice on that section, and how to approach that?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

I actually love this section. It's about life lessons, CIOs teaching us values and insight into different things to get ready for. But the thing is that, you don't need to go in and memorize it to say, what was it that the CIO or Black & Decker said on such and such about being a CIO leader? What you need to know is, well, if we're covering a subject such as disbonding the iceberg, what is the context of disbonding the iceberg? You look at it and you start to see, oh, what they're telling us is, you've got to put on new systems into legacy systems, you're going to have problems. If you're going to have problems, these are some steps that you want to be able to take advantage of when you're communicating with the business. That's how you want to be able to consume the information. That way you're not memorizing well, who set it. You're understanding what the purpose of the article is.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

All the details they give you hopefully lead to a deeper understanding of the points that they're making.

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

That's just one lesson after another. There's nine lessons that you have to be ready for the exam. Whether they're being a digital leader, or managing the whitespace, or anything that we have to deal as leaders in our IT industry, it just gives us pointers, things that we're going to have to be able to know how to address experience, how to communicate with our peers at those levels, and how to make it successful so that the business survives, and that the IT department helps the business grow and succeed.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Good. Why shouldn't students do the pre-assessment over and over? I've had students try to do it, and then I'll do grade, so they'll take it again right away, get a little better and then they'll try it again. Why should they do that?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

The pre-assessments, is a static exam. It's one and done. If you take it and you take it again, you're taking the exact same test. If you expand the arrows after you take the test and you're looking at your coaching report, you can actually see the answers. Why this becomes an issue is, if you take the pre-assessment in the beginning or you take it multiple times, you start to train yourself to be ready to pass the pre-assessment. But the high-stakes or the OA exam is different. Because it's different, you're not as prepared so your scores don't reflect what you've got on the pre-assessment. That's why you don't take it over and over again.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Then one more question. I'll get this from students a lot. They've read through everything they've done all the studying they feel like they need to, and they take the pre-assessment, they don't do as good as they were hoping. How did they get from not so great on the pre-assessment to getting their confidence to take the test?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

This is a really great question, and we evaluate it when we look at it from the course instructor standpoint. We say, where did you learned? What are the areas you're struggling with? Do you want to spend some time with the course instructor breaking down the subject a little bit more? Do you need to go back and revisit it or is it something you're unfamiliar with? Then help prepare. What we're doing is we're pairing down the 39 chapters that you are consuming, to now maybe we're only focusing on 10-15. By doing that, then you are making sure that you're really prepared and then you'd go in the OA with a lot more confidence.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

Good. One more thing I just wanted to talk about is, how much time should students plan? Now generally, I'll tell students six weeks to two months. What's the pacing? Do you think that's a decent amount of time?

Speaker #3 (Jerry Geyser):

I like six weeks, that's what the course's standard set to. Sometimes folks can accelerate it depends on how much time they can dedicate to the reading. Again, it's because you can't take any shortcuts. If you know 60 percent of the book, you're going to get 60 percent on the exam. There's no, I've read 60 percent, I'm going to get a passing score because of my knowledge in other areas. It's a direct relationship. If you can read it in four weeks and you feel extremely comfortable and you get all the nuances of the book material, you can do it shorter or if you take two months, that's perfectly fine. There's no problem with that.

Speaker #2 (Lavender):

We're good. Well, I appreciate you coming in today, Jerry, and talking to me about this. I hope our listeners got something out of it today. I hope everyone has a great day. Thank you.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

Schedule time with your course instructor to explore more deeply. WGU, a new kind of you.