

The Importance of Reading ITIL

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Thinking back to your college days, did you ever wake up in a panicked state the night before an exam with a thought racing through your brain that you had forgotten to study something – perhaps you had not bought and read the course textbook!

In the crush to prepare for ITIL intermediate- and advanced-level exams, we participate in classes, memorize terminology and acronyms, study the syllabus points and try our hand at the practice exams. But how many of us have actually cracked open one of the OGC's ITIL books?

"Even the best lecturer in the world cannot cover all the points in the book." Those were the words of an ITIL Examiner at a recent webinar attended by Accredited Training Organizations (ATO) from around the world.

The Basics.

As all ITIL practitioners know, ITIL is an acronym for the IT Information Library, a set of five books covering the IT Service Management (ITSM) lifecycle – Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operation or Continual Service Improvement.

The ITIL V3 qualification scheme makes available to practitioners more intermediate- and advanced-level courses than any of its past qualification schemes. For those on the managerial track, there are Lifecycle courses, and for hands-on practitioners there are Capability courses. At the higher levels, there are Service Manager Expert courses, and ultimately there will be a Service Manager Advanced qualification.

These courses pull their presentation and exercise material directly from the ITIL books, and they employ experienced instructors with at least two levels of certification – ITIL Service Manager Expert and the qualification of the course being taught.

However, there is one more important element in the mix – you, the student and your commitment to becoming familiar with and understanding the principles of the course.

Read the ITIL Manual.

There is no doubt about it, text books are expensive – and they are also necessary. We have probably all tried to slide through a college course without purchasing the textbook. Most of us do that only once as we quickly face the reality that passing a course requires completing all of the requirements, including attending the lectures, doing the homework, and reading the book.

It is the same with ITIL. Like an academic textbook, an ITIL book is not an easy read. In fact, if you try to read it cover-to-cover like a novel, we recommend that you do so near a safe, soft surface should the inevitable nod-off occur.

However, when used within the context of directed readings within a course, the ITIL books are rich in guidance and content. They contain the accumulated wisdom of organizations of all types and ages and within all industry sectors.

Your ITIL instructor and course material help explain and structure the guidance in the ITIL books according the learning objectives of the different courses, but they cannot substitute for your actual familiarity with the material in the book.

Experience has shown that classes in which students have read the underlying OGC material quickly move to a higher

level of discussion and learning accomplishments, not to mention passing the exam. Everyone benefits! This is so important that the ITIL Examination Institutes may soon begin a survey to compare examination results with whether the student has read the book.

Gaining ITIL Literacy.

Fortunately, there is also guidance on how to read the guidance in the ITIL books.

Most course providers send out some sort of Welcome Letter to course registrants that states which ITIL books are appropriate for the class.

Lifecycle classes reference the actual Lifecycle books as shown below:

[Service Strategy Lifecycle](#) – Service Strategy

[Service Design Lifecycle](#) – Service Design

[Service Transition Lifecycle](#) – Service Transition

[Service Operation Lifecycle](#) – Service Operation

[Continual Service Improvement Lifecycle](#) – Continual Service Improvement

Depending on which Lifecycle processes they rely on, Capability courses may reference more than one Lifecycle book as follows:

[Operational Support & Analysis \(OSA\)](#) – Service Operation

[Release, Control & Validation \(RCV\)](#) – Service Transition, Service Operation

[Planning, Protection & Optimization \(PPO\)](#) – Service Design, Service Strategy

[Service Offerings & Agreements \(SOA\)](#) – Service Design, Service Strategy

The [Service Manager V2V3 Bridge](#) course and [Managing Across the Lifecycle](#) reference the complete library.

In addition to the course bibliography, your course provider generally states which particular sections of each book are relevant to the course. As the ITIL exams directly match the concepts contained in the syllabus, and the syllabus directly references the particular sections of the ITIL books, this is almost like knowing what the questions will be before you sit down to take the exam!

Because your days in class, or in an online course, will be packed with lectures and exercises, it is always best to come to class prepared, having read through the relevant sections of the ITIL books at least once. Once you are in the class, you will want to reread each section in light of the day's lecture topics. You will have achieved two objectives – a greater understanding of each topic the instructor presents, and a deeper understanding of the guidance presented in the ITIL book.

You can boil this guidance down into a simple 5-step progression.

1. Prior to class – obtain appropriate ITIL books
2. Prior to class – read section as noted in class syllabus
3. During class – reread sections in concert with class agenda
4. Exam preparation – skim through sections that are noted on the syllabus
5. After class – reread sections as needed to guide your daily activities.

Overcoming the \$ and ¢ Objections.

The ITIL books represent worthwhile investments and additions to your professional library. However, in today's economy, individuals and organizations must carefully watch every dime they spend.

While there are no alternatives to the ITIL books, they make use of today's varied networking, media and digital rights distribution capabilities, so that an organization can find the scheme that best fits its needs and pocketbook.

As far as individuals are concerned, it is a bit awkward and cumbersome, but you may consider sharing the book purchase with a friend or colleague and purchasing your own dedicated copy later.

Summary.

Now that you are familiar with the ITIL book, you will find that after the class is over it will occupy a venerated spot, not on your bookshelf of other reference materials, but on your desk as you frequently refer to how its guidance can help you respond to the challenges you face each day.

Visit our [online bookstore](#) to purchase your copy of an ITIL book or license.

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