

Session 2 (1/15/26):

Homework:

ACTIONS TO COMPLETE:

- Draft 8-10 STAR stories using the Competency Story Map
- Identify gaps where you're missing examples (leadership, conflict, failure)
- Practice "Paint the Pain" on your 3 strongest stories
- Apply to 10 more jobs (20 total) and track them
- Schedule 1-2 informational interviews using The Warm Intro Protocol™
- Research 5 target companies (news, challenges, culture)

📌 BRING TO SESSION 2:

- 5-7 experiences from work, school, or projects for story development
- Your Competency Story Map (from Pre-Session 2 materials)
- Questions about interviews you're preparing for

— Leadership (No Formal Title)

Situation

When I joined the track and field team as a new student, I was coming from a very different cultural and religious background. I barely spoke the language, didn't know anyone, and often felt out of place in a competitive team environment.

Task

My goal was to integrate into the team, contribute positively, and prove that I could be a reliable and supportive teammate despite these challenges.

Action

Instead of trying to lead verbally, I focused on leading through actions. I showed up consistently, supported my teammates, stayed disciplined in training, and made an effort to connect with others even when communication was difficult. Over time, I built trust by being dependable, encouraging, and putting the team first.

Result

I was awarded the Team First Award, which recognized my contribution to team cohesion and spirit. This experience helped me understand the real impact that inclusion, consistency, and quiet leadership can have on a community, and it later inspired me to create a club called NoorFit where others could feel that same sense of belonging. So we meet every week and have fun doing different kind of sports.

★ STAR 2 — Conflict Resolution

Situation

During a group academic project, one teammate repeatedly failed to attend meetings or contribute, which created frustration within the group and put our final grade at risk.

Task

Resolve the situation respectfully while protecting the team's progress and maintaining professionalism.

Action

Instead of escalating emotionally, I facilitated a constructive conversation. I communicated with the professor, spoke with the teammate to understand their situation, and helped align expectations between all parties so we could move forward fairly.

Result

The conflict was addressed calmly, the team regained alignment, and the project was completed without further issues or tension.

For a final project for a class. He said that a family member died and never showed up. Talked to professor. He ended up finishing his portions of the project and sending remotely, and he wasn't in the final presentation.

★ STAR 3 — Failure / Major Setback

Situation

I failed an academic course during a semester where I was balancing work alongside an 18-credit course load.

I was working 22 hours a week at Wal Mart. I had 18 credit hours with Physics/Calc/Engineering classes. I ended up failing a software engineering course (very lab intense and project based class). Things were going well the first half of the semester, and deteriorated. The workload just increased and the final project was very time intensive.

Task

Understand what went wrong and ensure it didn't happen again.

Action

I took responsibility for the failure, reflected on my limits, and realized I was pushing myself toward burnout instead of sustainable performance. I adjusted my time management, rebalanced my workload, and actively used campus academic resources for support.

Ended up being in contact with the professor, went to help sessions, office hours, just could not get enough time to juggle all of my commitments. After an honest conversation with the professor, I decided to put my time into the courses that I was not failing, and retake the course that I was failing next semester, cutting my losses, and not dragging down my other courses in the process.

Result

The following semester, I performed much more effectively. More importantly, I learned how to manage long-term effort without burning out — a lesson I continue to apply today.

Lessons learned/results:

- I overcommitted/overextended myself and didn't realize it until too late.
- Retook the class and passed with an A second time around.
- I tend to look at the classes and understand better ahead of time how much labs/projects and talk to the professor about time commitment, etc.
- I could have taken advantage more of on campus resources for help in the class earlier before it became unmanageable.

-I couldn't adjust my work schedule in time to accomodate what I needed, next time I will sign on for less hours at work closer to the end of the semester to have time for final projects, exams, etc.

★ STAR 4 — Working Under Pressure

Situation

At Goodwill, we were severely understaffed on an unusually busy donation day, and the manager had to temporarily leave to support another location.

Task

Keep operations running smoothly and prevent the team from being overwhelmed.

Action

I stepped beyond my usual role, coordinated the team, delegated tasks clearly, and reorganized donation flow by optimizing the placement of Gaylords to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary movement.

Result

We successfully processed over 400 donations that day without falling behind, and the team remained focused and coordinated despite the pressure.

★ STAR 5 — Initiative / Process Improvement

Situation

At Goodwill, we were required to process a certain number of items per hour, but the standard method taught was inefficient and time-consuming.

Task

Improve efficiency without compromising accuracy or quality.

Action

I analyzed the workflow, identified inefficiencies, and developed a new processing method that reduced wasted motion and streamlined the process.

Result

Processing time was reduced from about one hour to 30–45 minutes, and other clerks adopted the method because of its effectiveness.

★ STAR 6 — Teamwork

Situation

In a software project, our team consisted of people from very different backgrounds and age ranges, from 18 to 29 years old.

Task

Align the team and ensure everyone contributed effectively to the final product.

Action

We encouraged open communication, respected each person's perspective, and worked collaboratively to integrate different ideas into a cohesive design.

Result

The project was successful, and I learned how diversity in background and experience leads to stronger problem-solving and better outcomes.

★ STAR 7 — Communication (Adapting to Different Needs)

Situation

At Goodwill, part of our mission is to create employment opportunities for everyone, including individuals on the autism spectrum.

Task

Ensure tasks and instructions were clearly understood by team members with different communication needs.

Action

I adapted my communication style to each individual, breaking tasks into clear steps, using patience, repetition when needed, and checking for understanding rather than assuming it.

Result

Team members felt supported and confident in their work, which improved both productivity and team morale.

★ STAR 8 — Decision-Making

Situation

There were moments when a manager was unavailable and immediate decisions were required to keep operations running smoothly.

Task

Make responsible decisions without overstepping authority.

Action

I assessed the situation, prioritized what needed immediate attention, followed established policies, and stepped outside my usual role to support the team when necessary.

Result

Operations continued without disruption, and issues were resolved efficiently until management returned.