

Dana Leenheer
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Project Update Report

Original Project Goals:

My original project goals were focused on upskilling for business analyst and data analyst positions as I was between jobs. I haven't landed a full-time opportunity yet but have been able to recently start a temporary contract position with a former employer within their IT department. I will detail the impact this role has already had on the direction of this project in the next section. The original focus of my project was to work through a LinkedIn Learning career path focused on becoming a data analyst. The topics of the pathway are business intelligence, R, data analysis, tableau, statistics, predictive analytics, data visualization, and data-driven decision making. Each topic originally had 3 videos.

Progress So Far:

I have made great progress thus far towards accomplishing my project goals. I have completed watching all 3 business intelligence videos/courses and successfully completed all the section quizzes within each course with a perfect 100% score. These courses offered a great starting point by giving a general overview of business intelligence, discussing Excel as a BI tool, introducing Tableau, and discussing the usefulness of dashboards and data stories.

I have also completed the R programming language section of the LinkedIn Learning career pathway. These three courses provided a great introduction to the language and did a great job explaining how the data world uses this R. RStudio was also heavily featured in these courses. I downloaded RStudio and was able to follow along. The two courses featuring RStudio provided enough hands-on experience with the program that I feel comfortable navigating the program and would complete a data project using the language. I originally was under the impression that the R section was a project to complete, this was not the case. Even with this not being the case I feel like the walkthroughs that I was able to complete provided a great introduction to the language and provided a great way to familiarize myself with RStudio. I have also learned that how you implement R largely depends on the packages that you download, so completing a one-off project wouldn't necessarily provide the significant learning opportunity that I originally thought. The walkthroughs that I was able to complete on my local system were an adequate introduction. I will complete mini data projects with R and RStudio in the coming months, but probably outside this course given the amount of video courses that I have left in the LinkedIn Learning pathway.

I have also started a Data Consultant temporary role at the US Anti-Doping Agency. This opportunity is within their IT department and will provide some great hands-on experience, specifically in the data visualization and data engineering spaces. I have already had the opportunity to complete some of the coursework available on the Microsoft website, specifically the data fundamentals training and video series on the Cosmos database.

Reflection and plan for Weeks 9-12:

As I look towards planning for the remaining weeks of this course, I have realized that setting out to complete 34 hours of video was too large a goal. I was not considering the time that it would take to complete the section quizzes and complete the exercises alongside the videos (and the additional time added for pausing the video from time to time to review the screen when code was being presented). For the R programming language section, I downloaded R and RStudio and followed along with all the exercises in the first video. This more than doubled the original length of time of that video. For the remaining R videos, I did not complete all of the exercises on my local computer and instead focused on the exercises that I was more curious about or had a large impact in my learning (ex. Plotting some different graph and chart types with a data frame). One of the R videos also compared Excel and showed the equivalent data processes available in that software. This side-by-side view was very interesting and expanded my knowledge of Excel's data analysis tools.

Given that I have most of the data analysis section remaining and the tableau, predictive analytics, data visualization, and statistics sections to go I need to revise my original goals. The amount of video and quizzes left would go outside the scope of the course. Moving forward I will complete one video in a section and then move to the next section and complete a course from that section. Ideally, I will have time to revisit the data analysis section and maybe even complete a section or two, but I want to focus on learning the broadest amount of information possible. My new role at USADA will also help enrich my learning by giving me additional exposure to data analysis, they use Power BI for various reporting needs, and data engineering (specifically how databases work and are deployed in a production environment).