TEACHING AND LEARNING

When the Dean Called for Remote Programming

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In early April, the Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management Dean's Office put out a call for educational programming to be offered during the first Maymester session in the history of the graduate school. The month-long Maymester programming was designed to provide educational and skill building opportunities for students who needed to pivot their plans due to changes in summer internship, travel, and employment because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with faculty who provided credit-bearing Maymester classes, the Walker Management Library (Management Library) partnered with the Vanderbilt Libraries' Digital Scholarship and Communications Office (DiSC) to offer three non-credit Maymester programs. The first step was deciding on the topics for the programs.

Later in April, the Management Library experienced the transition to remote learning when our in-person multi-week Tableau training series was retooled for remote delivery. Rather than the planned progressive, in-person sessions, students were directed towards self-guided, asynchronous Tableau sessions through our recently acquired O'Reilly for Higher Education database subscription. We then held a synchronous session via Zoom, with demonstrations within Tableau, along with sharing of visualizations the students had created and a Q&A session.

We chose to build on this experience for our Maymester programs. The additional topics selected were based on tools that students requested and that the Career Center communicated were in demand by employers: Introduction to Tableau, Introduction to Python, and ArcGIS for Business Mapping. We leveraged the expertise of our library colleagues in DiSC with all of these programs and expanded our partnership with them. While our DiSC colleagues were the experts in their respective software tools, they were not familiar with their uses in business applications or with our graduate student population. We were able to provide context that informed decisions such as which data sets are best to use with the software tools so that our students received programming that would translate into the business world. In the case of the Python sessions, the DiSC instructor already had plans to produce subject-specific Python programming assignments, and business ended up as subject number one due to our partnership.

As Maymester commenced we quickly saw the reality of non-credit programming in a stressful time. Student interest and enrollment in the programs was high at the beginning, but virtual learning fatigue began to show itself and there was a significantly lower level of active participation and/or completion than we expected. As a result, we are planning on adding microlearning credentials to increase future engagement.

A question Management Library staff asked when we began Maymester planning was: how do we provide students with tools and resources to improve their career outcomes when we ourselves were not expert users of the tools? While we facilitated the sessions, we were also students developing our own software competencies and skills. We are now able to offer (and have since offered) Tableau workshops without having to rely on our DiSC colleagues to deliver the instruction. This gives us greater flexibility to provide Tableau programming on both a regular and on-demand basis. For more information on the programs we developed, see the Maymester Library Programs website (<https://www.library.vanderbilt.edu/management/maymester>) which describes the offerings in more detail.