Blackboard Provides Student Performance Analysis Tools

The Blackboard Grade Center offers options for reviewing student performance on your tests and exams and can be a useful mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of your test questions. A poorly worded question doesn't mean your students aren't mastering the content. Look for Attempts Statistics, Download Results, Item Analysis and Column Statistics as options in the column header for your test.

One advantage of online testing is that when students submit answers, you can turn their choices into data that you can use for your own test self-evaluation. This type of data analysis is especially helpful when you use closed questions that have few correct answers. You can infer many things from the data such as:

- what kinds of questions are answered correctly
- what kinds of questions are answered incorrectly
- what are the most common incorrect answers
- what questions are the majority of the class answering incorrectly

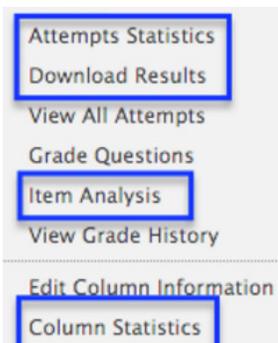Based on the results, you might ask yourself these questions:

- Can the questions be worded more clearly or in a different way?
- Are the multiple choice answer options clear and differentiated enough?
- If answers are being missed by a majority of the class, have I provided enough content or practice for students? It might be time to review the materials and activities leading up to the test to make sure you aren't leaving any gaps.

The Blackboard Grade Center offers several options to get statistics on your tests and exams. From the Blackboard Grade Center, click on the down arrow in the column header for your test to get the options menu.

ATTEMPTS STATISTICS

If you have a test set up for multiple attempts, this option determines how many students are taking advantage of a second or third attempt to better their score. If you have a test with 20-questions with unlimited attempts and students are taking the test 20 times, then you might need to rethink your strategy as students must be guessing!

DOWNLOAD RESULTS

If you aren't getting what you want from the other options, you might find it helpful to download the results of the test so you can run the exact data through excel or other data manipulation software using a .csv or .txt file. This option is probably the most useful when comparing results of one class with another class and useful when reporting to accrediting institutions.

ITEM ANALYSIS

Provides information for an overall view of the test and of individual test questions. This option is very thorough and has a lot of information that you might find helpful. The analysis looks at individual questions and rates them on the overall performance of the student as well as overall difficulty. If you run the Item analysis during the semester, you may choose to use the results to readjust student's scores or to address misconceptions before a cumulative final exam.

COLUMN STATISTICS

This option gives you more information about your test results including a grade distribution. At a quick glance you can tell if the majority of students are scoring very low on your test. If they are scoring very low, you might need to intercede to review important information to make sure students are really achieving mastery.

When you look at the the results you gain from these different options and analyze the results, you should get a good idea on whether or not your assessment needs reworking, especially if the results are consistent over several semesters.

RESOURCES

Blackboard Item Analysis - https://goo.gl/gs4s8A

Heidi Olson is the Learning Design Coordinator at UAF eLearning with over 25 years of experience in higher education as an Instructional Designer and adjunct instructor.