

Organizing Your Data

Organizing the results of an assessment or midsemester feedback will make it much easier to analyze and identify next steps.

Begin by determining the type of data you are analyzing, quantitative or qualitative. Most results of quantitative student work can be summarized with simple tallies and percentages. Tallies are counts of how many students earned each rating or chose each option. You can tally the number of students who

- Earned a particular grade or score
- Got a particular question correct
- Chose each option in multiple-choice questions

It is helpful to translate tallies to percentages, as it makes it easier to compare groups of different sizes. This allows you to compare different sections of the same course within a year or the results of a course from year to year. Percentages also makes it easier to compare student answers to different questions on assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses (Suskie, 2009, p. 255).

Example:

Course: <i>Basic Statistics</i>			
Assessment: <i>Basic Statistical Operations</i>			
Date Given: 3/02/16			
# of Completed Assessments: 50			
Question #	Learning Objective #	Tally of Correct	Percentage of Correct
1	1	45	90%
2	1	35	70%
3	1	32	64%
4	2	28	56%
5	2	25	50%
6	2	40	80%
7	3	25	50%
8	3	23	46%
9	3	16	32%
10	3	45	90%
Summary LO #1:		112/150 = 75%	
Summary LO #2:		93/150 = 62%	
Summary LO #3:		109/200 = 54%	

This chart organizes a 10-question assessment covering three learning objectives. The instructor chose to count the number of students (out of the 50 students who took the assessment) who answered the question correctly. She then converted this to a percentage. This allows the instructor to identify questions that were most problematic for the students. In this instance, only 32% of the students answered question 9 correctly. This may indicate a need to reteach that concept, or it could also indicate that the question and/or answer choices were unclear.

The bottom of the chart summarizes the results by learning objective. The total number of correct responses to questions assessing LO #1 was 112. Because there were 150 possible responses (3 questions times 50 students), we divide 112 by 150 to get an overall average of 75% for Learning Objective #1. By organizing the data in this manner, we can see that Learning Objective #3 (at 54%) may need additional focus and reteaching.

Qualitative Summaries, including such responses as open-ended text-based results, reflective writing, open-responses questions, etc., can be summarized through quick read-throughs and grouped listings.

Quick Read-Throughs: Quickly read through the responses for general impressions. If you have too many responses to read through them all, read a random sample. To be sure you are getting a wide range of results, divide the student response into a score band and select a particular percentage from each score band to read.

Grouped Listing: If your qualitative assessment or assignment is composed of brief statements that fall into reasonably discrete categories, you may wish to list the results in grouped categories. This technique allows you to identify trends in the data.

For example:

Question: What was one thing you learned in this module that was most helpful?	
Summarizing Results <i>Tallying</i> <i>Percentages</i> <i>Summarizing Qualitative Data</i>	Gathering Feedback From Students <i>Stop-Start-Continue</i> <i>POV Postcards</i>
Creating an Instructional Plan <i>Listing strategies aligned to data analysis</i>	

In this example, the instructor can see that tallying results and the POV postcards were most helpful to many students, while summarizing qualitative data was seen as helpful by only one student.