When it comes to instructional design, quality matters more than quantity. How can institutions use learning analytics to find the right fit between instructional design pattern, teaching style, pedagogy, and student outcomes?

In October 2016, Blackboard’s Dr. John Whitmer, Nicolas Nuñez, and Diego Forteze conducted an analysis looking at an anonymized sample that included data from 3,374,462 unique learners in 70,000 courses at 927 institutions. The research found that faculty design Blackboard Learn courses so that the time that students spend tends to follow one of several typical patterns, which they called “archetypes”.

To help institutions to optimize their course delivery by instructional design pattern, we have now built course archetypes directly into Analytics for Learn.
Expanded data model

As of the 4.3.4 release of Analytics for Learn, courses can now be categorized by course archetype: Supplemental, Complementary, Social, Evaluative, or Holistic. These are the same categories discovered by the data science team led by John Whitmer at Blackboard. By including this new information within the data model itself, A4L users now have self-service access to explore complex questions related to how course archetype impacts student success relative to a wide variety of institutional, demographic, and behavioral factors. With this information in hand, faculty, instructional designers, chairs, and deans can work to identify the patterns that instructors are already using and engage in important conversations about how the online learning environment might better complement teaching and learning goals.

New reports

By extending our data model to include this valuable information, we are providing Analytics for Learn customers with a unique and radically expanded range of possibilities for ad hoc instructional design reporting and learning analytics. But we have also included several new reports to help institutions answer important questions like:

- How many courses of each archetype are at my institution/college/department?
- How are course archetype distributions changing over time?
- What is the average class size of courses in each archetype?
- How do courses grouped under each archetype compare in terms of count, size, and engagement markers?
- How do courses grouped under each archetype compare in terms of average hours of activity by tool

Blackboard Intelligence

Blackboard Intelligence is a set of packaged data warehouse, analytics, and reporting applications including modules for Blackboard Learn (Analytics for Learn), Student Management, Finance, HR, and Advancement. Blackboard Intelligence integrates with leading ERP systems, enabling institutions of higher education to stand up a robust dimensional data warehouse in a matter of months, not years. It improves institutional performance through increased information quality, productivity, insights and results.

For more information, visit blackboard.com/analytics