How Packback Deep Dives is Transforming Writing Education

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the ability to effectively evaluate and improve student writing remains a pivotal challenge. Writing is not only a fundamental skill for academic success but also a critical tool for professional development and personal expression. At the same time, educators often find themselves overwhelmed by the time and effort required to provide detailed, actionable feedback on student writing, which is essential for fostering growth and improvement.

At the heart of effective education lies the need for:

1 Meaningful feedback that guides student improvement

2 Efficient grading processes that allow educators to focus on content

3 Enhanced student engagement and confidence in their writing abilities

4 Tools that bridge the gap between knowledge and its clear communication
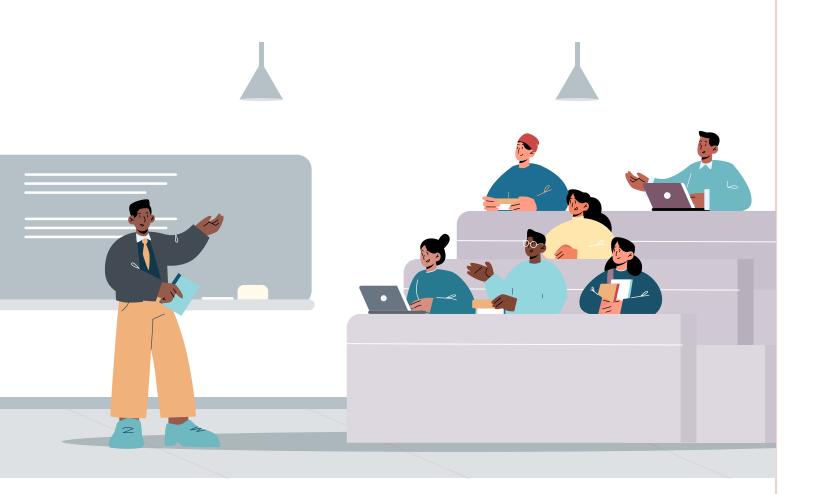
Traditional methods of providing feedback and grading are increasingly inadequate at addressing these needs, particularly in large classes or courses with intensive writing requirements. As the landscape of teaching shifts from formative based assessments to a greater emphasis on summative assessments, the demand for a more scalable and impactful solution has never been greater.

Enter Packback Deep Dives—our Instructional AI-powered platform designed to revolutionize the way educators and students approach writing. By delivering real-time, constructive feedback on grammar, structure, and research quality, Deep Dives empowers students to improve their writing skills continuously. For educators, it offers a much-needed respite from the labor-intensive task of grading, allowing them to focus on providing substantive feedback and fostering deeper student connections.

This collection of case studies showcases the transformative impact of Packback Deep Dives on both students and educators. Through the experiences of professors like Sean Ryan, Leigh

Southward, MJ Vickers, and Keith Hollowell, we explore how Deep Dives enhances student writing proficiency, boosts academic performance, and significantly reduces grading time for educators, allowing them to focus on the content of students' work. These real-world applications highlight the profound benefits of integrating AI-powered feedback into academic settings, paving the way for a more effective and engaging educational experience

Sean Ryan
Project Management Professor
Arizona State

Quantitative Results:

65%

reduction in grading time

B→A

Students improved their writing performance by a full letter grade

Mastering Graduate-Level Writing: Achieving Excellence in Project Management

Introduction

Sean Ryan, a project management professor at Arizona State University, has been using Packback Deep Dives for the past three semesters in his graduate level Project Management Theory and Thoughtful Projects classes. With class sizes of about 8-10 students, Sean faces unique challenges in transitioning students from undergraduate to graduate-level writing, particularly with 50%-65% of his students for whom English is a second language.

Problem

Before implementing Packback Deep Dives, Sean observed that students struggled with the transition to graduate-level writing. They often regurgitated information instead of paraphrasing and synthesizing ideas, which is critical for higher academic work. This required Sean to spend significant time providing detailed feedback on grammar and structure, limiting his ability to offer substantive feedback on the course content. The struggle students were having with this transition coupled with the lack of substantive feedback was evident in the work they were submitting. And with roughly 50% of the course grade coming from writing assignments, Sean knew he had to make a change.

Solution

To address these challenges, Sean integrated Packback Deep Dives into his courses. Deep Dives' AI-powered writing assistant provided real-time, actionable feedback on writing, grammar, structure, organization, and flow which helped students correct their mistakes and improve their work as they wrote. This immediate feedback was particularly beneficial for international students, who often faced additional challenges with English writing conventions. To further help

students understand the value Deep Dives could provide them with, Sean demonstrated the platform's capabilities by writing a paper himself, which showcased the logic behind the feedback and helped ease the transition to using the new tool.

The Results

The impact of Packback Deep Dives on student performance was profound. **The platform accelerated students' development of critical writing skills**, enabling them to produce higher-quality assignments. By the end of the semester, students had improved their writing skills significantly, with many of their **grades increasing by a full letter grade**. The real-time feedback helped students understand their mistakes and learn how to conduct better research, cite credible sources, and maintain a consistent perspective throughout their papers.

Students overwhelmingly praised the platform, noting that it helped them understand why they received the grades they did and what they needed to do to improve. The ability to get instant feedback on their writing style and the quality of their research allowed students to make continuous improvements. This led to better-prepared and more confident writers who could engage more deeply with the course material.

Sean also saw a significant reduction in **grading time, which dropped from 35 minutes to about 10 minutes per paper**. This allowed him to focus more on providing detailed feedback on the content and theories being discussed in the papers. The overall result was a more efficient grading process and a more enriching educational experience for both Sean and his students.

To professors who are undecided on Deep Dives, Sean would say, "If you use the platform effectively it will help you structure your assignments so you're focusing on a specific learning objective. You can actually help students learn how to research, how to draft and revise, and ultimately get through the editorial process — which is nearly impossible to do in a traditional writing environment."

Case Study

Leigh Southward
Associate Professor
University of Arkansas

Quantitative Results:

50%

Students improved their performance by over half a letter grade

85%

of students felt Deep Dives improved their critical thinking

Empowering Students: Unlocking Potential Through Continuous Writing Feedback

Introduction

Leigh Southward, a professor at the University of Arkansas who teaches Introduction to Clothing Concepts, Introduction to Textiles, and History of Dress, has been utilizing Packback Deep Dives since its launch in 2022. With large class sizes ranging from 90 to 200 students, Leigh faced significant challenges in ensuring the work that her students submitted was well-researched, on-topic, and demonstrated proper writing skills.

Problem

Before implementing Packback Deep Dives, Leigh encountered several issues with her students' writing. They often struggled with basic English and grammar, leading to poorly structured and off-topic submissions. This lack of clarity and coherence in their writing resulted in lower grades, typically in the high C to low B range. Students also had difficulty incorporating and citing credible sources to support their arguments. For example, in her History of Textiles course, they'd often cite anecdotal evidence on Ancient Greecian clothing, rarely bringing in research or sources to support their claims. Grading these submissions was especially time-consuming, as Leigh had to address numerous issues related to research, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization that her university's LMS simply couldn't help solve.

Solution

When Deep Dives launched in late 2022, Leigh immediately decided to give it a try. The Instructional AI-powered feedback provided students with real-time guidance on their writing, helping them understand and correct their mistakes as they worked. Leigh introduced the tool to her students by demonstrating its capabilities in class, showing them how the feedback could improve their writing skills. This helped

students see the value of the platform and understand that it was not just another automated tool like ChatGPT, but a learning aid that taught them how to become better writers.

The Results

The impact of Packback Deep Dives on Leigh's students was remarkable. The real-time feedback helped students improve their grammar, structure, and overall writing quality. As a result, most students began submitting **work that was graded in the high B to low A range**. Deep Dives also taught students how to conduct better research, support their claims with credible sources, and express their thoughts in a clear and organized manner. Leigh noticed a significant shift from lazy, superficial submissions to well-thought-out, introspective, and research-backed assignments, especially in her History of Textiles course.

Students responded positively to the AI feedback, appreciating how it helped them **understand and learn the course concepts better.** They were excited to see their grades improve as they developed stronger writing skills. Leigh also benefited from the reduced **grading time, which was cut by approximately 30-40%**. This allowed her to focus more on the content of the submissions and less on grammatical and structural issues, enabling her to assign more writing tasks without being overwhelmed by the grading workload.

For any professor unsure about adopting Packback, Leigh's advice is clear: "Deep Dives is a tool that can actually help you and your students. Listen to what Deep Dives can do for your courses and take the jump. I did, and it completely changed the way I was able to go about my teaching. Meet with them; you've got nothing to lose."

MJ Vickers
Sociology Professor
Texas A&M University

Quantitative Results:

50%

reduction in grading time

2X

More feedback provided
to students

Sociology Success: Streamlining Writing Assignments for Better Outcomes

Introduction

MJ Vickers, a Sociology professor at Texas A&M University, has long been at the forefront of finding more efficient ways to teach while still fostering a connection with students and providing them with constructive feedback. Teaching courses like Statistics for Sociology and Methods of Sociological Research, she faces the challenging task of grading numerous long-form writing assignments. With class sizes averaging 30-35 students, MJ sought a solution that would streamline her grading process while maintaining the quality of feedback she provided to her students.

Problem

Before adopting Packback Deep Dives, MJ relied on Texas A&M's LMS for managing and grading student submissions. Despite the LMS being rather robust, MJ found the grading process to be exceedingly time-consuming and tedious. Grading a single paper could take up to 20 minutes, primarily due to the manual effort required to check grammar, spelling, and provide constructive feedback. This inefficiency was particularly burdensome given her workload, which included teaching four courses without the help of teaching assistants. During this time period, which took place post COVID-19, MJ, like many other educators, began to notice the deterioration of students' writing abilities and comprehension skills, a trend she was determined to reverse.

Solution

In the fall of 2023, MJ implemented Packback Deep Dives, hoping it would provide a more efficient and effective grading tool. The platform quickly proved to be a game-changer. By automating the basic grammar and spelling checks, Deep Dives significantly

reduced the time MJ was spending grading—cutting it down by roughly **50% to just 10 minutes per paper**. The built-in custom rubric feature allowed MJ to easily assign points and provide detailed feedback directly on the assignments, making it easier and faster for her to provide the constructive feedback her students needed to succeed.

Moreover, the AI grading assistant within Deep Dives offered real-time feedback to students, enabling them to improve their writing skills continuously without needing constant direct intervention from MJ. **This digital teaching assistant effectively handled the foundational aspects of writing, freeing MJ to focus on the students' content and ideas**. Deep Dives also provided robust plagiarism and AI-generated content checks, giving MJ peace of mind and ensuring academic integrity.

The Results

The impact of Packback Deep Dives on MJ's teaching workflow has been game changing. The platform not only **halved her grading time** but also **allowed her to assign more writing-intensive work**, knowing that the AI would support both her and her students throughout the process. MJ found that the ability Deep Dives gave her to leave more in-depth and constructive feedback significantly enhanced the learning experience for her students, and **helped them grow as writers**.

Students appreciated the detailed feedback and the immediate assistance from the in platform AI scaffolds, which helped them develop their writing skills more effectively. Additionally, MJ found reassurance with Deep Dive's built-in AI generated content checker. She finds this feature particularly valuable in the current academic climate, where the use of generative AI tools can be seen as a form of plagiarism.

MJ's experience with Packback Deep Dives highlights the platform's ability to alleviate the grading burden on educators, foster deeper student engagement, and enhance the overall quality of education. For professors on the fence about adopting Deep Dives, MJ emphasizes the substantial time savings, the improvement in student writing skills, and the enhanced focus on content over grammar and syntax.

Keith Hollowell
Literature Professor
Virginia Commonwealth University

Quantitative Results:

50%

reduction in grading time

Reduced average time of feedback to

5 days

Literary Insights:
Transforming Analysis and Writing Skills in Humanities

Introduction

Keith Hollowell is a literature professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and has been one of the largest advocates of Packback Deep Dives since he participated in our pilot program in late 2021. While teaching writing intensive courses of over 100 students a semester, Keith sought innovative solutions to manage the significant workload associated with grading long-form writing assignments. Keith's story offers a unique perspective on how Deep Dives has evolved from its humble beginnings as a writing tool to an essential component of his course structure.

Problem

Before integrating Packback Deep Dives, Keith relied on the university LMS to collect papers, check-ins, and reflections on a weekly basis in his Introduction to Literature course. However, he still had to grade quizzes and reading checks by hand, in addition to shorter papers of about 500 words, and longer ones reaching 1,000 words. Keith quickly found out that grading this much writing by hand was nearly impossible. In fact, he estimates that to fully grade a paper for content, structure, grammar, and depth would take nearly 90 minutes. This arduous process limited Keith's ability to provide the detailed feedback and guidance that his students needed. Moreover, students frequently made simple grammar and composition errors and struggled to write analytically, often resorting to formulaic five paragraph essays with no original thought. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these issues, leaving students ill-prepared to write with their own voice and creativity.

Solution

After speaking with his Packback Experience Manager, Keith decided to give Deep Dives a shot and he noticed the impact almost immediately. The Instructional AI-driven feedback system helped his students address their grammar and composition mistakes as they wrote, allowing Keith to focus on the content and analytical depth of students' writing. Deep Dives effectively **halved his grading time**, with the AI assistant handling the foundational aspects of writing, Keith was able to spend more than ever before providing feedback and guidance to his students, creating a better learning experience for all.

Students benefited from the real-time coaching provided by Deep Dives, which Keith believes helped them develop their writing skills more effectively than the feedback they received from the writing center. Deep Dives encouraged students to think critically and write more thoughtfully, transforming their approach to assignments. They weren't following a formula, they were writing with voice and purpose. Additionally, Keith found the grading format user-friendly, making it easier to leave in-line feedback and commentary.

The Results

Packback Deep Dives had a profound impact on Keith's teaching workflow and his students' writing abilities. By **reducing grading time by over 50%**, Keith could assign more writing tasks and spend more time engaging with students' ideas rather than correcting basic errors. Students began to appreciate the support from Deep Dives, which boosted their confidence and improved their writing skills significantly.

The structured, organized, and consistent feedback system provided by Deep Dives created a level playing field for all students, enhancing the overall quality of their submissions. Keith was able to pull up sample papers as models to illustrate strong and weak points, further enriching the learning experience.

For educators considering Deep Dives, Keith highlights the immediate and transformative impact it can have on grading and course structure. He emphasizes the substantial time savings and the enhanced ability to meet students at their current skill level, fostering a more effective and supportive learning environment. Keith's experience underscores the value of integrating AI tools like Deep Dives to revolutionize educational practices and outcomes.

Conclusion

The stories shared by Sean Ryan, Leigh Southward, MJ Vikcers and Keith Hollowell paint a picture and accurately demonstrate the impact that Packback Deep Dives can have for both students and teachers to create a more enriching learning experience for everybody.

By providing real-time, AI-powered feedback, the platform helps students enhance their writing, critical thinking, and research skills, leading to better academic performance and increased confidence. For educators, Deep Dives significantly reduces the time spent on grading, allowing them to focus on giving meaningful feedback and engaging more deeply with students.

Deep Dives has enabled professors like Sean, Leigh, MJ, Keith, and countless others to assign more writing tasks and improve the overall quality of education by providing students with the guidance and feedback they need, while also supporting educators by helping them focus on delivering valuable instruction.

For professors at a crossroads or those who are experiencing pain points similar to those outlined in this study, Packback Deep Dives sets a new standard for writing education, offering a scalable and impactful solution that benefits everyone involved. Its success stories demonstrate the platform's potential to save time, increase student writing skills, classroom engagement and satisfaction, and create a more enriching experience for both students and teachers.