


# Enhancing Instruction with Packback: How AI is Empowering Educators

## Introduction

In the “post COVID” educational landscape we are currently in, educators are facing an uphill battle and finding it increasingly harder to resonate with students. Educators are being asked to manage larger class sizes, with less resources, while still ensuring that each student receives the individual attention they need to succeed. The challenge of tracking student progress, providing personalized feedback, and fostering an engaging learning environment can be overwhelming and feel almost impossible, especially as class sizes grow and student needs diversify. This epidemic has led to many teachers leaving the profession and even more feeling burnt out and tired of the burden placed upon them.

However Packback can offer an answer and ease some of the burnout and burden that educators are feeling. Packback’s Instruct tools offers a solution that not only simplifies these tasks but also enhances the overall teaching and learning experience. During this case study we will explore how the Insights Dashboard, Match & Message, and Public Praise & Private Coaching features of Packback’s Instruct tools are transforming the way educators approach their work, making their lives easier and their classrooms more effective.



Packback has become essential in my large lectures because it enables me to quickly identify and support students who need it. The ability to track participation and intervene before students fall too far behind is a game-changer. — *Phil Mixer*





## Insights Dashboard


### Key Findings

- Enables timely interventions by identifying students who are not meeting participation requirements.
- Helps adjust teaching strategies based on participation trends, leading to increased student engagement and improved classroom outcomes.
- Example: A 25% increase in student participation was observed after timely interventions guided by the Insights Dashboard.

The Insights Dashboard is a cornerstone of the Instruct toolset, offering educators a real-time, comprehensive view of student participation and performance. For educators like Phil Mixer, a science professor at Washington State University, this tool has become indispensable for managing large classes that often reach upwards of hundreds of students. The dashboard's ability to monitor trends and provide detailed insights into individual student engagement and performance allows Phil to quickly identify which students need extra attention. In his biology courses, which are his largest courses, the Insights Dashboard enables Phil to track participation trends, intervene early when students fall behind, and adjust his teaching strategies to better meet the needs of his students. The Insights Dashboard has allowed Phil to automate the more tedious tasks professors face like attendance and participation, allowing him to allocate more time towards teaching his students.

Phil's experience with the Insights Dashboard is echoed in the broader context of large lecture settings, where keeping track of every student's progress can be a significant challenge. The dashboard's ability to highlight students who haven't met participation requirements allows educators to provide timely support before grades are impacted. This proactive approach is not only beneficial for individual students but also improves overall classroom outcomes. For instance, in one of Phil's large lectures, he noticed a drop in participation among a specific group of students. By using the Insights Dashboard to pinpoint the issue, he was able to reach out to those students, offering additional resources and support. **This intervention led to a 25% increase in participation over the following weeks**, demonstrating the powerful impact of the Insights Dashboard on student engagement and success.

#### Quantitative Results:

25%   
increase in  
participation



## Match & Message

### Key Findings

- Streamlines communication with students by allowing educators to send targeted messages based on specific participation or performance criteria.
- Supports maintaining high levels of student engagement and assignment completion.
- Example: A 20% increase in draft submissions was achieved after sending targeted reminders using Match & Message.

In addition to tracking student performance, managing communication with a large number of students is another daunting task that many educators face, especially when it involves following up with those who are at risk of falling behind. Packback's Match & Message feature addresses this challenge by allowing educators to easily identify students who meet specific participation criteria and send them targeted messages. Keith Hollowell, a literature professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, who regularly uses this feature, has found it invaluable in keeping his students on track.

Keith leverages Match & Message to streamline his communication process, particularly in large Introduction to Literature classes where it's easy for students to slip through the cracks. The ability to filter students based on their participation levels or submission status allows him to send personalized messages to those who need reminders or encouragement. This targeted communication ensures that no student is overlooked, helping Keith keep students engaged, on the right track, and feeling like their professor cares about them and actually wants to see them succeed (because they do!).

The importance of timely and targeted communication in maintaining student engagement is well-documented, and Match & Message directly supports this need. In one of Keith's courses, as the deadline for Deep Dives drafts approached, he noticed that several students had yet to start their assignments. Using Match & Message, he quickly sent out reminders along with helpful tips on how to get started. **The result was a 20% increase in draft submissions before the deadline**, reducing last-minute stress for Keith and saving his students from being docked points that would negatively impact their grade. This feature not only saves educators time but also ensures that students receive the guidance they need to succeed.

### Quantitative Results:

**20%**   
increase in draft  
submissions before  
the deadline



## Public Praise and Private Coaching

### Key Findings

- Public Praise motivates students by publicly recognizing exceptional work, fostering a culture of intrinsic motivation leading to improved performance.
- Private Coaching provides personalized, discreet feedback, helping students improve without the pressure of public scrutiny.
- Example: The use of Public Praise led to improved quality of class discussions, while Private Coaching significantly enhanced individual student writing skills.

Let's face it, whether it be at work, in our personal lives, or anywhere else, we all love feedback and praise, and students are no different. In fact, feedback is a critical component of the learning process because it encourages students to keep moving forward and helps them understand if they are on the right track. Packback's Public Praise & Private Coaching features provide educators with the tools to offer both public recognition and private, constructive feedback. Public Praise allows educators to highlight exemplary work in a way that motivates the entire class, setting clear standards for what constitutes high-quality contributions. This public recognition fosters a positive classroom environment and encourages other students to strive for similar achievements while giving them an example of the type of work they should be submitting.

**Educators who use Public Praise report significant improvements in student morale and engagement.** By publicly acknowledging high-quality posts, instructors can create a culture of excellence that motivates students to participate more actively and thoughtfully. Keith Hollowell, is one of the professors who has effectively utilized Public Praise in his courses. He uses it to highlight high-quality student posts to the entire class, providing them with teachable moments to showcase what good work looks like. This not only boosts the confidence of the students being praised but also sets a clear benchmark for others to follow. In one of his literature courses, Keith used Public Praise to recognize a particularly insightful analysis of a literary text. This public acknowledgment not only motivated the student who was praised but also inspired other students to deepen their own analyses in subsequent posts. **As a result, Keith noticed a significant improvement in the quality of the class discussions, demonstrating the powerful impact of public recognition.**

On the other hand, Private Coaching offers a more discreet way to provide detailed, constructive feedback. This feature is particularly valuable when addressing areas for improvement, allowing educators to communicate directly with students who need extra support without singling them out publicly. The ability to offer personalized guidance in a private setting helps build a trusting relationship between educators and students, encouraging students to take risks and improve their work without the fear of embarrassment.



Let's take Dr. Phil Mixer for example. Say Dr. Mixer is noticing a student struggling with applying complex microbiology concepts in their posts. Using the Private Coaching tool, he is able to offer specific guidance on how to approach these concepts, suggesting additional resources and strategies for improvement. This simple act of feedback can help the student better understand the material and improve their future contributions. Studies have shown that private, focused interaction can significantly enhance the students' learning experience and contribute to their academic success.

## Conclusion

Packback's Instruct tools—Insights Dashboard, Match & Message, and Public Praise & Private Coaching—are revolutionizing the way educators manage their courses and engage with their students. These AI-powered features not only make instructors' lives easier by automating and streamlining some of the more mundane and tedious tasks, but also enhance the learning experience by providing timely, relevant, and personalized support to students. The success stories of educators like Phil Mixer and Keith Hollowell highlight the tangible benefits of integrating Packback into the classroom, from increased participation to improved student outcomes.

For educators looking to enhance their teaching efficiency and student engagement, Packback offers a practical and powerful solution. By leveraging AI to address the challenges of modern education, Packback enables instructors to focus on what they do best—teaching and mentoring their students.

