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Key Takeaways:

- Packback empowered Toni to transform her Cambridge AS English General Paper course into a dynamic, discussion-based learning environment. **Leading to an 80% pass rate.**
- The real-time feedback and Curiosity Score motivated students to improve their writing and critical thinking skills.
- Toni's workload was reduced, allowing her to assign more writing assignments and provide meaningful feedback without burnout.
- Even during maternity leave, Packback ensured her students continued **progressing with consistent writing instruction.**
- Packback proved its versatility, serving not only as an English tool but as a **platform that can be used across disciplines.**

Toni Livingston's Journey with Packback: Elevating Student Engagement and Performance

Introduction

In 2023, Toni Livingston began teaching Cambridge AS English General Paper, an advanced critical thinking and writing intensive course, at Tampa Bay Technical High School. With this being the first time this course was offered, there were no pre-existing materials or guides to rely on. Toni was quickly thrown into the fire and had to create a complete curriculum from scratch for the very first time. This daunting task left her searching for a way to make her classroom dynamic and engaging while also providing students with rigorous writing instruction.

During a summer training, Toni was introduced to Packback, which had recently partnered with Hillsborough County Public Schools to provide students and teachers with more rigorous writing support. While she was initially overwhelmed by the idea of building her course from the ground up, Toni decided to give Packback a try. Little did she know, it would become the cornerstone of her course and transform her teaching experience.

The Problem

Without a structured curriculum, Toni faced several challenges. The foremost being, how could she keep her students engaged in writing and critical thinking without a clear path?





Teaching six periods of Cambridge AS English General Paper required a solution that could foster meaningful discussions, promote critical thinking, and give her the tools to be able to grade assignments and provide students with constructive feedback in a timely manner. And with 30+ students in each class, providing individualized feedback on long-form writing assignments seemed nearly impossible, especially as she aimed to maintain high academic standards and help her students grow as writers.

Toni was also concerned about the potential for burnout. How could she stay energized and focused while grading mountains of writing assignments, creating her own course content, and keeping students actively engaged? She faced an uphill battle.

The Solution



Packback became the solution Toni didn't know she needed. With Packback Questions, Toni transformed her class into a discussion-based learning environment. Once her community was set up, Toni had her students post discussion questions every Thursday, reflecting on the topic they'd covered the previous week. This weekly routine allowed students to interact with the material in a more meaningful way, and provided them with an outlet to engage in discourse and discussion with students in different class periods.

One of the platform's key features, the **Curiosity Score**, pushed students to refine their writing and thinking. They quickly learned that Packback wasn't a passive tool—it required full focus and attention to meet the score criteria, leading to **an improved understanding of the course content**. Toni saw students **evolving in their ability to write more clearly, think more critically, and engage more deeply with course material**.

Packback's AI provided instant feedback to students, allowing them to self-reflect and improve on their own writing before submitting their final drafts. This real-time feedback gave students the feeling of having their own personal writing tutor. Beyond helping students, Packback also gave Toni more flexibility and time. With the AI-powered grading assistant helping her streamline her workflow and grade more efficiently, **Toni was able to assign more writing without feeling overwhelmed by the grading load**.

Even when Toni went on maternity leave, Packback remained central to her classroom operations. She set up two weekly writing assignments, ensuring her students continued receiving writing instruction and feedback while she was away. Thanks to Packback's ease of use and its AI-powered feedback, her students kept progressing, even in her absence.

The Results



The impact of Packback on Toni's students was profound. By consistently engaging with the platform, students improved their writing and critical thinking skills over time. The regular practice and real-time feedback provided by Packback helped them become more confident and competent writers. Toni believes this played a key role in their performance on



the Cambridge AS English General Paper exam. Rather than being overwhelmed by the intensity of the exam, her students were well-prepared and had the writing experience needed to succeed, **leading to a whopping 80% pass rate on the exam.**

Packback also helped Toni maintain a writing-intensive course without being bogged down by the workload. The AI grading assistant **reduced the time she spent grading assignments while still allowing her to provide robust feedback.** This balance of automation and control helped her avoid burnout and enabled her to focus on higher-level teaching and curriculum development.

As the year went on, Toni began to discover that Packback wasn't just an English tool. She saw its potential across subjects, helping students in science, social studies, and even technical courses become stronger writers. Upon this discovery, Toni shared Packback's benefits with other teachers, explaining how it could be used beyond the traditional English classroom.

Most importantly, Packback fostered **intrinsic motivation** among her students. By giving them the autonomy to explore topics within the framework of her course, they became more engaged and self-directed learners. The ability to track their progress with the Curiosity Score gave them tangible evidence of their improvement, further motivating them to take ownership of their learning journey.

In the end, Packback didn't just make Toni's life easier—it transformed her students' learning experience, leading to better engagement, improved writing skills, and higher academic performance.

