

THE IMPACT OF AN AI-DRIVEN DISCUSSION PLATFORM ON STUDENTS' OUTCOMES

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Asynchronous online discussions are often at the core of most online courses. Instructors use them as important tools for student-to-student engagement to foster different student outcomes. Despite the potential benefits of online discussions, several challenges exist. For example, students do not always engage fully in these online discussions, and when they do, some of their responses are cursory or repetitious comments that hold less value for fellow students. This study used an AI-supported discussion platform, Packback, to develop students' critical thinking skills and promote engaging and meaningful discussions. As they compose, students receive real-time feedback from Packback on the quality of their posts, encouraging them to ask effective open-ended questions at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy. Furthermore, Packback serves as an equity tool by providing a personalized learning experience to each student, thereby promoting academic success for all students irrespective of their background and unique skill sets.

