

# What the Grade *Never* Tells You

How AI-Powered Oral Assessment Surfaces Knowledge Gaps Earlier



**80%** Confidence in understanding

Students reported stronger awareness of their understanding after explaining their work aloud.

**75%** It would prevent disengagement

Students felt earlier visibility into weak understanding could prevent disengagement.

## THE INSTITUTION

Lindenwood University has built its reputation on education that stays with students long after graduation. Founded in 1827, it is one of the oldest universities in Missouri, a private institution committed to developing graduates who are genuinely prepared for what comes next.

Across a full academic-year pilot, running from Fall 2025 through Spring 2026, Lindenwood explored a number of questions facing higher education, one of which was becoming increasingly urgent: how do you identify when a student is at risk of disengaging before a final grade reveals the problem too late to retain them?

*When a student falls behind, the question that matters most is not why it happened. It is whether anyone found out in time.*

## WHAT INTEGREVISE DOES

After submitting written work, students take part in a short AI-supported dialogue, responding to questions about their work in their own words. They explain, justify and reflect on what they submitted. The platform does not grade. It reveals whether genuine understanding sits behind the work.

That dialogue produces structured feedback for students and aggregated insight for educators, supporting assessment validity, student development and cohort-level understanding.

## WHAT WE FOUND

The pilot surfaced two important forms of evidence. The first came from students reflecting on their own learning experience. The second came from the tutor observing how students actually engaged with the process in practice. Together, they revealed not only the platform's potential, but the conditions required for that potential to translate into meaningful retention impact.

### **Students engaged more deeply when they knew they would need to explain their work**

Several students described approaching their assignments differently when they understood they would need to speak about their work aloud. Rather than submitting and moving on, they reported reflecting more critically on their understanding and reasoning.

*“Knowing that there was an examination of my knowledge coming, I was more prepared and learned more about the topic beforehand.”*

- Lindenwood Student

*“It helped me reflect more deeply on my paper and asked questions that pushed my thinking further.”*

- Lindenwood Student

At the same time, tutor feedback highlighted an important implementation insight: this effect depended heavily on the viva being embedded directly into the assignment workflow. When positioned as a separate step, student completion and engagement became inconsistent.

The question was not whether the viva had educational value. The question was whether students encountered it at the right moment, in the right place and with the right level of integration into the assessment process.

### **Learning gaps surfaced what written submissions alone had not revealed**

Tutor feedback confirmed that the oral assessment outputs highlighted several amber and red indicators, suggesting gaps in understanding or application that had not been fully visible in the written work itself.

*“The scores from the viva did indicate several amber and red areas, indicating students did not either understand the material or the application of the questions.”* - Lindenwood Professor

These signals matter because they give institutions a clearer view of risk while there is still time to act. Enjoyment is useful, but the deeper value is earlier visibility into misunderstanding, uncertainty and disengagement before the module reaches its endpoint.

Among students who completed the process correctly, the tutor also observed stronger awareness of strengths and weaknesses, suggesting the platform demonstrated meaningful diagnostic value even within an early-stage deployment.

## 75% of participating students saw potential to help prevent disengagement

Among students who completed the oral, 75% felt this type of assessment could help prevent students from falling behind or disengaging from a module.

Taken alone, this does not yet prove retention improvement. But it gives an important early signal: students recognised that Integrevise could help them understand where they stand, spot gaps earlier and stay on track before disengagement takes hold.



### Deeper Engagement

Used early, before disengagement hardens into non-completion.



### Embedded Workflow

Strongest when built directly into the assessment process.



### Early Identification

Surfaces misunderstanding before final grading.

## One student surfaced something no final grade would have caught in time

During the pilot, a student revealed mid-session they had been working from the wrong supplemental material for weeks without realising it.

Under a conventional assessment model, this likely would not have surfaced until after grading. Instead, the signal emerged during the assessment itself, while support was still possible.

This is what happens when assessment becomes an earlier visibility mechanism for student risk.

## THE FINANCIAL CASE

Student retention sits at the heart of every institution's financial and academic strategy. A student who withdraws at the end of Year 1 represents three to four years of lost tuition revenue, alongside replacement recruitment costs that far exceed the cost of support. When those students remain invisible until a grade signals the problem, the window for meaningful intervention has already closed.

**+1% Retention** can represent *hundreds of thousands* in preserved tuition revenue annually

A single percentage point improvement in first-to-second year retention represents significant additional revenue for any institution. What this pilot indicates is that the signals retention strategies depend on are already present in the student experience. The question the next phase answers is whether those signals can be surfaced consistently, at scale and early enough to act on.

## PILOT INDICATION

The pilot suggested that earlier visibility into understanding may create earlier opportunities for support, engagement and retention. Embedded workflows strengthened adoption, while earlier identification of misunderstanding created opportunities to intervene before disengagement became withdrawal. Even small improvements in continuation can represent significant academic and financial impact.

Ready to make student risk visible before it becomes student loss?

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