

Whangaparāoa College, Auckland, New Zealand



Staff explain why Education Perfect is important to teaching and learning programmes at a Year 7-13 school.



Using EP since
2017

EP users
(Students)
1650

EP users
(Teachers)
127

About

Whangaparāoa College is a Year 7-13 school, located to the north of Auckland on the Whangaparāoa Peninsula.

The school roll consists of 1700 students from Year 7-13.

Whangaparāoa College is a public decile 9 school teaching to the NZ Curriculum and aligned to NCEA for senior students.

Our online learning journey

Whangaparāoa College has been exploring EP for various subject areas for a number of years, and recently made the commitment to the full EP suite for students.

Staff are developing excellent skills with the platform, with five staff members already at Level 5: Guru status in the EP teacher certification programme.

Why have you chosen Education Perfect (EP)?

We use EP to help support teachers by giving them a platform to engage with the learners that are more suited to a digital environment. It also gives staff the opportunity to be efficient with their work and focus on the key areas of teaching; relationships. The positive impacts for both students and teachers include that EP provides an alternative way to deliver and engage with lessons.

Jason Pocock
Deputy Principal

Awesome tool, love the differentiation in EP!!

– Hamish Smith, Teacher

My learners loved duking it out an in inter-class revision competition

– Maria Sinclair, Teacher

I am loving the advanced editor because I can finally add multiple components - for example scratch pad and a long answer questions.

– Teresa Winstone, Teacher



Impact

Use of EP is becoming embedded into practice for teaching staff, with 22% of teachers having attended an in-person PD session provided at their school in 2021 alone. A further 2% of teachers took up online PD opportunities in 2021.

8% of teachers have actively reached out to invite a colleague in another school to connect with EP, and 9% have provided EP with written testimonials, showing that the value of the platform is widely understood by staff.

When surveyed, staff reported that the the positive impacts of EP at Whangaparāoa College were numerous, and included notable benefits to areas such as those below:

- Staff efficiency
- Relationship building
- Differentiation

Staff Efficiency

Staff felt that EP is incredibly efficient, due to the fact that self marking and differentiation are easy to implement using the features of the system. This enables staff to assess at multiple levels easily, while offering the freedom to choose between setting diagnostic tests for a single group within a class, an entire class, multiple ability groups across a range of classes, or an entire year group.

Usage data supports this, with a third of teachers utilising the Quick Test feature on EP, which comes equipped with remediation options, alongside engagement and achievement data. Staff are also using efficiency measures such as assigning pre-built assessments and homework tasks to direct learning, and derive data, from meaningful points in their coverage of the curriculum.

Relationship Building

This is a key focus area for Whangaparāoa College. Staff report that EP enables learner success and self management, leading to positive and constructive conversations. They note the need to be cautious and to utilise EP as a tool to allow the teacher to engage with learners more effectively, safe in the knowledge that EP is offering time saving features such as automatic marking.

Staff are using EP to provide encouragement, feedback and guidance to learners, in the form of written/verbal feedback on responses, sending cheers, and running assessment comparisons, the latter of which helps them to provide each learner with solid information about the progression of skills.

Differentiation

This is another key focus area for Whangaparāoa College. Staff point out the fact that students need a range of activities, and that EP is an option in their toolkit, but not the only one needed for a varied and engaging programme. Deliberately effective use of EP targeted at areas of relevance for each class, subject, topic and situation are always important.

Staff also note that EP offers tools beyond ability-based differentiation, providing an option where students can learn and practice self management skills while still accessing relevant content. One teacher commented that *'those who understand what EP is capable of use it very efficiently and those who don't, don't'* - a comment that clearly identifies that EP has a place in the school, but there is space yet for other staff to access training and upskilling to identify key features that will work for them.

Features of EP staff identified as being especially useful for differentiation include diagnostic testing, self management, the fact that EP enables learner success leading to

greater motivation, the revision and extension options and the ease of accessing work anywhere at any time. They also note that the wide variety of exercises mean that EP is equally useful for learning as well as practicing skills and concepts.

What characterises a student or teacher who prefers EP?

Staff felt that teachers who like to incorporate differentiation into their lessons would be more inclined to utilise EP. They noted that using EP as a primary teaching tool and not as a 'teacher replacement' is vital to ensuring successful use of the platform. A strong theme came through from staff that they enjoy harnessing the benefits offered by EP to save time and effort that can then be redirected back to facilitating learning for students in other ways.

Likewise, staff identified that students who are independent and have a little self management skill tend to benefit most from EP, but did note that anyone who would benefit from having learning differentiated for their specific needs will find the platform useful. Learners who like to work at their own pace, or revisit instructional learning explanations while completing a task are supported by teaching and learning programmes incorporating EP.

Looking ahead

In order to use EP even more effectively, staff are exploring the customisability of lessons on EP, particularly to bring content to an accessible level for students with low literacy ability, or those new to the English language. Teachers feel strongly that EP should be a tool that forms part of their approach, and with so much expertise already on staff at Whangaparāoa College the use of EP will continue to be fine-tuned and expanded.

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