

Five months in and EP is having a significant impact

SCHOOL

Birkdale Intermediate School

COUNTRY

New Zealand

EP SUBSCRIPTIONS

English, Science, Social Sciences, Languages, Maths

CURRICULUM

New Zealand

Kathleen Mitchell is a whānau (home room) and Digitech Specialist teacher at Birkdale Intermediate in Auckland. New Principal Joel King, an EP advocate, introduced EP to all staff at the start of the 2024 academic year and two terms in, Kathleen can already see the impact EP is having on student engagement, differentiation, and teacher confidence with technology.

Birkdale Intermediate, located in Auckland, New Zealand, values empowering students to undertake their own learning journey, be that independently or with a teacher, and with a focus on their own interests and passions. They were seeking a highly engaging digital platform to enable students to access a wide range of quality resources, inside and outside the classroom, to support this vision. Principal Joel King proposed Education Perfect (EP), having used it successfully at his previous school.

About Birkdale Intermediate

Birkdale Intermediate is a state school with a role of three hundred and forty students organised across thirteen mainstream and two Te Reo Māori immersion classes, each with its own whānau (home room) teacher. These are mixed ability composite year 7 and 8 classes studying Maths, Reading, Writing, Social Science, Science, Health, PE, Te Reo Māori, The Arts, Food Technology, Digital Technology and Hard Technology with subject expert

teachers. EP was introduced at the start of the year across all classes.

Rocketing engagement

Kathleen Mitchell, digitech specialist and whānau teacher, responsible for the implementation of EP, has been astounded by the increase in student engagement with learning, “The students are loving EP. On Fridays we have our whānau class all day and spend time covering the core curriculum. Before if I had said we need to do fifty minutes on statistics, I would have struggled to keep them motivated. Now they do the fifty minutes and when we switch to Literacy, they ask if they can carry on using EP.”





Kathleen believes this is due to the fun and pace of the EP tasks, “As a Digitech teacher I understand the educational value of gamification and a pacy approach. EP capitalises on both. The students enjoy the tasks and take any competitions very seriously. They are highly motivated to put the time in, inside and outside class.”

Valuing individual students' efforts

Alongside the increased engagement, Kathleen identified amongst the students a sense that their efforts were worth something, “I think some students had disengaged with online platforms because there was just a right or wrong answer and nothing more. Once they saw the detailed feedback and the easy to understand graphs showing their progress they felt that EP was not only good fun but valid and relevant to them as individual learners. When I spend time with them discussing what I can see on the teacher dashboard, they appreciate that we teachers are still an important part of their learning journey, and that EP is a tool for teachers not a replacement.”

Differentiated learning pathways for every student

In conjunction with the constructive personalised feedback, EP provides recommendations for next steps, “EP shows a teacher where there are gaps in a student's learning. When you have twenty to thirty students, this is where EP comes into its own. Not only can we assign the recommended EP activities but we can also set up small group or individual physical activities to fill those learning gaps.”

The school is using EP to guide students to undertake their own learning journey and help teachers use valuable classroom time to enable every student to reach their potential.

Teacher confidence with technology

Kathleen has also been blown away by the positive impact that the consolidation of digital resources across the school into the one package had on teachers' confidence, “EP is proving to be indispensable for teachers who are not so comfortable using technology in the classroom. All staff and students are using the same platform across every subject, it is user-friendly, and the benefits are immediate, with teachers particularly loving how easy it is to track student progress. Data analytics made easy!”

The Birkdale staff work with the students interchangeably on the core curriculum areas, with whānau teachers supporting the specialist Maths and Literacy teachers during home room time,

“We have set up EP so that all our staff are ‘teachers’ for every class, meaning everyone can see student progress for every subject.”

EP has made it possible for whānau teachers across the school to effortlessly see exactly where a student is on a curriculum strand and assign appropriate activities in EP or in face to face groups, supporting the school's collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

Only a few months into the EP journey, the school cannot yet quantify the impact that the platform has had on student achievement to date. Kathleen is confident that by this time next year they will be able to measure the difference,

“You just have to look at the increase in student engagement, the time and effort they are putting into using the programme, to know that we will see an improvement in our assessment results by this time next year.”