



CASE STUDY - Epping Forest College

Phil Hall is Deputy Principal for Epping Forest Campus, New City College Group, and an experienced OFSTED nominee.



“As a college, we have used eTrackr^{ilp} for about ten years, but it wasn’t used consistently across departments. All that changed when we received an unexpectedly low rating from OFSTED six months before Epping Forest merged with New City College. I was a newly-appointed quality nominee at the time of that inspection. One of my first calls was to VLE Support Ltd to discuss what we could do, as I was very aware that I needed to put a very robust system in place very quickly and knew that we already had eTrackr^{ilp} within the college. We had a very frank conversation and their advice was excellent. They were able to share insights into what had worked in other colleges as well as listening to our particular needs.

Now understanding the potential of eTrackr^{ilp}, we were then in a position to make some really clear decisions across the college about how we would use it; what we were going to track, when reports would be run and the decision that everything should be reported in eTrackr^{ilp} (and that “local” spreadsheets were not acceptable). Dates for progress reviews and reporting were set and our quality calendar included this detail so that all members of staff would know what would be reported on, when.

We are now in a position to clearly demonstrate to OFSTED that we can identify and track issues. However, more than this, we can now accurately track every single learner at risk, follow their interventions and the impact of them. We have been able to establish the crucial difference between a currently-working-at-grade and a predicted grade within eTrackr^{ilp}, so we are far more robust with our interventions. Our learners currently achieve within 0.5% of what we predict they will, thanks to more accurate measuring and monitoring. We even improved achievement by 13.6% in one academic year, in part due to eTrackr^{ilp} allowing us to monitor and take action far more responsively than we could previously.

We now use eTrackr^{ilp} across the college, even for our adult learners (where we just use the elements we need to record unit progress). Where eTrackr^{ilp} really comes into its own is with Study Programmes. We needed a system that would record all elements of the programme in one place: English and Maths, Work Experience, Progression, Disciplinary, EEP hours and so on. eTrackr^{ilp} does all of that. I don’t think any other system tracks learners quite as holistically as eTrackr^{ilp} can.

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eTrackr^{ILP} also looks really good from a student's point of view. Our students like to see how they are progressing and really like the traffic light system – they will want to know why they are red or amber and what they need to do to change this

As a management tool, the reporting functions in eTrackr^{ILP} are incredibly powerful and one of its biggest strengths. The reports offer an exceptional level of detail, allowing you to drill down to individual student level. I talk to colleges who use competitor products and think they are great – so I show them eTrackr^{ILP}'s reports and watch the lightbulb come on!

We have worked out which reports provide the information different members of staff will need at any point; teaching staff use some, curriculum managers use others, quality and SLT use others. It does make me smile when I hear our teaching staff quoting eTrackr^{ILP} report numbers but that just demonstrates to me what a useful tool it has become for us.

My advice to anyone looking to get the most from eTrackr^{ILP} would be just two points: 1) make sure your management team are engaged with it's potential and are proactive in driving the implementation. 2) take some strategic decisions, as we did, about what you are monitoring and when. Both of these have paid dividends for us.

eNotify

"eNotify has given us really rich, powerful data with which to challenge attendance, both with students and with their parents. It's allowed us to become more proactive with students who actually need support, and at the same time to close the gaps on those who don't. Previously, this data was spread across emails, phone messages and notes but we are much more effective for having it all in one place.

We did have the big debate before we implemented eNotify about whether we would just be making it 'too easy' for students to report absence. However, we decided to try it; I think making all absences unauthorised, even if they have a reason attached to them, means students know an absence will always be followed up on; it has given us really clear data on why students are absent.

The fact that eNotify is completely integrated with eTrackr^{ILP} is really helpful and means eTrackr^{ILP} remains our key source of student data."

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