Accelerating student achievement **with CEM data**

Beijing International Bilingual Academy (BIBA), established in 2006, caters for international students as well as Chinese local students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

BIBA provides the Cambridge IGCSE programme within the IB Middle Years Programme framework, alongside the Chinese National Curriculum, followed by the IB Diploma Programme in Grades 11 and 12.

Head of Pedagogy and School Accreditation, Mr Parras Majithia, explains how they are using Cambridge CEM data to support internal processes to accelerate student achievement through use of evidence on research-based practices.

'In terms of data, we are moving towards more evidence-based practices,' Parras explains. 'We chose to implement Cambridge CEM assessments across the Middle and High Schools because it is adaptive. Additionally, because it is one test rather than multiple tests, and because it does not require students to have specific curriculum knowledge but looks instead at students' learning profiles.'

Individualising student support

Over the last few years, BIBA has collected a lot of data from different sources.

'We are now at the stage where we want to push through with using the data more and use it in different ways: at subject level, grade level; programme level, school level,' says Parras. 'We also want to support teachers to use different data sets at individual class level to be able to provide individualised support for students.'

'We are looking at the relationships between all of the different types of data, including from CEM, to ask questions. Those questions then help to interrogate the data set more closely, and then help us to go back and look at our classroom practice.'

Supporting teachers
and bilingual students

The CEM data is particularly valuable for bilingual schools.

'We know that typically in bilingual schools, the English vocabulary of a student profile is often a weaker area, because most students are operating their second or third language. Cambridge CEM's Yellis and CEM IBE assessments have been helpful for us in looking at our student profiles, and now we have more of an evidence base enabling our teachers to have further detailed understanding about the students in front of them. We feel the CEM data has real potential to have positive impacts on the student experience and their progress.'

'The student feedback on the assessments has also been positive. One of the key reasons they have said that they preferred CEM to some of the other tests they have experienced is that it is one short test: 50 minutes to an hour maximum, and it covers a range of questions.'

'Having the CEM data helps us to have learning conversations with the students, and it is designed to help both teachers and students with their learning. CEM data has been a real win for the students, and a win for us, as well, in terms of logistics and organization because its setup is also relatively easy.'

Evaluating
educational outcomes

'In order to evaluate the educational outcomes, we are conducting some historical analysis, looking at the CEM data, the predictions and the IGCSE results of all cohorts which have been through the school.'

'We are also working on identifying the relationships between the variables for us to see at a strategic level the impact of any changes that have been made in the last few years, and then also what changes we might need to make in our structures in order to better meet the needs of our students who are coming through.'

'So, we are taking the data and turning it into information. And it is about using the professional judgment of our educators to build and develop strategies to support student learning... and that is when it becomes really useful. We want our teachers to own the data and use it in ways that will assist in their planning, assessments and professional conversations.'

Asking the
right questions

Parras believes that sharing the data and asking questions is key.

'Once we have downloaded the CEM data, we start by reviewing it against other datasets we have, identifying any patterns and seeing what questions are raised,' he explains. 'We share the appropriate data with different stakeholders and then we can start to ask more questions and drill down a little further.'

'For example, at cohort level we have been comparing the different outcomes of boys and girls, and the difference in scores in each of the Vocabulary, Mathematics and Non-Verbal sections.'

'Some of the CEM data, particularly on individual students and individual scores, did show us some surprises which was good to see, because it gave us the chance to ask more questions and then to investigate other areas of the curriculum within the school.'

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Find out more: cem.org