



Using Cambridge CEM assessments to get insight into students' minds

Nahar International School, Mumbai, opened in 2014 with the mission to provide an inclusive, intellectually stimulating but also an emotionally caring environment that allows children to explore their full potential.

The school provides a complete Cambridge International Programme from Cambridge Early Years to Cambridge Advanced, with students working towards Cambridge IGCSEs and Cambridge International AS & A Levels. The school is also a Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications Centre which offers a Certificate in Teaching and Learning and Educational Leadership.

Principal, Vandana Arora, explains their reasons for introducing CEM assessments as a way of gaining a better understanding of students' learning needs.

Understanding student potential

Nahar International School had a clear purpose in seeking externally validated assessments.

'We already had a lot of assessment data in the school, for example from in-class observations, internal assessments, prior attainment and so on. But we felt that we didn't know enough about the full range of students' ability, or how we might help them reach their maximum potential.'

'We liked CEM assessments because they aren't knowledge-based, you don't have to prepare the students for it, and when we examined the reports, we saw how they could help us understand our students' true potential.'

'The CEM assessments showed us a completely new angle to the way the students learn in a way we had never seen before.'

“ We looked at many assessments until we found CEM. We liked the fact that CEM is part of Cambridge, so it fits well with all of our programmes, and that the assessments were research-based and used extensively in the UK and around the world. ”

Insight for teachers and parents

CEM assessments have helped Nahar International School gain a deeper understanding of student needs, as well as identifying patterns and trends, Vandana explains.

'CEM assessments give us externally validated, objective predictions and indications for the reasons behind students' performance levels, which has really helped teachers validate their own opinions. It has also helped them to ask questions about how they can help the students reach where they should be and get parents involved in supporting the whole child.'



Whole school improvement

'With this kind of data, we can see trends and patterns and start identifying where the gaps are, why the gaps are there, what are the barriers and constraints which are there and which areas do we need to improve, so it all feeds into the whole school improvement plan.'

'The CEM assessment data and reports have given us insight for both teachers and parents alike. CEM has given us authentic data which helped us understand more about each student and the factors that play a part in their achievement.'

“ These assessments really help teachers and parents come together on one page. It has helped the teachers to have conversations with the parents to identify any gaps between the potential and the real performance of students.



Vandana's top tips on how CEM assessments can be introduced in your school

1 Understand your reasons for doing the assessment



With any assessment you adopt, you should begin with a clear intention in mind of how you are going to use the data that comes from it.

2 Get buy-in from the teachers



It's important that teachers are convinced about it, and they see a benefit in it for themselves. It has a much better impact if the teachers understand the whole idea and the reasons behind it.

3 Have an orientation with the parent body.



Just giving the assessment results doesn't give the maximum benefit, so it's important to have buy-in from the parent body and show them the benefits of the assessment data.

4 Explain the reasons for the assessment to the students

Particularly in senior grades, it's important to make the students clear about why the assessment is not an additional burden and why it's a benefit for them.



5 Take each stakeholder seriously



Working with each stakeholder first and then launching the programme has been a huge benefit for us and would benefit other schools.