

Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications – Annual Review Pilot Report

A report on the findings from the Cambridge PDQ Annual Review Pilot

January 2018

Overview

In September 2017, the Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQ) Team undertook the first pilot of their Annual Review process across 5 regions. The 5 pilot regions were:

- East Asia
- MENA
- Pakistan
- SEAP
- South Asia

These regions were chosen as they represent a range of maturity in terms of the length of time that Professional Development Centres have been established there.

Timeline:

September 2017	The Annual Review process was launched with some communications briefings to all PDQ centres letting them know which regions would be involved and when the Annual Review would take place. This was also an opportunity for centres to begin to ask questions.
October 2017	The Annual Review templates were delivered to all pilot centres with detailed instructions and exemplars to support the process. They were asked to complete their self-evaluation and to request their candidates to complete an anonymous online survey.
November 2017	Returned Annual Review forms were assessed externally by three commissioned colleagues who are familiar with the Cambridge PDQs. They assessed against a rubric which allowed them to create a feedback report.
December 2017	Feedback was returned to centres and reports were compiled to look at the data.
January 2018 and onwards	The Annual Review data will be used to allow the PDQ Team and regional colleagues to provide support to weaker centres and to promote the best practice being seen in stronger centres.

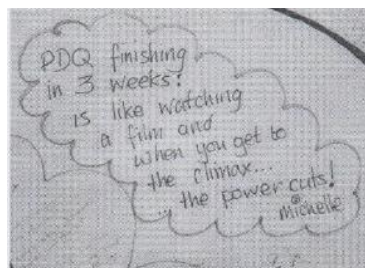
Key Reflections from Centres

The majority of centres provided interesting and thought provoking reflections on their programmes to date. What follows is a collection of the most frequent comments and some interesting specific quotes from a range of centres.

Centre Strengths

- The effect on teaching and learning:
 - “The PDQ programme at ... is having an effect on teaching and learning, and contributing to a cultural shift in the faculty”
 - “We do see the changes of teaching styles from PDQ candidates and we believe that this will in turn to make positive changes to the teaching styles of the whole school.”
 - Candidates’ new knowledge “has provided them with the confidence to try different approaches and activities without feeling that they are taking a big risk”
 - “Often [candidates] don’t leave immediately after the [guided learning] lesson has finished and stay behind to talk more”

From a PDQ centre’s ‘Graffiti Wall’



- Teachers are gaining trust and building rapport with each other which facilitates a sharing learning community and encourages them to collaborate to solve problems that they face.
 - “The candidates are now agents of change in their schools and slowly catalysing a change in the culture to one of learning and innovation”
- Incentives
 - “Salary enhancements and public recognition for colleagues completing PDQs also provides some motivation “
- Mentors
 - “having a mentor is beneficial”. The mentors are “developing another management style”
 - “supportive mentors are crucial to the success of the programme”
 - “The materials on mentoring were a great help as it convinced the mentors how valuable they are and how they can impact the candidates’ learning and practice.”
- Culture change
 - “We were able to build congeniality where teachers built personal friendships and there were positive interactions where they were able to support and motivate each other to complete CIDTL.”
 - “While the school management team has been working with [teachers] for years to update their teaching methods to include constructive approaches, the course has helped them to understand why this is necessary by introducing them to key learning theories.”
 - “Teachers are no longer as resistant to change and new ideas as they used to be, they are more comfortable with being observed and taking feedback, and they are more open to training and professional development.”

- “PDQS have been a game changer ... As a teacher education centre, there are several intense programmes we offer schools and the wash back effect of these PDQS is palpable in everything we do. Personally the PDQs have helped me live my dream.
- Succession planning
 - Through this course, I was able to identify Vice Principals and Coordinators and this has helped me with the leadership legacy planning.”

Centre Challenges

- Candidate recruitment
 - “We must address the issue of enrolment of teachers to the program with more open and frank discussions amongst our own staff”
- Resources
 - “We need to gather more resources from reference books and videos to enrich the content.”
- Mentors
 - Candidates report not being supported by a good mentor
 - “Finding time to spend with mentors was difficult”
 - “Should the mentors, who do spend a substantial amount of time and energy in mentoring, get some acknowledgement (in the form of a certificate or the like) from CAIE?”
 - “We have to guide our mentors to practice the approach of asking questions such as why, why not, how, which and what to help candidates reflect more.
 - “Mentors need to be more proactive and should provide feedback in a more productive way with reflective and thought provoking questions.”
 - “Most mentors neither discuss nor mentor the draft lesson plans with the candidates. Consequently teachers teach lessons that are not very active or coherent. We have addressed this by mentoring the candidates on one draft session plan at least in Module1.”
- Language issues
 - “This challenge makes our candidates not comfortable when the time comes for expressing their learning and understanding as well as, expressing their reflection through the written essays.”
- Academic skill level
 - “Overall, the candidates had poor academic writing skills and needed a lot of extra support with understanding what expected with the questions, how to quote and reference, and how to write academically.”
 - “Our candidates need to be able to use appropriate referencing and citations, which should only be used to justify and back up own ideas.”
 - “We need to help our teachers to improve their critical thinking skill and to reflect more on their teaching and practice so that they are not just describing experiences and theories but actually analysing their experiences and applying theory to better understand their practice.”
- Examiner feedback
 - “A detailed analysis of each candidate would help candidates to improve in the future. Assessment data and exemplars shared by Cambridge do not show how a ‘pass’ can be raised to a ‘distinction’.”
- Recognition
 - “We need to work with CIE-PDQ team to ensure equal weightage by our country’s educational boards to the CIE courses alongside the B.ED course which is a

mandatory requirement for teachers in India. This is a major deterrent for interested candidates wanting to pursue the teaching learning qualifications offered by CIE as PDQ's."

Key Learning

- Establish a mentoring programme – select, train and assign mentors to candidates
- Give higher priority to ensure timely submission of portfolios
- The centre has to maintain an acceptable standard for submission even if the candidates are willing to take risks with sub-standard work
- A higher emphasis on reading does not help candidates to connect theory to practice. Trainers need to provide more guidance on how to do this.

Centre requests

- Training
 - "more face to face sessions for school leaders and PLs"
 - "make peers among PL community so they can share resources and best practices"

Key Feedback on Annual Review Process from Centres

Once centres had completed and returned their Annual Review they were asked for their views on the process and the support they received. Below are the headlines from this survey:

- 100% of respondents felt that they had had enough information about the Annual Review before they received it.
- 14% of respondents did not feel supported by their senior leader whilst compiling the Annual Review.
- 81% of respondents felt confident that their candidates had completed the anonymous survey.
- Of the anonymous survey of candidates, some commented:
 - "I think this is the best and easiest way to receive our candidates' feedback."
 - "I thought keeping it anonymous helps getting authentic feedback"
 - "I would have appreciated if as Program Manager I could review the response of my candidates to survey questions. It could have helped me in reflecting and revisiting my plans if required. But now I don't know what is their opinion about the program"
- 95% of respondents felt that they were clear about what was expected of them during the Annual Review. One commented: "we were unsure as to the level of detail and evidence required to back up our thinking."
- 90% of respondents felt they had enough support material to help them complete their Annual Review. One commented: "It would have been great if you could have emailed us a pack with all of the documents"
- 81% of respondents made use of the Annual Review support page. The remaining 19% found the page after they had completed their review.
- 81% of respondents felt that the questions in the Annual Review allowed them to reflect appropriately on their programme. The other 19% would have liked:
 - An opportunity to give feedback on what it is like to be a PDQ Centre.
 - An opportunity to feedback on the commitment level of their candidates
 - An opportunity to highlight context specific issues
- 81% of respondents liked the fact that the Annual Review is linked to reaccreditation. The other 19% commented:

- They would have liked the turnaround of feedback to have been quicker and that it made more sense for accreditation to be after the reviews had been read.
- They felt that having been a centre for more than 10 years should have exempted them from the review
- We should consider other measures for reaccreditation
- Reviews should be timed to be at the ends of programmes
- **Other comments:**
 - “I like the opportunity to self reflect on what we do and the impact of it on our candidates and school. It was also appreciated that the length of the review was not too burdensome. However, there is no way to really measure what we have written and I wonder if every centre responds truthfully, reflectively and accurately, and how would or could this be measured”
 - “It is really a very good and indeed required step taken by the Cambridge. This will not only give us a chance to introspect formally but also we get to know the good practices and steps taken by other centres across the globe. Thanks once again for taking this initiative.”
 - “It was an interesting experience and helped to form the contact and structure of the changes I would like to implement.”
 - “I thought it was a short and sure way of checking on the centre's performance and yet very developmental in nature as it is linked to a feedback .I really enjoyed sharing my experience and learnings and am glad Cambridge cares for the same . Thank You”
 - “It is something new but perhaps a two or three-year review would be better as there may not be enough candidates who register for this programme within a 1-year period.”
 - “There should be separate feedback forms for the senior leader and trainers to allow for triangulation of data.”
 - “This is a brilliant way of assessing where each centre and PLs stand in terms of how effective the delivery of the programme has been. In fact, I am thinking of carrying out similar review process internally a couple of times before the annual review, with my faculty, mentors and candidates, so we have sound data to share. Thank you for the initiative.”

Next Steps

- The PDQ Team and regional links will now work with the Annual Review documents to ensure that best practice can be shared through Programme Leader Community and to develop support plans for those centres that need it.
- Recommendations report is being written to allow learning from the pilot to take place and to establish the best way forward for next year's review.