



Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications Teaching Bilingual Learners

Beijing Luhe International Academy became a Cambridge Professional Development Qualification (PDQ) centre in 2017 and offers the Cambridge PDQ Certificate in Teaching Bilingual Learners to its staff. The programme plays an important role in the academy's professional development strategy, supporting teachers to build their confidence in bilingual teaching and improve outcomes for learners. The academy educates over 400 learners across years 10, 11 and 12.

About Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Designed to support school-based professional development, Cambridge PDQs are based on research and best practice in teaching, learning and leadership. Candidates work both independently and in collaboration with colleagues to reflect on their professional context, develop new strategies and apply learning to their current practice.

With structured support from Cambridge, Programme Leaders design their Cambridge PDQ programme to suit the context and needs of their candidates. Each Cambridge PDQ programme is offered at Certificate (level 4) and Diploma (Level 5). Candidates submit a portfolio of evidence to Cambridge for assessment. Successful completion leads to the candidate being awarded their qualification.

Teaching Bilingual Learners

The Cambridge PDQs in Teaching Bilingual Learners supports candidates' professional growth and career development by offering the opportunity to explore the challenges and principles of teaching through an additional language. The qualification is available at both Certificate and Diploma level:

- [Certificate in Teaching Bilingual Learners \(5887\)](#)
- [Diploma in Teaching Bilingual Learners \(5888\)](#).

Cambridge PDQ Programme Leader

The Programme Leader, usually a senior member of staff at the school, is key to the success of a Cambridge PDQ course, overseeing programme design and delivery, co-ordinating mentors and monitoring progress. To become accredited, a Programme Leader completes an online course, delivered by Cambridge. They have access to a wealth of support.

PROGRAMME LEADER PERSPECTIVE:



TRACEY ORR

Teacher of English, Literature and History at Beijing Luhe International Academy.

Tracey tells us about her experiences of delivering the Cambridge PDQ in Teaching Bilingual Learners, which she has sole responsibility for at the school.

"We had a very specific institutional goal in mind for the Cambridge PDQ in Teaching Bilingual Learners (TBL). We have a long-standing target to encourage local Chinese staff to deliver 70% of their lessons in English but teachers have varying levels of preparation to meet that objective.

"We recognised the need to strengthen our framework of support for the teachers and on reviewing the content of the TBL syllabus, we determined that this would be a very valuable programme."

Selecting the first teachers to take part

"We chose to run the inaugural TBL programme with a small group of staff who are in a good position to disseminate the methodology and strategies in their departments: the Head of Academic Affairs, the Head of Economics, the Head of Science Department and the Senior Chemistry Teacher.

"All are local Chinese teachers with strong English skills who were quite comfortable conducting lessons in English but none of them had reached the institutional goal of a 70/30 English/Chinese language split.

"This was because they were sometimes doubtful of their English skill level, especially when under time constraints and this led them to rely more heavily on Chinese language.

Designing a programme to meet candidates' needs

"We scheduled four periods into the timetable a week for guided learning sessions so that no personal time is

required. Every training session is a combination of theory and demonstration of methodology and strategies from course resources.

'I chose a core set of strategies for all candidates to incorporate into their practice such as "Do you hear what I hear" (Silver, Strong and Perini), "jump-start" (Echavarria, Vogt and Short) and "retrieve taking" (Agarwal and Bain).

'Modelling the strategies as part of the guided learning means teachers can experience them from the point of view of being a student. It is often eye-opening for them to be in this role.

'Candidates are encouraged to spend a few minutes discussing the modelled strategy and, whenever possible, use it themselves in their lessons in the coming week.

'With this collaborative advancement of teaching skills, we can build a store of common experiences and share reflections on how effective the implementation was and what could be done to make it more impactful. Candidates also research and choose strategies of their own.

Supporting candidates in producing portfolios

'One of the key practical approaches I took was to create a framework of "graphic organisers" to help candidates ensure that they are including all target outcomes in their writing and meeting the requirements of the assessment criteria.

'I find that once the requirements have been clearly and logically laid out in this framework, it is virtually impossible for candidates to miss meeting the requisites. This model is also something practical they can carry forward into their own teaching.

'We set the aim of meeting the distinction level of all assessment criteria. To achieve distinction, candidates must reflect thoroughly on each aspect of their classroom practice and identify which students benefited. The depth of reflection required can only be achieved by honestly analysing the strengths and weaknesses of their own teaching.

'We build in some time for candidates to meet and discuss their progress together. This peer review of portfolios is very helpful for candidates to see where they can strengthen their writing and presentation and, again, it serves as a strong model for the peer assessment process that they can apply in their own lessons.

'PDQ graduates serve as mentors for the new PDQ cohort, helping them maintain reflective thinking on pedagogy.'



Exterior view of Beijing Luhe International Academy

Benefits for teachers and learners

'The Cambridge PDQ programme has had a great impact on our school. The quality of teaching practice has improved markedly.

'The ultimate target is for our students to achieve their desired scores in Cambridge exams and, in the long run, be successful at their chosen universities overseas in English-speaking countries.

'Teachers are designing lessons according to the principles of active learning, they skillfully employ formative assessment techniques and the results are manifested in improved student participation and ultimately academic achievement.'



A MENTOR'S PERSPECTIVE: HUI KANG

Head of the English Department,
Beijing Luhe International Academy.

Why did you become a mentor for the Cambridge PDQ in Teaching Bilingual Learners (TBL)?

I am interested in helping teachers from a diverse range of departments develop their bilingual teaching skills. I believe supporting them in enhancing their use of English can have a long-term impact by supporting students' academic growth and preparing them for future study.

Did you already have experience in mentoring?

I had mentored teachers in my own department as part of our new-teacher induction programme and this has given me insight into the importance of offering support. By applying the skills I developed, I am better equipped to guide mentees in the PDQ programme from various departments, helping them effectively integrate bilingual teaching strategies into their curriculum.

“ The programme has had a great impact on our school and the quality of teaching practice has improved markedly. ”



What training did you receive as a PDQ mentor?

As part of the PDQ programme, my mentee attends weekly classes with the PDQ Programme Leader. I also attend the sessions at key points in the programme and actively participate in them. The sessions helped me understand the structure of the programme and the specific needs of my mentee.

What does your role as PDQ mentor involve?

I provide general English support, helping my mentee integrate bilingual teaching strategies into their practice. This includes guiding them on how to use English effectively in their classroom and offering advice on specific language-related challenges. I set clear targets for them, hold regular meetings to track progress and offer constructive feedback on their teaching practices. I also support them in reflecting on their bilingual teaching strategies and adjusting these to improve student outcomes.

What has been your biggest success with a mentee?

My mentee from the Economics Department significantly improved their ability to use English in the classroom, especially to explain complex concepts. By working together on strategies to simplify language and incorporate more interactive activities, they have become more confident in teaching bilingually.

What has been your biggest challenge as a mentor?

Finding the balance between providing enough support and respecting the mentee's teaching schedule. TBL teachers often have limited time to focus on bilingual teaching strategies within an already packed curriculum, so it's crucial to use the time we have efficiently. This requires careful planning to ensure that each mentoring session is focused and productive, while allowing my mentee to make progress at a manageable pace. Managing time effectively is also essential to balance the needs of my mentee with my responsibilities as Head of Department.

What transferable skills have you gained?

This experience has deepened my understanding of how to effectively guide others while enhancing my own leadership skills, especially in a diverse teaching environment. I have become better at asking open-ended questions and helping my mentee think more deeply about their teaching methods. I have received valuable feedback on my mentoring approach, which has made me more reflective in my own practice. I have also become more skillful in giving constructive feedback to teachers within my own team and improved my interpersonal skills.

What advice would you give to a new PDQ mentor?

Focus on building a supportive relationship with your mentee. Establish clear communication from the start and set achievable goals together.



A CANDIDATE'S PERSPECTIVE: NIUE DANNI

Teacher, Economics, Beijing Luhe International Academy

Why did you take the Cambridge PDQ in Teaching Bilingual Learners (TBL)?

Economics places a heavy English-language demand on students. There are many terms and expressions to memorise and the exam requires essay writing, which is a big challenge. I wanted to make my teaching more effective.

How do you work with your mentor?

I have regular short meetings with my mentor to talk about the targets set in the guided learning sessions and she gives me formal feedback every time she observes one of my lessons. We discuss the effectiveness of my methods and the improvements I could make next time. If I find it difficult to think of an appropriate activity, she gives me suggestions on how to design one.

How do you gather evidence for your portfolio?

I write down my reflections in my reflective journal every time I use a TBL method or activity and record my effectiveness at that activity. My mentor also records videos so I can review the activity and see where it has gone well and where it needs improvement. I also gather evidence from students' in-class answers, output, discussion content and the quality of their homework. I use AI to give me some suggestions for theory research, but I write my portfolio myself.

“ This experience has deepened my understanding of how to effectively guide others while enhancing my own leadership skills. ”

Do your learners know you are part of a PDQ programme?

Yes. They see me as an active learner who is learning new teaching methods and they enjoy using the different activities. They know they are making improvements in their knowledge and understanding, and in their English speaking, listening and writing.

What has been the biggest impact on your classroom and leadership practice?

I am able to give more specific advice to other teachers in my department and I have more ways to encourage active learning that benefits the students. Before I learned about concepts such as translanguaging, I would randomly switch between English and Chinese without thinking about how to scaffold and rehearse for effective learning. Now my teaching method is much clearer and it is more helpful to students.

What has been the biggest challenge you have encountered?

It can take more time to prepare, organise and carry out a TBL activity than it takes to deliver a traditional lecture-based lesson. However, I have witnessed that since our teachers have been using PDQ methods, they have been more effective in improving understanding in the long run. Students remember the knowledge taught using PDQ methods for a longer period.

What advice would you give other candidates who are considering the Cambridge PDQ in Teaching Bilingual Learners?

I strongly recommend this programme and advise school leaders and teachers to be open-minded about accepting this advanced way of teaching. If teachers who are used to the traditional way of teaching embrace the theory and new strategies and methods, once they have used them a few times, they will be able to see real progress in their students.

“ I strongly recommend this programme and advise school leaders and teachers to be open-minded about accepting this advanced way of teaching. ”

For more details about Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications go to: cambridgeinternational.org/pdq