

## **Bridging Pedagogy and Professionalism: the Influence of Teaching Professionalisation on Student Learning**

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### **Abstract**

This study explores the impact of teaching professionalisation on student learning within the context of higher education, focusing on the experiences of academics who have completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipHE). Rooted in an interpretivist paradigm, the research employed a qualitative case study approach to gain in-depth insights into how formal professional development shapes teaching practices and, in turn, influences student learning outcomes. A purposive sample of 20 academic staff members from a single higher education institution participated in semi-structured interviews. All participants had successfully completed the PGDipHE within the past five years. Data were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns, beliefs, and shifts in pedagogical perspectives. Findings indicate that the professionalisation process through the PGDipHE significantly enhanced participants' reflective practice, pedagogical confidence, and adoption of student-centred teaching strategies. Academics reported a deeper understanding of curriculum design, assessment literacy, and inclusive practices, which contributed to more engaging and effective learning environments. Moreover, participants noted improved student feedback, greater student engagement, and enhanced academic performance as perceived indicators of positive change in their teaching. The study highlights that professionalisation is not merely a formal credentialing process, but a transformative journey that reshapes academic identity and fosters a culture of continuous pedagogical improvement. These findings underscore the value of structured teaching qualifications in strengthening the quality of higher education and advancing student success. This research contributes to the growing discourse on teaching excellence and academic development, offering implications for policymakers, institutional leaders, and educators committed to enhancing learning and teaching in higher education through meaningful professionalisation initiatives.

**Keywords:** Professionalization, Higher Education, Pedagogical Practice, Student Learning, Academic



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