

ABSTRACT

Over the years, programmes such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PGDipHE) have been developed and introduced both worldwide and in South Africa in response to the rapidly changing academic environment. The emphasis of such programmes is typically on the development of a scholarly approach to teaching, assessment and curriculum design. Much research has been done on the way such programmes facilitate the development of academic practice, academics' sense of reflexivity as well as providing academics with the insight and skills needed to better design and develop curricula. Not much has been said, however, about the development of academic identity over time within a PGDipHE. This is a case study changing identity.

The focus of this social realist study is on an engineering academic's personal, transformative journey through such a PGDipHE programme. The purpose of the study is to describe and explain shifts in academic identity over time through this journey. In realising this goal, Archer's morphogenetic framework provides a good theoretical framework as it highlights the importance of the interplay between structures and cultures in the emergence of one's personal powers and potentials. The Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) dimensions of Specialization and Semantics are used as explanatory frameworks to describe and account for shifts in academic identity through making explicit changes in discourse. In this research report, I argue for the use of a principled and scholarly approach for research within the field Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The social realist framework emerged as being particularly useful in examining shifts in academic identity within such a PGDipHE. The analysis highlighted the qualitative nature of the shifts in identity over time. It also enabled one to trace changes in discourse over time. The practice of writing responses to articles emerged as particularly instrumental in the development of an educational gaze and facilitating shifts in academic identity.