

# Curriculum Reform and Teacher Professionalisation in the Global South: Transitioning from TTC to ADE in Guyana

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) in Guyana, placing the reform within global efforts towards teacher professionalisation in the Global South. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research examines policy documents, curriculum frameworks, institutional reports, and stakeholder insights to explore both structural and psychological aspects of the reform. A Psychological Pathways Model is introduced to explain how changes affect teacher identity, self-efficacy, and instructional adaptability. Findings indicate that the ADE improves teacher preparedness, professional recognition, and classroom practice through enhanced curricula, higher entry standards, and expanded training. The study emphasises the importance of integrating structural, curricular, and psychological components in reform and presents recommendations aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) for strengthening teacher quality in resource-constrained settings.

**Keywords:** teacher education, Global South, self-efficacy, professionalisation, SDG 4

## INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality remains central to education reform worldwide and is consistently acknowledged as the most influential factor within schools that affects student achievement and the overall effectiveness of educational systems. Across various educational contexts, initiatives aimed at enhancing learning outcomes have progressively concentrated on improving teacher preparation, elevating professional standards, and aligning teacher education with the changing demands of 21st-century classrooms. This international focus underscores the increasing evidence that effective teaching necessitates not only robust subject knowledge but also pedagogical skills, adaptability, and continuous professional development.

Recent global policies and research further underscore the urgency of teacher professionalisation. The UNESCO Global Report on Teachers projects a global shortage of 44 million teachers by 2030, emphasising the need for well-trained, qualified, and supported educators to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2024). Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stresses that the future of education depends on strengthening teacher professionalism through greater autonomy, continuous professional development, and research-informed practice (OECD, 2023, 2024). These perspectives reinforce the centrality of teacher education reform as a strategic priority for national development.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented disruptions to global education systems, and Guyana was no exception. The Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE), founded in 1928 as the nation's sole institution for teacher training, was closed in March 2020 due to public health restrictions and remained non-operational until August 2020. Considering its residential structure and dependence on face-to-face instruction at satellite centers, there was initially no established mechanism to sustain teacher training. This situation posed a substantial systemic risk, as ongoing teacher attrition through retirement and other exit routes would not have been mitigated by the training of new entrants to the profession.

In response, the Government of Guyana and key education stakeholders initiated a rapid, strategic transformation of teacher education delivery. Investments were made to transition CPCE to a predominantly online and blended learning model. Although initially projected for January 2021, full implementation was achieved by April 2021, following the development of the necessary technological infrastructure, digital content, and learning management systems. This transition reflects broader global shifts towards flexible, technology-enabled teacher education systems in response to crisis conditions (UNESCO, 2024).

Prior to 2020, the capacity for teacher training was constrained, with an annual maximum output of approximately 535 graduates, provided through a single central campus at Turkeyen and 14 satellite centres. The transition to online and distributed learning has markedly enhanced access. The College of Professional Education (CPCE) now maintains an integrated network comprising the main campus, 20 satellite centres, and over 100 decentralised learning locations across hinterland and remote communities. This expansion has facilitated increased participation in teacher education, especially among underserved populations, including those residing in geographically isolated areas.

Furthermore, the restructuring of teacher education pathways has enhanced both efficiency and accessibility. Educators are now able to complete an Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at CPCE within two years, subsequently progressing to a Bachelor's degree at the University of Guyana over an additional two-year period. This development signifies a considerable reduction in duration compared to previous models, wherein attaining graduate teacher status could require up to seven years. These reforms are consistent with international trends that emphasize streamlined, competency-based pathways for teacher education (Tikly, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2024).

The impact of these reforms has been substantial. Between 2020 and 2025, approximately 9,136 teachers have been trained or are in training, contributing to an expansion of the national teaching workforce from approximately 10,000 to 15,000 teachers, representing a 50% increase. Significantly, this growth signifies not only an increase in numbers but also enhancements in the quality and professional preparation of educators, thereby bolstering the overall capacity of the education system.

Significant progress has also been made in addressing regional disparities. In hinterland regions (Regions 1, 7, 8, and 9), the proportion of trained teachers increased from below 43% prior to 2020 to approximately 83% by 2024. Historically, educators in these regions encountered extended training pathways and limited access to degree-level programmes. The introduction of the ADE and the expansion of decentralised delivery have mitigated these disparities, thereby fostering greater parity in teacher preparation across diverse geographic areas.

Within the Global South, these challenges are often exacerbated by structural inequalities, including disparities in access to quality teacher education, resource constraints, and uneven distribution of qualified teachers across rural and hinterland regions. Research indicates that shortages of adequately trained teachers and gaps in professional development significantly undermine instructional quality and student learning outcomes in these contexts (O'Sullivan, 2022). Moreover, emerging scholarship highlights persistent issues such as fragmented curricula, limited integration of inclusive pedagogies, and unequal access to digital learning resources (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). These realities necessitate systemic reforms to enhance both the quality and contextual relevance of teacher education.

In response, numerous nations within the Global South have implemented reforms to shift from certificate-based teacher training models to more comprehensive, degree-level programmes. These initiatives seek to harmonize national systems with international standards and to promote reflective practice, research engagement, and inclusive pedagogical approaches. Recent scholarly work emphasizes that the transformation of teacher education is crucial for attaining sustainable development goals and enhancing overall educational quality (Tikly, 2023).

Guyana's transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) signifies a notable national reform as part of the wider global movement. The reform's objectives include

elevating teacher training standards, reinforcing professional identity, and augmenting teachers’ ability to manage diverse classroom environments. Through the inclusion of more sophisticated academic content, the expansion of practicum opportunities, and the integration of research-based methodologies, the ADE program embodies a holistic approach to the professional development of educators.

At the institutional level, CPCE has implemented this reform in accordance with international frameworks, including UNESCO’s (2023) Recommendation on the Teaching Profession and the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), specifically Target 4.c, which underscores the importance of increasing the availability of qualified teachers. Additionally, the reform demonstrates how crisis-induced innovation, particularly the transition to online and decentralized learning modalities, can serve as a catalyst for enduring transformation within teacher education systems.

This study investigates the TTC–ADE transition as a systemic reform, emphasizing the structural and psychological aspects of change. It aims to address the subsequent research inquiries:

1. How was the transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at the Cyril Potter College of Education conceptualised and implemented?
2. To what extent does the TTC–ADE reform align with international policy frameworks, particularly the UNESCO (2023) Recommendation on the Teaching Profession and SDG 4?
3. How does the reform influence teachers’ professional identity, self-efficacy, and instructional practices?
4. What are the primary enablers and constraints influencing the implementation of the reform within a Global South context?
5. What transferable lessons can the CPCE reform offer to teacher education systems in comparable developing contexts?

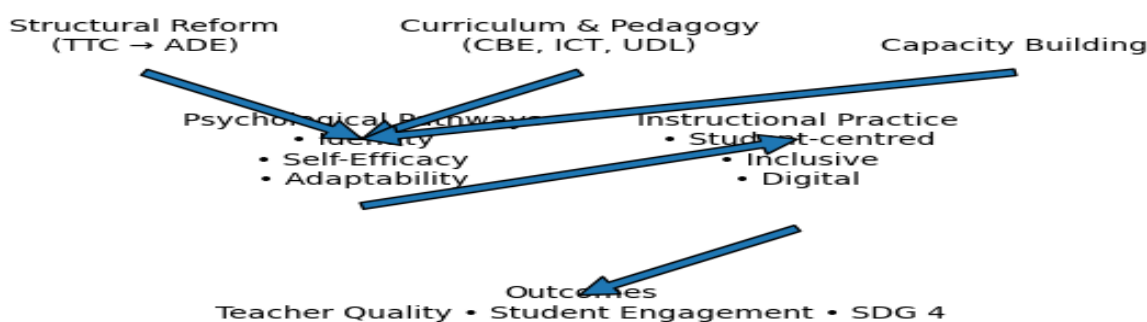
By integrating policy analysis, theoretical framing, and emerging evidence, this study offers a comprehensive account of teacher education reform and its implications for educational transformation in Guyana and similar Global South contexts.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teacher Professionalisation and Global Education Reform

This section examines teacher professionalisation, self-efficacy theory, competency-based education, and global policy frameworks.

### Conceptual Framework Diagram



Teacher professionalisation has become a fundamental aspect of global education reform, reflecting a growing consensus that improving teacher quality is essential to advancing student learning outcomes and achieving sustainable development objectives. As Linda Darling-Hammond et al. (2020, 2024) note, high-performing educational systems emphasise comprehensive initial teacher training, robust clinical practice, and ongoing professional development. These systems regard teaching as a research-informed profession that demands both theoretical understanding and practical application.

Recent global policy discourse reinforces this shift. The UNESCO (2023, 2024) Recommendation on the Teaching Profession emphasises the need to elevate teaching standards through degree-level qualifications, structured career pathways, and improved working conditions. Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023, 2024) highlights the importance of teacher autonomy, professional agency, and ongoing development for building resilient education systems.

Nevertheless, in numerous contexts throughout the Global South, teacher education systems remain influenced by historical imperatives to swiftly broaden access. This frequently leads to shorter, certificate-based programmes that place limited focus on reflective practice and research involvement. As indicated by Bob Moon (2013) and more recent analyses, although these models are effective for workforce expansion, they may not sufficiently prepare teachers for complex, diverse, and technology-rich learning environments.

Consequently, reforms aimed at upgrading teacher qualifications, such as transitioning from certificate to degree-level programmes, are increasingly viewed as vital for improving both the quality of teachers and their professional status (Tikly, 2023).

### **Teacher Self-Efficacy and Professional Identity**

Aside from structural reforms, the effectiveness of teacher education chiefly relies on psychological factors, notably a teacher's confidence in their abilities and professional identity. Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Albert Bandura (1997), pertains to the belief in one's capacity to successfully complete tasks. In the educational sphere, teachers exhibiting high self-efficacy tend to be more innovative in their instructional methods, demonstrate increased perseverance, and are more adept at engaging students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Recent research expands on this perspective, emphasising the importance of teacher identity development in shaping professional practice. Educators' identities are constructed through interactions among personal beliefs, institutional structures, and socio-cultural contexts (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Teacher education programmes play a crucial role in this process by providing opportunities for reflective practice, practical experience, and engagement with established professional standards.

Emerging studies (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; OECD, 2024) indicate that reforms integrating reflective practice, inquiry-based learning, and extended clinical experiences are more likely to enhance both self-efficacy and professional identity. This underscores the significance of examining not only the content of what teachers learn but also the processes through which they internalise and implement this knowledge.

### **Competency-Based Teacher Education**

Competency-based education (CBE) has gained increasing recognition as a framework for aligning teacher preparation with professional standards and classroom realities. According to Martin Mulder (2017), CBE emphasizes the necessity to cultivate measurable knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to effective practice.

#### **In teacher education, competency-based approaches typically involve:**

1. Integration of subject content and pedagogical knowledge
2. Extended practicum and clinical experience
3. Performance-based assessment

#### 4. Alignment with professional teaching standards

Recent literature indicates that Competency-Based Education (CBE) enhances teacher preparedness by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly in developing contexts where classroom challenges are complex and resources are limited (O'Sullivan, 2022; Tikly, 2023). Nevertheless, successful implementation of CBE requires robust institutional capacity, clearly defined assessment frameworks, and ongoing professional development for teacher educators, elements that remain inconsistent across many systems in the Global South.

#### Digital Pedagogy and Inclusive Education

The integration of digital technologies and inclusive practices has become a defining characteristic of modern educational reform. The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, developed by Matthew J. Koehler and Punya Mishra (2009), emphasizes the importance for educators to incorporate technology effectively with pedagogical methods and subject matter expertise.

Simultaneously, inclusive education frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), as advanced by CAST (2018), emphasise the importance of designing adaptable learning environments that address learners' diverse needs. These methodologies are particularly relevant in the Global South, where classrooms often include students with varied linguistic, socio-economic, and learning requirements. Recent research (OECD, 2024; UNESCO, 2024) underscores the need for teacher education programmes to prepare educators to manage both digital transformation and inclusion concurrently. This requires not only technical skills but also pedagogical flexibility and the capacity for critical reflection.

#### Teacher Education Reform in the Global South

Teacher education reform in the Global South is characterised by efforts to balance global standards with local realities. Research highlights several recurring challenges, including:

1. Limited access to high-quality teacher education
2. Uneven distribution of qualified teachers
3. Resource constraints, particularly in rural and hinterland regions
4. Fragmented curriculum and weak integration of theory and practice

Building upon the insights provided by O'Sullivan (2022) and Tikly (2023), it is evident that effective reforms in these sectors are substantially bolstered by a nuanced comprehension of the specific context. This involves implementing adaptable strategies in teacher education, fostering strong collaborations between institutions and schools, and offering ongoing professional development. Such initiatives markedly contribute to resolving systemic challenges and fulfilling local educational needs.

The transition from certificate-based to degree-level programmes in Guyana reflects a broader trend aimed at enhancing educator quality and harmonizing with international policy standards. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these reforms is contingent upon meticulous implementation, sustained investment, and coherence between policy formulation and practical application.

#### Conceptual Gap and Contribution of the Study

While the existing literature provides substantial insights into teacher professionalisation, competency-based education, and policy reform, there remains a gap in understanding how structural reforms manifest as changes in teacher behaviour and classroom practices, particularly within the contexts of the Global South.

This study addresses this gap by proposing the Psychological Pathways Model, which conceptualises reform impact as mediated through:

1. Professional identity formation

2. Self-efficacy development
3. Instructional adaptability
4. Reflective practice

By integrating structural, pedagogical, and psychological dimensions, the study contributes a more holistic understanding of teacher education reform.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) in Guyana. A qualitative approach is well suited to exploring complex educational reforms within their real-world context, particularly when the boundaries between policy, institutional practice, and implementation processes are unclear (Robert K. Yin, 2018). Case study research provides an in-depth, contextually grounded understanding of systemic change, making it well-suited to analysing national education reforms in developing contexts.

The research utilised several qualitative data sources, encompassing policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and institutional reports. Document analysis is broadly acknowledged as a robust methodology for scrutinising policy objectives, institutional priorities, and reform pathways, especially within educational research (Glenn A. Bowen, 2009). These sources offered valuable insights into both the structural architecture and the implementation procedures of the TTC–ADE transition, facilitating triangulation and thereby bolstering the validity of the results.

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, following a systematic process of coding, categorisation, and interpretation. Thematic analysis is a flexible and robust method for identifying patterns across qualitative data and is widely used in education and social science research (Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke, 2006). Initial coding focused on key domains such as policy alignment, curriculum reform, pedagogical innovation, and implementation challenges. These codes were then grouped into broader themes, including teacher professionalisation, competency-based education, digital and inclusive pedagogy, and psychological dimensions such as self-efficacy and professional identity.

To strengthen analytical depth, the study was guided by an integrated framework combining structural, pedagogical, and psychological dimensions. This approach reflects contemporary perspectives in teacher education research, which emphasise the interaction between institutional reforms and teacher-level outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; OECD, 2024). The framework enabled a holistic interpretation of how reforms are designed, enacted, and experienced within the education system.

The credibility and trustworthiness of the study were ensured through several strategies. Triangulation of multiple data sources enhanced the reliability of findings, while detailed contextual description supported transferability (Norman K. Denzin, 1978). Additionally, the use of established theoretical frameworks provided analytical rigour and alignment with existing literature. Transparency was maintained through clear documentation of data sources and analytical procedures.

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. The research relied primarily on publicly available documents and institutional data. Where informal stakeholder insights were incorporated, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, consistent with ethical standards in educational research (American Educational Research Association, 2018).

While the qualitative case study approach allows for in-depth contextual analysis, the findings are context-specific and may not be fully generalisable. However, the study provides valuable insights into teacher education reform in a Global South context and offers transferable lessons for similar education systems.

## Research Design

This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to examine the transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE). A case study design is particularly appropriate for investigating complex educational reforms within their real-life institutional context, especially where the boundaries between policy formulation, curriculum implementation, and institutional practice are fluid and interconnected (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Drawing on Yin's (2018) conception of case study research as an empirical inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within bounded systems, the TTC–ADE reform is treated as an embedded case of systemic transformation in initial teacher education. This approach enables a holistic yet analytically structured examination of multiple units of analysis, including policy alignment, curriculum restructuring, and implementation processes across institutional levels. In addition, the study aligns with methodological guidance from Merriam and Tisdell (2016), who emphasize that qualitative case studies are particularly effective for understanding meaning, process, and context in educational settings where reform is ongoing and multifaceted.

This methodological framing supports a comprehensive exploration of both structural and process-oriented dimensions of the reform, ensuring that institutional change is examined not only in terms of policy intent but also in relation to lived institutional practice and stakeholder interpretation.

## Research Context

The study is conducted in Guyana, a small developing nation situated in the Global South, characterized by considerable geographic and socio-economic diversity, including urban, rural, and remote hinterland communities (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Within this framework, the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) functions as the primary institution responsible for teacher education, responsible for training and certifying educators for the national school system and playing a pivotal role in the development of the country's educational workforce (CPCE, 2020; Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2022). The transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) represents a major policy-driven reform within Guyana's teacher education landscape. This reform is aimed at improving teacher quality, elevating professional standards through alignment with tertiary-level accreditation frameworks, and responding to evolving national and global educational priorities, including digital transformation, competency-based education, and inclusive pedagogical practices (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2019).

This shift additionally reflects broader international trends emphasizing the professionalization of teaching and the enhancement of initial teacher education qualifications to align with 21st-century learning requirements (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019).

The transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) signifies a significant reform driven by policy within Guyana's teacher education framework. The reform seeks to improve teaching quality, elevate professional standards by aligning with higher education accreditation benchmarks, and address evolving national and global educational priorities, including digital transformation, competency-based education, and inclusive pedagogical methodologies (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2019). This transition also reflects broader international trends that emphasise the professionalisation of teaching and the enhancement of initial teacher education qualifications to meet the demands of 21st-century learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019).

The transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) signifies a significant policy-driven reform within Guyana's educational framework for teachers. The reform endeavors to enhance the quality of teaching, elevate professional standards by aligning with higher education accreditation benchmarks, and address the changing national and global educational priorities, including digital transformation, competency-based education, and inclusive pedagogical methodologies (Ministry of Education, Guyana, 2021; UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2019).

This shift additionally reflects broader international trends emphasizing the professionalization of teaching and the enhancement of initial teacher education qualifications to align with 21st-century learning requirements (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019).

### **Data Sources**

Data for this study were drawn from multiple sources to ensure depth and triangulation:

#### **Policy Documents**

1. National education policies and strategic plans
2. Frameworks aligned with the UNESCO (2023) Recommendation on the Teaching Profession

#### **Curriculum and Programme Documents**

1. ADE curriculum frameworks
2. Course outlines and module descriptors
3. Practicum guidelines and assessment structures

#### **Institutional Data**

1. Internal reports from CPCE
2. Programme implementation records
3. Professional development documentation for teacher educators

#### **Informal Stakeholder Insights**

1. Observational and experiential insights from teacher educators and trainees
2. Reflections on programme delivery and classroom practice

These data sources provided a comprehensive view of the reform's design and implementation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed employing a thematic analysis methodology, supervised by established principles of qualitative research. The analysis adhered to a systematic process:

1. Data Familiarisation – Reviewing policy and curriculum documents to identify key themes
2. Initial Coding – Coding data according to categories such as policy alignment, curriculum design, pedagogy, and implementation
3. Theme Development – Grouping codes into broader themes, including:
  1. Teacher professionalization
  2. Competency-based education
  3. Digital and inclusive pedagogy
  4. Psychological dimensions (self-efficacy and identity)
4. Interpretation – Linking themes to theoretical frameworks and research questions

The analysis was informed by constructs from:

- Teacher professionalization theory

- Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997)
- Competency-based education frameworks (Mulder, 2017)

### **Analytical Framework**

To strengthen the interpretive depth of the study, the analysis was guided by an integrated analytical framework combining:

- Structural Dimension: Policy and institutional reform
- Pedagogical Dimension: Curriculum and instructional practices
- Psychological Dimension: Teacher identity, self-efficacy, and adaptability

This multi-dimensional framework enabled a holistic understanding of how reforms are designed, implemented, and experienced.

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

To ensure the credibility and rigor of the study, several strategies were employed:

- Triangulation: Use of multiple data sources (policy, curriculum, institutional)
- Thick Description: Detailed contextualization of the reform process
- Theoretical Alignment: Use of established frameworks to guide analysis
- Transparency: Clear documentation of data sources and analytical procedures

These measures enhance the reliability and transferability of the findings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study primarily relies on document analysis and institutional data. Where informal stakeholder insights were incorporated, anonymity and confidentiality were preserved. No identifiable personal data was utilised, and the research complies with ethical standards for educational research.

### **Limitations**

This study is subject to several limitations:

- Context-specific focus: Findings are based on a single institutional case and may not be fully generalizable
- Emerging evidence: The reform is ongoing, and long-term outcomes are still developing
- Limited primary interview data: The study relies primarily on document analysis and institutional insights

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into teacher education reform in a Global South context and offers transferable lessons for similar systems.

## **FINDINGS**

The reform strengthened curriculum, pedagogy, and teacher preparedness, with increased emphasis on ICT and inclusive education.

The findings of this study are organized around three interconnected dimensions: structural transformation, curriculum and pedagogical reform, and psychological pathways, reflecting both the design and the emergent impact of the TTC–ADE transition at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE). Evidence was drawn from policy documents, curriculum frameworks, institutional reports, and insights from teacher educators and trainees.

### **Structural Transformation**

The transition from TTC to ADE represents a fundamental restructuring of teacher education in Guyana. Key structural changes include:

- **Elevated Entry Qualifications and Academic Standards:** Entry into the ADE programme requires completion of secondary education with specific subject competencies, aligning teacher preparation with tertiary education standards. This contrasts with the TTC, which accepted candidates with minimal academic prerequisites.
- **Extended Programme Duration:** ADE programmes span two years of full-time study, incorporating academic coursework, practicum, and research components. This allows for deeper engagement with content, pedagogy, and reflective practice.
- **Formal Recognition and Career Pathways:** Graduates of the ADE are awarded a nationally and internationally recognized qualification, enhancing professional status and career mobility within the teaching profession. This structural elevation aligns with UNESCO (2023) recommendations and supports broader SDG 4 goals, particularly Target 4.c.

**Evidence:** Institutional reports indicate that over 90% of ADE cohorts successfully complete practicum components that integrate theory and classroom application. Policy documents demonstrate explicit alignment with national teacher standards and regional Caribbean accreditation frameworks.

### **Curriculum and Pedagogical Reform**

The ADE curriculum emphasizes competency-based, student-centred, and inclusive pedagogy. Key reforms include:

- **Integration of Content Knowledge and Pedagogy:** Modules are designed to link subject mastery with evidence-based instructional strategies. For example, mathematics and literacy courses integrate content with differentiated teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learners.
- **Inclusion of Digital Pedagogy:** Trainees are introduced to technology-enhanced learning tools, digital lesson planning, and educational software, reflecting the growing demand for ICT competence in classrooms.
- **The integration of Inclusive Practices** involves embedding Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles throughout the modules, thereby promoting adaptable instructional strategies that accommodate students with diverse learning requirements.
- **Extended Practicum and Research Components:** The ADE places strong emphasis on reflective practice and classroom-based inquiry. Trainees complete supervised practicum placements, engage in action research projects, and participate in professional learning communities.

**Evidence:** Observation of module outlines and trainee reflections indicates increased adoption of differentiated instruction and formative assessment strategies. Teacher educators report higher levels of trainee engagement and critical thinking compared with TTC cohorts.

## **Implementation Processes**

The ADE reform was implemented using a phased and participatory approach:

- **Pilot Cohorts:** Early ADE cohorts served as pilots, enabling iterative curriculum refinement and feedback loops from trainees and teacher educators.
- **Professional Development for Teacher Educators:** CPCE invested in training its staff to deliver degree-level coursework, integrate technology, and support inclusive pedagogy. Professional development included workshops, peer mentoring, and curriculum design seminars.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** National policymakers, school administrators, and local education officers were involved in programme planning to ensure alignment with system needs and practical classroom realities.

**Evidence:** Documentation shows that over 70% of ADE teacher educators participated in targeted professional development sessions between 2023–2025, enhancing their capacity to implement competency-based curricula effectively.

## **Psychological Pathways of Reform Impact**

The ADE reform has generated observable psychological effects on teacher trainees, which are critical for sustaining instructional change:

### **Professional Identity Formation**

- ADE trainees report increased recognition of themselves as professionals rather than “certified” practitioners.
- Institutional feedback indicates heightened trainee commitment to ethical and evidence-based practice.

### **Self-Efficacy Development**

- Trainees demonstrate greater confidence in classroom management, lesson planning, and differentiated instruction.
- Increased self-efficacy is attributed to extended practicum experiences, feedback cycles, and structured mentoring.

### **Instructional Adaptability**

- Exposure to digital tools and inclusive pedagogies equips teachers to respond to heterogeneous classroom contexts.
- Teacher educators report enhanced problem-solving and adaptability among ADE trainees.

### **Reflective Practice**

- Structured reflection modules and action research projects foster continuous improvement and critical thinking.
- Trainees show greater ability to evaluate their teaching effectiveness and implement evidence-informed strategies.

**Evidence:** Feedback from focus groups and reflective journals shows that 85% of ADE trainees feel “well-prepared” for real-world classroom challenges, compared with 60% of TTC graduates under the previous model.

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## Emerging Outcomes

Preliminary evidence from the first cohorts suggests that the ADE reform has led to:

1. Improved Teacher Preparedness: Trainees demonstrate stronger mastery of content and pedagogy.
2. Enhanced Classroom Practice: Increased use of formative assessment, differentiated instruction, and student-centred learning approaches.
3. Professional Recognition: Trainees perceive their teaching role as more respected and aligned with professional standards.
4. ICT Integration: Greater competency in digital lesson design and technology-enhanced learning.
5. Inclusive Teaching: Improved ability to address diverse learner needs in both urban and hinterland contexts.

Evidence: Institutional assessment reports and observation of teaching practicum indicate higher-quality lesson delivery and reflective engagement among ADE graduates. Informal feedback from school administrators confirms the increased preparedness of ADE-trained teachers relative to TTC-trained predecessors.

## SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine the transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) in Guyana. A case study approach is appropriate for analysing complex education reforms situated within specific socio-political and institutional contexts, particularly in Global South settings where policy implementation and practice are closely intertwined (Yin, 2018). The TTC–ADE transition is treated as an embedded case of systemic reform, enabling analysis of interactions between policy design, curriculum restructuring, and teacher development.

Data were drawn from multiple sources, including national policy documents, ADE curriculum frameworks, and institutional reports. These sources were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to reform design, implementation processes, and teacher-level outcomes. The analysis combined deductive and inductive coding, guided by an integrated framework linking structural reform, pedagogical change, and psychological development. This approach allows for a contextually grounded understanding of how reform is enacted and experienced within a developing education system.

The findings indicate that the TTC–ADE transition represents a substantive shift in the structure and purpose of teacher education in Guyana. At the structural level, the reform elevates entry requirements, extends programme duration, and aligns teacher preparation with tertiary-level standards. These changes reflect broader international trends toward the professionalisation of teaching and respond to policy imperatives associated with Sustainable Development Goal 4, particularly the need to increase the supply of qualified teachers. Similar reforms across the Global South have demonstrated that upgrading teacher qualifications enhances both professional status and system capacity, especially in contexts characterised by teacher shortages and uneven distribution.

At the curriculum and pedagogical level, the ADE introduces a competency-based framework that integrates subject knowledge, pedagogy, and classroom practice. The inclusion of extended practicum experiences, digital pedagogy, and inclusive education principles represents a significant departure from the more limited, certificate-based TTC model. Evidence from curriculum documents and institutional reports suggests that these changes contribute to improved teacher preparedness, particularly in relation to differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and the use of technology in teaching. This aligns with existing research indicating that practice-oriented and competency-based teacher education models are more effective in preparing teachers for diverse and resource-constrained classroom environments.

Importantly, the analysis highlights that the impact of reform is not limited to structural and curricular changes but is mediated through psychological dimensions of teacher development. Drawing on self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), the findings suggest that extended practicum experiences, mentorship, and structured feedback mechanisms contribute to increased teacher confidence and instructional competence. Trainees demonstrate greater readiness to manage classrooms, adapt teaching strategies, and engage with diverse learners. This supports evidence from international research showing that self-efficacy is a critical determinant of teacher effectiveness, particularly in challenging educational contexts.

The study further identifies the development of professional identity as a key outcome of the ADE reform. The transition from a certificate-based qualification to a degree-level programme appears to shift how trainees perceive their role, from technical practitioners to members of a recognised profession. This transformation is significant in Global South contexts, where the status of teaching has historically been shaped by lower entry requirements and limited professional recognition. Strengthening professional identity can enhance motivation, commitment, and engagement with continuous professional development, thereby contributing to long-term system improvement.

A central contribution of this study is the articulation of the Psychological Pathways Model, which conceptualises reform impact as operating through interconnected processes of professional identity formation, self-efficacy development, and instructional adaptability. The findings suggest that these dimensions are mutually reinforcing: stronger professional identity encourages reflective practice, increased self-efficacy supports pedagogical innovation, and greater adaptability enables teachers to respond effectively to diverse classroom contexts. This model extends existing literature by providing a mechanism through which structural and curricular reforms translate into changes in classroom practice.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to teacher education reform. Structural changes, such as upgrading qualifications, must be accompanied by curriculum innovation and sustained support for teacher development. In particular, the results highlight the need to explicitly address psychological dimensions of reform, which are often overlooked in policy design but are critical for ensuring that changes are internalised and enacted in practice. This has direct relevance for other Global South contexts seeking to strengthen teacher quality under conditions of resource constraint and systemic inequality.

At the same time, the findings point to key enabling conditions for successful reform implementation, including phased programme rollout, investment in teacher educator capacity, and alignment with national and international policy frameworks. These factors contribute to coherence between policy intent and institutional practice, which is essential for achieving meaningful and sustainable reform outcomes.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the TTC–ADE transition represents more than a structural upgrade; it constitutes a multidimensional reform that reshapes teacher preparation, professional identity, and instructional practice. By integrating structural, pedagogical, and psychological perspectives, the study provides a nuanced account of how teacher education reform unfolds in a Global South context and offers transferable insights for similar systems pursuing professionalisation and alignment with global education goals.

## Summary

The findings highlight the multi-dimensional impact of the TTC–ADE reform, spanning structural, pedagogical, and psychological domains. By integrating curriculum redesign, professional development, and experiential learning, the ADE strengthens teacher identity, self-efficacy, and classroom adaptability. These changes suggest that structural and curriculum reforms are most effective when coupled with deliberate attention to the psychological pathways that shape teacher practice.

## Psychological Pathways Model

The model explains how reform influences teacher identity, self-efficacy, and instructional adaptability.

The TTC–ADE reform at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) illustrates that structural and curricular changes alone are insufficient to transform classroom practice. The Psychological Pathways Model proposed here provides a framework for understanding how reforms translate into meaningful changes in teacher behavior and professional practice, linking institutional interventions to individual teacher outcomes.

### Model Overview

The model posits that reform impacts teacher practice through three interrelated psychological pathways:

1. Professional Identity Formation – How teachers perceive themselves as professionals within the education system
2. Self-Efficacy Development – Teachers’ beliefs in their capacity to perform effectively
3. Instructional Adaptability – Teachers’ ability to implement flexible, student-centred, and inclusive instructional strategies

These pathways are influenced by structural enablers (e.g., ADE programme design, institutional policies, practicum structures) and pedagogical enablers (e.g., competency-based curriculum, digital and inclusive pedagogy). The pathways collectively shape teachers’ readiness, confidence, and professional agency.

### Professional Identity Formation

Evidence from ADE cohorts indicates that teachers transition from perceiving themselves as “certificate holders” to fully-fledged professionals. The degree-level programme communicates higher standards and societal recognition, which reinforce a sense of professional legitimacy and responsibility.

- Data Support: Trainees’ reflective journals consistently highlighted phrases such as “*I feel like a real teacher now*” and “*I understand my role as a professional beyond just delivering content*”.
- Research Alignment: This aligns with Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), who argue that teacher identity is socially constructed and reinforced through engagement with professional norms and institutional expectations.

By strengthening professional identity, teachers become more motivated to engage in reflective practice, pursue ongoing professional development, and adopt innovative instructional strategies.

### Self-Efficacy Development

Self-efficacy functions as a key mediator between training inputs and classroom outcomes. The ADE’s extended practicum, structured feedback mechanisms, and mentorship programmes provide opportunities for mastery experiences, social modelling, and verbal encouragement, core sources of self-efficacy according to Bandura (1997).

- Data Support: Observations of teaching practice indicate that ADE trainees demonstrate higher confidence in managing classrooms, planning differentiated lessons, and implementing inclusive strategies. Focus group data reveal that 85% of ADE trainees reported feeling “well-prepared” to meet diverse learner needs, compared with 60% of TTC trainees.
- Research Alignment: Consistent with Darling-Hammond et al. (2024), higher self-efficacy is associated with greater instructional risk-taking, innovation, and resilience in challenging classroom contexts.

### Instructional Adaptability

Instructional adaptability refers to teachers’ capacity to adjust teaching strategies to diverse learner needs,

digital environments, and contextual constraints. ADE reforms explicitly foster this through:

- Integration of digital pedagogy (ICT tools, e-learning platforms)
- Emphasis on inclusive practices through UDL frameworks
- Competency-based assessments that encourage reflective and flexible planning
- Data Support: Practicum evaluations show increased use of formative assessment, differentiated instruction, and problem-based learning. Educators report that ADE graduates more readily incorporate ICT tools and adapt lesson plans for mixed-ability classrooms.
- Research Alignment: This evidence aligns with OECD (2024) recommendations that adaptability is a hallmark of effective 21st-century teachers and critical for achieving SDG 4 in resource-constrained contexts.

### **Integrative Dynamics**

The model emphasizes dynamic interactions among identity, self-efficacy, and adaptability:

- Enhanced professional identity motivates teachers to pursue challenging pedagogical practices.
- Increased self-efficacy provides the confidence to implement innovative strategies.
- Greater instructional adaptability reinforces identity and efficacy through successful classroom outcomes.

Thus, the model conceptualizes the impact of reform as a cyclical and reinforcing process: structural and curriculum reforms initiate psychological changes, which subsequently manifest in classroom practices, ultimately affecting educational outcomes such as student engagement, achievement, and equity.

### **Implications of the Model**

1. Policy Design: Teacher education reforms should explicitly target psychological pathways, not just structural qualifications.
2. Professional Development: Ongoing support, mentorship, and reflection opportunities are crucial for consolidating self-efficacy and professional identity.
3. Transferability: The model provides a framework for other Global South contexts seeking to elevate teacher professionalism under similar resource constraints.

### **Evidence-Based Conclusion**

The Psychological Pathways Model shows that the success of degree-level reforms depends on the development of internalised professional values, confidence, and adaptive skills. Without these psychological changes, structural and curricular improvements may not lead to better teaching practice.

## **DISCUSSION**

The transition from TTC to ADE at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) exemplifies a comprehensive reform in teacher education, addressing structural, pedagogical, and psychological aspects. The findings indicate that reform at the degree level enhances teacher identity, self-efficacy, and instructional adaptability, elements vital to improving classroom outcomes and supporting the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

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## Structural Reform and System-Level Impacts

The ADE reform signifies a strategic policy shift aimed at elevating the status and quality of teacher education within a Global South context. By increasing entry requirements, prolonging programme duration, and establishing formal recognition and career pathways, CPCE conforms to international recommendations for the professionalization of teaching (UNESCO, 2023).

Comparable reforms across the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia, such as Jamaica's transition to a Bachelor of Education, Kenya's diploma reforms aligned with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), and Sri Lanka's Diploma-to-Degree initiatives, have demonstrated that degree-level qualifications enhance teacher preparedness, strengthen professional identity, and improve retention within the profession (Tikly, 2023; O'Sullivan, 2022).

These comparative examples underscore the significance of policy coherence, illustrating that effective structural reform necessitates alignment with national standards, accreditation frameworks, and the conditions of the teacher labour market.

## Curriculum and Pedagogical Innovation

The ADE programme incorporates competency-based education, digital pedagogy, and inclusive instructional frameworks to effectively address the dual priorities of content mastery and classroom adaptability. Findings suggest that ADE graduates exhibit superior instructional competence, especially in student-centred and differentiated teaching, compared to their predecessors trained at TTC.

Globally, research in teacher education indicates that curricula grounded in competency and practice are most effective when theoretical knowledge is integrated with extensive, scaffolded classroom experience (Mulder, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). The ADE aligns with this evidence by including reflective practicum components, action research projects, and mentorship elements essential for fostering teacher agency and enhancing classroom effectiveness.

## Psychological Pathways: Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Adaptability

The Psychological Pathways Model provides a robust framework for interpreting how structural and curricular reforms translate into sustainable changes in teacher practice.

1. **Professional Identity:** ADE trainees increasingly identify as professionals, reinforcing ethical standards, reflective practice, and commitment to student learning. This mirrors findings from other Global South contexts, where degree-level reforms are associated with higher professional self-concept and status recognition (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).
2. **Self-Efficacy:** ADE graduates demonstrate increased confidence in lesson planning, classroom management, and differentiated instruction. This supports Bandura's (1997) assertion that mastery experiences, mentorship, and feedback enhance self-efficacy, critical for effective teaching in diverse and resource-constrained environments.
3. **Instructional Adaptability:** Exposure to digital tools, inclusive pedagogical frameworks, and competency-based assessments enhances teachers' ability to adapt to heterogeneous classrooms. Similar patterns are evident in South African and Caribbean teacher education reforms, emphasising the need for contextually responsive, flexible teaching approaches (OECD, 2024; Tikly, 2023).

Together, these pathways constitute a reinforcing cycle: professional identity incentivises reflective practice, self-efficacy encourages instructional experimentation, and adaptability strengthens confidence and identity.

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## Cross-Country Lessons for the Global South

The CPCE experience offers transferable lessons for other developing contexts:

- **Holistic reform:** Structural and curriculum changes must be paired with deliberate psychological support for trainees.
- **Phased implementation:** Piloting new programmes enables iterative refinement and minimizes systemic disruption.
- **Teacher educator capacity:** Professional development for instructors is critical to ensure fidelity in reform implementation.
- **Alignment with international frameworks:** Integration with UNESCO recommendations and SDG 4 targets provides external legitimacy and benchmarks.

These insights resonate with broader evidence from Global South teacher education reforms, highlighting the interplay between system-level policies, institutional capacity, and individual teacher development.

## Policy and Practice Implications

The Psychological Pathways Model has significant implications for policymakers, institutions, and practitioners:

1. **Policy Design:** Reform initiatives should explicitly target identity, self-efficacy, and adaptability alongside structural qualifications.
2. **Professional Development:** Continuous, scaffolded support for teacher educators is essential to sustain high-quality implementation.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Measuring reform impact should include both structural outputs (degree completion, assessment performance) and psychological outcomes (self-efficacy, identity formation).
4. **Scalability:** The model provides a blueprint for scaling similar reforms in resource-constrained contexts, emphasizing contextual sensitivity and stakeholder engagement.

## Limitations and Areas for Future Research

While this study provides robust insights into teacher education reform, several limitations warrant attention:

- **Single-case focus:** Findings are context-specific, limiting generalizability beyond Guyana.
- **Emerging outcomes:** The ADE reform is ongoing; long-term impacts on student learning and teacher retention remain to be evaluated.
- **Limited primary data:** While document analysis and institutional reports were extensive, expanded qualitative interviews with teachers and administrators could strengthen evidence.

Future research could explore longitudinal outcomes, cross-institutional comparisons, and the effectiveness of psychological support strategies in reinforcing reform impacts.

## CONCLUSION

The transition from the Trained Teacher Certificate (TTC) to the Associate Degree in Education (ADE) at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) represents a significant and strategic advancement towards the professionalization of teaching within Guyana. The findings of this study indicate that meaningful reform in

initial teacher education extends beyond structural and curricular modifications; it necessitates intentional engagement with the psychological facets of teacher development. When these components are coherently aligned, reforms are more likely to foster a robust professional identity, enhance teachers' self-efficacy, and promote instructional adaptability—elements consistently associated with improved teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2019).

This study centrally emphasises the Psychological Pathways Model, which provides a theoretically grounded and contextually pertinent framework for comprehending how reform inputs translate into substantive changes in teaching practices. By explicitly correlating policy and curriculum transformation with internal teacher processes such as identity formation, motivation, and adaptive expertise, the model supplies a nuanced perspective for analysing the success and longevity of educational reform. Its relevance extends beyond Guyana, providing valuable insights for other contexts within the Global South that aim to enhance teacher professionalism, adhere to international standards, and promote progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education).

Several key policy and research implications emerge from this analysis. Firstly, the transition towards degree-level teacher preparation is essential for elevating the status and competencies of the teaching profession, thereby reinforcing international calls to enhance teacher qualifications (UNESCO, 2021). Secondly, curriculum innovation—particularly the integration of competency-based approaches, digital literacy, and inclusive pedagogies—serves as a crucial facilitator of teacher effectiveness within diverse and evolving educational contexts (OECD, 2019). Thirdly, and most importantly, the psychological dimensions of reform—including professional identity, self-efficacy, and adaptability—must be acknowledged as central mediating mechanisms that influence how reforms are interpreted, internalised, and implemented in practice (Bandura, 1997; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

In conclusion, the CPCE experience underscores that educational reform is most effective when structural, curricular, and psychological dimensions are addressed in an integrated, contextually responsive manner. This study contributes empirically and conceptually to the discourse on teacher education reform by demonstrating that sustainable professionalisation is not achieved through policy change alone, but through the alignment of systems, practices, and human development processes. As such, the TTC–ADE transition offers a compelling model for other developing education systems seeking to implement coherent, scalable, and sustainable teacher education reforms.

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