

**THEORY VS PRACTICE: THE EXPERIENCES OF POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA
IN EDUCATION (PGDE) STUDENTS FOR ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY
DURING THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE IN INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS****Dr. Sylod Chimhenga**Center for Student Management
Zimbabwe Open University, Bulawayo Region
ZIMBABWE**ABSTRACT**

The teaching practice is designed to smooth the transition from teacher to student. At the same time the teaching practice assignment gives the teachers training institutions an opportunity to evaluate the students teaching capabilities. It is the responsibility of teacher education institutions to provide such learning experiences to student teachers that they may be able to select, innovate and organize such learning experiences which may develop competence in the student teachers to teach the course of their specialization on the one hand and recreational activities and social useful production work on the other hand. This qualitative study examines the experiences the student teachers during their teaching practice, these include among others; relationship with the mentors, learners discipline and classroom management, supervision and mentoring, and observations. Data was collected and tabulated using semi structured interviews from 50 PGDE student teachers at Zimbabwe Open University doing teaching practice in Bulawayo in 2016. Major finding are: student teachers are not imparted practical training of different methods of teaching before they are sent for teaching practice and that the student teachers are not informed about the rules and regulations of the practicing schools. Based on the findings of this study, measures are suggested on how to improve teaching practice in order to have a positive influence on the student teachers' perception of, and attitude towards, the teaching profession.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Training, Student Teachers, Theory and Practice, Mentor.