

# Training music teachers through distance learning: The case of teaching practice mentoring at one primary school teacher training college in Zimbabwe

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*This study sought to examine the quality of teaching practice (TP) mentoring in the teaching of music at primary school level through the distance mode of training at one college of education in Zimbabwe. The study examined the experiences and perceptions of lecturers and student teachers on TP mentoring in music within the context of a distance mode of teacher training. A purposive sample of 17 music student teachers and 11 lecturers was selected. The study employed a qualitative case study research design in which one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis were used to collect data. The main conclusion from the study was that the distance approach to teacher training was not effectively utilised for teacher preparation in music due to inadequate music knowledge and skills of mentor teachers as well as weaknesses of the school curriculum. Recommendations drawn from these conclusions are that the teaching practice period should not be the same for all subjects and more demanding subjects such as music deserve to be practiced more. Student teachers specialising in music must be placed for teaching practice where there are music specialist teachers. This study also recommends that the placement of music student teachers for teaching practice be undertaken jointly by the teaching practice coordinators and the music specialist lecturer.*

## Introduction

Teaching practice is a distance learning segment of a teacher training course in which student teachers are equipped with skills to teach various subjects in the school curriculum. Mayes and Burgess (2010, p. 36) state that, 'Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been adopted worldwide as the potential solution to a range of teacher education issues, from cost and supply to access, diversity and quality.' In trying to fulfil this thrust, the Zimbabwean distance learning system in teacher training colleges has student teachers placed at schools where they are expected to be under the supervision of qualified mentor teachers. The quality training expectation is that they are attached to qualified and experienced mentor teachers who should guide them in the execution of their duties.

Botha (2010, p. 8) views teaching practice as an opportunity given to trainee teachers to incorporate theory and practice, by working together and learning from qualified class

teachers who act as both co-teachers and mentors. Through distance learning, music student teachers get the opportunity to apply the music theory they learn at college into practice in schools and also to fit into the professional school culture. The music student teachers are expected to enhance the teaching and learning skills in music under the guidance of qualified, experienced and practicing practitioners, through the TP mentoring approach at schools away from the teacher training college, which is the distance learning component of the teacher training. This study examined the extent to which Botha's view on teaching practice is implemented through the mentoring of music student teachers on teaching practice at one teacher training college in Zimbabwe which uses distance mode of teacher training.

### **Review of related literature**

Literature on the rationale and approaches for using distance learning approaches for teacher training, as well as research findings on implementation strategies on TP mentoring, indicate that this is a worldwide teacher training approach which if strategically implemented can produce quality teachers.

### **Utility of distance learning through TP mentoring**

Teacher training continues to be vital because there is still need for more qualified teachers, especially in developing countries (Perraton, 2010). Most countries have adopted a variety of strategies to train and produce better qualified teachers, such as the conventional or campus based and the distance learning approach which can produce qualified teachers who are more practically oriented (Bhargava, 2009; Simpson & Kehrwald, 2010; Perraton, 2010). In support of the distance method of teacher training, Simpson and Kehrwald (2010, p. 23) posit that:

The richer learning experiences made possible by the application of learning technologies have enhanced the appeal and uptake of teacher education at a distance and opened up new possibilities for reimagining, redesigning and redeveloping delivery plans as part of transformative approaches to education.

In Africa, research indicates that Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Nigeria use open and distance learning on a large scale to expand primary education. Zimbabwe, where the current study was conducted, took a similar approach soon after independence from colonial rule in 1980. The first cohort of 7,400 trainee teachers was enrolled into what was coined the Zimbabwe integrated teacher education course (ZINTEC) project of whom 80% passed the course and gained their qualification (Perraton, 2010). Before this, teaching practice was solely the responsibility of lecturers at all the country's teachers colleges. Trainee teachers practiced teaching without particular attachment to a qualified teacher for guidance and so there was very little input from qualified class teachers in schools. In 1995 this traditional or conventional strategy of training teachers was adjusted, from a more college-based model to a more school-based model that relies greatly on the involvement of qualified teachers as mentors of practicing student teachers. The strategy

of teaching practice mentoring came into practice in Zimbabwe, as a directive from the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, and as one aspect of the government's economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) (Mavhunga, 2004). TP mentoring of trainee teachers meant that every student on teaching practice was attached to a full-time teacher for professional and instructional guidance. This move also cushioned the government's financial burden on teacher training since students on teaching practice received an allowance instead of a salary, while ensuring that student teachers got the required guidance from class teachers on a daily basis.

### **The demand for qualified teachers**

Simpson & Kehrwald (2010) express that the demand for qualified teachers has been high and will continue to be so, as countries around the world work to ensure that all their citizens can access education. Training teachers through distance learning is therefore now regarded a worthier strategy because it helps in 'improving the general educational background of the trainee teachers; increasing their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and the development of practical skills and competences' (Perraton, 2010, p. 4). Lynd (2005, p. 13) and Wees (2009, p. 1) concur with this view by observing that the distance approach to teacher training helps trainee teachers to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to teach competently in the classroom.

With specific reference to the utility of distance learning as a strategy for training music teachers, which this study examined, D'Abate and Eddy (2008) argue that the approach enhances the expected practicality of the discipline of music.

### **Distance learning as a collaborative teacher training approach**

Training teachers through distance education requires collaboration between the teacher training institute and the practicing school. Bhargava (2009, p. 101) points out that an effective teacher training programme can be ensured when both the school and the college work in tandem. When student teachers are in schools on teaching practice they learn from their qualified mentors while lecturers then assess their performance under the mentorship of the qualified teachers (Maphosa & Ndamba, 2012). Mentoring student teachers on teaching practice is thus the foundation of collaborative training of teachers between universities, colleges and schools (Carter & Francis, 2001).

According to Perraton (2010) open and distance learning is a strategy that has been used mainly for initial teacher training and Mayes and Burgess (2010, p. 35) reveal that the use of the approach dates to the 1960s: 'Open and distance learning (ODL) has played an important role in initial teacher education and training since the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)/UNESCO Institute of Education was set up in the 1960s.'

Umar and Danaher (2010) point out that using open and distance learning (ODL) in teacher education enhances effectiveness, efficiency and equitability in instruction and at the same time maximises access to education as many students can be accommodated for teacher training. However, when using ODL, communication with the training institute while the student teacher is on teaching practice is vital as this enables lecturers to keep

abreast with the performance of the trainee teacher. According to Postle and Tyler (2010) such communication with both the student teacher and the mentor can be made possible through emerging technologies like e-learning or internet-based learning. However, in developing countries such as Zimbabwe, student teachers could be posted to schools in remote or rural areas where there is no electricity or internet facilities, which may compromise effective distance teacher training. This study included some of the music teachers who were placed in rural schools where they met and had to cope with such challenges.

Perraton (2010, p. 5) states that 'open and distance learning can be effectively deployed for teacher education', to ensure that trainee teachers develop the needed knowledge and skills to teach particularly neglected subjects like music. However, whilst the training of student teachers to teach all primary school subjects can be conducted in the same manner, music is unique in that it requires high blending of theory and practice by mentors who are specialised in the subject. However, in training to teach, music subject specialists have not been spared from some challenges, especially in Africa and other developing countries. These include unsatisfactory teacher development and teacher training facilities (Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011).

#### *Problem statement*

Distance teaching and learning strategies have gained momentum in higher education worldwide, including in developing countries like Zimbabwe where it has been formally adopted for the country's teacher training system (Mayes & Burgess, 2010). After the initiation of this system through the introduction of ZINTEC in order to alleviate teacher shortage at independence, the distance teacher training approach was formally adopted by all the country's teacher training colleges in 1995 (Mavhunga, 2004; Perraton, 2010; Kangai & Bukaliya, 2011). Therefore, the key prerequisite of teacher education in Zimbabwe is that student teachers spend two thirds of their training period in schools where they are attached to qualified teachers, who are given the responsibility of being mentors (Mattson, 2006). Since the students are placed at different types of schools and also mentored by different teachers away from college lecturers, it is apparent that the use of distance teacher training method has had its share of problems for all the stakeholders such as students, lecturers and mentors where students are placed. This paper reports the findings of a study that was conducted to investigate how college lecturers and their trainee teachers at one teachers' college in Zimbabwe experienced and perceived the utility of distance mode of teacher training in the subject of music at the primary school level.

#### **The objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- Examine the observations of college lecturers on the quality of TP mentoring at schools where music student teachers are placed.
- Explore the experiences of the student teachers on TP mentoring in the teaching of music.

- Evaluate the utility of distance learning approach at one Zimbabwe teachers' college for training music student teachers during teaching practice.

### **Research design and data collection processes**

The study was conducted using the qualitative research approach. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 94), 'qualitative research involves looking at characteristics, or qualities that cannot easily be reduced to numerical values'. The qualitative research is mainly used in situations where the researcher wants to come up with in-depth understanding of a situation or an issue in its natural context. McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 348) reveal that qualitative research is in most cases conducted in the field, and in 'natural settings, in which the participants exhibit their normal behaviors'. This approach was appropriate for this study in that the participants of the study were interviewed about their usual TP teaching and learning roles and experiences as students and lecturers respectively. Apart from interacting with study participants during interviews, researchers also made observations of the reality of how TP was conducted through examining the teaching practice records and supervision reports produced by the participating lecturers and students.

The case study design was adopted in Matabeleland South province; schools where the students were placed for TP and one primary teachers' college where they studied were the cases under study. According to Rule and John (2011, p. 3), 'A case might be a person, a classroom, a programme, a process, a series of developments, an institution or even a country.' What makes it a case for study is its singular and distinct nature or informative characteristics that are rich with information which is of interest to the research in question. Cohen *et al.* (2011) posit that in a case study, views from the appropriate individuals in real sites are obtained and this gives a better comprehension of ideas and opinions from respondents' own perspectives and meanings. In this study, the sampled students narrated how they experienced practicing to teach music at schools where they were placed for TP while their lecturers explained their views on their college's quality of conducting TP placement, supervision and assessment in music. All the selected study participants were therefore relevant for and rich with information on this case study in that they were all heavily involved in the phenomenon under study as key stakeholders in the application of distance teaching and learning during TP.

### **The study sample and data collection approach**

This study examined how TP mentoring using the distance learning approach was applied by one teachers' college in Zimbabwe to train students to teach music during teaching practice. Purposive sampling was used to select the 28 study respondents, who comprised 17 student teachers and 11 lecturers. Jones *et al.* (2014, p. 107) warns that in qualitative research such as the current study, 'not all people interested in participating in a study will make excellent participants', while Morse (2007, p. 231) concurs that qualitative researchers 'must select the participants to observe or interview who know the information'. In this regard, all the 28 participants of this study were selected because they were all knowledgeable about how teaching practice was conducted in music at the college and schools where the study was undertaken. In line with qualitative case study research,

one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis (Gledhill *et al.*, 2008) of TP records were the main data gathering instruments for the study. Individual interviews were conducted with student teachers because the schools where they taught were not close to each other. One focus group interview was conducted with nine non-music specialist lecturers and two face-to-face interviews were conducted with the two music specialist lecturers at the teachers' college.

### **Data presentation and analysis**

Teaching practice mentoring is a distance learning approach used to equip trainee teachers with the appropriate teaching and learning skills for various subjects in the school curriculum. The approach has been used to connect theory learned at the teacher training university or college and the practical done in the practicing schools. In the following section, the varied views of student teachers on the TP mentoring process gleaned from one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions are presented.

### **Results**

The results of this study are presented in the five themes that emerged from the data gathered as follows: disregard for music as a non-examinable subject, inadequate music resources, inadequate knowledge in music, inappropriate TP mentoring approaches and production of unauthentic assessment documents.

#### **Disregard for music as a non-examinable subject**

Information regarding the quality of teaching practice (TP) mentoring in the teaching of music at primary school level was obtained from 11 lecturers and 17 student teachers who were studying music as their main subject. To ensure this, we confirmed each participant's major subject before the interview session. The student teachers sampled in this study were those doing in-depth study in music, on the basis that they might offer rich information. We also ascertained that all interviewed music student teachers were attached to mentor teachers. When student teachers were asked whether they benefit through TP mentoring, their responses varied. A male student from school number 1 pointed out that:

Having a mentor teacher is a good idea, mentors help us in lesson delivery, how to manage our records and classrooms; in the teaching of subjects like music they don't, they want to teach examinable subjects.

The student teacher reflected that TP mentoring is a valuable exercise as there is a lot that they learn concerning the teaching profession from their mentor teachers. However, the student teacher pointed out that in the teaching of music they get inadequate guidance as mentor teachers ignore non-examinable subjects like music. Similarly, a female student also from school number 1, stated that, 'I gain nothing through mentoring. Nothing really, our mentors don't bother about music, it is non-examinable.' Concurring with the above views was a female student from school number 3 who expressed that,

Mentoring is good but not absolute because there are certain subjects that are not being considered seriously especially practical subjects like music, art, physical education and home economics.

This implies that music and other practical subjects are not effectively taught because of the negative attitude that emanates from mentor teachers. An observation by lecturer 1 was that 'After a teaching practice visit we receive critique forms for Mathematics, English, ChiShona and IsiNdebele [native languages].' This means that music and other practical subjects are overlooked in TP supervision. It could also mean that there is need to review the curriculum so as to ensure that these neglected subjects get the same attention as that of other subjects, if this is not done very little will be achieved by music student teachers. In a focus group interview a male student teacher from school number 3 stated that:

Ah! Mentors do not have time to mentor or to help us in the teaching of music, my mentor always skips those subjects that are not examinable. I at times get a chance to teach music only when my mentor is not there.

The student teachers interviewed revealed that student teachers practicing in schools are inadequately assisted in the teaching of music through distance learning. Lecturer 3 perceived that, 'It is a trend that mentors avoid practical subjects like music but concentrate on examinable subjects like Mathematics and English in their teaching.' Similarly, lecturer 2 from focus group 2 expressed that, 'I have received complaints from the student teachers that I have seen to the effect that normally music is not given its time in the classroom.' This reflects that lessons in music are inefficiently conducted in schools.

It is by coincidence that student teachers get an opportunity to teach music in schools because mentor teachers find it a waste of time to teach music because learners will not be examined in the subject. However, lecturer 2 expressed that 'mentors would say music is not examinable so it is a waste of time to teach it. Then they have those examinable subjects being taught during the music lesson.' Lecturer 2 had an observation that,

In teaching practical subjects mentor teachers do not give student teachers time to teach the subjects, they normally prefer to do something during the time of a practical subject like cleaning the school or preparing for a soccer tournament.

This scenario in schools reveals that music is barely taught in primary schools, leading to the production of substandard music teachers. This finding falls too far short of the view held by Perraton (2010) that training teachers through open and distance learning is meant to ensure that student teachers develop appropriate knowledge and skills to teach different subjects in the school curriculum. These skills can never be fully developed if not nurtured and nourished by experts.

### **Inadequate music resources**

In order for music to be properly taught in Zimbabwean primary schools, the subject should get relevant instruments, media, textbooks and manuscripts. The practical component of

the music subject requires the use of music instruments, in music appreciation it is mainly media that is used to teach the subject, while music theory would require the use of music textbooks and music manuscripts. In an interview a female student teacher from school number 3 revealed that, 'There are no music books to refer to. In our school there is no music syllabus. I had to borrow one for my grade from college. This school does not have music instruments.' Similarly, a female student teacher from school number 2 pointed out that,

We are teaching in rural schools and in these schools there is no electricity and it follows that there is no facility for internet, no electrical gadgets like radios, televisions or DVDs, so upon getting an opportunity to teach, we talk about these gadgets.

This means that some student teachers graduate with limited knowledge on how to use music instruments in the classroom. It was an observation by lecturer 4 in focus group 1 that 'Because there are no proper music resources to teach practical subjects, mentor teachers do not teach the subjects, hence student teachers are not exposed to the teaching of music.' Similarly, Lecturer 3 from focus group 2 observed that, 'most schools do not have music instruments meaning that student teachers will be teaching percussion instruments which are mainly improvised versions.' This indicates that the student teachers are inadequately prepared to teach all the components of the music subject, hence they are not professionally prepared to teach music. It is likely therefore that the student teacher would remain highly theoretical which would impact negatively on his professional growth as a music teacher. This finding is in line with the view by Kangai and Bukaliya (2011) who state that developing countries still face challenges in producing insufficiently developed teachers due to inadequate resources and poorly structured facilities.

### **Inadequate knowledge in music**

Training student teachers in music requires specialised guidance if the product is to be a quality one. A student teacher with a mentor teacher with mediocre qualifications and experience produces a sub-standard teacher. One male trainee teacher from a focus group in school number 1 expressed that, 'Mentors are not confident in teaching music.' A female trainee teacher from school number 1 expressed that, 'Mentors don't have interest in the music subject. You just teach by yourself.' During a focus group discussion, a male student teacher from school number 3 remarked, 'They lack knowledge in the subject.' Similarly Lecturer 3 in focus group 1 quoted a mentor teacher saying, 'I cannot really help because music was a difficult subject to me when I was at college, I did not really grasp much knowledge in the subject.' The views presented revealed that student teachers are placed under the guidance of mentor teachers who do not have adequate knowledge in music. The mentor teachers hardly teach the subject in the schools meaning that mentor teachers rarely observe and practice teaching music. This is contrary to the views by Botha (2010) who states that through distance learning student teachers should be able to link theory learned at college and practice done in schools.

The student teachers revealed that mentor teachers were not accurately executing their mentoring duties in equipping student teachers with teaching and learning. Lecturer 2 from



focus group 2 reflected that, 'Some mentors are not familiar with the current demands, hence they have no confidence in teaching practical subjects like music.' Similarly, a female trainee teacher from a focus group 2 in school number 2 expressed that, 'I think the reason could be that mentors do not have information on music; they do not know how to teach music so they don't teach the subject.' On the same note, a male teacher from school number 3 trainee expressed that:

I think those mentors who mentor student teachers should be taught one or two things about music and awaken their knowledge on music and then make them understand music as a subject.

This scenario does not only reflect inadequate mentoring, but also proffers negative perceptions by student teachers towards their mentor teachers, hence the whole process becomes futile. A female student teacher from school number 2 described:

You know, for example when I am teaching other subjects I am guided by the mentor in such a way that I adjust and modify my teaching and learning strategies and make them better. In music she doesn't, I don't know maybe it's because she doesn't have much information, I don't know.

The views from music student teachers reflect that trainee teachers are not properly mentored in the teaching of music because their mentor teachers have inadequate knowledge in the teaching of music. Similarly, lecturer 3 observed that, 'Most lecturers who do not lecture music try by all means to avoid supervising music student teachers; they rather feel comfortable observing lessons taught in their own subject areas even if the timetable spells out music at that particular time.' While Lecturer 2 also expressed that, 'Lecturers in other subject areas find it challenging to assist student teachers in the teaching of music because they are not familiar with the subject.' The finding reveals that mentor teachers and lecturers who are not music specialists inadequately supervise music student teachers. This is against Wees (2009) who views that it is important that through teacher training student teachers be properly equipped with teaching and learning skills that develop them professionally.

### **Inappropriate TP mentoring approaches**

Teaching practice mentoring is a distance learning approach meant to assist trainee teachers develop professionally. It is vital that mentor teachers work in collaboration with lecturers from the teacher training institute to equip student teachers with the desired knowledge. Trainee teachers were asked how TP mentoring in music was done in their teaching practice. An interview with a female music student teacher from school number 2 revealed that the trainee teacher had at no time been assisted in teaching music. Similarly, a female trainee teacher from school number 1 revealed that, 'My mentor has on no occasion asked to see me teach music, actually mentors are not worried about non-examinable subjects like music.' A male teacher trainee from school number 2 stated that:

At times my mentor teacher observes me teaching because I would have asked him to assess me, he just does it just for the sake of giving me a critique form because it is a requirement. But, he has not in time seen me teach music.

The views from the music student teachers reflect that there is insufficient TP mentoring of music teacher trainees. Lecturer 2 observed that the current TP supervision approach is that, 'every lecturer should be in a position to supervise any subject presented to them by the student teacher as long as it is in the primary school curriculum and this includes music'. One male student teacher from school 3 stated that, 'no music lecturer has ever visited me'. Another male trainee teacher from school number 2 expressed that, 'When lecturers visit, they are not worried about non-examinable subjects like music.' Music student teachers further revealed that during their distance learning in schools, music lecturers hardly visited their schools for TP supervision in music and even those lecturers who visited them did not adequately supervise them in the teaching of music. Lecturer 1 has detected that in schools when learners have an opportunity to sing class teachers take that as a lesson in music yet singing is just a component of the music education programme. The findings from this study reveal that music student teachers undergo TP mentoring and TP supervision which is inappropriate for the teaching of music. This means that music student teachers are professionally inadequately developed in the teaching of music during teaching practice, by both the teacher training college and the practicing school. This view is not consistent with views expressed by Bhargava (2009) and Simpson and Kehrwald (2010) who claim that distance learning provides a worthy approach to greater professionalism and that schools should work in partnership with the teacher training colleges to train music student teachers in the teaching of music.

### **Production of unauthentic assessment documents**

Teaching practice documentation is a very important aspect of distance education. The documents are used mainly to monitor the progress of the trainee teacher. The critique form is used by both the mentor teachers and the lecturers to write comments on the performance of the student teacher and it contains the marks awarded for that particular assessment. When asked how the assessments were done, a female student teacher from school number 3 stated that:

She assesses my documents only and writes a critique form following what my lecturers would have come in and wrote on their critique form, without assessing my lesson presentation. She writes the critique form as if she has seen me teach.

This negation of professional ethics could be emanating from limited of expertise and general negativity towards the subject. The mentor teacher had little to comment on since they did not know what to do. The general approach of music is limited. A female trainee teacher from school number 2 revealed that:

I just do my plans of work as I was taught at college and then I show her my plan and usually she just says go ahead and teach. She doesn't correct me in as much as she does in other subjects when it comes to music.

Similarly, a male student teacher also from school number 2 revealed that:

I plan on my own. I try to do as I was taught at college, whether it's correct or wrong nobody checks and I let it go like that as long as in the long run I will go through my teaching practice with a pass.

Most of the lesson plans that student teachers prepare were not assessed. This reflects that there is limited thorough supervision and expert advice, thus, breeding unprofessional ethics. On TP documentation lecturer 3 detected that student teachers, 'just do these records to impress, not writing what is really happening in class.' Similarly, lecturer 2 expressed that, 'I think if the number of those documents was reduced there will be quality and honest work presented.' The views from the lecturers reflect there were many TP documents to be filled in by student teachers hence they wrote false information just to meet the requirements.

### **Discussion of main findings**

The findings of this study reveal that class teachers and lecturers who are not music specialists inefficiently develop music student teachers. This finding is contrary to the view by Botha (2010) who states that teaching practice is a teacher training component meant to equip trainee teachers with classroom skills. The study revealed that student teachers were given limited time with limited resources to practice teaching music. This finding is contrary to the views by Mayes and Burgess (2010) that through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) quality teachers are produced. The results of the study revealed that music trainee teachers were placed under the mentorship of class teachers who were not music specialists. This finding is divergent from the views from Mavhunga (2004) that student teachers on teaching practice were attached to experienced mentor teachers.

The findings of this study reveal that student teachers are attached to class teachers who guided them in practicing teaching and lecturers visit them to supervise the practice. This result is consistent with the view from Carter and Francis (2001) that TP mentoring student teachers on teaching practice should take a collaborative approach with universities, colleges and schools. This study revealed that in the practicing schools, student teachers do not practice teaching music adequately because music is not deemed an examinable subject. Non-examinable subjects are overlooked in Zimbabwean primary schools. This view is contrary to views conveyed by Bhargava (2009) and Simpson and Kehrwald (2010) that distance learning is a valuable approach to developing trainee teachers professionally.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

In conclusion, the study finds that music was not taught effectively in Zimbabwean primary schools. Mentor teachers in the practicing schools had inadequate knowledge to teach music from which trainee teachers could observe and imitate their practice. It was clear that student teachers lacked guidance, support and coaching in learning how to teach music in their practicing schools. This study finds that using distance learning to train student teachers to teach music has not been effectively done in the colleges under study.

The recommendations drawn from these conclusions are that policies should be put in place to ensure that music is taught in Zimbabwean primary schools. The study also recommends that key stakeholders, lecturers and mentor teachers, involved in training teachers through distance learning, should work in partnership to ensure that music student teachers are given the needed support in learning how to teach music. This study also recommends that schools should provide resources like music instruments and textbooks. Equipping mentor teachers with music skills could be one way to ensure that the subject is taught in Zimbabwean primary schools. The study recommends that there be in-service training for mentor teachers as well as incentives for those with the task of mentoring student teachers on teaching practice. The study also recommends that the teaching practice period for trainee teachers studying diverse subjects must be different and music trainee teachers must be placed in schools where there are music specialist teachers.

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