

Provision of Open Distance Learning to students with Hearing Impairment in Institutions of Higher learning: the case of Zimbabwe Open University

By

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Abstract

Students with Hearing Impairment experience learning problems in most institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe. Access to college and university facilities is often limited and hence their needs are not catered for. Those learning through distance education are the most affected since they have to endure these problems alone. Thus for an institution like the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), where Open Distance Learning (ODL) is the mode of instruction, there is need to develop learning materials that would enable these students to learn effectively though they may be few in number. Students with hearing impairment in most higher learning institutions (ZOU included), have expressed experiencing difficulties in coping with their studies partly due to the fact that the learning materials used are tailor made for the mainstream form of education. This research is a descriptive survey meant to extract information from students with hearing impairment; so that solutions can be found on how to develop effective learning materials for ODL in Zimbabwe. A qualitative design was adopted as a way of assessing the needs and feelings of the hearing impaired students. By virtue of the small population involved, this approach was the most useful though besides Interviews, questionnaires were used to triangulate the findings from students, lecturers and support teachers.

Key words: *Hearing impairment, Hard of hearing, Open Distance learning, learning material, Distance education*