

An Interrogation of Lecturer's Skills in Assisting Visually Impaired Students during the COVID-19 Lockdown Era in Selected Universities in Zimbabwe

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Abstract : The present study interrogated the lecturer's skills in supporting visually impaired students during the Covid-19 era at the University of Zimbabwe. It particularly assesses how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the learning experience of visually impaired students and which skills the lecturers possessed in order to assist the visually impaired students during online learning. Data was collected from lecturers and visually impaired students at the University of Zimbabwe Disability Resource Centre. Data was collected through the use of interviews and questionnaires. Using content analysis, it was established that visually impaired students faced challenges of lack of familiarity with the Moodle learning platform, marginalization, lack of professional training, and lack of training for parents and guardians. Lecturers faced challenges of lack of training, the curriculum, access, and technical know-how deficit. It was established that lecturers had to resort to social media platforms in order to assist visually impaired students. Visually impaired students also received assistance from their friends and family members. On the basis of the results of the research, it can be concluded that lecturers needed in-service training to be provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach students with visual impairments and provide quality education to students with visual impairments.

Keywords : visual impairment, disability, covid-19, inclusive learning

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