HARNESSING OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES USED BY ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Open educational resources are a new paradigm that is hugely impacting and changing the mode of scholarly communication the world over. The paradigm is based on the notion and belief that the web is the largest library on earth, offering a wealth of useful and accessible resources in a variety of disciplines and fields. The web has revolutionalised how information is accessed, making knowledge available to millions of people who would normally not have such access due to lack of libraries and the costliness of textbooks and reference materials. Budget cuts in library expenditure in many colleges and universities have deprived students of badly needed educational resources. Rather, open educational resources have modified existing pedagogical models and strategies in higher education. Wheeler (2010) argues that the enormity of accessible learning resources will eventually force academics to reinvent the way teaching- learning strategies are conceived in colleges and universities. Bill Gates (2010) in a speech at a Technomy conference said "Five years from now, on the web for free, you will be able to find the best lecturers in the world... It will be better than any single university... the best lecturer in the world will not be at hallowed institutions, reserved only for the privileged and elite, but on the web for everyone who wants access to them". It is in light of this background that this paper seeks to assess the effectiveness of harnessing Open Educational Resources in teacher education programmes. The paper is a qualitative analysis of the effectiveness of the pedagogical methods used by the Zimbabwe Open University in teacher education. The study is informed by the contention that under current economic hardships in Zimbabwe, open and distance learning which fosters the use of open educational resources is becoming the best method in teacher education. Interviews through questioners, documentary analysis, focus group discussion and personal observations are to be used to triangulate data collection for this paper.

Keywords: Harnessing, open educational resources, teacher education, pedagogical.