



Consulting Teaching and Learning at a Zimbabwe University During Covid-19: Roadmap to Recovery and Beyond

Efiritha Chauraya and Wonder Muchabaiwa

Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

Email: efirithachauraya@fastermail.com/chaurayae@staff.msu.ac.zw

Abstract: *The Covid-19 pandemic has caused probably the most significant world-wide disruptions in all sectors of the economy in human history. This study prescribes a Zimbabwe state university where little has been done to explore what can be done to prepare the institution to have students continue learning in the face of any threat similar to Covid-19. The study provides snippets of lecturers' and students' reflections on their experiences with teaching and learning during the Covid-19 era. Utilising a qualitative approach that employed face-to-face semi structured interviews, data was solicited from 10 lecturers and 20 students. Data was thematically analysed. Both positive aspects and negative outcomes of teaching and learning during the covid crisis were recorded, and from these outcomes, lessons which will help the university systems withstand future emergencies and crises were drawn. These lessons are the novelty and contribution of the study. Key among the lessons were that the institution: continues mobilizing resources to build and strengthen support for teaching-learning, strengthen the registration process, develop a system for online examinations, lobby government to subsidise cost of data bundles, and increase connectivity to remote parts as well as offer online counselling services for students and lecturers.*

Keywords: *Teaching and learning, Covid-19, Lessons learnt, Rural-urban divide, Socio-economic divide, Zimbabwe.*

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 crisis has tested the education systems worldwide in unprecedented ways. A new normal, which saw learning institutions adjust their ways of doing business, imposed itself as did personal and professional life. Teaching and learning transitioned from face to face to virtual and then blended. At the time of writing the article (April-May 2022), Zimbabwe institutions of higher education were migrating from the virtual teaching and learning mode to the blended teaching-learning revolution. Even as it appears (at the time of writing this article) that

the coronavirus that caused the covid-19 crisis may soon be old news, no one knows what pandemic will struck next, so lessons learnt from the Covid-19 crisis are good preparatory ground for institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe and beyond, to contingently plan to manage unplanned and unexpected emergencies, such as Covid-19, so that students are not left without studying as what happened when Covid-19 hit the whole world in March 2020.

Advantages and challenges of online teaching and learning during Covid-19 have been extensively documented for the whole world ((Vijayan, 2021; Chaturvedi, Purohit, &