

## **Investigating the Extent to Which Assessment Practices in Zimbabwe's 2-5-2 Teaching Practice System Enhance Continuous Improvement of Student Teachers' Teaching Skills**

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**ABSTRACT** The study sought to establish the experiences and perceptions held by mentors, teaching practice lecturers and student teachers on the extent to which assessment practices of student teachers on teaching practice enhance continuous improvement of their teaching skills and competences in Zimbabwe's 2-5-2 teacher education programme. The mixed methods design was used to collect data in two phases. The first phase used questionnaires to collect survey quantitative data while the second phase collected qualitative data through interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The researchers sampled 28 teaching practice lecturers, 100 mentors and 100 final year student teachers from the ten national primary teacher education institutions to participate in the first phase. Three teaching practice lecturers, three mentors and three focus groups of six students each were conveniently selected from neighbouring host schools for interviews in the second phase. The research findings revealed that student teachers in Zimbabwe's 2-5-2 teaching practice were formally assessed through lesson observations only by lecturers and mentors while peer or collegial assessment existed on voluntary basis among student teachers. The study further revealed that Zimbabwe's 2-5-2 teaching practice did not use any form of self assessment practice to promote continuous improvement of student teachers' teaching skills and competences during teaching practice. The study recommends the adoption of self assessment practices to complement the current lesson observation assessment practices and formalization of peer/collegial assessment.