## Background

\*DEBs Background\*

Teaching practice is a period when student teachers implement in the classroom what they have learned at a teacher training institution (Atputhasamy, 2005:1; Beeth & Adadan, 2006:103; Ogonor & Badmus, 2006:1; Oluwatayo & Adebule, 2012:109; Rosemary, Ngwarai & Ngara, 2013:126; Owusu & Brown, 2014:25). It is essentially conducted in a school classroom environment. Baek and Ham (2009:272) add that teaching practice is a programme that student teachers engage in to sharpen their teaching skills in class under the supervision of a qualified teacher. Dusto (2014:2) gives a comprehensive account of the activities that a student teacher undertakes during teaching practice when he explains that:

*Teaching practice involves observation and practice teaching. Student teachers are allowed to practise what they have learnt such as lesson planning and teaching and are assessed by supervising teachers and teacher educators.*

In traditional university-based teacher education preparation programs, the placement of the future teacher in a school classroom to practice teaching. Teaching practice is known by a multitude of terms (Elligate, 2007:37). These terms include field experience, practice teaching, professional experience, student teaching, internship, school-based experience and practicum.

Teaching practice is an important function of teacher education, mainly because it is the source of professional competencies in teacher education (Allen et al., 2010:616). According to the AITSL (2013:6), preparing a teacher has translated into student teachers spending more time on training as well as on teaching practice in schools to overcome the perceived gap between theory and practice. The increase in the duration of training and practice is aimed at enhancing student teachers‟ knowledge and skills of teaching in readiness for the world of work.

When students are being trained as teachers in a higher institution of learning such as the Zambia ICT College, they are taught methods of teaching. Ong‟ondo and Jwan (2009:515) explain that schools or colleges are often used as “practice sites” where student teachers can interact with the actual learners as part of their practical engagements. The attachment of a student teacher to an institution is largely determined by the level he or she is being trained to teach.

In summary, teaching practice is a period during which a student teacher is given an opportunity to teach pupils in a school. During teaching practice, a student teacher is expected to translate the theory learned during training into practice with the help and support of a teacher educator and supervising teachers.