

## **Enabling Teacher Learning in Rural Districts: A Focus on Classroom Support**

**H. B. Khuzwayo<sup>1</sup>, S. Bansilal<sup>2</sup>, L. Webb<sup>3</sup>, A. James<sup>2</sup> and B. Goba<sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>University of Zululand, Private Bag X1001 Kwadlangezwa 3886, South Africa*

*<sup>2</sup>University of KwaZulu-Natal, Private Bag X03, Ashwood, Pinetown, South Africa*

*<sup>3</sup>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, PO Box 77000. Port Elizabeth 6031, South Africa*

**KEYWORDS** Teacher Support. Rural. Mentoring. Situative Perspective. Mathematics. Science

**ABSTRACT** This study is focused on a professional development program for rural mathematics and science teachers, which included a classroom support component. The purpose was to explore the teachers' and mentors' perceptions of the nature of the learning they experienced. The participants in the study were eight teachers and eight mentors. Data was generated from questionnaires, interviews and written reflections. The findings reveal that the intervention resulted in learning gains for both teachers and mentors. The teachers were pleased with the level of support and encouragement they received, which improved their confidence, and teaching skills. The mentors too extended their own content understanding while they learnt more about the realities of the teachers. However, the mentors were external to the teachers' situations, which limited future support. It is recommended that the education department should explore possible ways to sustain such classroom support because of the value it offers to teachers.