

## **Exploring Principals' Role in Providing Instructional Leadership in Rural High Schools in South Africa**

**M. J. Taole**

*Department of Teacher Education, University of South Africa, PO Box 392,  
Pretoria, South Africa  
E-mail: taolemj@unisa.ac.za*

**KEYWORDS** Performance. Transformational Leader. Knowledge. Educational Reform. Change

**ABSTRACT** Effective leadership is the cornerstone of any education system. It can ensure the effective implementation and management of curriculum changes. Leadership by principals plays a critical role in motivating teachers and creating a culture of learning in the school. This article investigates the capacity of principals to provide instructional leadership at school level and the challenges they encounter in managing and implementing curriculum changes. The study employed qualitative design using interviews. The participants were principals from the Brits district of the North West province, who were identified through purposive sampling. The results showed that principals view themselves as managers and not as instructional leaders. Lack of training in curriculum change management and implementation remains a challenge to most of the principals. The study also revealed that workload, daily disruptions, lack of support from subject specialists, and parents are some of the barriers that constrain principals from executing their duties as instructional leaders with diligence. For principals to perform their instructional leadership tasks, they need to free themselves from their managerial tasks and delegate these tasks to other members of the management team. Then they can focus their efforts on teaching and learning. Principals can achieve this with the necessary support from all stakeholders.